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Story of the Indian

B.E. Mahan

Iowa
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EDITED BY BENJAMIN F. SHAMBAUGH

Iowa
791.6 Mahan
M27s Story

THE STORY OF THE INDIAN

A PAGEANT OF EARLY IOWA

COMPILED BY
BRUCE E. MAHAN



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FOREWORD

This short pageant, dealing with the story of the Indian, has been compiled for use as a high school assembly program during Iowa History Week, April 16-21, 1928. The idea of observing the third week in April as Iowa History Week was inaugurated in 1926 by the State Historical Society of Iowa in cooperation with the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs. The purpose of the movement was to stimulate a greater interest in the history of Iowa. Under the supervision of the Iowa History Committee of the Federation interest in the project became so widespread that Iowa History Week has been made an annual event.

The settings for the two scenes of this pageant are simple, and the costumes are not difficult to prepare. Although the pageant as written is intended for presentation on an indoor stage it can easily be adapted to outdoor production if desired.

The pageant is in two scenes, one dealing with the first meeting of Indians and the white men in Iowa; the second showing how the Sauk and Foxes gave up the last of their land in Iowa to the white man. Although the visit of Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet to the Illinois Indians, who had crossed over into Iowa for their summer hunt, lasted more than one day it has been necessary for the purpose of the pageant to treat their visit as a single unit. In Scene Two similar treatment has been given to events that happened on successive days at the conference with the Sauk and Foxes in 1842.

Scene One is based on the account of the visit of Mar-

quette and Joliet to Iowa as set forth in Thwaites's edition of the *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. LIX, pp. 115-125. Scene Two is based upon a contemporary account of the conference with the Sauk and Foxes in the *Burlington Territorial Gazette and Advertiser* for October 15, 1842, and on the story of the conference as related by one of the participants, Alfred Hebard, in the *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series) Vol. I, pp. 397-408. The speeches in each scene have been adapted to fit the requirements of the pageant.

SCENE ONE: THE COMING OF THE WHITE MAN

Characters: Jacques Marquette, a Jesuit missionary; Louis Joliet, a woodsman of New France; the Great Chief of the Illinois Indians, two lesser chiefs, a pipe bearer, a master of ceremonies, Indian braves, women, boys and girls.

Time: June 25, 1673.

Place: A valley in Iowa near the Mississippi River.

Scene: An Indian village. The tipi of the Great Chief stands in the center of the stage at the rear flanked on either side by the tipis of the two lesser chiefs. A woods drop forms the background and wood wings are used at the side of the set.

At the opening of the scene Indian braves are engaged in the task of mending broken bows and war clubs. Some are asleep on blankets in the shade of the trees. The Great Chief and the two lesser chiefs are resting inside their tipis. Indian women are pounding corn into meal, scraping skins, and making garments. Indian girls are weaving mats of rushes, and Indian boys are fastening arrow heads on shafts.

Marquette and Joliet approach from the right without being seen. They stop and give a loud shout. The Indians are startled into sudden life. The chiefs appear in the doorway of their tipis, and braves rush about gathering their weapons. The Indian women, boys, and girls hide behind the tipis. Soon the braves recognize the strangers as Frenchmen and friends and the tumult quiets down. The pipe bearer, holding aloft a calumet or pipe of peace, sets out with three braves in single file

to meet the Frenchmen. He stops in front of the visitors.

Marquette. Who are you?

Pipe Bearer. We are Illinois. All our village awaits thee, and thou shalt enter all our cabins in peace.

Led by the four Indians Marquette and Joliet are escorted to the Great Chief who stands in front of his tipi flanked on either side by the two lesser chiefs. Indian braves, women, boys, and girls stand in groups in the background. Marquette stops in front of and to the right of the chiefs. Joliet stands in front of and to the left of the group. The pipe bearer and one brave stand back of Marquette, the other two braves of the escort party take a position back of Joliet.

First Chief. How beautiful is the sun, O Frenchmen, when thou comest to visit us.

Second Chief. How good it is, my brothers, that you should be here.

The Great Chief beckons for all to be seated and for the pipe bearer to prepare the calumet for smoking. He smokes it, and passes it first to Marquette, then to Joliet. Then it is smoked by each brave in turn. At the end of this ceremony all stand.

Marquette. (*Giving the Great Chief a present*) With this token I wish to announce that my companion, Louis Joliet, and myself are journeying peacefully to visit the nations dwelling on the river as far as the sea. (*Giving the Chief a crucifix*) With this token I announce the God, the Great Manitou of all white men and all red men who loves all your people and wishes to make himself known to you.

Joliet. (*Giving the Great Chief a present*) With this token I announce that the great captain of the French has subdued your enemy, the Iroquois, and has restored peace everywhere. (*Giving him another present*) With this token I beg you to give us all the information you

have about the sea and about the nations through whose land we must pass to reach it.

Great Chief. I thank thee, Black Gown, and thee, O Frenchman, for having taken so much trouble to come to visit us. Never has the earth been so beautiful, or the sun so bright as to-day. Never has our river been so calm or so clear of rocks, which thy canoes have removed in passing. Never has our tobacco tasted so good or our corn appeared so fine as we now see it. (*Placing his hand on the head of a little Indian slave boy nearby*) Here is my son whom I give thee to show thee my heart. I beg thee to have pity on me and on all my nation. It is thou who knowest the Great Spirit who has made us all. It is thou who speakest to Him and who hearest his word. Beg Him to give me life and health, and to come and dwell with us, in order to make us know Him. (*Having said this the Chief places the slave boy near the visitors and gives them an elaborately carved calumet*) By this present I express my esteem for your great governor. (*He gives them a third present*) With this token I beg you in behalf of all our nation not to go farther on account of the great dangers that lie ahead.

Marquette. I fear not death and regard no happiness greater than to lose my life for the glory of Him who has made us all.

At this point the master of ceremonies enters with an Indian maid who carries a bowl of Indian meal. The Chief motions for all to be seated. Taking a wooden spoon the master of ceremonies dips it into the meal and places it to the mouths of the visitors and to the chiefs in turn. This course is removed and a second girl brings in a platter of baked fish. The master of ceremonies takes morsels in his fingers, removes the bones, and places the fish in the mouths of the visitors. Another girl brings in the third course — roast dog — but Marquette

and Joliet both refuse this, much to the surprise of the Indians. A fourth course, roast buffalo meat, is served in the same way as the fish.

At the conclusion of the feast women bring gifts of beadwork and present them to the visitors. Marquette, Joliet, and the chiefs then stand in front of the center tipi as the braves entertain them with the Discovery Dance. One brave strikes up a rhythmic measure on the tribal drum. Another plays an Indian dance melody on a flute. With much pantomime the braves dance forward and back in a great circle using all sorts of fantastic steps, gestures, bendings, and swayings. In groups of two or three they dance forward in a skulking posture, scanning the horizon with shaded brows for the approach of game or the enemy. Pretending to discover one or the other they scurry back to signal their discovery to the leader in the center of the circle. Then all pretend to get their bows and arrows or lances ready for the chase. As they dance around the circle with their feet patting the ground in perfect rhythm they pretend to shoot arrows or hurl their spears at the enemy or game as the case may be. A yell of triumph at their success brings the dance to an end.

When the dance ends Marquette and Joliet and the Great Chief come forward to the center and the braves form groups in the background.

Marquette. We must go now and continue our journey. But on our return within four moons we shall visit your village again.

Great Chief. We shall go with you to the banks of the great river and there bid you farewell.

Taking with them their presents and the little slave boy Marquette and Joliet depart the way they came, followed by the chiefs and all the Indians of the village.

SCENE TWO: THE DEPARTURE OF THE INDIAN

Characters: Governor John Chambers of the Territory of Iowa representing the United States government; Indian Agent John Beach; Interpreters Antoine Le Claire and Josiah Smart; Claim Commissioners Alfred Hebard and Arthur Bridgman; Licensed traders J. Sanford, L. S. Phelps, William Phelps, J. P. Eddy, W. G. and G. W. Ewing, and James Jordan; Captain James Allen and Lieutenant Charles F. Ruff of the United States Dragoons; a troop of dragoons; Keokuk, Kishkekosh, Hard Fish, Appanoose, Poweshiek, the Son of Black Hawk, and other chiefs; Indian braves.

Time: October 11, 1842.

Place: Indian Agency of the Sauk and Foxes.

Scene: The interior of a circular tent. A slightly raised platform with chairs and a table occupies one side of the tent. Planks on blocks of wood arranged in a semi-circle in front of the platform provide seats for the chiefs and braves.

At the opening of the scene Governor Chambers, the interpreters, claim commissioners, and licensed traders file in and take their places on the platform. Led by Keokuk the chiefs and braves file in slowly and with great dignity and take their places in front of the platform, the chiefs in the front row, and back of them the braves. Following the Indians Captain Allen and Lieutenant Ruff enter with a detachment of dragoons. The two officers join the white men on the platform and the dragoons take up positions at intervals on the outside of the circle of Indians. At a signal from Governor Chambers all are seated.

Governor Chambers. (*Rising and stepping to the front of the platform*) Friends and children. Your Great Father, the President of the United States, has sent us here to council with you to-day. We rejoice that the Great Spirit has enabled all of you to arrive safely. He has given us a clear day and we hope that he has opened your ears and prepared your hearts for what we have to say. We have come a great way to meet you for your own good.

Keokuk. (*Rising quickly and stepping to the open area in front of the platform, raises his right hand, and glances around*) We are happy to meet you here to-day as the representatives of our Great Father in Washington in friendly council. The red man is always happy to take his white brother by the hand and to smoke the pipe of peace with him.

Governor Chambers and Keokuk shake hands. A brave prepares the peace pipe for smoking, and hands it to Keokuk. He smokes it and presents it to Governor Chambers who takes a puff and hands it to his interpreters. Then it is passed along the line of white men, and to the Indians in turn. When the pipe gets back to the starting point Governor Chambers steps to the front of the platform.

Governor Chambers. Your Great Father has heard that you owe much money to the traders. This does not please him. He has sent us here to show you how to pay these debts and still have enough money to buy food, blankets, arms, and ammunition as long as you live.

Keokuk. The accounts of the traders are too long for us to remember. You have had the commissioners look over these accounts, Father, and whatever they say we owe, we shall pay.

Governor Chambers. (*Turning to Claim Commissioners Hebard and Bridgman*) Gentlemen, will you present your report at this time.

Alfred Hebard. (*Looking at a roll of foolscap*) We have examined the claims of the licensed traders and white neighbors of the Sauk and Foxes with great care. Prices charged in each instance have been liberal if not high. This is due in part to the risk and uncertainty of the trade and in part to the fact that the Indian will have only the very best. Some charges are clearly too high such as Italian cravats at eight dollars, looking glasses at thirty dollars and satin coats at sixty dollars. In such cases we generally divided the claim in half. We have reduced the total figures from \$312,366.24 to \$258,564.34, and recommend that the Indians pay this amount to the claimants as set forth in this report.

Governor Chambers. (*To the traders*) You have heard the report of Mr. Hebard and have already looked over the figures. Do you agree with the findings? (*The traders nod their heads saying, Yes, that's all right. We're satisfied with those figures, and similar expressions.*)

Arthur Bridgman. Governor, here is another claim that has just come to our attention. A party near Iowa-ville has a bill for \$200 for beef furnished to Keokuk and his friends. What shall we do with it?

There is a hurried conference among the Indians, then Keokuk jumps up much excited.

Keokuk. Throw that out! That worthless old bull has been too much paid for already.

Governor Chambers. You may omit that claim, gentlemen. (*Taking up treaty parchment in his hand*) Now, friends and children, your Great Father wants me to tell you how you can pay these debts. You have much land, more, indeed, than you can use. Your Great Father will pay all your debts to the traders and give you in addition \$800,000 for this land. You will still be allowed to live in the western part of your country for three

years, then your Great Father will give you a new home across the Missouri. We are ready to hear your answer.

Hard Fish. I hate to give up my country. In former days game was abundant, and wild fruits could be found in the thickets. On these pastures our horses have fattened. Our wives and daughters have cultivated our corn fields and raised beans and melons and squashes. No land in the world is so beautiful as our home. Look around you and behold the prairies now turning to gold. Only a few moons ago they were green and gay with blooming flowers. Great sycamore and walnut trees border the streams and furnish shade for the tired hunter. From these rivers our young men have obtained an abundance of fish. In this land the sun and the moon and the stars smile on the red man, and the Great Spirit guards him night and day. We have already sold the white man much land — that should be enough.

Son of Black Hawk. Headmen, Chiefs, Braves, and Warriors of the Sauk. The Great Spirit made this beautiful country. Then he made the red man and put him in it. His title runs back to the beginning of things. There is no question about that. No memory of any man, no tradition ever taught anything to the contrary. For more than a hundred winters our nation was a powerful, happy, and united people. But from the day the pale faces landed upon our shores they have been robbing us of our inheritance, and slowly, but surely driving us back, back, back toward the setting sun. Even now they are running their plows through our grave yards, turning up the bones and ashes of our sacred dead. My father fought the white man. But in a contest where our numbers were so unequal to theirs he was doomed to fail. In memory of my father, the noble Black Hawk, I oppose the sale of any more of our land to the white man.

Keokuk. The Great Spirit has made us swift of foot and skilled marksmen with the bow and arrow, but the buffalo has disappeared and smaller game is getting scarce in our country. We need blankets for our braves, and clothes for our squaws and children. Winter is coming on. We need arms, ammunition, traps, and hatchets. The Great Spirit cannot furnish us these things. We already owe the traders much money. How can we pay except by selling our land. If we obey the wishes of the Great Father we shall have money enough for all our needs, and our squaws and children will never be hungry. I shall place my mark on the treaty.

Keokuk, followed by most of the chiefs, marches up to the table and signs the treaty. Hard Fish and the Son of Black Hawk stand aloof.

Governor Chambers. Friends and children! You have done well to obey the wishes of the Great Father. The Dragoons will lead you to your new home. Go peaceably and live in peace with your new neighbors. Learn to plow the soil and to grow crops. Then you will always have food. Learn to work like the white man. Work will keep you from evil and give you the comforts of the white man in your home. Stay away from the whisky vendors. Then you will live in peace and happiness in your new home.

Poweshiek. (*Rises, slips his blanket from his shoulder, raises his hand aloft, and pointing westward, says*) Soon, I shall go to a new home and you will plant corn where my dead sleep. Our towns, the paths we have made, and the flowers we love will soon be yours. I have moved many times and have seen the white man put his feet in the tracks of the Indian and make the earth into fields and gardens. I know that I must go away.

Led by Keokuk, the Indians file out followed by the dragoons, and in turn by Governor Chambers and his party.

COSTUMES

SCENE ONE

Marquette wears the long black cassock of a Jesuit missionary, a black Roman hat, and carries a crucifix.

Joliet wears the fringed coat and trousers of a woodsman or fur trader of New France, and a wide-brimmed felt hat.

The Indians wear typical Indian garb, that of the chiefs being more elaborate than the others. These Indian costumes should be more primitive than those used in Scene Two.

SCENE TWO

Governor John Chambers wears the uniform of a brigadier general of that day — a long double-breasted dark blue coat, gold epaulets, dark blue trousers, and a plumed hat.

Captain James Allen and Lieutenant James Ruff of the United States Dragoons wear short dark blue coats, white belts, light blue trousers, and tall "tarbucket" caps. Each has a cavalry saber. Dragoon privates wear a similar uniform with a low-crowned blue cap. Each has a carbine and a saber.

Agent John Beach, Interpreters Antoine Le Claire and Josiah Smart, Commissioners Hebard and Bridgman, and the licensed traders wear the costume of the forties — a long-skirted dark coat, fancy vest, light-colored trousers, high collar, black stock, and a wide-brimmed felt hat.

The Indians are dressed in their finest garb, the costumes of the chiefs being very elaborate. They wear gay blankets, feathered head-dresses, dangles in their ears, and bracelets on their arms. They carry war clubs or decorated spears. Their faces, arms, and necks are stained brown and decorated with red, white, and black paint. Kishkekosh has a gold-headed cane.

