



Photo added by Dennis Burlingham

Chief Andrew Rapp

BIRTH	Feb 1862 Michigan, USA
DEATH	16 May 1938 (aged 76) Hartford, Van Buren County, Michigan, USA
BURIAL	Rush Lake Indian Cemetery Hartford, Van Buren County, Michigan, USA
MEMORIAL ID	73139805 · View Source

The Hartford Day Spring, October 16, 1929

RAPP IS CHIEF OF POKAGON INDIAN BAND

HARTFORD MAN ELECTED AS TRIBAL HEAD AT POW-WOW SATURDAY

SEEK MONEY FOR TRIBE

Organize to Recover Funds From "Great White Father," and Give Indian War Dance

Andrew Rapp, residing northwest of Hartford and one of the most aggressive members of the remnant of the once strong Pokagon band of Indians, was elected chief of the band at the pow-wow held at the Hartford town hall last Saturday.

About a hundred Indians from Michigan and Indiana attended. The men did the voting and gave Chief Rapp 23 votes, as against 12 for Michael Quigno of Hartford and 8 for Michael Williams of Dowagiac.

They also elected Henry Alexis of Toquin as secretary and Michael Quigno as treasurer. Five members of the band were chosen to act with the officers as a business committee.

The purpose of the general counsel was to formulate plans for taking part in the effort sponsored by Chief Law-Man-la, a wealthy Sioux Indian from Oklahoma who has established headquarters at Niles, to collect funds that various Indian tribes claim are due under old treaties.

All business of the pow-wow was conducted in the Pottawotomie language. Chief Rapp, who is a grandson of the famous

Potawattomie chief Leopold Pokagon, addressed his tribesman in their native tongue and explained the age old treaties upon which the redman base their claims to compensation from the government.

One basis for the claim is said to be a treaty provision for annual payments to the Indians "forever." Although they have been battling for recognition of their claims for years, the redman are now inspired to new hope by the activities of Chief Law-Man-In.

The Pottawotamies voted to pay their tribal officers one per cent of all moneys collected as compensation for their services.

In the evening the Indians staged a war dance for the entertainment of the paleface friends. Indian costumes typical of the Sioux tribe were brought here for the occasion by Chief Law-Man-In, and different somewhat from the Pottawotamie tribal regalia with which Michigan palefaces are familiar.

Following the war dance Chief Rapp and Wm. Mix brought out their fiddles and played for a dance in which a number of paleface friends danced with the native sons and daughters of the forest.

Saturday's general council was the largest held in Hartford in years. Before the session ended an old tribal custom was changed and Chief Rapp was made the presiding officer at all gatherings of the tribe. A name for the organization was also adopted. It is "The Michigan, Indiana, Ottawa, Chippewa and Pottawotomie Corporation Society," intended to include the remnants of all the tribes in the two states.

LOCAL INDIAN CHIEF IS FOUND DEAD IN WOODS

Andrew Rapp, 73, Died As He Trudged Along Woodland Trail Near His Home

Andrew Rapp, 73, Hartford's most widely known Indian and former chief of the Pokagon band of Pottawattomies here, was found dead in the woods late Monday on the Charles Drullinger farm, formerly the J. P. Hoover place, three miles northwest of town, where he is believed to have lain since his disappearance late Friday afternoon.

Pat Alexis, a nephew of the dead man, discovered the body as he walked to Hartford along a path through the woods and swamp which the Indians followed as a short cut to this village from Chief

Rapp's home in the forest north of the Paw Paw river and east of the county line.

Alexis notified local officers, and Coroner Frank Thompson and state police from the Paw Paw post were called to the scene. Coroner Thompson decided that death was due to a heart attack as the aged Indian trudged toward his home, and no inquest was held. The body was brought to the Zuver & Calvin mortuary here.

Chief Rapp came to Hartford Friday and obtained his old age assistance check. He cashed the check and paid two small bills, at local stores. He apparently spent the balance of the money for none was found on his body.

Henry Alexis, another nephew, was living with Chief Rapp in his woodland cottage. The cottage of his brother, Pat, is nearby. When Chief Rapp failed to return Friday night, the Alexis brothers thought little of it. Mr. Rapp frequently went to the home of Julius Becker near Paw Paw lake and remained for a few days, and he was thought to have gone there. Not until the nephew discovered the body lying a few feet from the woodland path was it suspicioned that harm had befallen him.

Mr. Rapp was nearly a lifelong resident of the Hartford community, having lived for many years on the 20-acre tract that was his home, most of that being covered with the native forest he loved so well. His wife died about 50 years ago, soon after their marriage, and he had since lived alone save when his nephews or other of his tribesmen stayed with him.

Chief Rapp was exceptionally well versed in Indian lore and was a most interesting narrator of the history of the redmen. In his possession were many rare treaty books and he knew the tribal records of his race in which his people gradually ceded their lands to the white man. Mr. Rapp was a carpenter and was known as an industrious workman among his white neighbors by whom he was often employed.

Mr. Rapp was elected chief of the local Indian band in 1929, and was the last to hold that title. As such he conducted the tribal negotiations with the government. He was a descendant of Chief Leopold Pokagon and his son, Chief Simon Pokagon, who came from a long line of tribal chieftans of early days.

Chief Rapp is survived by a brother, Anthony Rapp, residing in the

Silver Creek Indian settlement in Cass county, his two nephews in Hartford and a nephew residing in Traverse City.

Funeral rites for him were held at 9 o'clock this morning at the Watervliet Catholic church, the Rev. Fr. J. F. Murphy officiating, and burial was in the Rush Lake Indian burying ground - a cherished spot to the Indians as the last residing place of Chief Simon Pokagon and hundreds of other members of their fast diminishing race.

Created by: K. Clinard

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