

# Journal of the Forced Removal of the Potawatomi from Indiana, 1838

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**ABSTRACT:** On August 28, 1838, General John Tipton arrived at the Twin Lakes encampment in Marshall County, Indiana, accompanied by one hundred armed militia, to enforce the provisions of an 1836 treaty with the Yellow River Potawatomi that specified the band's removal from their lands and homes in northern Indiana to Indian Territory, west of the Mississippi River. Eight hundred and fifty-nine Potawatomi were forcibly gathered up and marched through Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, until they reached their destination in Kansas on November 4. The official journal of the removal kept by Tipton, conductor William Polke, and secretary Jesse Douglass, details the length of each day's march, the weather, the state of rations and provisions, the count and condition of the sick and the dead among the Potawatomi, and all other details required by the Office of Indian Affairs. The journal is published with footnotes researched and written by the editorial staff of the *IMH*, accompanied by ten interleaved letters to and from conductor William Polke.

**KEYWORDS:** Indian Removal, Potawatomi, Potawatomi Trail of Death, Indian traders, Indian missions, Indian treaties, Indian annuities, War Department, Office of Indian Affairs, Roman Catholicism, Malaria, Typhoid, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Logansport Indiana, Danville

Illinois, Springfield Illinois, Quincy Illinois, Wabash River, Tippecanoe River, Sangamon River, Illinois River, Missouri River, Mississippi River, Osage River, Indian Territory, Menominee, Ashkum, Iowa, Peepiskah, John C. Tipton, William Polke, Abel C. Pepper, Carey A. Harris, Isaac McCoy, Jonathan Lykins, Robert Polke, Jesse Douglass, Jacob Hull, David Wallace, Amaziah Morgan, Dr. George Jerolaman, Chauncy Carter, Father Benjamin Marie Petit, Anthony L. Davis

On August 5, 1836, Abel Pepper, representing the U. S. Office of Indian Affairs, and three Potawatomi chiefs signed a treaty that ceded the Yellow River Potawatomi's lands to the federal government. Menominee, who shared the reservation with the three signatory chiefs (*wkamek*), refused to sign the treaty, and in November, he and several other *wkamek* wrote to Indiana senator John Tipton, stating that "we have never Consented to any Sale of our Reserves or give any authorization to it or have had any part in Said Treaty." In summer 1838, when the treaty stipulated Removal, Menominee refused to leave his village and cede his land, and he was joined by Potawatomi from other bands who had also refused to be removed. During that summer, white squatters intent on snapping up farmland poured into the area, supported by legislation approved by Congress that June. Hostilities flared: according to squatter Joseph Waters, Potawatomis chopped down his door and threatened his life. In retaliation, a group of squatters burned down a number of Potawatomi cabins. Tipton visited some of the *wkamek* in mid-August 1838 and found them "stubborn and rather insolent," but reassured the Office of Indian Affairs that the Potawatomi "must leave . . . do not be surprised if strong measures are taken."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Menominee et al. to Senator John C. Tipton, November 4, 1836, 3:312–13, Nellie Armstrong Robertson and Dorothy Riker, eds., *The John Tipton Papers*, Volume 3: 1834–1839 (Indianapolis, Ind., 1942); "Aug. 1838 letter to Gen A. Morgan, Ass't Superintendent, from Joseph Waters," *Indianapolis Indiana Journal*, October 27, 1838; Jeffrey Ostler, *Surviving Genocide: Native Nations and the United States from the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas* (New Haven, Conn., 2019), 313; R. David Edmunds, *The Potawatomis: Keepers of the Fire* (Norman, Okla.), 1978, 265–67; Tipton to Carey Harris, August 21, 1838, 3:667, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*; An Act to Grant Pre-emption Rights to the Settlers on the Public Lands, ch. 119, 5 Stat. 251 (1838).

On August 26, 1838, Pepper wrote to Indiana governor David Wallace that he feared “the temper and conduct of the Indians and white men” would lead to “the shedding of blood.” He requested one hundred volunteer militia to oversee the removal. The troops, led by Gen. Tipton, arrived at Twin Lakes on August 28, after Pepper had gathered tribal leaders together for a council. Tipton arrested Menominee and other *wkamek*, and his armed troops gathered up the Potawatomi for forced removal. Tipton, defending the military action, told Gov. Wallace that “the arrival of an armed force sufficient to put down hostile movements against our citizens, effected in three days, what counselling and fair words had failed to do in so many months.”<sup>2</sup>

The official journal of the removal, reproduced below, begins two days after Tipton and his forces arrived at the encampment.<sup>3</sup>




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<sup>2</sup>Pepper to Wallace, August 26 and October 2, 1838, Dorothy Riker, ed., *Messages and Papers Relating to the Administration of David Wallace, Governor of Indiana, 1837–1840* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1963), 147–50; Tipton to Wallace, September 18, 1838, 3:716, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>3</sup>The journal and the letters, interleaved according to date, which appear here were originally published as “Journal of an Emigrating Party of Pottawattomi Indians, 1838,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 21 (December 1925), 315–36; and Dwight Smith, ed., “A Continuation of the Journal of an Emigrating Party of Potawatomi Indians, 1838, and Ten William Polke Manuscripts,” *IMH* 44 (December 1948), 393–408. The first part of the journal—the entries from August 30 through November 10—was transcribed from a copy made by Jesse C. Douglass, enrolling agent of the 1838 emigration, and published in the *IMH* without footnotes. Nellie Armstrong Robertson and Dorothy Riker note in the Tipton Papers (3:713 n25) that Douglass’s manuscript was “in the possession of Miss Katherine Hamilton of Fort Wayne”; a copy of that manuscript is in the collections of the Indiana State Library, Indianapolis. The second part of the journal—the entries from November 11 through December 4—is a separate manuscript titled “A Continuation of the Journal of an Emigrating Party of Potawatomi Indians, 1838”; it was transcribed and edited by Dwight Smith, from William Polke’s papers at the Lilly Library, Indiana University Bloomington. Smith writes: “The handwriting of the first and of that herein printed [the “Continuation”] are not of the same scribe. Neither is written by Polke. The latter apparently was dictated or kept by a scribe, secretary, or some other member of the emigration.” Some footnotes are based upon notes by Dwight Smith. The maps which appear in this article were created by J. Paul Blekking (Tanager Mapping and Consulting LLC) and researched and edited by Admiral S. Wieland. Thanks to Alyssa Mertka of the Lilly Library for digitizing materials from the Polke Manuscripts for access during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to Caitlyn (Ayoka) Wicks, Indiana University History Department, for research assistance.

Journal Of an Emigrating Party of Pottawattomie<sup>4</sup> Indians, From Twin Lakes<sup>5</sup>, in Marshall County, Ia. [Indiana], to Their Homes on the Osage River in the We [stern] Territory. Conducted by Wm. Polke, Esq.<sup>6</sup> Property of Judge Polk if called for.

Thursday 30th. August, 1838.

Commenced collecting the Indians at Twin Lakes Encampment, Marshall County, Indiana, and succeeded in gathering by night time, about one hundred and seventy.

Friday, 31st. Aug.

Received considerable accessions to the numbers of yesterday. The day was employed in bringing in the Indians and their baggage.

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<sup>4</sup> There are more than 140 known spellings historically attributed to the Potawatomi people, which accounts for the variations found within this volume. Many of these stem from attempts to recreate *Bodéwadmī*, which has been translated many ways, including *People Who Make a Fire by Blowing*, *People of the Place of the Fire*, and *Keepers of the Fire*. James Clifton explains that Potawatomi did not use that name among themselves: “They use the singular ‘Neshnabē,’ Man, or the plural ‘Neshnabek,’ People.” Potawatomi is a language in the Algonquian family and its closest “relative” is Anishinaabemowin, or Ojibwe, spoken by the people of the same name—a member tribe of the Council of the Three Fires, along with the Ottawa and Potawatomi. *Neshnabek* “once had the connotation of the True or Real People—themselves, in contrast to others, strangers. Today it has the sense of *Indian* people in contrast to Euro-Americans.” The Potawatomi have been referenced by a single name (regardless of spelling) since first contact with the French in the 1600s. James Clifton, *The Prairie People: Continuity and Change in Potawatomi Indian Culture* (Iowa City, Iowa, 1998), 13–18; Edmunds, *The Potawatomis*, 3–4; John D. Nichols and Earl Nyholm, *A Concise Dictionary of Minnesota Ojibwe* (Minneapolis, Minn., 1995), 10; Richard A. Rhodes, “Language Shift in the Subarctic and Central Plains,” in *The Language of Hunter-Gatherers*, ed. Tom Güldemann, Patrick McConvell, and Richard A. Rhodes (New York, 2018), 552–55.

<sup>5</sup> Menominee’s band, estimated at about 1,500 members prior to Removal, resided near Twin Lakes in Marshall County—not far from Plymouth, and reaching Lake Maxinkuckee. Irving McKee, “The Centennial of ‘The Trail of Death,’” *Indiana Magazine of History* 35 (March 1939), 28–29. The *Logansport Telegraph* described the August 1838 encampment at Twin Lakes as “a space about 100 yards square. . . almost completely filled with Indian tents, ponies, pigs, public officers, dogs, cats, sentinels, wagons, &c. Throughout the whole proceedings, great decision, energy and activity were displayed, accompanied by very little, if any, cruelty—that is, viewing the whole as a matter of national policy.” “Removal of the Pottawatamies,” *Richmond Enquirer*, October 12, 1838, from the *Logansport Telegraph*.

<sup>6</sup> On the life and career of William Polke, see John Kester, “A Shirt and a Bible: William Polke’s Frontier Indiana,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 116 (March 2020), 30–80. On the appointment of Polke as conductor, see Abel C. Pepper to Harris, September 6, 1838, 3:696–97; and Tipton to Harris, September 10, 1838, 3:698–99, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*; Pepper to Polke, August 25, 1838, Polke Manuscripts, 1809–1868, LMC 1852, Lilly Library, Indiana University Bloomington (hereafter Polke Manuscripts).

Saturday, 1st Sept.

Succeeded after much difficulty in enrolling the Indians, and found the number in camp to be seven hundred and fourteen.<sup>7</sup>

Sunday, 2nd Sept.

Loaded thirteen wagons with the Baggage belonging to the Indians and prepared for a march.<sup>8</sup>

Monday, 3d Sept.

A party of forty-two Indians were brought into camp, and the business of the emigration so arranged as to expedite our departure on to-morrow.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>By 1838, the federal government viewed Indian Removal as a decided fact which had already taken place or would occur, as correspondence among Tipton, Polke, Pepper, and Harris makes clear. The Potawatomi, as this journal reveals, resisted Removal in many ways before, during, and after the process, and continued to seek control over their lives. Rebecca Kugel, in her study of Indigenous peoples in Ohio and Indiana after 1815, posits a white American “narrative of Native dissolution and disappearance.” The narrative of disappearance, she notes, carried (and today continues to carry) weight and “authority” because of its dominance within “popular discourse and public memory.” Indigenous peoples did not agree that their disappearance was “a foregone conclusion,” and utilized a variety of strategies to remain on and retain their lands, and to resist Removal. Rebecca Kugel, “Planning to Stay: Native Strategies to Remain in the Great Lakes, Post-War of 1812,” *Middle West Review* 2, no. 2 (Spring 2016), 1–26, quotes 19. See also David A. Nichols, “Potawatomi Resistance, Renewal, and Removal,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 117 (June 2021), 65–81; Susan Scheckel, *The Insistence of the Indian: Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Princeton, N. J., 1998), 84, 108–109, 125.

<sup>8</sup>The Potawatomi were forced to leave behind their homes, most of their possessions, their livestock, and their fields filled with unharvested corn. Tipton brought in appraisers to determine the value of corn on each family’s acreage and left one of his lieutenants and a lawyer “to take charge of and attend” the corn, maintain the fences, and harvest and sell the crop (and livestock). “Appraisalment of Corn in Indian Fields,” September 1, 1838, 3:683–84, Tipton to Samuel Taber and Lt. James Nash, September 3, 1838, 3:689–90, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*. Daniel McDonald reproduces accounts by white settlers who witnessed the removal, including one who related that the Potawatomi homes were burned after the Indians were forced to leave and that their burial ground was eventually plowed over. McDonald noted that “when all was in readiness to move, the wigwams and cabins were torn down and Me-no-mi-nee Village had the appearance of having been swept by a hurricane.” Daniel McDonald, *Removal of the Pottawattomie Indians from Northern Indiana: Embracing Also a Brief Statement of the Indian Policy of the Government, and other Historical Matter Relating to the Indian Question* (Plymouth, Ind., 1899), 21, 44.

<sup>9</sup>John C. Tipton was in command of the removal from Twin Lakes to the Indiana/Illinois border, when Polke took over as conductor. Tipton had fought at Tippecanoe and in the War of 1812, served in the Indiana House of Representatives, and been appointed and then elected to serve in the U.S. Senate (1831–1838). In 1821, Tipton, Indiana governor James B. Ray, and Michigan territorial governor Lewis Cass (later Secretary of War for President Andrew Jackson) negotiated a treaty with the Miami Indians that ceded the right-of-way needed to build the Michigan Road through northern Indiana. In 1823, Tipton was appointed Indian agent for northern Indiana to the Potawatomi and Miami; he served until 1831. Donald Carmony notes that the post was a “political plum, which itself controlled considerable patronage.” Tipton, through his roles as

Tuesday, 4th Sept.

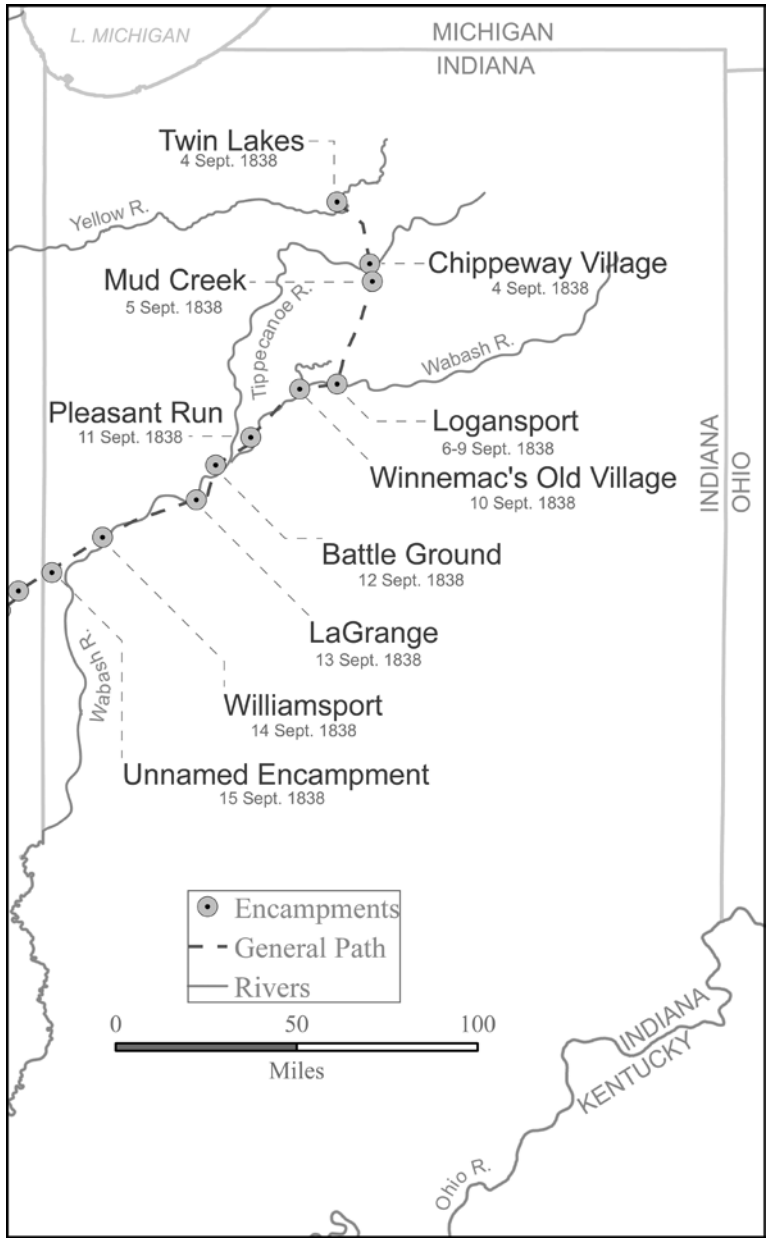
Left Encampment at Twin Lakes at half past 9 o'clk A. M. leaving behind on account of sickness of the chief San-ga-na, with his family consisting of thirteen persons, three of whom are very sick, and proceeded on our march.<sup>10</sup> Messrs. Wheeler & Hopkins agree to furnish provisions during the sickness of the family, and until such time as San-ga-na may be able to report himself at the agency at Logansport, preparatory to his emigration west.<sup>11</sup> The day was exceedingly sultry, and the roads choked up with dust. Travelling was attended with much distress on account of the

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agent and later U.S. Senator, cultivated a wide network of influence; many of the appointments of officers and militia to the 1838 removal were due to his recommendations. Correspondence among Tipton, Polke, Pepper, and the Office of Indian Affairs regarding final plans for the "business of the emigration" is voluminous, especially after Tipton reached Logansport at the end of July 1838, although plans for the forced removal had begun much earlier. As Senator, Tipton also played a role in 1838 legislation to further organize and fund an Indian Territory west of the Mississippi. See Tipton's "Speech on Indian Territory Bill," April 18, 1838, 3:594-614, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*; Donald F. Carmony, *Indiana, 1816-1850: The Pioneer Era* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1998), 493.

<sup>10</sup> Sangana is listed as a student in the Baptist Carey Mission School in Niles, Michigan, in the early 1820s; he received a land grant in the Treaty of Mississinewa, October 16, 1826. Charles J. Kappler, comp. and ed., *Indian Affairs, Laws, and Treaties*, 7 vols. (Washington, D. C., 1904), 2:277. See also Tipton to Wallace, September 5, 1838, 3:693, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*. McDonald provides an unsourced account of the Potawatomi visiting their burial grounds on the day before the forced march began. Described as a "final farewell of the dead," the chiefs, along with "several white settlers," spoke to those assembled: "Weeping and wailing, which was confined to a few at first, became general, and until they were finally induced to disperse, it looked as though a riot would surely ensue. In solemn reverence they turned their weeping faces from the sleeping dead, never to look upon the graves of their kindred again." McDonald, *Removal of the Pottawattomie Indians from Northern Indiana*, 20.

<sup>11</sup> Wheeler & Hopkins of Plymouth, Indiana, were official provisioners for the Office of Indian Affairs. On September 3, 1838, Tipton wrote to Carey A. Harris, federal commissioner of Indian Affairs, that he had authorized a draft for \$1,000 for provisions for the removal. Tipton to Harris, September 3, 1838, 3:688-89, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*. See also Tipton to Chauncey Carter, September 27, 1838, 3:731, on payment to the firm. The business of Indian Removal had, by 1838, become structured and regulated under the authority of the Office of Indian Affairs in the War Department. On regulations for supply contracts, see "Revised Regulations, No. V., Concerning the emigration of Indians," *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs 1837-1838* (Washington, D.C., 1837), 127-28. In 1828, the newly established town of Logansport had become a major trade center and the site of an Indian agency after Tipton and his allies successfully lobbied Secretary of War James Barbour to remove the agency from Fort Wayne and the control of the powerful Ewing brothers. Carmony notes that Tipton's interest in Logansport was tied to "his significant speculation in land in the Logansport area," made valuable because the Wabash & Erie Canal was to be built through the area once Indian land claims had been ceded. Robert A. Trennert, Jr., *Indian Traders on the Middle Border: The House of Ewing, 1827-54* (Lincoln, Neb., 1981), chap. 2; Carmony, *Pioneer Indiana*, 185-89, 497.



Map depicting the general path and encampments of the Potawatomi forced removal through Indiana. Encampment names are historical and taken from the journal herein; waterways are based on present-day locations.

Cartography courtesy of J. Paul Blekking (Tanager Mapping and Consulting LLC), map research and editing courtesy of Admiral S. Wieland.

scarcity of water.<sup>12</sup> Reached Chippeway at sunset having travelled a distance of twenty-one miles—five miles further than it was the intention of the Conductor to have gone, but for the want of water.<sup>13</sup> The number of horses belonging to the Indians is estimated at two hundred and eighty-six—the number of wagons engaged in the transportation twenty-six. Provisions and forage rather scarce and not of the best quality. [During the night of the 4th instant at the encampment at Chippeway, twenty persons affected their escape—stealing two horses from the Indians remaining behind, and have not since been heard of.]<sup>14</sup>

Wednesday, 5th Sept.

Fifty-one persons were found to be unable to continue the journey, the means of transportation not being at hand—they were therefore left, the most of them sick, the remainder to wait upon them.<sup>15</sup> Proceeded on our route, and reached at half past 12, at noon, the point determined upon as the location of our second encampment, a distance of nine miles from the encampment of the day before. The scarcity of water in the country again retarded the progress of the emigration—the distance being either too great or too short between the watering places. A child died on the evening of this day, and was buried on the morning of the 6t.<sup>16</sup> A child was also born

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<sup>12</sup> Scarcity of water would be an ongoing problem on the forced march West. Natural sources such as creeks, rivers, and springs, used for drinking and washing, could dry up in drought conditions or become stagnant, creating a breeding ground for bacteria and mosquitos, which frequently carried disease. Reginald Horsman, *Feast or Famine: Food and Drink in the American Westward Expansion* (Columbia, Mo., 2008), 6.

<sup>13</sup> In 1831, Polke had moved from Vincennes to what was then Cass County to supervise the construction of the Michigan Road. In 1834 he built a frame house that he named Chippeway; the building also served as an inn and post office. The house was moved from its original site onto the grounds of the Fulton County Historical Society in 1993. See Kester, "A Shirt and a Bible," 59–60.

<sup>14</sup> Potawatomi resistance to the forced removal took many forms, including many Natives escaping northward to the Pokagon band in Michigan and others finding refuge wherever they could. Jeffrey Ostler relates the story of a Potawatomi woman named Ko-bun-da, who fled into the swamps upon hearing of the militia, gave birth in hiding, and took refuge with a fur trapper. Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 313.

<sup>15</sup> Tipton wrote to his son: "The waggon contractors have faild to supply the means of transportation and have detained me half a day. . . . I shall remain one day in camp near Logansport to organize the immigrateing party on a new footing *military*." Tipton informed Harris that "near eight hundred" Potawatomi were in the camp, many of them "bair foot and entirely destitute of blankets & nearly so of shirts." Tipton to Spear Tipton, September 5, 1863, 3:692–93, Tipton to Harris, September 5, 1838, 3:692, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>16</sup> Forty-three Potawatomi died during the forced removal from northern Indiana to eastern Kansas. Most, as noted in the journal, were children or elderly.

during our encampment. A party of three Indians joined us today shortly after coming into camp. Subsistence generally consisting of beef and flour, and that very difficult to acquire—having in most cases to transport it from Logansport, a distance from the furthest point of 46 miles.<sup>17</sup>

Thursday, 6th Sept.

Left the Encampment at Una [Mud] Creek at 9 in the morning, and travelled encountering fewer difficulties on our route, than on either of the previous days, to the encampment settled upon in the immediate vicinity of Logansport, having accomplished on our third day's march, a distance of seventeen miles.<sup>18</sup> During the Evening of our arrival, nine of those left at Chippeway came up.

Friday, 7th Sept.

Two wagons with the thirteen persons left at Chippeway arrived in camp today. Kock-koch-kee, with his party consisting of fifteen persons, as also Co-co-ta, Che-shaw-gen Way-wa-he-as-shuk and Pawk-shuk, with their families, making in all eighteen persons, came into camp today.<sup>19</sup> A child died this morning.

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<sup>17</sup> The meat of domesticated cattle and oxen came under this descriptor. Beef was prepared and cooked in a variety of ways: boiled, dried, fried, minced, roasted, and stewed. For extended travel, preserved, packed beef (such as chipped beef) was generally the standard provision, supplementing or replacing quantities of bacon. Horsman, *Feast or Famine*, 10, 15, 27, 45, 78, 128. The War Department's "Revised Regulations, No. V., Concerning the emigration of Indians" specified under rule 39 that "the ration will consist of one pound of fresh beef or fresh pork, or of three-fourths of a pound of salt pork, and of three-fourths of a quart of corn or corn meal, or of one pound of wheat flour to each person, and of four quarts of salt for every one hundred persons." These provisions were to be "issued once a week, or oftener, depending on the situation of the party"; procurement of provisions "by contract" was "preferable." The emigration departed with rations of fresh beef, although Dr. Jerolaman, the appointed physician, was warned to substitute bacon for much of the beef ration, due to "bowel problems" that would add "many more . . . to the number of Sick." *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs 1837–1838*, 128; G. [White] to Dr. G. Jeroloman, September 9, 1838, Polke Manuscripts.

<sup>18</sup> Members of the Potawatomi Trail of Death Association viewed the microfilm of the original journal, held by the Indiana State Library, and identified an error in the transcription of the September 5, 1838, entry published in the *IMH*. In the original journal, the encampment was identified as "Mud Creek," along the Michigan Road, approximately six miles south of Rochester. "Mud Creek," Potawatomi Trail of Death Route & Marker Pictures, Potawatomi Trail of Death Association, last updated July 16, 2015, <http://www.potawatomi-tda.org/indiana/mudcreek.htm>, accessed March 2021.

<sup>19</sup> Cheshawgen (Shishowgin) appears in the Tipton papers as the owner of eight acres of cornfields, valued at \$40, at Menominee's village. "Appraisement of Corn in Indian Fields," September 1, 1838, 3: 683–85, Robertson and Riker, eds, *John Tipton Papers*. Pawkshuk (Pawqshuk) owned one acre, appraised at \$5. See W. Ben Secunda, "To Cede or Seed? Risk and Identity among the Woodland

Saturday, 8th Sept.

A child three years old died and was buried—The chief Wewiss-sa came in with his family consisting of six persons, to join the emigration,—himself sick.<sup>20</sup> Two wagons that had been sent to Chippeway returned bringing with them twenty-two the whole of the number of those left behind, save the few who had effected their escape, and nine others who wished to remain until they are better able to travel.<sup>21</sup> C. Martin has agreed to furnish them while sick at that place.<sup>22</sup>

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Potawatomi during the Removal Period," *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* 31 (Spring 2006), 70. Anticipating that the group was ready to move, Tipton wrote to Fort Wayne bankers Allen Hamilton and Hugh McCulloch: "I need funds and must have them." Tipton demanded \$10,000 in Indiana state bank paper funds, \$5,000 "in Illinois paper," and authority for an additional \$10,000; he wrote to disbursing agent Henry Tilley that his "best estimate" was that "the expenses of removing the pottowotomoy Indians . . . will require fifty thousand dollars." In the wake of the Jackson administration's elimination of the Second Bank of the United States, Tipton was dependent on funds from state banks. Tipton later revised his estimate downward after ordering his officers to "Economise." Tipton to Hamilton or McCulloch, September 7, 1838, 3:697, Tipton to Tilley, September 7, 1838, 3:697, Tilley to Harris, September 11, 1838, 3:700–701, Tipton to Harris, September 20, 1838, 3:723, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*; Carmony, *Pioneer Indiana*, chapter 4. Polke would later submit a revised estimate of \$28,453. "Estimate of the Probable expense of the Pattawattamie Emigration," Polke to [Pepper?], September 18 [?], 1838, Polke Manuscripts.

<sup>20</sup>Wewissa was a signatory of the treaty signed on September 23, 1835. Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs, Laws, and Treaties*, 2:472. David Edmunds identifies him as one of several prominent Potawatomi men who owed money to private traders. Edmunds, *The Potawatomis*, 259.

<sup>21</sup>The journal which appears here was required by the Office of Indian Affairs. The conductor was to record important information (in particular, at this point in the removal, the number of Indians mustered for the march) and then submit the journal as part of his report. The journal (and the voluminous correspondence of white officers and government officials reflected below in the footnotes) offers only a second-hand account of the experiences of the Potawatomi, forcibly removed from their homelands and marched to a distant place of which they knew nothing, losing children and elders along the route. Scholar, and member of the Chickasaw Nation, Jodi Byrd notes the connections between involuntary transit from one place to another (in the case of the Potawatomi, forced Removal from their home grounds) and a state of liminality: "What it means to be in transit, then, is to be in motion, to exist liminally in the ungrivable spaces of suspicion and unintelligibility. To be in transit is to be made to move." Byrd examines the production and reification of "Indianness" via the U.S. settler empire, from colonization to the twenty-first century. She finds that white Americans have tied their particular conception of "Indianness" to the concept of a vanished past, a concept that leads them to erase indigenous peoples: "Indigenous peoples, especially in lands now occupied by the United States, continue to serve primarily as signposts and grave markers along the roads of empire." The belief in "the regrettable colonization and genocide of American Indians," Byrd writes, is a continuation and extension of contemporaneous descriptions of forced removal of the Potawatomi, Cherokee, and other tribes. Jodi Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis, Minn., 2011), xv–xix, 6–7.

<sup>22</sup>On September 18, 1838, Corbly Martin submitted a request for payment for supplies he had provided to the Indians remaining at Logansport. Corbly Martin to [Pepper?], September 18, 1838, Polke Manuscripts.

**THE POTTAWATTAMIES.**—We are not yet advised as to the measures to be taken with the remnant of Pottawattamie Indians north of us. Report still has it that troops have been called upon to hold themselves in requisition to be ready to do active service at a moment's warning. All this, however, we can scarcely believe.—Gov. Wallace, who has lately been among the Indians, was sent, or sent himself, no doubt, as a kind of *arrant courier* to reconnoitre, perpend the difficulties to be encountered, and the glory to ensue, and report the prospect to the standing army. But, when here, his Excellency seemed to care very little about the Pottawattamies or the prayers of those who petitioned him, as he quietly set himself down among us, and remained a day or two "*talking politics.*" He appeared quite to have forgotten the difficulties which seemed to threaten the north; or which, indeed, it would appear demanded his urgent attention.

Since the above was written, troops have left this place for the north, to *drive* (that is the word, we believe, folks use in speaking of this matter) yes, to *drive* the Indians away. We have not been busy (i. e. *we* the junior) in inquiring much about this affair, but as far as we can learn, the troops are ordered out by the agents of the government here, and not by the Governor. We have heard it rumoured about within the last twenty-four hours, that there has been *some little* difficulty between the settlers and the Indians—hence the present war-like parade. Suppose the Indians should be too weak from hunger and sickness to be “*driven*” from off the land they now occupy, will the troops be ordered to shoot? If they are, they had better load their pistols with common sense and shoot themselves.

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The *Logansport Herald* and *Logansport Telegraph* reported the news of the Twin Lakes council as well as the westward journey of the Potawatomi.

*Logansport Herald*, August 30, 1838

Sunday, 9th Sept.

Physicians came into camp today, and reported three hundred cases of sickness, generally of a temporary character, and which they are of opinion, may be removed by a two-day course of medicine.<sup>23</sup> A kind of Medical hospital has been erected to-day, which is likely to facilitate the course of medical regime proposed by the physicians. A child died to-day. The priest formerly attached to the Catholics among the Pottawattamies, asked and obtained leave to say mass to-day and perform the ceremonies of his church in camp. The rites are now being performed.<sup>24</sup> This Evening Sidney Williams and Wm. Ta Polke, who had been dispatched in pursuit of the Indians, who escaped from Chippeway, returned, having reconnoitred the villages and cornfields on the Reserve without receiving any intelligence of the fugitives.<sup>25</sup> They brought into camp three Indian horses which they had found on the road. A child died since dark.

Monday, 10th Sept.

The morning was early employed in preparations for a removal. Nothing of any note occurred during the morning. At 10 o'clk. we got under way

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<sup>23</sup> Tipton to Harris, September 10, 1838, 3:698–99, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>24</sup> The Catholic mission to the Potawatomi at Yellow River had enjoyed considerable success, especially after the arrival of young Jesuit priest Father Benjamin Marie Petit in November 1837. When Tipton and his armed troops arrived at the Twin Lakes camp, Menominee and other *wkamek* invoked their desire to stay with their priest. Tipton suggested that Petit use his influence “to satisfy the dissentients, and harmonize this whole matter that these Indians will go off quietly and peaceably.” Petit, in return, sought and obtained the permission of his superior, Bishop Simon Bruté, to accompany his parishioners to Kansas, and, along the route, successfully lobbied Tipton and Polke for a regular Sunday morning rest for religious services. Petit also oversaw evening prayers and hymn singing in camp, as well as burial rites for Potawatomi who died during the forced removal. Tipton to Petit, September 2, 1838, 3:686–87, Jesse Douglass to Spear Tipton, September 22, 1838, 3:725–26 n32, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*. For Petit’s letters, diary, and baptismal record, see Irving McKee, *The Trail of Death: Letters of Benjamin Marie Petit* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1941); on rites for the dead, see Petit to Bishop Bruté, November 13, 1838, *ibid.*, 100–101. On the success of Catholic missions among the Woodland Potawatomi, see Paul O. Myhre, “Potawatomi Transformation: Potawatomi Responses to Catholic and Baptist Missionary Strategy and Competition, 1822–1872,” (Ph.D. diss., St. Louis University, 1998), chaps. 3 and 4; Edmunds, *The Potawatomi*, 264–65.

<sup>25</sup> Sidney Williams was cited by Tipton as a corroborating witness in *Tipton v. Thomas Martin et al.*, an 1836 case centering around land sales, the construction of the Michigan Road, and Tipton’s ongoing disputes with the Ewings and their business associates in Fort Wayne. William T. Polke was William Polke’s youngest son. “Statement of Case Against Thomas Martin et al., January 12, 1836,” 3:203–205, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

and proceeded on our journey, leaving behind us of sick and attendan[ts] twenty-one. The day was hot—we had the advantage [how]ever, of being in the vicinity of water, our route lying on the northern bank of the Wabash the whole distance.<sup>26</sup> We reached our encampment at Winnemac's old village, at about 5 o'clock, a distance of perhaps ten miles from the camp at Logan.<sup>27</sup> Provisions of the same character of those of yesterday and the day previous. Bacon is not to be had—beef and flour constitutes generally our provisions.<sup>28</sup> A child died since we came into camp. A man also died tonight after several day's sickness.

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<sup>26</sup> Several journal entries reference heat, dust, and dryness. September 1838 seems to have been more than usually warm, judging from the comments in a Richmond, Indiana, newspaper, under the title of "Hot Weather": "I wish I could jist slip off my flesh and sit in my bones for a space, to cool myself." *Richmond Palladium*, September 22, 1838. On September 1, an Indianapolis newspaper reported that excessive heat and drought had been afflicting Indiana for more than two months, with daytime temperatures reaching between ninety and ninety-six degrees in the shade. (The article falls directly beneath a brief update about the "Pottawatamie Indians" refusing to leave their lands and the calling in of General Tipton to "procure their removal" because of the "considerable influence over them" he had.) "Warm Weather And Its Effects," *Indianapolis Indiana Journal*, September 1, 1838.

<sup>27</sup> Jacob Piatt Dunn claims "Winamac" was a common Potawatomi name, tracing it back at least to contact with the French, where the Gallicized *Ouenemek* can be found in early documents; the Anglicized name found throughout the historical evidence has a number of different spellings. The name's translation is "catfish," coming from the words *wēē-nūd* ("muddy") and *māk* ("fish"). Jacob Piatt Dunn, *True Indian Stories* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1908), 316. There were two Winamacs in the early nineteenth century, one of whom—probably the one to whom Polke refers—was a neutralist and treaty signatory. Robert Owens, *Mr. Jefferson's Hammer: William Henry Harrison and the Origins of American Indian Policy* (Norman, Okla., 2007), 104–105, 200; Edmunds, *The Potawatomis*, 170, 307 n66. Winamac's old village may have been located near Prophetstown. See Helen Hornbeck Tanner, *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman, Okla., 1986), 98. The 1826 Treaty of Mississinewa set aside a land grant for Winamac's village, presumably his relocated village, on the Wabash River. Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs, Laws, and Treaties*, 2:276.

<sup>28</sup> Pork was a central part of the early American settler diet, and every part of the pig was used. Most meat was preserved, either through curing and smoking, or a salt and brine process in barrels. Sides of the hog were generally called "bacon" rather than "pork" regardless of preservation method. Horsman, *Feast or Famine*, 2–3, 11–12, 18–19, 33–34. The provisions of the forced march would have differed from the usual Potawatomi diet. James A. Clifton describes their pre-Contact "dual economy" as "digging stick and hoe farming, hunting, fishing, and the gathering of wild plant foods. In summer they grew maize, pumpkins, squash, beans, and tobacco, and hunted deer, elk, and beaver." After Contact, as Susan Sleeper-Smith notes, "processing furs and controlling agricultural resources remained female responsibilities." Potawatomi men hunted and fished for food and trapped furs for trade. Clifton, *The Prairie People*, 32, 74; Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst, Mass., 2001), 55, 89–95.

Tuesday, 11th Sept.

Left Winnemac Encampment at 10 A. M. and journeyed westward. Our route lay through an open, champaign, country, which circumstance rendered the travelling more pleasant than that of any previous day. The sick along with us appear to be recruiting and everything bids fair for a comfortable and prosperous emigration.<sup>29</sup> If we may be allowed to judge from the gayety of our encampments—the bright smiles that gild the sunny faces of our unhappy wards, and the contentment which seems to mark the sufferance of imposed restrictions, we may safely calculate upon the pleasantest and happiest of the emigrations west. We reached our present encampment (Pleasant Run) at 5 o'clk.—having accomplished a distance of seventeen miles.<sup>30</sup> Provisions beef and flour, bacon difficult to be procured. A source of considerable expense is the foraging of Indian horses. We generally, however, manage to pasture them during our encampment, as cheaply as possible.

Wednesday, 12th Sept.

At half past 8 o'clk. we struck our tents and started on the march. At 11 we reached and forded the Tippecanoe river.<sup>31</sup> A little after 12 we passed the Battle Ground and at 1 arrived at our present encampment (Battle Ground) Distance from the Encampment of yesterday fifteen miles.<sup>32</sup> Immediately after our arrival the Indians were collected, and Dry Goods consisting

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<sup>29</sup> Champaign country is level, open country. Recruiting refers here to recovery.

<sup>30</sup> The Pleasant Run encampment was located at a creek of the same name, north of Delphi, in Pittsburg, Indiana. Situated along the Wabash River, it is presently part of Tippecanoe Township in Carroll County. Rich Meyers, Potawatomi Trail of Death Association, Potawatomi Trail of Death, Indiana, "Google Map Links for Trail of Death," last updated January 16, 2017, <http://potawatomi-tda.org/gmaps.htm>, accessed March 2021.

<sup>31</sup> Jacob Piatt Dunn explains that the Potawatomi name for the river is *Kē-tāp'-ē-kōn*. The Native settlement "below the mouth of the river" was *Kē-tāp'-ē-kōn-nōng*; "Tippecanoe" is likely a "corruption" of this. The Miami form, *Kē-tāp'-kwōn*, refers to the buffalo fish, common in the freshwaters of North America. Dunn, *True Indian Stories*, 307.

<sup>32</sup> Battle Ground refers to the Battle of Tippecanoe. For a good summary thereof, see Colin Calloway, *The Shawnees and the War for America* (New York, 2007), 143–45. See also Adam Jortner, *The Gods of Prophetstown: The Battle of Tippecanoe and the Holy War for the American Frontier* (New York, 2012).

of Cloths, Blankets, Calicoes, etc., to the amount of \$5469[.]81 were distributed among them.<sup>33</sup> Nothing of importance occurred during the remainder of the day.<sup>34</sup> The Indians appeared to be well satisfied with the distribution of the Goods. A very old woman—the mother of the chief We-wiss-sa—said to be upwards of an hundred years old, died since coming into camp.<sup>35</sup>

Thursday, 13th Sept.

We commenced our journey this morning about 9 o'clock, and after traveling until 4 this afternoon, reached the encampment near Lagrange—some eighteen miles from the camp of yesterday.<sup>36</sup> With the exception of the

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<sup>33</sup>The federal government's "Revised Regulations" for Indian emigration specified the distribution of goods to Indians, including specifications for blankets: "None but the Mackinac blankets, so called, will be procured for Indians. These are much better suited to their wants and tastes than any others." Mackinac (Mackinaw) cloth was heavyweight, water-repellant wool. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1837–1838*, 128. As they did with all goods and provisions, Tipton and Polke reported expenses and disbursements back to Commissioner Harris, Tipton noting the distribution of enough blankets "to furnish all of the most needy" and reporting that "the cloths and calicoes [were] cut up for leggins and shirts. . . . This was actually necessary to shield them from the weather, as well as for the sake of decency." Tipton to Harris, September 12, 1838, 3:703, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>34</sup>Tipton submitted his revised and corrected muster roll to Harris, listing a total of 859 Potawatomi. Tipton also informed Harris that Tilley had failed to raise funds in Fort Wayne and was on his way to Indianapolis: "I am nearly out having used all I could raise before I set out. I shall send to Lafayette and Terre Haute in the morning to borrow money. I must do this or disband the party and let them disperse." Tipton to Harris, September 12, 1838, 3:703, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>35</sup>The *Terre-Haute Courier* noted the death of a "chieftan's mother upwards of a hundred years old," and described a "consultation" which took place prior to the start of the march about "whether or not it would be better to put her to death before she started, as no hopes of her long surviving, (particularly under the fatigues of emigration,) could reasonably be entertained. Fortunately, humane counsels prevailed, and the poor creature died, and was buried after a journey of four days." "The Emigrating Indians," *Niles National Register* (St. Louis, Mo.), reprinted from the *Terre-Haute Courier*, October 6, 1838.

<sup>36</sup>The *Richmond Palladium* reported on the departure of the "Pattawattamies," noting that they "left here for their new homes, west of the Mississippi." The editor lamented "the situation of the ill-starred sons of the forest" who would "finally, be shoved from the end of the log of Time into the ocean of Eternity." The *Terre-Haute Courier* opined: "No man can look upon these poor creatures without lamenting the inevitable necessity which drives them from the homes of their fathers." Such stereotyped lamentations did not necessarily indicate actual concern for Native peoples' welfare. More often they portrayed Indigenous people as romantic or aesthetic objects for white Americans to contemplate, or as representations of abstractions like Fate and Eternity. This reinforced Native Americans' status as nationally liminal figures. Scheckel, *The Insistence of the Indian*, 8–9; *Richmond Palladium*, September 22, 1838, citing the *Logansport Herald*, September 13, 1838; "The Emigrating Indians," *Richmond Enquirer*, October 12, 1838, from the *Terre-Haute Courier*.

sultry heat of noon-day and the excessive dust of the roads, our marches are very pleasant.<sup>37</sup> This Evening two neighboring physicians, Drs. Ritchie & Son were called into camp (the situation of the sick demanding it) and have visited and prescribed for most of those indisposed. They report 106 cases of sickness.<sup>38</sup>

Friday, 14th Sept.

Left Lagrange encampment at an early hour and proceeded at a quick pace on our journey—passing over a dry and seemingly unhealthy portion of the country. Our party continues to mend in health. Occasionally however, and indeed not unfrequently, persons thro' weariness and fatigue take sick along the route. This occupies much of our time.<sup>39</sup> We place them in the wagons which are every day becoming more crowded and proceed.

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<sup>37</sup> LaGrange was a short-lived town in western Tippecanoe County, Indiana.

<sup>38</sup> Reports of "intermittent fever" in the September 20 entry suggest that at least some of the ill may have been suffering from malaria, which was endemic in many parts of Indiana. Walter J. Daly notes that malaria, cholera, typhoid, and smallpox were all common in the Midwest during this period. Daly, "The 'Slows': The Torment of Milk Sickness on the Midwest Frontier," *Indiana Magazine of History* 102 (March 2006), 29–30; see also Don E. Bloodgood, "Early Health Conditions in Indiana," *Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Science* 61 (1951), 253–60. Dr. Ritchie may be a Dr. Ritchie of Newtown, Fountain County, Indiana, located about twenty-five miles from the now-extinct town of LaGrange, where the party was camped. See H. W. Beckwith, *History of Fountain County: : Together with Historic Notes on the Wabash Valley* (Chicago, Ill., 1881), 83. Thanks to Amy Harbor at the Alameda McCollough Research Library, Tippecanoe County Historical Association, Lafayette, Indiana, for this reference.

<sup>39</sup> Over the course of their forced march, more than 300 Potawatomi experienced some form of illness. The party's progress was halted over multiple days. The journal indicates that many Potawatomi experienced intermittent fever and fatigue, while some (though significantly fewer) experienced diarrhea and scrofula. Malaria and typhoid (which the group encountered in Illinois) are both likely causes. Typhoid fever is contracted through contaminated food and water, and the party encountered poor sources of drinking water and bad rations on the route to Kansas. Typhus, a flea-borne illness, was also purportedly sweeping through Indiana and Illinois at the time. However, the presence of scrofula—a form of tuberculosis affecting the lymph nodes in the neck—suggests that other illnesses could have been circulating among the Potawatomi before and during the journey, including forms of pulmonary disease. Hot days on dusty roads without adequate food, water, or footwear throughout the first part of the trek made ideal conditions for the spread of disease, as did later exposure to heavy rains and plummeting temperatures. Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 311–14; Erwin H. Ackerknecht, *Malaria in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1760–1900* (Baltimore, Md., 1945), 6–9; Edmunds, *The Potawatomis*, 267–68; "scrofula" in Walter D. Glanze, Kenneth N. Anderson, and Lois E. Anderson, *The Mosby Medical Encyclopedia* (rev. ed., New York, 1992), 697; and see Polke to Pepper, September 15, 1838, 3:708, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

Reached our camp ground near Williamsport at 4 P. M. As we advance farther into the country of the prairies water becomes more scarce—the streams are literally dried up, and we have reason to fear that unless soon refreshed with rain, our future marches will be attended with much pain, and suffering. To-day we made 18 miles. Two deaths took place this evening.<sup>40</sup>

Saturday, 15th Sept.

Early on this morning we were on our way, and travelled without interruption until 12 o'clk. M. when we arrived at an unhealthy and filthy looking stream, at which, from the reports of the citizens of the country, we were forced to encamp.<sup>41</sup> The young men among the Indians during the afternoon, to the number of twenty-five, were permitted to go on a hunting excursion—a permission which they have for some time seemed to covet.<sup>42</sup> We travelled to-day about 10 miles. Two small children died along the road.




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<sup>40</sup>Father Petit wrote to his family in France on this date, telling them about the military roundup of the Potawatomi: “the Indians, despite their peaceable disposition, had been surprised and taken prisoners of war.” Petit to His Family, September 14, 1838, in McKee, *Trail of Death*, 90–91. In an earlier letter to Tipton, Petit had written (but not included in the final draft) an extraordinary rebuke of the Removal process: “You had right perhaps, if duly authorised, to take possession of the land, but to make from free men slaves, no man can take upon himself to do so in this free country.” Petit to Tipton, September 3, 1838, *ibid.*, 89.

<sup>41</sup>Tipton informed Harris that the march had stopped early that day after learning that the next “sufficient quantity of good water” was at least twelve miles away, too far for the party to travel during that day. Tipton to Harris, September 15, 1838, 3:709, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>42</sup>Hunting and fishing were primary methods of obtaining food for Woodland Potawatomi, although they, like other Native Americans, had been forced out of many hunting grounds through war, Removal, and habitat destruction, as forests were cleared to make way for white farms and towns. Petit noted that “the Indians were permitted to hunt on the way, and from the Illinois River almost to the limits of the Indian Territory they destroyed many deer, turkey cocks, and pheasants in a magnificent hunting ground.” Petit to Bishop Bruté, November 13, 1838, in McKee, *Trail of Death*, 105. See also Tipton to Edward A. Hannegan, September 15, 1838, 3:709, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

Abel C. Pepper to William Polke<sup>43</sup>

Emigration of Indians

Forks Wabash sept 15, 1838

Sir,

Your report of the 12th inst, has been received and its contents carefully examined.<sup>44</sup> It would give me pleasure to appoint your son an assistant Conductor, but I had previously promised Capt. Hull an appointment if the services of an additional assistant should be required.<sup>45</sup>

And as he in my opinion possesses all the qualities required to constitute an efficient, capable and energetic officer; I have the fullest confidence that he will discharge the duties assigned him with entire satisfaction to

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<sup>43</sup> Abel C. Pepper served as a private in the War of 1812 and later rose to the rank of brigadier general in the militia. Pepper was a conductor for the 1833 Potawatomi removal, sub-agent and later agent at the Logansport Indian agency, acted as a commissioner in 1835 treaty negotiations with the Potawatomi, and in 1836 negotiated nine treaties with the Potawatomi by which he succeeded in buying nearly all their lands for the federal government. Those treaties included the Yellow River Potawatomi (the treaty later contested by Menominee, who did not sign), who reserved the right to remain on their lands for a period of two years, at the end of which they were required to yield possession and remove west of the Mississippi River. Pepper became superintendent for the Removal of the Indians in Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin (Pepper used the title "Superintendent Emigration of Indians" in his correspondence). Both Pepper and Tipton were central to the Office of Indian Affairs approving troops in August 1838 to arrest dissenting *wakamek* at Twin Lakes and forcibly gather the Potawatomi. See, for example, Tipton to Lewis Cass, March 7, 1835, 3:137, Tipton to Pepper, August 8, 1835, 3:164, Pepper to Tipton, April 16, 1836, 3:259–60, Pepper to Tipton, August 8, 1836, 3:301–302 ("I have concluded a treaty with the yellow river band, and I think in four weeks will be able to negotiate with most of the other bands. They have all promised to sell."), George W. Ewing and Cyrus Taber to Tipton, August 31, 1838, 3:304–305, Wallace to Tipton, August 27, 1838, 3:675–76, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*. See also William Wesley Woollen, *Biographical and Historical Sketches of Early Indiana* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1883), 407–411; R. David Edmunds, "The Prairie Potawatomi Removal of 1833," *Indiana Magazine of History* 68 (September 1972), 240–53; Edmunds, *The Potawatomi*, 244–46; Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs, Laws, and Treaties*, 2:462–63 ("Treaty with the Potawatomi, 1836").

<sup>44</sup> Polke to Pepper, September 12, 1838, 3:701–702, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*. Polke requested "one more additional appointment"—his son Benjamin—given that Tipton was to leave the group at the Indiana/Illinois border.

<sup>45</sup> Captain Jacob Hull was appointed assistant conductor of the Potawatomi emigration to succeed Luther Rice. He had charge of a small detachment that remained in Logansport until mid-September because several Potawatomi were too ill to travel. On September 11, Hull reported to Tipton that "no material change has taken place in the health of the Indians left here" and that one young man had died; he also noted that no more Potawatomi had arrived in Logansport to be removed. Polke to Hull, September 10, 1838, Polke Manuscripts; Tipton to Harris, September 10, 1838, 3:698–99, Pepper to Harris, September 15, 1838, 3:707–708, Hull to Tipton, September 11, 1838, 3:700, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

yourself and all concerned. Gen. Tipton has recommended the Suspension of Luther Rice as assistant Conductor—You will tell him that he is therefore suspended; but that he may if he chooses continue to act as interpreter, and if he does he will be paid accordingly.<sup>46</sup>

You will be punctual in making your weekly reports to the Commr. of Indian Affairs and to this office—no excuse will be taken for a neglect of this part of your instructions—not even sickness, for in that case you can employ some one to write for you.<sup>47</sup>

Your Muster Roll properly certified will I hope soon come to hand.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Luther Rice had acted as interpreter for a Potawatomi emigration from within the Chicago agency to the vicinity of Fort Leavenworth on the Missouri River in 1835, and for a Potawatomi delegation to Washington, D.C., in the winter of 1835–1836. He was appointed assistant conductor for the 1838 emigration but “at the suggestion of Gen. Tipton” was suspended and demoted to interpreter. Rice to Tipton, April 23, 1836, 3:265–66, Isaac McCoy to Tipton, November 21, 1837, 3:466–67, Pepper to Harris, September 6, 1838, 3:696–97, Pepper to Harris, September 15, 1838, 3:707–708, and Tipton to Pepper, September 12, 1838, 3:703–704, in Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*. On the 1835 emigration from the Chicago agency, see Rice to Tipton, April 23, 1836, 3:265, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*; John P. Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians: Northern Indian Removal* (Norman, Okla., 2016), chap. 5. On the delegation to Washington, see Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 312–13. Harris described the “most salutary effect” of tribal leaders visiting Washington and then going home “to their kindred with just ideas of the strength and resources of the country . . . and impressed with the conviction of the propriety of remaining at peace with us and with each other.” Carey A. Harris, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to Secretary of War Joel R. Poinsett, December 1, 1837, in *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs 1837–1838*, 5–6.

<sup>47</sup> Carey A. Harris served as a clerk in the War Department under Secretary Lewis Cass. In 1836 President Andrew Jackson appointed him commissioner of Indian Affairs, with the responsibility for rapidly and inexpensively completing Indian Removal. In office, Harris opposed allowing the Cherokees to take partial charge of their own removal, threatened the Chickasaws with force if they did not emigrate according to his timetable, and sought to limit Native American sovereignty and access to education in Indian Territory. He also tried to make Removal turn a profit for himself and other entrepreneurs. Harris appointed corrupt supply contractors, helped white masters take fugitive Black slaves from the Seminoles, and speculated in southeastern Indian land allotments. This latter enterprise finally drew the unfavorable attention of President Martin Van Buren, who compelled Harris to resign in October 1838. Martin Case writes: “Of all the men who have served as commissioner of Indian Affairs, Harris was among the most corrupt.” Ronald N. Satz, “Carey Allen Harris (1836–1838),” in Robert M. Kvasnicka and Herman J. Viola, eds., *The Commissioners of Indian Affairs, 1824–1977* (Lincoln, Neb. 1979), 17–22; Martin Case, *The Relentless Business of Treaties: How Indigenous Land Became U.S. Property* (St. Paul, Minn., 2018), 137–38.

<sup>48</sup> Before the forced march began, Pepper had written to Polke: “Your attention is *particularly* called to the . . . muster roll.” On the march, Polke informed Pepper that “it has not been in our power to have the Muster Roll forwarded to you as directed,” due to his bringing up the rear of the march (which Tipton was leading) and not arriving in camp “erlier than 10 ‘o’ clock P. M.” Pepper to Polke, August 29, 1838, Polke Manuscripts; Polke to Pepper, September 12, 1838, 3:702, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

I would recommend to you the perusal of your instructions and of the “regulations No. 5” upon all occasions of leisure until you understand them perfectly.<sup>49</sup>

I am sir, very respectfully your obt. servt.  
A C Pepper  
Superintendent  
William Polke Esq.  
Conductor.



Sunday, 16th Sept.

At 8 o'clock we were loaded and in our saddles. Seven persons were left sick in camp, among the number a woman who was about to be confined.<sup>50</sup> A few minutes travel brought us to the Grand Prairie, a portion of which we passed over, arriving at our present Encampment at Danville, Ill., at about 3 o'clock. P. M. The heat along with the dust is daily rendering our marches more distressing. The horses are jaded the Indians sickly and many of the persons engaged in the emigration more or less sick.<sup>51</sup> The whole country through which we pass appears

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<sup>49</sup> Pepper refers to the “Revised Regulations No. V,” an eleven-page document consisting of seventy-five bullet points full of regulations on the process of Indian Removal, including: the titles and responsibilities of each officer and agent, as well as the amount of pay for each; rules for disbursements, transportation, supplies, and provisions; and accounting procedures. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1837–1838*, 123–33.

<sup>50</sup> Father Petit joined the emigration on this date, after receiving permission from his superior. He described “a scene of desolation, with sick and dying people on all sides. Nearly all the children, weakened by the heat, had fallen into a state of complete languor and depression.” Petit to Bishop Bruté, November 13, 1838, in McKee, *Trail of Death*, 98–99.

<sup>51</sup> A report of the forced march through Danville, Illinois, on September 17 reached the *Terre-Haute Courier*, which gave readers a harrowing description of the condition of the Potawatomi. After describing instances of illness, death, and birth on the journey, the author stated: “These things, of course, must excite our sympathies; but how can they be avoided, considering all things? They [the Potawatomi] are treated with all possible kindness by the amiable conductor and those under him; but yet to see 800 poor, half-clothed, hatless, breechless creatures in a single file, choked with dust, and suffocated with heat, mounted on poor half-starved Indian ponies, is a sight that no man of sensibility can look upon unmoved or with compsure. The difficulty of finding water, horse feed, &c, in crossing the Grand Prairie, it is feared, may impede, very much, their march, as well as increase among them the progress of disease.” “The Emigrating Indians,” *Richmond Enquirer*, reprinted from *Terre-Haute Courier*, October 12, 1838.

to be afflicted—every town, village, and hamlet has its invalids. We travelled to-day fifteen miles, passing the dividing line between the two states at about 11 o'clock. We find provisions and forage, the further we advance, demanding most enormous prices. It is worthy of remark, perhaps, that such a season for sickness in this country is almost unparalleled. In the little town, adjoining which we are now encamped, containing a population of from eight hundred to a thousand four persons died yesterday.<sup>52</sup>



William Polke to Carey A. Harris  
Encampment near Danville [Illinois]

16 sep<sup>r</sup> 1838  
Hon C A Harris

Sir

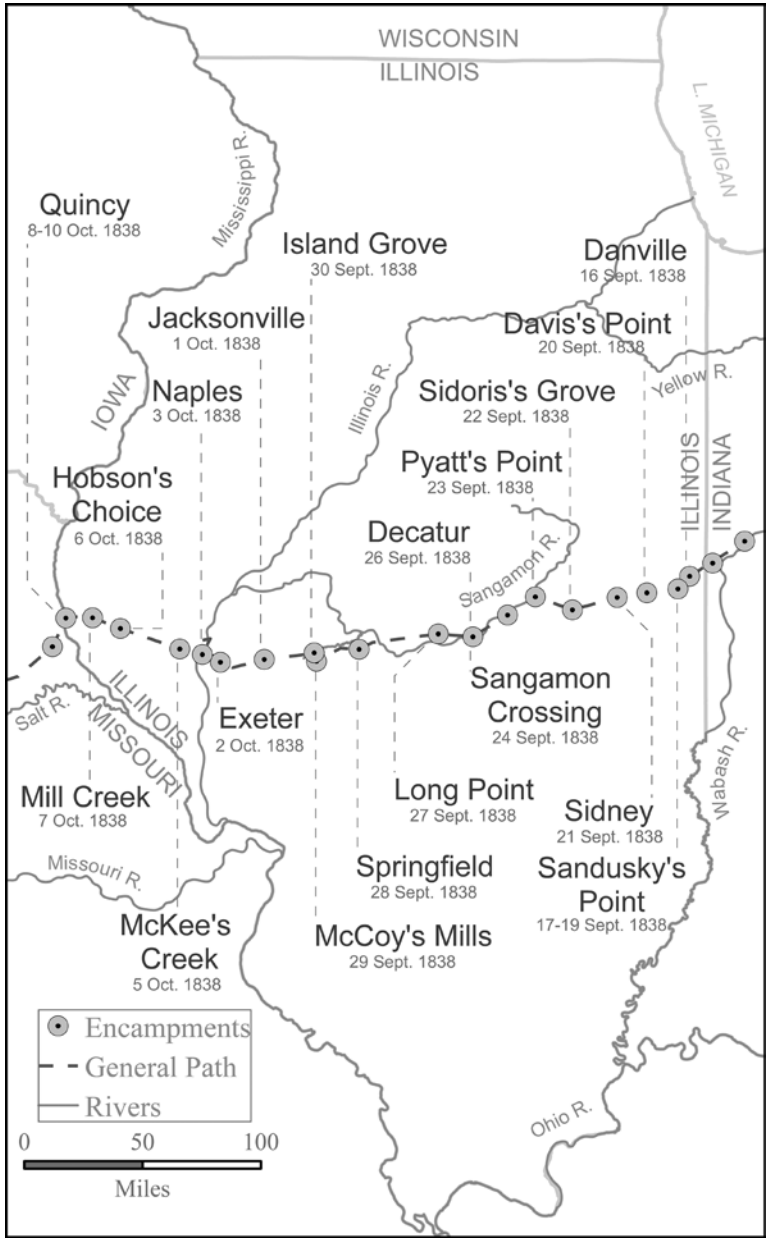
Knowing the anxiety you must feel respecting the numerous party of Potys recently placed in my charge to be transferd to thier new homes in the west I beg leave to submit for your inspection a copy of my communication of this day to Col A C Pepper.

The time is so much sickness prevails in our Country the Indians have been unhealthy but are improving in health, the whites are I think as unhealthy or more so than the Indians

Yr obt Sert.  
Wm Polke

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<sup>52</sup>The Potawatomi were marched through Illinois during what was probably an outbreak of typhoid. See John D. Haeger, "The Abandoned Townsite on the Midwestern Frontier: A Case Study of Rockwell, Illinois," *Journal of the Early Republic* 3 (Summer 1983), 179–80, on a "virulent" outbreak in fall 1838.



Map depicting the general path and encampments of the Potawatomi forced removal through Illinois. Encampment names are historical and taken from the journal herein; waterways are based on present-day locations.

Cartography courtesy of J. Paul Blekking (Tanager Mapping and Consulting LLC), map research and editing courtesy of Admiral S. Wieland.

William Polke to Carey A. Harris  
 Encampment near Danville  
 16 septr 1838

Sir

With this I have the honour to transmit to you a roll of the Pottawotimie Indians Emigrating under my charge from Marshall County Indi to the osage rive[r] in the western Territory<sup>53</sup>

Yr obt Sert  
 Wm Polke  
 Hon C A Harris  
 Com Indn Affair



Monday, 17th Sept.

Left the Encampment at Danville at 9 in the morning, and proceeded to Sandusky's point—a distance of six miles, where we encamped for the remainder of the day and night.<sup>54</sup> Soon after our arrival in camp, Joseph Mouland who was left as Interpreter for the sick remaining at the camp of Saturday last, came up with his part, it having received an accession by the birth of a child.<sup>55</sup> Provisions and forage we find scarce. Subsistance generally beef and flour. A young child died directly after coming into camp.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>The official muster roll, which recorded the names of heads of families, the number of Indians and their ages (and in the case of Indians removed from southern states, the number of slaves), was one of eighteen federal government forms for Indian Removal. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1837–1838*, 152.

<sup>54</sup>Sandusky's Point is now Catlin, Vermillion County, Illinois. "Catlin," Potawatomi Trail of Death Route & Marker Pictures, Potawatomi Trail of Death Association, last updated February 4, 2007, <http://www.potawatomi-tda.org/illinois/catlin.htm>, accessed April 2021.

<sup>55</sup>Joseph Morland was an assistant interpreter for the removal. Pepper lists him among five interpreters (Joseph Barron, Peter Laplant, John Lasley, Henry Taylor, and Andrew Goslin) and two assistant interpreters (Morland and Abram Burnet) whom he had appointed. Chauncey Carter, who acted as assistant dispersing agent, later wrote to Tipton: "[Taylor] is infinitely the most efficient among the interpreters except Laslie, who is worth all the rest. Rice Roslin Burnet, Moreland are not worth one curse." Pepper to Harris, September 6, 1838, 3:697, Carter to Tipton, October 7, 1838, 3:744, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>56</sup>Father Petit described the order of march, including the militia who were "hastening the stragglers, often with severe gestures and bitter words" and the baggage wagons filled with the sick "rudely jolted, under a canvas which, far from protecting them from the dust and

Tuesday, 18th Sept.

The accumulation of business, together with the discharge of a number of troops in service, rendered it necessary that we should remain in camp a day or so—beside which the weak condition of many of the emigrants demanded rest. During the evening a woman and a child died. A child was also born today. The health of the emigrants continues very bad. Scarcely a day but new cases are reported. In the main however, a daily improvement may be calculated upon. Dr. Jerolaman, the physician to the emigration arrived in camp to-day, and commenced the discharge of his dut[ies]. He is assisted for the time by Dr. James H. Buell of Williamsport, Ia. whose services were enlisted during the absence of Dr. Jerolaman.<sup>57</sup> In their report of to-day they say, “there are at this time sixty-seven sick—of that number there are forty-seven cases of intermittent fever—thirteen of continued and three of diarrhoea, and two of scrofula. Of the whole number eight may be considered dangerously ill.”<sup>58</sup> Provisions and forage still continue to be scarce.

Wednesday, 19th Sept.

The business for which we remained yesterday in camp, is but half concluded.<sup>59</sup> The sick require active treatment such as they cannot receive whilst on the march. We remain to-day. To-morrow morning most of the volunteers will be discharged, when we expect to proceed on our way.

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heat, only deprived them of air, for they were as buried under this burning canopy—several died thus.” Petit to Bishop Bruté, November 13, 1838, in McKee, *Trail of Death*, 99. McKee notes that the *Delphi Oracle*, September 15, 1838, reported that the entire procession “was nearly three miles long.”

<sup>57</sup>Dr. George Jerolaman was appointed physician for the removal. He joined the emigrating group late, having stayed behind with some of the sick and having been ill himself. Correspondence from various officers of the emigration indicates that Jerolaman was frequently ill, at one point leaving the party for a few days. Polke to Harris, September 14, 1838, 3:706, Polke to Pepper, September 15, 1838, 3:708, Polke to Tipton, September 26, 1838, 3:730, Polke to Tipton, September 29, 1838, 3:734, Henry W. Tilley to Tipton, October 10, 1838, 3:746, Robertson and Riker, eds. *John Tipton Papers*. Dr. James H. Buell had settled in Williamsport in 1830 and was the first physician to practice in Warren County, Indiana. Weston A. Goodspeed, *1883 History of Warren County, Indiana: Historical and Biographical* (Chicago, 1883).

<sup>58</sup>Both physicians also reported to Polke that “the amount of subsistence allowed [the Potawatomi] is not sufficient.” They recommended “an additional allowance of tea & sugar to such as are sick.” Jeroloman and Buell to Polke, September 18, 1838, Polke Manuscripts.

<sup>59</sup>On this day, both Polke and Tipton wrote letters reporting problems with the supply and distribution of rations and forage. Polke to [?], September 19, 1838, 3:718, Tipton to Harris, September 19, 1838, 3:718–20, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

The report of the physicians varies but little from that of yesterday.<sup>60</sup> They report six or eight cases as very dangerous. A child of six or eight years old died this Evening. Also late at night an adult person.<sup>61</sup>



William Polke to Carey A. Harris  
Sandusky Encampmen[t]  
19 septr 1838

Sir

It is known to you that volunteers to prevent difficultees between the Pottowotimy Indians & our own Citizens 100 volunteers were ordered into service by the Govr of Indiana,<sup>62</sup> no doubt was entertained that they woud effect a removal of the Indians anu as the volunteers were on thier march to the Indian village I was requested to accept the appointment of conductor shoud thiere be an Emigration not one day not an hour was left me to examin your instruction or forms I entered the service and in three days had the management of between seven & eight hundred Indians my Clerks & all assistents were to select nether disburseing officer of money except that furnished on the credit or from the pocket of a private citizen.

The volunteers acted as common labourers in hauling Indian Poneys collecting thier other property & doing camp duty. These men were (many of them) of the first citizens of the State they refused to use the Indian ration. Bread bacon, Tea coffee & sugar were purchased for thier use and forrage for thier horses.

I have never yet been furnished with a copy of the contract for transportation. The contractors believing that no Emigration woud be got up had no wagons ready until hundreds of Indians were reday to move

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<sup>60</sup>The doctors also reported (not included in the journal) that the number of deaths “will be greatly augmented unless pains be taken to provide an adequate number of waggons to transport those who are sick.” “The disease which prevails among them,” they wrote, “is that which is peculiar to the country; and which is spreading to an alarming extent among the whites.” Jerolaman and Buell to Polke, September 19, 1838, Polke Manuscripts.

<sup>61</sup>Father Petit wrote from the camp to the bishop of the St. Louis diocese that “our trip is a harsh experience; we have much sickness; two of the Indians were buried today.” Petit to Bishop Joseph Rosati, September 17, 1838, in McKee, *Trail of Death*, 95.

<sup>62</sup>David Wallace to Tipton, August 27, 1838, 3:675, Robertson and Riker, *John Tipton Papers*.

they then hired some all the wagons and I was compelled to hire wagons to transport sick Indians the first 5 days of our march I hired wagons every day & paid them off in a day or two or as soon as others could be procured I find by examining the roll which I send you to day that I have discharged ten wagons that have rendered service for short periods, to day I will prepare and get the wagoners on the 15 Inst the contractors for furnishing transportation abandoned their contract & I have entered into a contract with Mr George Smith to furnish transportation the balance of the Journey, to day I will prepare and send you a roll showing the signature of the persons authorized to receive pay for thier services<sup>63</sup>

heretofore it has not been possible for the disburseing officir or myself to conform to your forms and instructions with that accuracy that we could wish but hereafter I will pursue the forms and instructions given me by the superintendant or yourself

With great respect Yr obt Servt

William Polke to Abel C. Pepper  
Camp at Sandusky Point 6 miles west of  
Danville Ill. Sept 19th 1838

Sir

The Blanks Inclosed have been filled as follows. Thomas C Slaughter Assistant conductor sept 1st 1838.<sup>64</sup> John R Calder Assistant conductor sept 1st 1838<sup>65</sup> J. C. Douglass Enrolling Agent sept 4th 1838.<sup>66</sup> I herewith

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<sup>63</sup> George Smith was a mail contractor in northern Indiana, who was engaged by Tipton to supply wagons for the trip to the Logansport agency and acted as a wagoner on the emigration. Smith was also tasked with obtaining forage for the animals pulling the wagons: "Geoge Smith by urging scolding and Constant watching has partially supplied us with Forage. I hav to Night Notified him that unless he furnishes us with Forage in good time I shall at the end of three Days take the contract out of his hands. . . he has Relied upon our friendship too much but I informed in public Business I had no friends." Elias Murray to Tipton, June 24, 1838, 3:646, Tipton to [?], August 28, 1838, 3:680, George W. Ewing to Tipton, August 29, 1838, 3:681, Polke to Tipton, September 26, 1838, 3:730-31, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>64</sup> Thomas C. Slaughter was employed by John B. Duret in the Cass County clerk's office and was appointed by Pepper to the emigration party. Duret to Tipton, December 16, 1837, 3:475-76, Pepper to Harris, September 6, 1838, 3:697, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>65</sup> John R. Calder was assistant to Major Henry W. Tilley, disbursing agent for the Miami annuity payments of 1838. Pepper to Tipton, September 5, 1838, 3:691, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>66</sup> Jesse C. Douglass was one of the publishers of the *Logansport Herald* (an enterprise whose establishment was partially funded by Tipton). He was appointed as an enrolling agent and as

Return the appointment of Thomas C Slaughter as enrolling Agent and Joshua shields with a request that Mr Shields appointment be changed to that of assistant conductor from the date of his former appointment of Assistant superintendant herewith returned.<sup>67</sup> I repeat the request that B. C. Polke be appointed assistant Conductor commencing the 10th instant the day his services commenced in camp From the number of waggons employed in the Emigration it is Indispensibly necessary that a wagon master be appointed which will advance the progress of the Emigration. After consulting Genl Tipton who coincides with me in opinion we have assigned that duty to Mr John Hamilton a Gentleman well qualified for the appointment and request that you confirm the appointment and that his salary be two Dollars and fifty cents per day;<sup>68</sup> With a view to Economy and to prevent dissatisfaction I would respectfully suggest the propriety of discontinuing Luther Rice as assistant conductor and appoint him first Interpreter—instead [sic] of Andrew Gosline assistant Interpreter Instead of Principal all which is respectfully submitted

Your Obt servant  
 Wm Polke Conductor  
 Col A C Pepper  
 Superintendant  
 Emigrating Indians




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adjutant for the Potawatomi emigration, and during the emigration acted as Polke's secretary. In December, Douglass sought another patronage position from Tipton: "Col. Pepper requested or rather suggested that I should write you in regard to the exploring party of Miami Indians next summer. He seems desirous that I should obtain the situation of Director or Conductor of the party." Jesse C. Douglass to John T. Douglass and Tipton, April 27, 1837, 3:397, Douglass to Tipton, August 17, 1838, 3:665, Douglass to Tipton, September 29, 1838, 3:734, Douglass to Tipton, October 1, 1838, 3:739 ("Sir, Judge Polke has again requested me to write you and inform you of our progress, prospects, &c."), Douglass to Tipton, October 21, 1838, 3:755–56, Douglass to Tipton, December 7, 1838, 3:778, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>67</sup> Joshua Shields, Tipton's cousin and brother-in-law, had fought at Tippecanoe and served in the War of 1812. Shields was assistant superintendent of the emigration. Pepper to Harris, September 6, 1838, 3:697, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*. See also "Spier Spencer's Company: Pay Roll," September 12 to November 23, 1811, 1:84–88, "Tipton's Company: Muster Roll," September 5–20, 1812, 1:97–99, Glen A. Blackburn, comp., Nellie Armstrong Robertson and Dorothy Riker, eds., *The John Tipton Papers*, Volume 1: 1809–1827 (Indianapolis, Ind., 1942).

<sup>68</sup> John Hamilton was a wagoner on the Potawatomi emigration. "List of Wagoners, Potawatomi Removal," September 1838, 3:738–39, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Letters*.

NO. XII.  
*\*A ROLL OF WAGONS AND TEAMS employed in the removal of the  
 party conducted by* *ending*  
*Indians, commencing*

The undersigned agree to furnish to \_\_\_\_\_, agent of the United States, when required, within \_\_\_\_\_ days, the wagons and teams set opposite to our names in this roll; both to be of good quality, and sufficient to haul, the distance required, one thousand five hundred pounds; the United States to be liable for no accidents of any description.

DATE OF ENTRY.	SIGNATURES OF OWNERS.	WITNESS.	COMMENCING.	ENDING.	NUMBER OF DAYS EMPLOYED.	NUMBER OF HORSES, OR OXEN.	PAY PER DAY.		AMOUNT PAID.	RECEIPT.	WITNESS.	REMARKS.
							Going.	Returning.				

I certify that the teams above paid for were entered in the names of the persons authorized to receive pay for the same.  
 Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ *Disbursing Agent*  
 (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_ *Indians.*  
 \_\_\_\_\_ *Special Agent and Superintendent.*

\* See paragraph 68.

“A Roll of Wagons and Teams,” one of eighteen forms required by the federal Office of Indian Affairs to record the business of Indian Removals.  
*Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1837-1838*

Thursday, 20th Sept.

At 3 o'clock we were up and busily preparing the discharge of the volunteers. At sun rise they were mustered and marched to Head Quarters, where, after being addressed for a few moments by the General in command, they were discharged and paid off, Sixteen of the mounted volunteers, upon a requisition of the Conductor of the emigration were retained in service and are now under the immediate charge of Ensign Smith.<sup>69</sup> At 9 o'clk. a few hours before which an elderly woman died, we prepared for our march. We left the camp at half past 9, and reached our present encampment at about 2 P. M. During the march of the party, Gen. Tipton who has heretofore been in command of the volunteers, and superintended the removal of the present emigration, took his leave, and left us in charge of the Conductor, Wm. Polke, Esq.<sup>70</sup> While on the march a child died on horseback. A death has also occurred since we came into camp this Evening. We are now encamped at Davis's Point, a distance of ten miles from the camp ground of yesterday. To-morrow we expect to reach Sidney, which is reported to be a good watering place.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Tipton's General Order of September 20, 1838, lists the "fifteen Dragoons who will be detailed to accompany the expedition to the end of the march," including Ensign B. H. Smith, 3:724–25, Robertson and Riker, eds. *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>70</sup> Before his departure, Tipton sent Harris an accounting of those "persons employed in collecting and assisting the removal of the Indians"; an accounting of expenses incurred; and an official appraisal for the value of the corn that had been left in the Potawatomi fields, for which payment was due to the Indians (\$742.50). Tipton sent a much lengthier account, printed in the Indiana Senate's official journal, to Gov. Wallace. Tipton details his "opinion of the causes which have led to the difficulty now happily terminated" and defends himself: "It may be the opinion of those not well informed upon the subject, that the expedition was uncalled for, but I feel confident that nothing but the presence of an armed force, for the protection of the citizens of the State, and to punish the insolence of the Indians, could have prevented bloodshed." Tipton to Harris, September 19, 1838, 3:718–19, Tipton to Harris, September 20, 1838, 3:723, Tipton to Wallace, September 18, 1838, 3:713–18, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*. The Senate journal also includes a report from the Standing Committee of Military Affairs, copies of some of the official correspondence to Wallace from Pepper and Tipton, and a copy of the journal of the emigration through September 16. *Journal of the Senate of the State of Indiana during the Twenty-Third Session of the General Assembly* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1838), 713–31.

<sup>71</sup> Davis's Point is presently near Homer, Champaign County, Illinois. "Champaign County, Illinois," Potawatomi Trail of Death Route & Marker Pictures, Potawatomi Trail of Death Association, last updated February 4, 2007, <http://www.potawatomi-tda.org/illinois/homer.htm>, accessed April 2021.

Friday, 21st Sept.

Left Davis's encampment at half-past 9. At a little before 2 we reached Sidney, near the spot selected for encampment. The health of the Indians is the same—scarcely a change—the worst of the cases in most persons proves fatal. Physician reports for yesterday, “their condition somewhat better. There are yet fifty sick in camp—three have died since my last.” The farther we get into the prairie the scarcer becomes water. Our present encampment is very poorly watered, and we are yet in the vicinity of timber. A child died since we came into camp. This morning before we left the Encampment of last night, a chief, Muk-Kose, a man remarkable for his honesty and integrity, died after a few days' sickness.<sup>72</sup> Distance travelled to-day 12 miles. Forage not so scarce as a few days ago. Bacon we occasionally procure—beef and flour, however, constitute our principal subsistence.

Saturday, 22nd Sept.

At 8 o'clock we left our Encampment, and entered the prairie at Sidney.<sup>73</sup> The day was exceedingly cold.—The night previous had brought us quite a heavy rain, and the morning came in cold and blustry. Our journey was immediately across the Prairie, which at this point is entirely divested of timber for sixteen miles. The emigrants suffered a good deal, but still appeared to be cheerful. The health of the camp continues to improve—not a death has occurred to-day, and the cool bracing weather will go far towards recruiting the health of the invalids. A wagoner was discharged to-day for drunkenness. Dissipation is almost entirely unknown in the camp. To-night, however, two Indians were found to have possessed themselves of liquor, and become intoxicated.<sup>74</sup> They were arrested and put under

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<sup>72</sup> Mukkose, or Mucose (Young Bear), was a Wabash Potawatomi and supporter of Protestant missionaries. Several of the 1836 treaties list a chief “Muck Rose,” who may be the same person. Edmunds, *The Potawatomis*, 224, 257.

<sup>73</sup> Petit describes coming to “the grand prairies of Illinois, under a burning sun and without shade from one camp to another. They are as vast as the ocean, and the eye seeks in vain for a tree. Not a drop of water can be found there.” Petit to Bishop Bruté, November 13, 1838, in McKee, *Trail of Death*, 100.

<sup>74</sup> In the early period of Ohio Valley settlement, whiskey was the most common form of alcohol and was also a valuable trade item. It was easy to store, transport, and sell, and the process of distillation could begin whenever and wherever corn was available. Horsman, *Feast or Famine*, 20. Clifton states that the Potawatomi were “heavy users of hard liquor” but, despite their ample crops of corn, were strictly consumers because “they lacked the technology and knowledges necessary to distill alcoholic beverages.” Clifton, *The Prairie People*, 159.

guard. Some six or eight persons were left at Davis's Point this morning, for want of the means of transportation. They came in this evening. We are at present encamped at Sidoris's Grove, sixteen miles distant from Sidney. Water quite scarce.

Sunday, 23rd Sept.

Left our encampment at 9 o'clock, having been detained for an hour at the request of the Rev. W. Petit, who desired to perform service.<sup>75</sup> The day was clear and cold. Our way lay across another portion of Grand Prairie, which, as was the case yesterday, we found without timber for fifteen miles.<sup>76</sup> Physician reports the health of the camp still improving. "The number of sick" the report says "is forty. There have been two deaths since my last report, and four or five may be considered immediately dangerous." A child died early this morning. One also died on the way to our present Encampment. Distance travelled to-day fifteen miles. We are at present encamped on the Sangamon river, along the banks of which our route to-morrow lies. Subsistence, beef and flour—better, however, than usual.<sup>77</sup>

Monday, 24th Sept,

At 9 this morning we left Pyatt's Point (the encampment of yesterday) and proceeded down the Sangamon river fifteen miles, to the place of our present Encampment, Sangamon Crossing.<sup>78</sup> Physician reports "there have

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<sup>75</sup> Petit wrote to the priest serving the Catholic church in Logansport, Indiana: "Today we were better treated because of a kind of authority given me which I accepted and am using for their good. . . . When we encamp I am entrusted with the sick and assigned to the doctor as interpreter. [Petit had learned the Potawatomi language during his time at the Yellow River Mission.] On the march I have general supervision over all and decide upon whatever can be alleviating." Petit to Father François, September 23, 1838, in McKee, *Trail of Death*, 96.

<sup>76</sup> Tipton informed Harris that water shortages on the Illinois prairie had induced him to dispatch three men ahead of the emigrating party, who reported back that "the greatest distance between watering places is 17 miles." Tipton to Harris, September 23, 1838, 3:726, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*. See also Polke to Tipton, September 26, 1838, 3:730, and Carter to Tipton, October 4, 1838, 3:741, on the trip through Illinois being regulated by the availability of water.

<sup>77</sup> Tipton wrote to Pepper that he had "reduced the beef ration substituting bread Tea sugar and coffee for the Indians. their health was much improved." Given the regular Potawatomi diet of fresh game and fish, along with corn, squash, cabbage, and other vegetables, the rations of beef (often of poor quality) were probably contributing to illness among those already ill and weakened. Tipton to Pepper, September 23, 1838, 3:727, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*; G. [White] to Dr. G. Jerolaman, September 9, 1838, Polke Manuscripts.

<sup>78</sup> Pyatt's Point was located in present Monticello, Piatt County, Illinois. Shirley Willard, *Potawatomi Trail of Death: 1838 Removal from Indiana to Kansas* (Rochester, Ind., 2003), 158 n11.

been two deaths since my last, and the situation of several of the sick is much worse. I would recommend that twenty-nine be left until to-morrow." At the suggestion of Dr. Jerolaman twenty-nine persons were accordingly left behind with efficient nurses. They will join us to-morrow. We find a good deal of difficulty in procuring wagons for transportation—so many of the emigrants are ill that the teams now employed are constantly complaining of the great burthens imposed upon them in the transportation of so many sick. Subsistence and forage the same as yesterday. A child died during the evening.

Tuesday, 25th Sept.

To allow the sick left at Pyatt's Point yesterday time to join us, and to give the emigrants generally a respite, and to bring up the business of the emigration, it was determined to remain in camp to-day. The baggage wagons were weighed and reloaded during the day and the matters of the emigrants made more comfortable. Sometime in the afternoon the sick left at the encampment of yesterday arrived. Directly after their arrival a woman among the number, died. The rest were but little if any improved. A child also died this evening. The farther we advance the more sickly seems the character of the country, It is sometimes very difficult to procure provisions and forage owing to the general prostration of the husbandry Most of the Indian men were permitted to go on a hunting excursion to-day. They brought in a considerable quantity of game.

Wednesday, 26th Sept.

Left our Encampment at the Crossing at 8 o'clock in the morning and proceeded on our route. The sick appear somewhat recruited. Owing to the indisposition of our physician no report has been made since Monday. We have reason to believe that the health of the camp is returning. The weather still continues delightful—the roads, however, are again becoming dusty. Provisions and forage seem not so scarce as farther back.—the country through which we are now passing is more thickly settled. Distance travelled to-day fourteen miles. We are now encamped near Decatur, Ill. forty miles from Springfield. A child died after dark.

Thursday, 27th Sept.

At 8 this morning we were loaded and on our horses. We travelled until 2 p.m. and reached our present encampment, Long Point, about fourteen

miles from the camp of last night.<sup>79</sup> During the march, and indeed for the last three days, a considerable number of the Indian men were scouring the prairies in search of game. Their success has been such as to supercede entirely the necessity of issuing rations. The camp is now full of venison. Mr. Shields, one of the Assistant Conductors, left us this morning on account of indisposition.<sup>80</sup> A substitute, it is thought, will not be necessary as the emigration is already far advanced on its route. We find no difficulty in procuring water, and we have every reason to believe that the greater portion of our route will be found to furnish a sufficiency for the party. Physician still indisposed. Forage and subsistence the same. We find less difficulty in procuring sufficient quantities.

Friday, 28th Sept.

Left Long Point at a little before 8 and crossed the prairies intervening. At 2 o'clock. P. M. we reached the Sangamon (on the banks of which we have encamped for the last five days) after crossing which we pitched our tents. We are now within a few miles of Springfield, which place we shall pass through to-morrow.<sup>81</sup> Judge Polke, the Conductor, on the occasion of passing through a village of the character of Springfield, requested I-o-weh, one of the principal chiefs, so to arrange and accoutre the Indians as to insure a good appearance.<sup>82</sup> The chief was delighted with the propo-

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<sup>79</sup> According to the Potawatomi Trail of Death Association, Long Point was "a 'point' of trees in the prairie, south of present day Niantic, Illinois." "Niantic," Potawatomi Trail of Death Route & Marker Pictures, Potawatomi Trail of Death Association, last updated June 7, 2006, <http://www.potawatomi-tda.org/illinois/niantic.htm>, accessed April 2021.

<sup>80</sup> Polke to Tipton, September 26, 1838, 3:730, Tipton to Harris, September 28, 1838, 3:734, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*. Tipton reported that "Two of the assts Shields & Taylor is sick & I will start two others after the party tomorrow."

<sup>81</sup> Indicative of Tipton's continued, albeit distant, role in the removal is Carter's report to Tipton on personnel and the cost of the emigration, especially the economies regarding forage for the Potawatomi's horses ("we avoid it whenever it is possible to do so"). Carter to Tipton, September 28, 1838, 3:732, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>82</sup> Ioway was a prominent Wabash Potawatomi *wkama*, involved in a factional fight at the 1836 annuity distribution that nearly led to violence. Ioway and the Wabash Potawatomis wanted most of the annuity cash given to their creditors, the Ewings; the St. Joseph Potawatomis, including their *wkama* Ashkum, wanted Jean Baptiste Chandonnai and their creditors paid. Alexis Coquillard, one of the rival creditors, and Chandonnai partially dismantled the roof of the annuity cabin while the Ewings were in it, while a Potawatomi man got up on another roof and suggested killing all the traders. Case, *The Relentless Business of Treaties*, 60–61; Edmunds, *The Potawatomis*, 259–60; Edmunds, "'Designing Men, Seeking a Fortune': Indian Traders and the Potawatomi Claims Payment of 1836," *Indiana Magazine of History* 77 (June 1981), 109–122. W. Ben Secunda posits going beyond conflicts over trade to understand competing bands' differing strategies toward accommodation versus resistance. Secunda, "To Cede or Seed," 57–88. During the 1838 removal to Kansas, Carter

sition and no doubt the emigration to-morrow will present quite a gaudy appearance. As an inducement they were promised some tobacco, which they have been much in want of for several days.<sup>83</sup> The day has been very warm, which added to the length of our march, fatigued much the emigrants. The illness of the camp is disappearing gradually, and we may safely calculate upon a great diminution in the number of sick at the next report of the physician.<sup>84</sup> Forage and provisions becoming plenty, as we nearer approach the settled portions of the state. Distance travelled to-day Eighteen miles. Two children died during the night.



William Polke to Carey A. Harris  
Encampment, at Sangamon River  
28d septr. 1838.

Sir

Two days since, one of the principal chiefs, I-O-weh, who has assisted and taken an active part in forwarding the present emigration of the Pottawattamie Indians, was found to be without his horses, they having strayed away from the encampment. It was thought that to compel him to walk among those over whom he exercises such supreme control might prove unpopular to the cause of the emigration, and be the cause of such serious discontent as to effect much the ends and objects of the government, so far as his connection with his people might be brought to bear upon this and cases of a like character.—A horse, for which the Disbursing Officer paid \$62.50, was accordingly purchased and given to him.

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referred to Ioway as the “principal chief,” a position the *wkama* frequently and publicly claimed. Carter to Tipton, October 14, 1838, 3:749, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>83</sup> Robin Wall Kimmerer—environmental scientist and member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation—describes tobacco as a sacred offering: “the gift of tobacco is not a material one, but a spiritual gift, a means of conveying our highest regard,” and was used as a way to “carry” a person’s “thoughts to the Creator.” Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching of Plants* (Minneapolis, Minn., 2013), 208, 238. For the pre-Contact era, James A. Clifton identifies the “tobacco” used by the Potawatomi as red sumac bark made into powder and smoked in traditional pipes. Another way of using or offering tobacco would be “casting it into the fire” as a way of honoring something particularly spiritual in nature. Clifton, *The Prairie People*, 33, 49–50. See also Christopher M. Parsons, “Natives, Newcomers, and *Nicotiana*: Tobacco in the History of the Great Lakes Region,” in Robert Englebert and Guillaume Teasdale, eds., *French and Indians in the Heart of North America, 1630–1815* (East Lansing, Mich., 2013), 21–41.

<sup>84</sup> Jerolaman to Polke, September 28, 1838, William Polke Manuscripts.

**POTAWATTAMIES.**—The latest accounts received from the emigrating Pottawattamies, inform us that they had encamped at Danville, Ill., with the intention of awaiting the coming of rain—the long and unusual drought having rendered it impracticable to obtain, in crossing the Grand Prairie, a sufficient supply of water for so large an emigration.—*Logansport Telegraph*.

Stories from Logansport, Indiana, newspapers were reprinted in newspapers from the East Coast to the western frontier.

*Richmond (Indiana) Palladium*, September 29, 1838

I have to hope that you will see the necessity of the course which has been adopted. I-o-weh has lately been zealously engaged in assisting the Officers of the government in the collection of the Indians, and aiding all in his power to bring about the present Emigration.<sup>85</sup>

Wm Polke Conduct  
Hon C. A. Harris.



Saturday, 29th Sept.

In order to pass Springfield at as early an hour as possible, we rose before light, and at 8 o'clock were on our way. The Indians amongst whom a degree of pride was excited, arranged themselves into line, and with an unusual display of finery and gaudy trumpery marched through the streets of Springfield. The wayfares were covered with anxious spectators, so much so indeed as to threaten for a time to impede the progress of the Emigration.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Ioway's expensive horse, a possession which anthropologists would call a "prestige good," and his carefully cultivated relationship with federal officials, men representing a regime upon which the Potawatomis relied for supplies, were both interrelated markers of the *wkama's* status. They both displayed and reified his "fictive kinship" with powerful outsiders. Daniel Richter, *Before the Revolution: America's Ancient Past* (Cambridge, Mass., 2011), 26–30; Cary Miller, *Ogimaag: Anishinaabeg Leadership, 1760–1845* (Lincoln, Neb., 2010), 32–33, 126–27.

<sup>86</sup> The Black Hawk War had reached into many parts of northern and western Illinois in 1832. The "anxious spectators" may have been apprehensive about hundreds of Indians passing through their town, as well as curious to view what would have been a public spectacle. On the Black

We passed clearly through however, and that too without the detention of a single Indian. At 3 we reached our present Encampment, McCoy's Mills, distant from last night's camp seventeen miles.<sup>87</sup> This morning, Dr. Jerolaman on account of his continued indisposition, requested leave to remain in Springfield a few days to recruit.<sup>88</sup> Permission was granted. Our march today was through a very dry region of Country. We are now encamped on a stream affording little water.

Sunday, 30th Sept.

We left McCoy's Mills at about 9 o'clk. and at 12 reached Island Grove, the place of our Encampment 6 miles distant from the Camp of last night. Our march was made necessarily short on account of the scarcity of water—this being the only watering place nearer than ten or fifteen miles. The death of a child occurred a few hours after our encampment. Health of the sick still improving. Provisions and subsistence good and healthy. The Indians still bring in large quantities of game—sufficient for their subsistence—and they greatly prefer such provisions as they acquire by the chase.<sup>89</sup> One of the Dragoons was dismissed last night for intoxication—Nothing of the kind is permitted.<sup>90</sup>

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Hawk War, see Patrick J. Jung, *The Black Hawk War of 1832* (Norman, Okla., 2007); Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 297–308. On the war and its effect on Removal policy, see Edmunds, *The Potawatomis*, 241.

<sup>87</sup> McCoy's Mills was near present day Riddle Hill, Sangamon County, Illinois. "Riddle Hill, Illinois," Potawatomi Trail of Death Route & Marker Pictures, Potawatomi Trail of Death Association, last updated May 31, 2006, <http://www.potawatomi-tda.org/illinois/riddlehi.htm>, accessed April 2021.

<sup>88</sup> Jerolaman to Polke, September 29, 1838, William Polke Manuscripts.

<sup>89</sup> The Potawatomi obviously preferred to feed themselves whenever possible, rather than relying on government rations. Chauncy Carter noted in a letter from Springfield that "the Indians hunt & kill many Deer & we gave them no provision last night & but half rations this night." Carter added that at such times "there is more than enough to provision the dragoons" from the food officially allocated for the Indians, detailing this cost-saving measure to Tipton. Carter to Tipton, September 28, 1838, 3:732, Robertson and Riker, *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>90</sup> Polke, according to every available source, did his best to prevent drunkenness in the encampments, among both whites and Potawatomi, but failed frequently nonetheless. By 1838, the Office of Indian Affairs issued regulations that, on paper, prevented Indians from obtaining alcohol while under government supervision. The "Act to regulate trade and intercourse with Indian tribes, and to preserve peace on the frontiers" specified a \$500 fine to anyone who "shall sell, exchange, or give, barter or dispose of any spirituous liquor or wine to an Indian, (in the Indian country)." *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1837–1838*, 82–83.

Monday, 1st October.

Early in the morning we left Island Grove—travelled over a dry prairie Country, seventeen miles, we reached our encampment, near Jacksonville, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Nothing occurred during our march save that a child fell from a wagon, and was very much crushed by the wheels running over it. It is thought the child will die. To-night some of the chiefs reported two runaways, who left this morning. During the Evening we were much perplexed by the curiosity of visitors, to many of whom the sight of an emigration or body of Indians is as great a rarity as a travelling Caravan of wild animals. Late at night the camp was complimented by a serenade from the Jacksonville Band.<sup>91</sup>

Tuesday, 2nd Octr.

We struck our tents at 8 this morning, and prepared for a march. Owing to the very great curiosity manifested by the citizens generally, Judge Polke, after being solicited, marched the emigration into the square, where we remained for fifteen or twenty minutes. Presents of tobacco and pipes in abundance were made by the citizens to the Indians, who appeared quite as much delighted with the favor shown them as with the excellent music of the Band which escorted us around the square. We continued our journey, and at 3 o'clock reached our present encampment about sixteen miles from Jacksonville.<sup>92</sup> The day was excessively warm and

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<sup>91</sup> Jesse Douglass wrote to Tipton: "We meet with a good deal of attention wherever we go, and a good deal of impertinence and idle curiosity. But generally we have been courteously treated by the citizens of Illinois. To-night (as an evidence) we were waited upon by the Jacksonville Band, who played us some fine airs, to the infinite gratification of the assembled natives." He noted that the band departed the camp "laden with thanks." Douglass to Tipton, October 1, 1838, 3:739, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*. The *Logansport Herald* printed a letter purportedly written by a member of the removal party: "To most of the country through which we pass the sight of an Indian emigration is quite as great a show as a caravan of wild animals, and so much curiosity here the good people to gratify, that we are frequently compelled to clear the camp of our visitors—ungallant enough, too, as we usually have more female onlookers in than any other. The Indians as much perplexed at the visible attentions which are bestowed upon them, and would most thankfully decline a repetition of such civilities." The writer mentions that, when on "show," the Potawatomi would "blacken their visages." *Logansport Herald*, October 25, 1838. James Clifton notes that the Potawatomi tradition of blackening the face symbolized "approaching death or catastrophe," and records that when Menominee and other Potawatomi first encountered missionary Isaac McCoy in 1821, they greeted him with their faces painted black but, in an act of subversion, "had the Christian cross marked on their cheeks and made a great show of genuflecting." Clifton, *The Prairie People*, 271.

<sup>92</sup> This encampment was located at present day Exeter, Scott County, Illinois. "Scott County, Illinois," Potawatomi Trail of Death Route & Marker Pictures, Potawatomi Trail of Death

the dust very afflicting, added to which water was scarcely to be found on the route. Provisions and forage we find in considerable quantities, without difficulty.

Wednesday, Oct. 3d.

Left Exeter encampment at a little before 8 o'clock, and without any occurrence of note reached the Illinois river at about 11—9 miles distant from last night's camp. Preparations were made for ferrying the river, and we embarked in keel and flat boats directly after our arrival. The day was spent in crossing and recrossing the stream, and by 9 p. m. we succeeded in landing the last of the baggage wagons. We are now encamped on the opposite shore from Naples, where we shall perhaps remain to-morrow, to recruit the fatigues of the last few days. A child died directly after our arrival at the river.

Thursday, 4th Octr.

Although the ferriage of the river was completed last night before we slept, it was thought advisable by the Conductor to remain in Camp to-day. The Indians made use of the opportunity thus afforded, to furnish themselves with moccasins, wash their blankets and clothes, and do many other things necessary to their comfort and cleanliness during the remainder of the journey.<sup>93</sup> The health of the Indians is now almost as good as before we commenced our march from Twin Lakes—a few days more will entirely recruit them. A young child died in the Evening.

Friday, 5th Oct.

Left Encampment opposite Naples at 8 o'clock, and reached at a little after 12 our present encampment, at McKee's creek, twelve miles from the Illinois river.<sup>94</sup> We were forced to-day to leave the Road and travel a considerable

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Association, last updated May 12, 2006, <http://www.potawatomi-tda.org/illinois/riddlehi.htm>, accessed April 2021.

<sup>93</sup>Moccasins were both a handmade good for personal consumption and a marketed commodity, which Polke could potentially have purchased in lieu of shoes. See Catherine Cangany, "Fashioning Moccasins: Detroit, the Manufacturing Frontier, and the Empire of Consumption, 1701–1835," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 69 (April 2012), 265–304.

<sup>94</sup>McKee's Creek encampment was near present day Perry, Pike County, Illinois. "Pike County, Illinois," Potawatomi Trail of Death Route & Marker Pictures, Potawatomi Trail of Death Association, last updated June 7, 2006, <http://www.potawatomi-tda.org/illinois/perry.htm>, accessed April 2021.

distance to find water—even such as it is—standing in ponds.—The streams are nearly all dry. Subsistence, beef and flour. Forage of a good character.

Saturday, 6th Oct.

At a little before 8 in the morning we left the encampment of last night. During the night we were visited by a fall of rain which rendered the travelling to-day unusually pleasant. The duet has been completely allayed, and the air much cooled. Water on the route was only to be found in stagnant ponds. At 3 o'clock we reached our present encampment, which from the barrenness of the spot in everything save grass, brush and weeds, we have appropriately named Hobson's Choice.<sup>95</sup> Beef and potatoes were issued to the Indians this Evening. Forage, corn and hay. A child died since we came into camp. Distance travelled to-day eighteen miles.

Sunday, 7th Oct.

We were on the march this morning at half past 7 o'clock. The journey was pleasant and the road better than usual supplied with water. The distance to Quincy, of which we are now within six or seven miles, was too great for one day's journey; we therefore encamped at Mill-creek, but twelve miles distance from Hobson's Choice camp. To-morrow we shall reach Quincy at an early hour, and as soon as possible cross the river on the opposite bank of which we expect to remain two or three days to allow the teamsters and others engaged in the service, sufficient time to repair their wagons, etc. A child died shortly after we arrived in camp.

Monday, 8th Oct.

In order to reach Quincy and forward the ferriage of the river as much as possible, parties of the emigration were detached and sent a-head at 7 o'clock. At 10 a great portion of the emigrants had reached the river, seven miles from the camp of last night.<sup>96</sup> A steam ferry-boat which had been

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<sup>95</sup> The Hobson's Choice encampment was located at present Liberty, Adams County, Illinois. "Adams County, Illinois," Potawatomi Trail of Death Route & Marker Pictures, Potawatomi Trail of Death Association, last updated March 2, 2009, <http://www.potawatomi-tda.org/illinois/liberty.htm>, accessed April 2021. The white men's decision to call their bleak surroundings "Hobson's Choice" was likely supposed to be humorous. Merriam-Webster defines the term as "an apparently free choice when there is no real alternative." *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. "Hobson's choice," <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Hobson%27s%20choice#h1>.

<sup>96</sup> Father Petit noted that the emigrating party attracted the attention of townspeople: "When the Indians arrived at Quincy, the inhabitants, who compared this emigration with previous ones, could not help expressing their surprise at the modesty of our Christians, their calmness, and their

previously employed, was in waiting for, and the Indians were immediately put on board. By night we succeeded in crossing all the Indians, horses, and several wagons. The remainder will be brought over as early as convenient, to-morrow. It is with the utmost difficulty that many of the Indians are restrained from intoxication<sup>97</sup>. A guard has to be kept under arms in every town through which we pass.—Tomorrow will be employed in the payment of the officers and troops. Three children died since morning.

Tuesday, 9th Octr.

The wagons belonging to the emigration were early engaged in ferrying the river, and by night time all were over. During the day the officers were busily employed in making out the accounts of the officers, laborers and wagoners engaged in the emigration most of whom will be paid and settled with up to the 30th ult. Two Dragoons Messrs. Kelley & Smith declined going further with the emigration—they were accordingly discharged.<sup>98</sup> Dr.

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general demeanor.” Petit to Bishop Bruté, November 13, 1838, in McKee, *Trail of Death*, 102. The *Quincy Whig* reported: “The emigrating Pottawattimies, on the way to their future residence, on the head waters of the Osage River, crossed the Mississippi at this place, during the three first days of the week. There are, we understand, over eight hundred of them. Much sickness has prevailed among them since they left their former homes in Indiana.” *Quincy Whig*, October 13, 1838.

<sup>97</sup>Randy Mills notes how alcohol exercised profound and often damaging biological and cultural effects on Native Americans post-contact, “an especially troubling problem as tribes came into closer contact with newly arriving white settlers.” James Clifton observes that alcohol became disruptive to the Potawatomis’ “patterns of community life” because “ample supplies of whiskey” too often became a “solvent for the limited internal controls of men prone to violence.” Randy Mills, “‘It is the Cause of All Mischief Which the Indians Suffer’: Native Americans and Alcohol Abuse in the Old Northwest,” *Ohio Valley History* 3, no. 3 (2003), 3; Clifton, *The Prairie People*, 159. See also Sami Lakomäki, Ritva Kylli, and Timo Ylimaunu, “Drinking Colonialism: Alcohol, Indigenous Status, and Native Space on Shawnee and Sámi Homelands, 1600–1850,” *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 4 (Spring 2017), 1–29, wherein the authors discuss “the intimate interlinkages between alcohol, colonial state-building, and political and cultural constructions of Indigenous status and Native spaces” (p. 1). It is worth noting that Potawatomi men and women did not necessarily consider alcohol consumption pathological; some Lakes Indian women incorporated it into mourning rituals, while some Potawatomi men (such as the prophet Main Poc) considered it an additional source of bravery and strength in battle. Peter C. Mancall, “Men, Women, and Alcohol in Indian Villages in the Great Lakes Region in the Early Republic,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 15 (Autumn 1995), 425–48, esp. 430–31, 434–35; Mark J. Wagner, “‘He Is Worse Than the [Shawnee] Prophet’: The Archaeology of Nativism among the Early Nineteenth Century Potawatomi of Illinois,” *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* 31 (Spring 2006), 89–116, esp. 110.

<sup>98</sup>Polke wrote to Tipton: “The Rule I have adopted when ever a person Complains [is] to Dismiss without Ceremony.” George Smith and his wagoners—whom Polke needed to complete the journey to Kansas—proved a partial exception to Polke’s rule. When they complained about compensation and threatened to quit in Missouri, Polke “Informd them if they left the service they Returnd home on their own Expencc but that if they went on I would see them have Justice Done them.” Carter informed Tipton that one of the dragoons had been dismissed by Polke “for

Jerolaman came into camp to-day—his health is still very delicate. Several of the chiefs assembled to-day, and requested of the Conductor liberty to remain in Camp each succeeding Sabbath for devotional exercises. Leave was granted. The health of the Indians is still improving. We shall continue in camp to-morrow. Mr. H. Barnett, a dragoon, was also discharged to-day, at his own request.<sup>99</sup>



William Polke to Carey A. Harris  
Camp Quincy west Bank of Mississippi  
octobe[r] 9th [1838]

sir

on yesterday about 10 O Clock A m the front of the Emigration Reached the Mississippii and before sunset we had all the Indians and part of our waggons across we shall have to Remain here to Day and probably to morrow in order to give our waggonersers [sic] & others an opportunity of Repairing their getting thier horses shod and other necessary Repairs I had supposed that at this p[l]ace I could have Dispensed with the servceis of the VolunTERS that have been attached to the Emigration but the Experience of the last week has Convinced me of thier use in husling the Indian groups Each morning and guarding against Impositions from suspicious persons who are following the Emigration<sup>100</sup> with a view as is supposed frequent our Camps with a view of swindling the Indians of thier ponies and other property and another very Important Duty they perform by guarding the groghshops with [which] Each village abounds through which we pass to prevent the Intoxication of the Indians in which we have succeeded thus far with but few Exceptions,<sup>101</sup> under these Circumstances I have Concluded

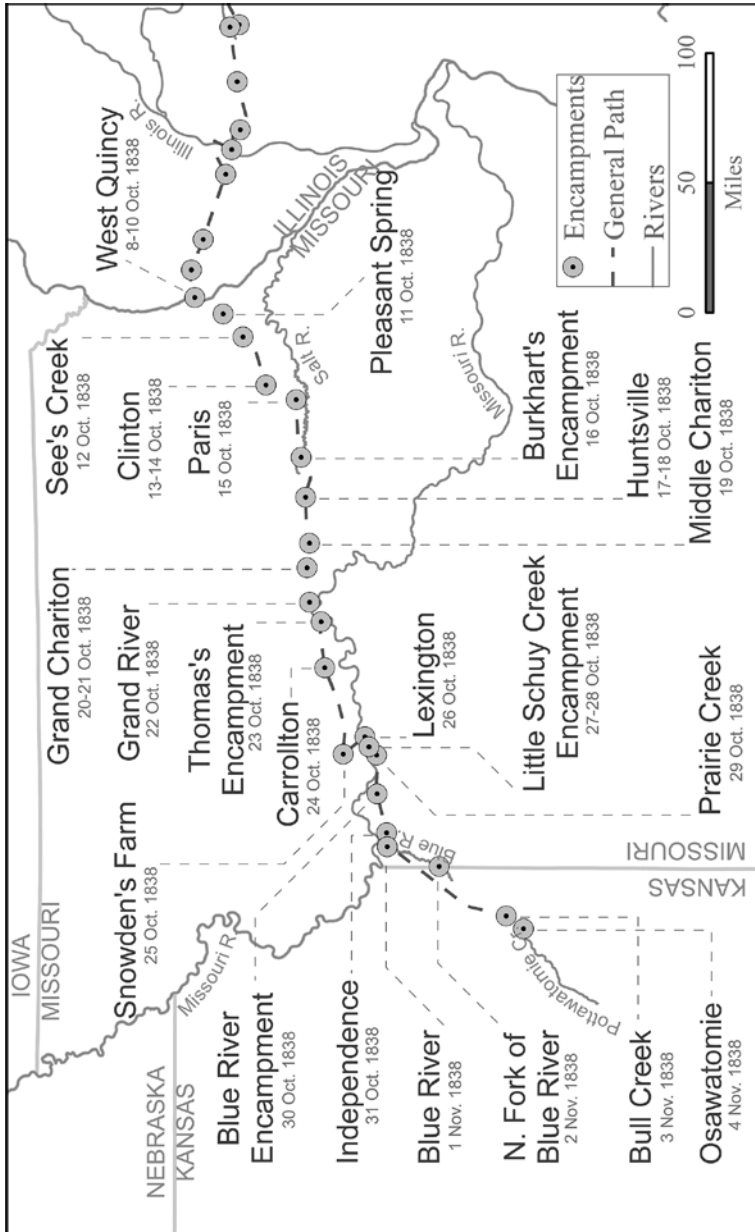
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complaining and another for getting drunk." Polke to Tipton, October 11, 1838, 3:748, Carter to Tipton, October 7, 1838, 3:744, Robertson and Riker, eds. *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>99</sup> Polke told Tipton that Barnett "wished to force me into the measure of Raising their wages &c saying you had so promised him. I instantly Discharged him and Informed all that they were at liberty to Retire that I could do without them which stopped any further Complaints." Polke to Tipton, October 11, 1838, 3:748, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>100</sup> The "suspicious persons" were very likely white peddlers seeking to swap whiskey for Potawatomi horses and household goods. See notes 91 and 96 about the group attracting attention.

<sup>101</sup> Carter noted that Polke had endeavored to ferry the party across the river as quickly as possible to "keep our Indians sober. Sands disgraced his emigration by staying in town 3 or 4 days & all got drunk white & red." Carter to Tipton, October 7, 1838, 3:744, Robertson and Riker, eds.,



Map depicting the general path and encampments of the Potawatomi forced removal through Missouri to the reservation in Kansas. Encampment names are historical and taken from the journal herein; waterways are based on present-day locations.

Cartography courtesy of J. Paul Blekking (Tanager Mapping and Consulting LLC), map research and editing courtesy of Admiral S. Wieland.

to Retain them in service during the Remainder of the Emigration as the Weather is Becoming Cool with frost we shall be Compelled to purchase shoes for a Num[ber] of the old men and squaws who are Destitute of Mocasons<sup>102</sup> owing to the great Number of weak and Infirm we have frequently to Employ waggons for a Day or two at a time which Does not appear on the Roll of waggons and in the absence of Instructions from Col Pepper the superintendant I have Exercised what I beleeve a sound Discretion in forwarding the Benevolent Views of the governme[n]t and [illegible] towards these Indians

I am sir your obe  
[William Polke]



Wednesday, 10th Oct.

The settlements of yesterday was concluded to-day, and every person engaged in the service, save the Officers of the emigration, was paid up to the 30th ult. In order to allow the wagoners an opportunity of repairing their wagons, shoeing their horses and making other repairs necessary for the safe prosecution of the journey, much extra ferriage was done during the two days of our encampment at the river. This might have been avoided by remaining on the Quincy Chore, but the dissolute habits of the Indians and their great proneness to intoxication, forbid such a step on the part of the agents of the government.<sup>103</sup> At sunset all the wagons that had been repairing, were in camp, and we were prepared for next day's journey.

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*John Tipton Papers.* Col. Lewis H. Sands had served as superintendent of the fall 1837 emigration of a group of Ottawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomi Indians to Indian Territory. See Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians*, 166–69.

<sup>102</sup> Recurring shortages of basic supplies such as shoes may stem from the strict orders Polke received from Abel Pepper, even before his appointment as conductor. Polke was told to supply only “such articles [of clothing] as are absolutely necessary for decency and protection from the inclemency of the season” and to “exercise a rigid economy.” Three weeks later, Pepper again admonished Polke to the “observance of *Strict economy* relative to *Expenditures of every Kind*.” Pepper to Polke, August 8, 1838, and August 29, 1838, Polke Manuscripts (emphasis original).

<sup>103</sup> These journal entries reflect both the difficulties of protecting the Potawatomi when the large emigrating group passed through inhabited towns and Polke's unawareness, until a few days after this entry, that Gen. Morgan, assistant superintendent of the emigration, was supplying whiskey to Indians when the party camped at night.

Thursday, 11th Octr.

At 9 o'clock the emigration moved from the encampment of the last two days. The rest of yesterday and the day before had much recruited the health and spirits of the Indians. The march was pleasant and without the occurrence of any difficulties. We are encamped at Pleasant Spring, near Palmyra, Mo. Capt. J. Holman, of Peru, Ia. arrived in Camp to-day.<sup>104</sup> He serves in the capacity of Assistant Superintendent, having received his appointment at the suggestion of reports unfavorable to the health of the officers attached to the emigration. A woman died shortly after we encamped today. An ox wagon engaged in the transportation of Indians, having lost its cattle was forced to remain behind with its load. The wagon along with those left to hunt the oxen will be up to-morrow. Distance travelled to-day thirteen miles.

Friday, 12th Oct.

Early this morning we prepared for marching, and at 8 o'clock were under way. We passed through Palmyra at 10, and had little difficulty in preventing the excesses of the Indians. After we arrived in camp, however, two or three Indians were found to have procured liquor, and become much intoxicated. They were immediately arrested and put under guard. We are now encamped on See's creek, thirteen miles from Pleasant Spring, the camp of last night.<sup>105</sup> The health of the Indians is considered so good that medicine has not for some time been administered to them. Subsistence beef and flour. Forage corn and corn fodder. The Indian horses are suffered

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<sup>104</sup> Joseph Holman was a Fort Wayne merchant who had organized an unsuccessful petition against moving the Fort Wayne Indian agency to Logansport. In 1838, he was captain of one of the companies of dragoons who went with Tipton to the Twin Lakes encampment and then formed part of the initial military escort through Indiana. Tipton wrote to Holman on September 29 that Polke's news "respecting the health of his assistants has induced me to request you to set out tomorrow & travel with all possible speed until you overtake the party when with it you will aid Judge Polke in the various duties required as assistant superintendent, if he is sick you will take charge of the whole concern." Tipton also wrote to Polke about sending Holman and instructed Polke: "Should any of your assistants be too sick to do duty, *but for a day*, leave them—hire others and report the facts. you must have well not sick men to do duty." Tipton to Wallace, August 31, 1838, 3:681–82, Tipton to Wallace, September 18, 1838, 3:717, Tipton to Holman, September 29, 1838, 3:736, Tipton to Pepper, September 29, 1838, 3:737, Tipton to Polke, October 1, 1838, 3:740, Tipton to Benjamin H. Smith, October 2, 1838, 3:741, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*. See also Trennert, *Indian Traders on the Middle Border*, 29–30.

<sup>105</sup> See's Creek is near present day Monroe City, Monroe County, Missouri. "Monroe County, Missouri," Potawatomi Trail of Death Route & Marker Pictures, Potawatomi Trail of Death Association, last updated June 1, 2011, <http://www.potawatomi-tda.org/missouri/monroeci.htm>, accessed April 2021.

to graze through the woods. The wagon left behind yesterday came up this evening after dark. Gen. A. Morgan, who has heretofore been acting in the capacity of Assistant Superintendent in the emigration gave notice that he should offer his resignation to-morrow.<sup>106</sup>

Saturday, 13th Oct.

This morning as we were on the eve of leaving our encampment, a number of the Indians headed by the chief Ash-kum came up to Head Quarters, and requested an interview with the Conductor and Gen. Morgan. Ash-kum arose and in a short talk informed the Conductor that the Indians were unwilling that Gen. Morgan whom they had been taught to recognize as principal in the emigration, should leave them.<sup>107</sup> They felt, he continued, that Gen. M. was near to them as a protector—he had made them pledges upon which they depended, and the fulfilment of which induced them in part to consent to their emigration. The Indians also requested thro' Ashkum liberty to travel less and remain longer in camp. Judge Polke answered. He informed them that Gen. Morgan had voluntarily offered his resignation, and that he had been appointed to conduct them to their new

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<sup>106</sup>General Amaziah Morgan was appointed to the removal at the insistence of Abel Pepper. The rest of his history as assistant superintendent is told in letters among Pepper, Tipton, Polke, Harris, and Carter. In mid-September, Tipton wrote to Polke, telling the judge not to pay Morgan's expenses, especially for the general's servant. After receiving "letters from camp," Tipton wrote from his home to Pepper: "Genl Morgan hangs on to the Emigration altho we were compell'd to stop him from even dividing the provisions to the Indians for which he is wholly unfit." Chauncey Carter informed Tipton that Morgan had dismissed his servant and was now sharing a cook with Dr. Jerolaman and others, assuring Tipton that "if Morgan makes bills out of camp, I shall forbid his drawing & make him pay his own bills." Tipton appears to have made a failed attempt to have Morgan dismissed; instead, he wrote to Polke, giving the conductor the authority to "pay no attention" to Morgan. Finally, in a remarkably frank letter, Carter told Tipton: "Genl Morgan had been in the daily practice of getting intoxicated himself & it was believed that he aided the Indians in procuring whiskey." Carter related that Judge Polke had discovered Morgan "handing a full bottle of whiskey to an Indian then intoxicated." Polke gave Morgan an opportunity to resign before being dismissed and Morgan accepted the offer—but then proceeded to make trouble for Polke among some of the Potawatomi chiefs, as the journal makes clear. Pepper to Tipton, February 10, 1838, 3:537, Pepper to Tipton, February 18, 1838, 3:548, Polke to Pepper, September 12, 1838, 3:702, Tipton to Pepper, September 21, 1838, 3:725, Tipton to Pepper, September 23, 1838, 3:727, Carter to Tipton, September 28, 1838, 3:732, Tipton to Harris, September 30, 1838, 3:738, Tipton to Polke, October 1, 1838, 3:740, Carter to Tipton, October 14, 1838, 3:749, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>107</sup>Ashkum, a St. Joseph Potawatomi leader, had opposed Ioway in the 1836 annuity fight. Edmunds, *The Potawatomis*, 259–60; Edmunds, "Designing Men, Seeking a Fortune," 109–122. Secunda groups him, Leopold Pokagon, and Menominee into a loose regional alliance he calls the "Michigan Road band." Secunda, "To Cede or Seed," 70. Jacob Piatt Dunn asserts that "Ashkum" in the Potawatomi language is derived from a concept or state of being, meaning "'to continue,' 'more and more,' or 'more of the same kind.'" Dunn, *True Indian Stories*, 254.

homes, with the consent of Gen. M. etc. etc. Gen. Morgan also responded and returned his thanks to the Indians for the interest which they manifested in his welfare. The chief I-o-weh dissented in strong terms from the sentiments expressed by Ashkum. He stated that these men (alluding to Ash-kum and his associates) were not chiefs—that they were not entitled to respect as such. He wished that Judge Polke should conduct them to their new homes, and that Gen. Morgan should return. He was contented with the Officers remaining with the emigration.<sup>108</sup> The emigration left at 9 o'clock. Gen. Morgan having previously departed. The day was very windy, and the dust exceedingly afflicting. At 3 o'clock we arrived in camp at Clinton—a distance of seventeen miles from See's creek. To-morrow we shall remain in camp.

Sunday, 14th Octr.

To-day according to a promise made the chiefs a few days ago, we remained in camp. The Indians attended service during the day, and seemed quite to enjoy themselves. In the Evening the chiefs Ash-kum, I-o-weh and others, along with a number of the Indians, assembled at Head Quarters, and shook hands for a talk. They came, I-o-weh said, to demand the dismissal or suspension of Dr. Jerolaman, the physician for the emigration, whom they had ceased to like, and did not wish him longer to accompany the emigration.<sup>109</sup> Judge Polke answered and informed them that their request was one of so much importance and so unusual in emigrations, that he

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<sup>108</sup> Carter reported to Tipton that during the night after Morgan's dismissal by Polke, the general, Dr. Jerolaman, and others "were engaged in making an impression among the Indians in favor of Morgan." Carter related the "interview" described in the journal, adding that Ioway "the principal chief, requested of the Judge that Morgan should be discharged, in presence of the other Indians, who had previously spoken, stating for his reason that Morgan was constantly drunk & that he kept the Indians drunk." Carter to Tipton, October 14, 1838, 3:749–50, Robertson and Riker, *John Tipton Papers*. Ioway, by supporting Polke's dismissal of Morgan and declaring his support for Polke as conductor for the rest of the removal, further reinforced his standing as an important chief, as well as his influence with Polke.

<sup>109</sup> A detailed account of Ioway's speech before Polke is given in a document in the Polke Manuscript collection, dated October 14. The writer may be Jesse Douglass, who often acted as Polke's secretary. According to the account, Ioway "wished to request a favor of his father the Conductor, which he was sincerely anxious might be granted. It was a delicate request, he knew, but . . . it was made for the benefit, and as the wish of the Indians." Dr. Jerolaman, Ioway stated, "did them no good, but they were fearful much harm." While the doctor "was with them at first, they were sick, & many of them died. Then he left them, and they soon recovered their usual health. He had returned again, and for what he asked but to destroy the health of those who left alone would soon cease to be a burden." The Indians, Ioway said, "would much rather risk the danger of sickness without rather than with the services of a physician in whom they had no confidence." Account by [Jesse Douglass?], October 14, 1838, Polke Manuscripts.

hoped he might be allowed time not only to decide himself but to counsel with his officers. The Indians then retired, with the understanding that an answer would be given them to-morrow evening.

Monday, 15th Oct.

At 8 o'clock this morning we were on the march. The day was very windy, which rendered our passage across the prairie very disagreeable. Many of the Indians suffered a good deal. At noon we reached our present encampment, near Paris, twelve miles distant from the camp of last night. During the evening the chiefs, according to arrangement of last night, along with a large number of the Indians, came up to Head Quarters, and repeated their request of last night. The Speaker said that he did not demand it for himself or for his associates alone, but for every man, woman and child in camp—they all united in soliciting the discharge of Dr. Jerolaman. The Conductor briefly informed them that Dr. J. had received his appointment from government—that he felt a delicacy in discontinuing an officer of government—that the Indians were not compelled to receive the services of Dr. J.—they were free to choose for themselves—that he thought it his duty to retain his services as physician for the officers of the emigration, and that viewing their request in the light he did, he could not consistently with his duty, grant their request.<sup>110</sup> He hoped they would forget their prejudices, and still continue friendly with Dr. J.—and that his decision might not affect the feelings of unity which had so far subsisted between the officers and their red brethren. In conclusion he informed them that he had purchased, in the hope of allaying their discontent, a keg of tobacco, which he wished them to smoke in token of continued friendship.<sup>111</sup> The

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<sup>110</sup> Joseph Holman conveyed the details of both meetings to Tipton, adding that Polke told Loway “that the White People wanted a Doctor & that he [Jerolaman] would not give any of the Indians Medicine unless they called for it.” Holman also recorded that Polke’s words “did not satisfy the Doctor.” Jerolaman, denied by Polke the opportunity to question Loway, became “enraged” and “continued raging at his camp until late bed time[.] how he may be when he rises we cannot tell.” Carter continued the story in a letter written two days later: “The Dr. became enraged & after he retired got gloriously drunk & am told abused the Judge outrageously. . . . He is a perfect nuisance in the camp, despised by nearly all, white & red, is on the sick list two thirds of his time.” Carter added that Polke “would have dismissed him before this if the Indians had not requested it, but think it would make a bad beginning to do it at their request.” Holman to Tipton, October 16, 1838, 3:751, Carter to Tipton, October 18, 1838, 3:752–53, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>111</sup> Tobacco, because of its status as a personal and spiritual gift and the connection it made between the smoker and the celestial realm, served as an important component of Native American diplomacy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. David Andrew Nichols, *Red Gentlemen & White*

Indians then retired, not, without, however, first requesting leave to renew the subject again. Subsistence, beef, corn and potatoes. Forage corn & hay.

Tuesday, 16th Oct.

Left Encampment at Paris this morning at 8. Our march was unusually long—water being scarce throughout the country. At 3 o'clk. we arrived at Burkhart's Encampment, eighteen miles from Paris.<sup>112</sup> The day was quite cold—last night having frozen water in camp. Health still improving. Complaints of sickness are scarcely to be heard.

Wednesday, 17th Octr.

Although the appearances of the weather were unfavorable, we were at an early hour preparing for the day's journey. At 8 the snow commenced falling very fast, and continued during the greater part of the day. Travelling was difficult, the road being exceedingly slippery, and the snow falling so fast as to render very cold and unpleasant the whole journey. At 3 o'clk. we reached our encampment near Huntsville, about thirteen miles from Burkhart's. The Indians travelled without complaint, and seemed greatly to approve of the exertions of government to place them at their new homes<sup>113</sup> Subsistence flour and beef. Forage corn and hay. The snow at night changed to rain, which almost inundated the encampment. A quantity of straw was procured, which generally distributed throughout the camp rendered the Indians tolerably comfortable for the night.

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*Savages: Indians, Federalists, and the Search for Order on the American Frontier* (Charlottesville, Va., 2008), 47–48.

<sup>112</sup> Burkhart's Encampment was located between present day Madison, in Monroe County, and Moberly, Randolph County, Missouri.

<sup>113</sup> As a U. S. Senator, Tipton had been heavily involved in 1838 legislation organizing the Indian Territory. In an April 18 speech, he laid out the details of government plans for the Removed, resettled Natives and the benefits, as he saw it, which would accrue to them. "If we teach them," Tipton concluded, "division of property, labor, and the elements of Government, and protect them from foreign emissaries and invasions by the strong arm of this Government, we have good reason to look forward with the confident hope of seeing them, at no distant day, emerge from degradation, and become an independent state, and its citizens an intelligent, industrious, and happy people." "Speech on Indian Territory Bill," April 18, 1838, 3:594–614 (quote 613–14), Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*. As journal entries make clear, however, there were no physical "new homes" for the Potawatomi (despite treaty promises) as a Kansas winter was setting in, only an expanse of prairie upon which they were required to build their own shelters.

Thursday, 18th Oct.

To-day owing to the continued rain we were forced to remain encamped. Added to which the state of the roads forbid our travel. Nothing occurred during the day, save the drunkenness of a few of the Indians who had procured liquor at Huntsville. To-morrow we expect to move. Provisions and forage the same as yesterday.



[William Polke?] to [Harris?]  
Cantsville Missouri, Octr 18 1838.<sup>114</sup>

Sir,

By the enclosed statements of the officers of the Emigration you will discover that a novel occurrence has transpired in this Emigration. To have complied with the request of the chiefs and other Indians would have been subversive of good order in the Emigration, and to pass Doctor Jerolaman's improper course in silence, would be equally improper. Under these circumstances I have thought proper to submit the whole case to the Department.<sup>115</sup>

I am, Sir, Your obedt. Servant



Friday, 19th Octr.

Early this morning the Indians were busily engaged in making preparations for a march. At 8 o'clock we were on the way. At 12 we reached encampment on Middle Chariton, eleven miles from the camp of last night.<sup>116</sup> The day was cold and clear—the journey, however, was accomplished without

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<sup>114</sup> Cantsville is present Coatsville, Schuyler County, in northern Missouri.

<sup>115</sup> The statement was signed by Chauncy Carter, George Rush, and James Arnold and gave their account of Dr. Jerolaman's behavior after the October 15 council with Ioway. The men reported that they had been in their tent "several paces" from the doctor's tent and had "distinctly heard" him make "repeated threats" against some of the officers as well as Ioway. They described his "ravings" as "usually preceded or followed by curses and oaths." Signed statement of Chauncy Carter, George Rush, and James Arnold, October 18, 1838, Polke Manuscripts.

<sup>116</sup> Middle Chariton here refers to the Chariton River, which flows from Iowa into Missouri, and is a tributary to the Missouri River.

the distress of Wednesday. The Indians still seem to be anxious to reach their destination.

Saturday, 20th Octr.

Left Chariton Encampment at 8 o'clock this morning. The road was quite muddy, and the air very cold. At 12 we reached our present Encampment on Grand Chariton, two miles from Keatsville. To-morrow being the Sabbath we shall remain in camp. The health of the Indians is almost completely restored. There are perhaps scarcely a dozen cases in camp. Subsistence beef and flour— of which the Indians are becoming tired. Bacon and pork cannot be procured. Forage hay and corn. Distance travelled to-day eleven miles.

Sunday, 21st Oct.

To-day we remained in camp to allow the Indians, according to a request made by them, an opportunity for worship.<sup>117</sup> During the day a considerable quantity of apples and cider was purchased and given to the Indians. The health continues good. One or two of the Officers have within the last few days been much indisposed.

Monday, 22nd Oct.

At an early hour this morning we left our encampment, and passing through Keatsville, journeyed towards the Missouri River. At 2 o'clock. P. M. we reached Grand River, preparations for the ferriage of which had before been made, and immediately commenced its crossing. By dark all the Indians and many of the wagons were over. The remainder will cross in the morning early and by 12 we hope to be able to continue our journey. Distance travelled to-day fifteen miles.

Tuesday, 23rd Octr.

The morning was early employed in ferrying the remainder of the wagons. By 12 o'clock. all were across, and we prepared for the continuation of our journey. The bottom lands of the Missouri being too flat and wet to encamp upon an hour longer than was essentially necessary, at 1 o'clock. we left Grand River Encampment, and passing over prairies (the cold being

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<sup>117</sup> Jesse Douglass wrote to Tipton that "nightly they [the Catholic Potawatomi] sing & pray—and every Sabbath hold a general meeting, which is well attended." Douglass to Tipton, October 21, 1838, 3:755, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

severe) arrived at Thomas' Encampment at a little after 4, a distance of ten miles. Subsistence beef, flour and corn.<sup>118</sup> Forage corn and corn fodder.

Wednesday, 24th Octr.

This morning before leaving Camp a quantity of Shoes were distributed among the indigent and barefooted Indians, the weather being too severe for marching without a covering to the feet. At 8 o'clock we left Thomas' encampment, and at 12 reached Carrollton, near which place we are now encamped. Distance twelve miles. Nothing occurred on the way. The cold was intense on the prairies. The country through which we passed to-day is very much excited. Nothing is heard—nothing is talked of but the Mormons and the difficulties between them and the citizens of Upper Missouri. Carrollton is nightly guarded by its citizens.<sup>119</sup>

Thursday, 25th Octr.

Having an unusually long journey before us, across a prairie, we moved from Carrollton encampment at half past 7 o'clk. and without meeting with difficulties or obstructions, but somewhat fatigued, we arrived at Snowden's, near whose farm we encamped. The journey was made unnecessarily long because of the scarcity of water and timber, and the absence of provisions and forage. Some time after our encampment the Conductor was waited upon by a gentleman, who it appeared had been delegated by the citizens of Richmond (a village near us) to request assistance as they really anticipated an attack from the Mormons tonight.<sup>120</sup> Judge Polke informed the

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<sup>118</sup> Thomas' Encampment was located southwest of present DeWitt, Carroll County, Missouri. Willard, *Potawatomi Trail of Death*, 180.

<sup>119</sup> Father Petit related a conversation with two travelling Frenchmen who "were somewhat frightened by the state of the countryside, which was all in arms. The majority of the Protestants in the country had resolved to exterminate or at least expel certain sectarians called Mormons, who refused to submit to the tax and the public charges." Petit to Bishop Bruté, November 13, 1838, in McKee, *Trail of Death*, 103. The Potawatomi forced march passed through Missouri during the 1838 Mormon War, which had begun in August and by mid-October involved violent clashes between state militia and large Mormon settlements in two counties. On October 27, Governor Lilburn Boggs ordered that the Mormons be driven from the state or exterminated; on October 31, troops captured and imprisoned Joseph Smith and other Mormon leaders, leading to the Mormon exodus to what would become Nauvoo, Illinois. Stephen C. LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* (Columbia, Mo., 1987).

<sup>120</sup> Petit related that "we heard artillery and rifle shots. We saw armed troops coming to formation from every direction. . . . We passed quietly through this theater of fanatic battles, although at our arrival a message had come asking that the Indians join the troops who were attacking the Mormons. This request was wisely rejected." Petit to Bishop Bruté, November 13, 1838, in McKee, *Trail of Death*, 104.

gentleman that such a step on his part would be entirely without the line of his duty. His duties were particularly delegated to him by the government, to which he was responsible for the faithful performance of the same. He hoped that the excitement would abate, and the aid which he required be rendered unnecessary. Provisions and forage as usual.

Friday, 26th Octr.

At 8 o'clock we left our encampment, and at 10 reached the Missouri river, opposite Lexington. We immediately commenced ferrying, and shall perhaps be able to get the wagons all over before night. We found the ferry engaged in transporting females who were flying from their homes. Great excitement prevails. Reports are rife throughout the country of bloodshed, house-burning, etc. The people seem completely crazed. By sunset all the wagons save a few were on the opposite bank of the river. Early in the morning we shall proceed to cross the Indians.

Saturday, 27th Octr.

At sunrise the ferry boats were busily plying from shore to shore. As fast as the Emigrants reached the southern bank they were hurried on their journey. At 2 o'clk. the party were all over the river, and hastened to join the front of the emigration. At 4 o'clock the front of the party reached our encampment at Little Schuy creek, eight miles from last night's camp.<sup>121</sup>

Sunday, 28th Octr.

To-day we remained in camp. We have performed a good week's travel, ferrying two rivers in the time. Health of the camp as good as it has been. This morning the Indians with Ash-kum at their head, came to Head Quarters and informed the conductor of some difficulties which they were fearful might occur in the exercise of the unrestricted power claimed by I-o-weh, whom they did not choose to acknowledge as a chief of the blood. They also requested information in regard to their annuities, etc.<sup>122</sup> Judge

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<sup>121</sup> Little Schuy Creek has since been renamed "Sni-A-Bar Creek." This encampment was located at present-day Wellington, Lafayette County, Missouri. "Lafayette County, Missouri," Potawatomi Trail of Death Route & Marker Pictures, Potawatomi Trail of Death Association, last updated May 23, 2012, <http://www.potawatomi-tda.org/missouri/lexingto.htm>, accessed April 2021.

<sup>122</sup> Annuities served as an essential foundation of the federal government's relations and treaties with Native Americans. The United States used these annual payments of goods and cash to pay Native peoples for land cessions and, in some cases, to promote its "civilization policy" (by

Polke hoped that they would cease to speak of a subject which could not be of benefit to them, but on the other hand might affect the progress of the emigration. When the journey was completed they were at liberty to speak and decide among themselves. He had yet some tobacco, which he should offer them in hopes that they would still continue in peace and harmony. He also informed them what he knew of their annuities, etc. The Indians then retired apparently contented. A child died after night some time—the first for the last four weeks.

Monday, 29th Octr.

At 8 o'clock we resumed our journey—the morning being delightful and fine for travelling. At 12 we reached Prairie creek ten miles from Schuy creek. Subsistence flour, corn-meal, beef and pork and game of every kind. Forage, corn, hay and fodder. About 5 o'clock Capt. Hull arrived in camp with the Indians left at Logansport and Tippecanoe, numbering in all some twenty-three.<sup>123</sup> They are tolerably good health and spirits and will perhaps accomplish the remainder of the journey ill the company of our party.

Tuesday, 30th Octr.

We marched from Prairie creek this morning at a little before 8, and at 1 p. m. reached our present encampment at Blue River, fourteen miles from this

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making some payments in livestock, plows, and technical assistance). Among tribal leaders, they were important to the status of chiefs and heads of families, as annuities were distributed to chiefs and family heads in a strictly regulated fashion by the Office of Indian Affairs. The 1837 "Revised Regulations, No. II" specified, among other details, to whom annuities were to be paid and the use of goods as part of the annuity system, and agents were required to complete the "Receipt Roll for Paying Indian Annuities to Heads of Families." Annuity payment days could serve as opportunities for different bands and communities to gather, feast, dance, and celebrate their national identity; they could also create dissension among Native leaders, Indian agents, traders, and merchants. During the 1838 removal, Potawatomi *wkamek* began to inquire about annuity payments before they reached Kansas, to Polke's dismay, and continued to do so in the absence of Agent Davis at their destination. See journal entries for November 5, 6, 19, 22, 23, and 24. Davis's absence was cause for concern among the Potawatomi as he, not Polke, was responsible for annuity payments and fulfillment of specific treaty stipulations. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1837–1838*, 100–102, 111; Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745–1815* (Baltimore, Md., 1992), 131, 137; Brenda Child, *Holding Our World Together: Ojibwe Women and the Survival of Community* (New York, 2012), 55–56.

<sup>123</sup> Both Henry Tilley and Joseph Holman—Tilley travelling in his capacity as a disbursing agent and Holman heading westward to join the emigration—caught up to Hull and his small group and reported back to Tipton. Tilley to Tipton, October 2, 1838, 3:740–41, Tilley to Tipton, October 10, 1838, 3:746, Holman to Tipton, October 11, 1838, 3:747, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

morning's camp.<sup>124</sup> The journey was unusually pleasant—the day warm, and the emigrants in the company of their friends, who came up yesterday evening, very gay and cheerful. Some time after our encampment Capt. Hull reported himself to the conductor and the number and condition of the emigrants under his charge. They number in all twenty-three, having five horses and three transporting wagons in company. They will be attached to the emigration under the charge of Judge Polke to-morrow.



Jacob Hull to William Polke  
Emigration  
Little Blue River Encampment  
Oct 30 1838  
Honrd William Polke

Sir

in compliance with your request I send there in enclosed a copy of my journal the Original contracts with the Wagoners the number of Persons Employed the number of Teams and Emigrants &c &

The wole No of Emigrants was 32 who started from Camp Logan [Logansport] Consisting of the following famalies

Topia malica and Lewis Burnett<sup>125</sup> 9

Mek-Seek-Waga 9

Pok-ka-qos 12

To-Pice 2

32

the number who ar[e] now in camp ar[e] 23 as follows

Topa-ma-lica & Lewis Burnett 9

Meek-Seek-Waga 6

<sup>124</sup> The Blue River Encampment was located at present-day Buckner, Jackson County, Missouri. Willard, *Potawatomi Trail of Death*, 180.

<sup>125</sup> Lewis Burnett (Topenebee) was a noted Potawatomi chief in southern Michigan who signed the Treaty of Greenville and eleven others on behalf of the Potawatomi. McCoy considered him “the principal chief of the nation” and key to the U.S. government’s determination to settle the Potawatomi in approved reserves in Indian Territory, particularly its effort to consolidate the relocated Potawatomis in a reserve on the Osage River. See, for example, McCoy to Tipton, July 21, 1837, 3:419–22, McCoy to Tipton, November 16, 1837, 3:458–59, Davis to Tipton, May 28, 1838, 3:633–34, Hull to Tipton, September 11, 1838, 3:700, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*. For the Osage River reservation see Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians*, 167–69.

Pok ka qos     3  
 To Piase       3  
 Jo-Wa-Qua    3  
 23

The reasons of the famalies differing in name and number from what thiy [sic] were at the time of Starting is occationed by some leeving one famaly and joining others and Seperating for themselves<sup>126</sup>

The journal will explane how the Number was diminished—

Moste Respectfully Your Odt Servt

Jacob Hull

[Endorsed] Jacob Hull Muster Roll October 30, 1838



Wednesday, 31st Octr.

Left Encampment this morning at half after 7 o'clock—the company under Capt. Hull being attached to the emigration—and at 12 o'clock passed through Independence. At 1 we reached our present encampment two miles south of Independence, and ten miles from the camp of yesterday. After reaching camp in the evening a small quantity of shoes were distributed among the emigrants. Many Indians came into camp during the afternoon much intoxicated.

Thursday, 1st Novr.

Left camp Independence at a little after 9—one hour or so having been allowed the Indians for their religious exercises. At 3 o'clk. we reached our present encampment on Blue River, sixteen miles.<sup>127</sup> The journey was exceedingly pleasant—the weather being warm and the road very good. Subsistence and forage of a good and healthy character, and to be had in abundance. To-morrow we shall cross the state line, and thereafter

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<sup>126</sup> Henry Tilley noted that “Cattiece (of the Family of Packagos) her Husbang & 4 Children left the party near Tippecanoe River, yesterday Packagos & his Brother left also. Capt. Hull is of opinion, Barron is at the bottom of the plot.” Interpreter Joseph Barron had been left behind at Logansport and was traveling with Hull's group. Polke to Pepper, September 15, 1838, 3:708, Tilley to Tipton, October 2, 1838, 3:740–41, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>127</sup> The November 1 encampment on the Blue River was located at present-day Grandview, Jackson County, Missouri. Willard, *Potawatomi Trail of Death*, 180.

experience some difficulty in provisioning—the country being almost an entire wilderness.<sup>128</sup>

Friday, 2nd Nov.

This morning broke upon us rainy and disagreeable. The Conductor being anxious, however, to complete the journey now so near at an end, gave the word for a move, and at 8 o'clock we were on the road—the rain increasing as we advanced. At 9 we crossed the boundary line, and found ourselves in the heart of a prairie, with scarcely any traces to mark our route. The journey was continued and at 12 a large portion of the emigrants on horseback became detached from the wagons, and wandered over the prairie four hours in search of the trace of the wagons. It was found at length, and we reached the camp ground set-out for at 3 o'clock, having travelled a distance (it was computed) of twenty-five miles, although we are now but twelve miles from the encampment of yesterday. Our encampment is known as the North fork of Blue river.<sup>129</sup> Subsistence beef and corn. Forage corn.

Saturday, 3rd Nov.

At an early hour we left our encampment at Oak Grove, and travelled until 2 o'clock when we reached a settlement of Wea Indians, on Bull creek, and camped adjoining Bull-town.<sup>130</sup> Our journey was pleasant, and was marked by the anxiety of the Indians to push forward and see their

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<sup>128</sup> By November 1838, the Osage River region of Indian Territory was inhabited by hundreds of members of the Wea, Piankeshaw, Peoria, Kaskaskia, Ottawa, and Potawatomi tribes. For a summary of Indians who were removed to Kansas, see "Emigrant Indians," in the Kansaspedia, online at <https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/emigrant-indians/15146>, accessed March 2021. In its annual report, the Office of Indian Affairs printed a table with its estimates of "the number of Indians now east of the Mississippi . . . those that have emigrated from the east to the west of that river," as well as "those within striking distance of the western frontier." Statistical Table No. 28, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1837–1838*, 72–74.

<sup>129</sup> The North Fork of the Blue River was located near Stilwell, Johnson County, Kansas. Willard, *Potawatomi Trail of Death*, 180.

<sup>130</sup> Wea had inhabited lands in southern Indiana Territory, but had ceded much of their land in early nineteenth-century negotiations with William Henry Harrison, in particular the 1805 Treaty of Grouseland. Federal Indian sub-agent Anthony Davis described the Wea settlements in Indian Territory as having "generally comfortable log cabins, fields fenced and ploughed, cultivated by animal power, own oxen, cows, hogs, fowls, &c." Davis also reported, in accordance with the U.S. government's emphasis on settled agriculture, that the Wea "show a disposition to wholly abandon the chase as a means of subsistence." Andrew R. L. Cayton, *Frontier Indiana* (Bloomington, Ind., 1996), 210–11; "Report of Anthony L. Davis, Sub-Agent on the Osage River," *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1837–1838*, 31.

friends. During the evening an attempt was made to enroll the Indians, but not very successfully. They did not seem (or would not) to understand or appreciate the object. Late in the evening several of the chiefs came to Head Quarters, and requested to remain in camp to-morrow. But the journey being so nearly completed, and the scarcity of forage and provisions induced the conductor to deny their request, and insist upon travelling.

Sunday, 4th Nov.

Left Bull-town encampment this morning at 9 o'clk. two hours having been allowed the Indians for devotional purposes. At 2 we crossed the Osage, where the Indians were met and welcomed by many of their friends, and at half after 3 reached Pottawattomie creek, the end of our destination.<sup>131</sup> The emigrants seemed delighted with the appearance of things—the country—its advantages—the wide spreading prairie and the thrifty grove, the rocky eminence and the meadowed valley—but particularly with the warm and hearty greetings of those who have tested (and but to become attached to,) the country assigned them by government.<sup>132</sup> The evening was spent in preparing for some settlements of to-morrow. The distance of to-day's travel is computed at twenty miles. Mr. Davis, the Agent, we found absent.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Groups from the St. Joseph and Wabash Potawatomi had been removed to Kansas in 1837. On the complex history of 1830s treaties with the Potawatomi and their relationship to Removal, as well as disputes over Indian settlement in Missouri, Iowa, and Kansas, see Edmunds, *The Potawatomi*, 241–66.

<sup>132</sup> Tipton had extolled the virtues of the Osage River country in his April speech to the U.S. Senate: "The suitability of this country is such that one is almost ready to conclude that Providence had contrived it for this very time and for this special purpose." Tipton, "Speech on Indian Territory Bill," April 18, 1838, 3:598, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*. Pepishkay's description of the land as "a desert—a wilderness" negates Polke's claim of the Potawatomi's delight.

<sup>133</sup> Anthony L. Davis was a northern Indiana merchant and supplier to the Indian agency. In 1832, he served as commissary for the September treaty signing with the Potawatomi; in 1834, he was appointed as an agent to reside with a group of Potawatomi being removed west to Indian Territory. Davis was active on behalf of the federal government in ongoing disputes over Potawatomi settlement in Council Bluffs and the Osage River reserve. In 1838, Davis was appointed as sub-agent for the Osage River reserve, the destination of the removed Yellow River Potawatomi. When Polke arrived in Kansas in early November 1838, Davis was probably still in Iowa, negotiating with Potawatomi there to move to the Osage River. Davis to Tipton, January 19, 1836, 3:207–209, Harris to Tipton, March 21, 1837, 3:390–91, Davis to Tipton, November 21, 1837, 3:465–66, Davis to Tipton, October 11, 1838, 3:746, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*; "Report of Anthony L. Davis, Sub-Agent on the Osage River," *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1837–1838*, 31; Trennert, *Indian Traders on the Middle Border*, 41, 45, 91–94.

Monday, 5th Nov.

The day was consumed in making settlements with the Officers. During the afternoon a considerable number of the Indians, assembled at Head Quarters, and expressed a desire to be heard in a speech. Pe-pish-kay rose and in substance said:—That they had now arrived at their journey's end—that the government must now be satisfied. They had been taken from homes affording them plenty, and brought to a desert—a wilderness—and were now to be scattered and left as the husbandman scatters his seed.<sup>134</sup> The Agent, Mr. Davis, they knew not, and his absence would not afford them an opportunity of deciding what they might expect from him. The Indians did not think such treatment of a character with that promised them in their treaties. They hoped Judge Polke, their friend, would remain with them and see that justice should be rendered<sup>135</sup> Judge Polke informed them that considering their request too important to be disregarded, he would return from Independence, whither it was necessary he should go to attest the settlements of the emigration, and remain with them until Mr. Davis's return. He would leave his son

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<sup>134</sup> Pepishkay was probably Peepiskah, a signatory of the December 16, 1834, treaty with the United States. Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs, Laws, and Treaties*, 2:430. White advocates of Removal viewed (usually with no personal knowledge) the western prairies to which Indians were forced to relocate as land filled with potential waiting to be extracted through "civilized" processes of settlement. The disparity between Pepishkay's descriptions of the prairies and meadows of Kansas, and the words of Douglass, Polke, McCoy, and other whites, is a stark example of the difference between white and Indigenous conceptions of land. Robin Kimmerer writes: "In the settler mind, land was property, real estate, capital, or natural resources. But to our people, it was everything: identity, the connection to our ancestors, the home of our nonhuman kinfolk, our pharmacy, our library, the source of all that sustained us. Our lands were where our responsibility to the world was enacted, sacred ground. It belonged to itself; it was a gift, not a commodity, so it could never be bought or sold. These are the meanings people took with them when they were forced from their ancient homelands to new places. Whether it was their homeland or the new land forced upon them, land held in common gave people strength; it gave them something to fight for. And so—in the eyes of the federal government—that belief was a threat." Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, 17.

<sup>135</sup> The *wkamek's* arguments center, as did Menominee's over the 1836 treaty and at the Twin Lakes camp council in August 1838, on the promises made to them in treaties with the federal government—promises that had not been honored. The Potawatomi apparently also believed that they might receive more consideration of their needs from a conductor whom they knew than from an unknown Indian agent. In addition, the language that *wkamek* frequently used with Polke, Tipton, and other whites can be read as acts of resistance, what James Scott terms a "public transcript." Scott writes that "the public performance of the subordinate will, out of prudence, fear, and the desire to curry favor, be shaped to appeal to the expectations of the powerful." Scott uses the term "public transcript" as "a shorthand way of describing the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate. The public transcript, where it is not positively misleading, is unlikely to tell the whole story about power relations. It is frequently in the interest of both parties to tacitly conspire in misrepresentation." James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, Conn., 1990), 2.

(Mr. B. C. Polke) who would in company with them visit and select such localities in the country as might please them. They returned for answer that they would reply in the morning. The Council then broke up. Quite an old man died after coming into camp last night. Beef and corn were delivered to the Indians in the afternoon. During the evening, a wagon belonging to and owned by Andrew Fuller, a Pottawattomie, containing six Indians, came into camp. They had travelled from Michigan with the intention of becoming citizens of the Western Territory, and borne their expenses for the whole route. They came without any instructions from the Agent at Logansport.

Tuesday, 6th Novr.

We were early preparing to move on our return—the Officers and wagoners generally expressing much anxiety to hasten their return. The Indians assembled again, and after a repetition of the requests and arguments of yesterday, informed the Conductor that they were willing he should leave them, but they should expect his return. In the meantime they hoped that Judge Polke would interest himself in their affairs. They had confidence in him, and hoped he would not abuse it. Immediately we left our encampment, and proceeded on our return. Much feeling was manifested at our departure. On our way we passed a wagon containing two dead persons. A sick family of Indians had been left at Bull-town—two of the sick had died. They reached the camp of the Indians before night. We arrived at our encampment of Saturday last at 3 o'clock.—To-morrow we shall proceed to Westpoint.

Wednesday, 7th Nov.

Travelled from Bulltown encampment to McLean's Grove, a distance of twenty-five miles. It had snowed the night previous and continued most of the day, which was very windy and excessively cold. But small number of the Teams kept in company—most of them selecting their own routes.

Thursday, 8th Nov.

Left McLean's Grove and travelled to Westpoint a distance of nine miles to breakfast. After breakfast we continued on our way, and arrived at Camp near Independence at 5 o'clock. Several of the teams were already in camp, and others coming in. To-day we travelled a distance of twenty-one miles.

Friday, 9th Nov.

During the day the wagons left behind us came into camp. The settlements with the teams will be commenced to-day and perhaps be concluded to-morrow.

Saturday, 10th Nov.

The settlements with the teamsters and officers were concluded to-day. To-morrow we set out for home every thing having resulted as well and as happily as could have been anticipated by the most sanguine.

I believe the foregoing Journal to be correct in every thing pertaining to distances, localities, etc., etc.

J. C. DOUGLASS,  
Enroll. Agent.

SCALE OF DISTANCES.

From Logansport to Quincy-----	339 miles
From Quincy to Independence ------	213
From Independence to Pottawattomie Creek, W. T.------	66
From Naples, Ill., to Quincy-----	49
From Springfield, Ill., to Naples-----	59
From Springfield to Danville, Ill. -----	126



William Polke to Carey A. Harris  
Camp, near Independence, Mo.  
10th Nov. 1838.

Sir

Enclosed I have the honor to transmit you the conclusion of the Journal of the emigration of the Pottawattamie Indians, brought up to this date—the day of final settlement with the officers and teams attached to the party.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Polke, aided by his secretary Jesse Douglass, had kept the required daily journal recording miles travelled, impediments which delayed the emigration, the “time of marching and encamping,” reports on rations and forage, and “every other occurrence that may enable the Government to form a judgment of the mode in which the business has been done.” *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1837–1838*, 124.

It affords me pleasure to say that the emigration has been conducted and finally concluded with the greatest promptitude. Not an unpleasant circumstance occurred during the whole of the journey, to affect the character or retard at all the progress of the party. All went off, and was settled with that harmony and good nature, which was and is best calculated to subserve the interests of government.<sup>137</sup>

By the Journal you will observe that the Indians after arriving at their homes, preferred complaints against government for its nonperformance of the stipulations of the treaties concluded with them for their removal west. Houses have not been built for them—lands have not been cultivated.<sup>138</sup> They murmur at this, and perhaps with propriety. I would respectfully suggest that the promises made them both by government and Gen. Tipton, in regard to the improvement of their homes in the west, receive early attention. Such course may prevent future trouble and perhaps difficulties.

In a day or two, according to a promise extorted from me, I shall return to the Indians, and remain with them until the return of Mr Davis, the Agent, whose absence I have earlier neglected to notice. In consequence of Mr D's absence, the Indians have not yet been formally delivered.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Ginette Aley argues that land “improvements” and development, federal Indian policy, and agricultural potential (both personal and commercial) should be understood as connected and “tightly wound” into the “fabric” of the identity and history of the Old Northwest. Forced Removal of Indigenous peoples was, therefore, in the interests of local, state, and federal governments precisely for the reason Kimmerer asserts: the prospective value of lands in the minds of white settlers. “In the case of Indiana, some Indian lands were highly coveted when it became evident that a number of the roads and canal routes desired by the settlers ran through them. To the Euro-Americans there, the contest for the land had less to do with ownership than it did with controlling economic opportunity, ensuring prosperity, and shoring up their power and authority—all at the expense of American Indians. Canal and road lands represented potential profits to the newcomers as well as progress in the region’s development of its agricultural promise.” Ginette Aley, “Bringing about the Dawn,” in Daniel Barr, ed., *The Boundaries Between Us* (Kent, Ohio, 2006), 199; Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, 17.

<sup>138</sup> More than two months after the Potawatomi arrived in Kansas, Anthony Davis was authorized by Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. Hartley Crawford “to inform the Indians of the late emigration that the promises made them before they left Indiana to have a Chapple and residence built for the Catholic clergyman who accompanied them and other buildings at their new homes &c, should be fulfilled if the necessary appropriations can be had.” Davis wrote to Tipton: “They [the Potawatomi] are mouthing about promises every time they see me, but with what presents I have on hand I think to be able to get along with them until the other is certain and if it never comes the less is said on the subject the better.” Davis to Tipton, January 21, 1839, 3:801, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>139</sup> Regulations required that “on the arrival of the party west, at their place of destination, a remuster shall be made by the agent receiving the party, and the changes in the detachments shall be accounted for in a column of remarks, and the number of the party, by personal examination on such muster, certified by the agent so receiving, a copy of which shall be forwarded

During my stay with the Indians, I shall do all in my power to harmonize their feelings, and hope that the Department will see the necessity of an immediate compliance with its promises.

I am very respectfully Your obt Servt  
Wm Polke Conductor

PS. I also enclose the Journal of Capt. J. Hull, kept during his march with a small detachment of Pottawattamies, left sick at Logansport, of the 10th Sept. last.<sup>140</sup>

W. P. Com  
Hon C. A. Harris  
Comi of Indian affairs  
Washington



Sunday Nov 11th 1838

Not completed the settlement as was anticipated on yesturday

Monday 12th

Continued throughout yesturday and to-day—completed about 10 o'clock P. M., and retired to rest ready to seperate on to morrow

Tuesday 13th

After early breakfast with extreme reluctance parted with my friends the Officers of the Emigration, To whose zeal and fidelity on all occasions to promptly perform their duties, is to be ascribed the happy termination of the Emigration, begun under such unfavorable circumstances. Traveled 13 miles to Westport, put up with my friend the Rev. Isaac McCoy whom I had not seen for some 8 or ten years.<sup>141</sup> Find from letters received by my

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to the Office of Indian Affairs (See form No. XVIII).” *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1837–1838*, 127.

<sup>140</sup> Hull’s journal was published as Dwight L. Smith, ed., “Jacob Hull’s Detachment of the Potawatomi Emigration of 1838,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 45 (September 1949), 285–88, and is reproduced in this issue with a revised introduction and footnotes.

<sup>141</sup> Isaac McCoy was also William Polke’s brother-in-law. From mid-1823 into spring 1825, Polke had served at the Carey Mission for the Indians, in Niles, Michigan, and the even more remote Thomas Mission one hundred miles further north. McCoy, a Baptist missionary, had established the missions (in 1822 and 1826, respectively) to convert and educate Potawatomis. Kester, “A

friend that a ch[ange] is taken place in the office of commissioners of [In]dian affairs by the resignation of the former incumbent &c<sup>142</sup>

Wendesday 14th

Remained at my friends, it be [came] excessively cold. Received much valuable information from my friend on Indian affairs and their new homes: as on these subjects his information is equal to that of any other person in the United States, and his opinions entitled to respect and consideration.<sup>143</sup>

He advises me on no consideration to leave before the return of Major Davis the Agent as he believed the course I had adopted in discharging the party with the exception of my son whom I kept for an assistant. Was a measure of Economy and would meet the approval of the department

Thursday 15th,

Cont[in]ues extremely cold. Passed the day in writing letters to Gen Tipton U. S. Senator from Indiana on the subject of the Emigration agreeably to his request.<sup>144</sup> In the afternoon traveled 3 mile to another friend Mr Lykin's

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Shirt and a Bible," 53–55; George A. Schultz, *An Indian Canaan: Isaac McCoy and the Vision of an Indian State* (Norman, Okla., 1972).

<sup>142</sup> Harris had resigned at the behest of President Van Buren in October and was replaced by T. Hartley Crawford.

<sup>143</sup> McCoy was an early and influential advocate for Indian Removal, beginning in 1823, when he conceived the idea of an "Indian Canaan" which would gather all Native Americans together in lands west of the Mississippi River. McCoy continued to promote his belief in "colonization" in writing, at his missions, and particularly in his work with Senator Tipton and federal officials in the War Department. For example, in the summer and fall of 1837, McCoy reports, in great detail, from Missouri on the "difficulties" caused by Indians who are refusing to stay within the boundaries of Indian Territory chosen by the U.S. government. In July 1838, Tipton writes to Secretary of War Joel Poinsett that "no man is better qualified" than McCoy to inform the tribes in Indian Territory of new federal legislation affecting them; in August, having done so, McCoy details to Tipton the complaints of the Osage, Cherokee, Shawnee, and Delaware and asks how he can "promote the just designs of the government." McCoy to Tipton, July 20, 1837, 3:416–19, McCoy to Tipton, July 21, 1837, 3:419–22, McCoy to Tipton, November 16, 1837, 3:458–59, Tipton to Poinsett, July 12, 1838, 3:655, McCoy to Tipton, August 17, 1838, 3:665–66, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*. See Claudio Saunt, *Unworthy Republic: The Dispossession of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory* (New York, 2020), chaps. 1 and 3; Isaac McCoy, *Remarks on the Practicability of Indian Reform, Embracing Their Colonization* (Boston, 1827); McCoy, *Address to Philanthropists in the United States, Generally, and to Christians in Particular, on the Conditions and Prospects of the American Indians* (n.p., 1831); and the biographical summary from the Isaac McCoy Papers, Manuscript Collection 422, Kansas Historical Society, online at <https://www.kshs.org/p/isaac-mccoy-papers/14076>, accessed March 2021.

<sup>144</sup> Tipton was also writing final reports, in particular to Secretary of War Joel Poinsett. Tipton enclosed his "account for services rendered and monies expended by me" for reimbursement. Tipton to Poinsett, November 18, 1838, 3:768–69, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

just arrived from Michigan whither he had been on public business In conversation with him. He approves of my course and advises me by all means to remain until the return of the Agt. said in common cases he was authorized to transact business for Mr Davis. but this was of such a character and such inportunce to future Emigrations of the same tribe th[at] [he] did not feel willing to act in [the] present case.<sup>145</sup>

Friday 16th

'The cold continues extreme for the season about 11 o'clock left my friend traveled 18 miles on my return

Saturday 17th

After early breakfast left Mr Catons the out side farm in Missouri. traveled 25 miles through the lonely prairie and a cold wind arrived in the evening late at Mr Davis' No intelligence received from him by his family. A severe snow storm this eveni'ng snow about 3 in. deep

Sunday 18th

At ten o'clock left the agency rode 15 miles to R Polke's who resides as trador near the Pattawattamie Encampment, where I shall take up my quarters until my departure it being convenient to the Indian Camps<sup>146</sup>

Monday 19th

During the day several of the cheifs and others having been informed of my return visited me to make enquiries concerning the Agt and expressing anxiety for his return as they wished to know something about the payment of their annuities and the prospects of Government making their

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<sup>145</sup> Johnston Lykins, Isaac McCoy's son-in-law, served as a teacher in McCoy's school at the Carey Mission in the 1820s, and then co-founded, with McCoy, the Indian Baptist Mission in Johnson County, Kansas, in the mid-1830s. Lykins acted as an assistant agent for the Potawatomi emigration of 1837 and for subsequent negotiations over Pottawatomi settlement at the Osage River versus Council Bluffs. See for example McCoy to Tipton, May 29, 1837, 3:405–407, Lykins to Tipton, November 17, 1837, 3:459–62, Pepper to Tipton, February 10, 1838, 3:537–38, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

<sup>146</sup> Robert Polke, William Polke's brother, was licensed to trade with Indians in the Osage River country. In early 1837, he joined McCoy and Tipton in an "exploreing tour" of the area prior to Potawatomi emigration; by late 1837, he had established a trading post along the river. Davis to Tipton, May 8, 1837, 3:398–99, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*; Louise Barrey, comp., "Kansas Before 1854, A Revised Annals, 10," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 29 (Summer 1963), online at <https://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-before-1854-a-revised-annals-10/17910>, accessed March 2021.

No. XVIII  
*Indians about to emigrate west of the Mississippi river,*  
 under the direction of  
 \*MUSTER ROLL of a company of

LAWS AND REGULATIONS.

NAMES OF HEADS OF FAMILIES.	NUMBER AND AGES OF INDIANS.								NUMBER OF SLAVES.		REMARKS.	
	Males.				Females.				Males.	Females.		TOTAL NUMBER.
	Under 10.	Of 10 and under 25.	Of 25 and under 50.	Over 50.	Under 10.	Of 10 and under 25.	Of 25 and under 50.	Over 50.				

I certify that I have examined the above roll.  
 (Signed) Enrolling agent.  
 (Signed) Special agent and Superintendent.

NOTE.—The names of individuals not belonging to any family will be distinguished by an (\*)

\*See paragraph 2.

The conductor of every Removal was required to complete and submit an official Muster Roll at the beginning and end of every march. It provided the federal government an exact count of the Native Americans who began and survived each Removal.

improvement which they believed they were entitled to by promises made them in place of those burnt on the reserve previous to their being forced from their [manuscript torn] In reply I observe Whatever was promised them would be performed by their great Father.<sup>147</sup> That for the present I advised them to build for themselves as comfortable winter quarters as they could that it was so cold and late in the season that homes could not be procured that it was so late that boats could not ascend the Missouri River That Mr Davis on his return could give them more information than I could That in the spring what the Government had promised them would be performed much more said to the same amount The Indians appeared satisfied with my explanation

Tuesday 20th

My sons & my horses the last night having broke away or was stolen.<sup>148</sup> I dispatched my son this morning in pursuit to go as far as Independence and return by way of Westport to request Mr Lykins as no Intelligence is yet received from Mr Davis to come out and receive the Indians as I am extremely anxious to get home without farther delay

Wendes 21st

Visited the Indians camp found them busily engaged preparing their winter quarters agreeably to my advice.<sup>149</sup> Re [manuscript torn] their enquiries

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<sup>147</sup> On the paternalistic language used by white officials, in particular President Andrew Jackson, see Michael Paul Rogin, *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (1975; New York, 1991).

<sup>148</sup> "At the request of Wm Polke," his brother Robert wrote a statement detailing the reasons for Polke's irregular conduct, i.e., leaving the Potawatomi to travel to Missouri (to dismiss the officers attached to the emigration, per the requirements of his contract) and then returning to Kansas (because the absence of the agent had made an official muster roll impossible). Robert also noted, in some detail, the events leading to the loss of the two horses and the extensive but failed search "which leaves but little doubts of their being stolen or secreted by the Indians." Robert then documented the horses' value (which presumably William was planning to recover from the government): the "iron grey . . . natural trotter" worth \$100, and the "bright bay . . . trots and paces" worth \$100. Statement of Robert Polke, November 27, 1838, Polke Manuscripts.

<sup>149</sup> Traditional Potawatomi winter shelters were "domed wigwams," built with wood and bark, with "a central hearth whose smoke escaped through an opening in the roof," and animal skins or wooden platforms for sleeping. Given the shortage of timber on the Kansas prairie and the lack of supplies (in the absence of the agent), the Potawatomi would have had very few resources with which to build. Edmunds, *The Potawatomi*, 16–17. Tipton, McCoy, and Pepper were all aware of the lack of timber on the prairie, although Tipton insisted "that the timber now there will be sufficient for the present and a few succeeding generations" and that, as Indians adopted settled agriculture, "timber will rise up with astonishing rapidity." Tipton, "Speech on Indian Territory Bill," April 18, 1838, 3:598, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

as to the return of the [manuscript torn] manifest more unwillingness for me to leave them before this return of the Ast They wish me to hear what he has to say to them

Thursday 22nd

This day the cheif Ash-cun visited me as I did not go to the camps. Made some enquiries as to the boundary of their land &c with the same enquiries as the other cheifs. I have no doubt the object of their repeated enquiries on the subject is to extort some promises from me believing what I promised would be fulfilled by the Government for I made it an unvariable Rule on the Jou[r]ney to make no promises but what I punctually performed. I am careful to make no promises that will embarrass the Agent

Friday 23rd

Visited by the cheif I-O-wa had the same story to repeat and the same request as to my remaining with them until the return of the Agent with an additional request that I would again visit their camps to see how the Indians get along to which I consented

Saturday 24th

Snow Storm this morning after which it became pleasant. visited the camps agreeably to promise find many of them have comfortable camps for winter and the principle part of the men engaged preparing a temporary chapel for the purpose of performing their devotional exercises in.<sup>150</sup> They appeared pleased with my visit named the promise made them by Gen Tipton of building them a chapel had repetition of the same requests an answers as before with an additional one of knowing their boundaries before permanently locating themselves My son returned this evening no intelligence of our horses. Mr. Lykins still insists on my remaining untill the return of the Agent

Sunday 25th

My son and a young man that I employed went in search of our horses down the Osage River thinking perhaps they may be in some of the bottoms

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<sup>150</sup> The Catholic Potawatomi quickly constructed "a temporary chapel [which] was raised near the banks of the river." The Catholic Church had already established the Sugar Creek mission twenty miles south in Linn County, Kansas, led by Father Christian Hoecken. Without shelter from the Kansas winter of 1838–39, most of the Potawatomi who had arrived in November moved to Sugar Creek. John Rothensteiner, *History of the Archdiocese of St. Louis* (St. Louis, Mo., 1928), chap. 28; Davis to Tipton, February 25, 1839, 3:812–13, Robertson and Riker, eds., *John Tipton Papers*.

of said River. I have to remain to go over the same Road to and from the Indian camps, though the story has been so often told My son and young man has returned but no intelligence of the lost horses I have come to the conclusion that they have been stolen

Monday 26th

The season is so far advanced and no intelligence of Mr Davis I have concluded to return to westport and see if Mr Lykins will consent to act for the agent so I can return home before the Roads become impassible.

Tuesday 22 [sic]

This day I attended the issue of provisions by the contractor of corn & beef under the direction of a young man for the agent much attention is necessary in order to prevent frauds being practiced upon the Indians by issueing corn in the ear as has been the practice<sup>151</sup> Late this evening the cheif we-wis-sa called to see me and said that part of his family was behind. and hoped that I would Bring them next year as he wanted all his family to move west as he was convinced that it would be to their advantage for them all to remove west.<sup>152</sup> I told him I should use my endeavors to have them come.

Wendesday 28th

Early this morning the chief, la-wa called upon me said he was informed that I was a going to leave them that the Indians wished me visit them before my departure he had come at their request and would return and have them assembled at his tent on my arrival I found them assembled after repeating their former requests and expressing their satisfaction of my treatment<sup>153</sup> During my continuation with them many of them stated they had friends behind which they wished to come next year and also

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<sup>151</sup> Indian agents and their representatives were responsible for contracting for and distributing the provisions which constituted a portion of annuities. Food provisions were given out by specified measures, "corn or corn meal" by the quart. Measuring corn still on the ear would have produced a substantially smaller portion than measuring corn meal. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1837–1838*, 100.

<sup>152</sup> On plans for the further Removal of Potawatomi from northern Indiana in 1839, see Dwight L. Smith, ed., "The Attempted Potawatomi Emigration of 1839," *Indiana Magazine of History* 45 (March 1949), 51–80; Edmunds, *The Potawatomi*, 268–71.

<sup>153</sup> Polke—like Tipton and the other men in charge of the 1838 removal—consistently misread the "public performance" occurring in the Potawatomi's words and actions, including their farewells to him. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 2.

expressed a wish that I should conduct the party after which I had to go through the ceremony of shaking hands with men women and children as is the custom of Indians which detained me until late in the day, after which I had to ride 15 miles to the agency

December 1st

The Agent having returned I had to assist in remustering the Indians which was completed on the 3rd Inst as will appear from the muster herewith transmitted<sup>154</sup>

December 4th

Proceded on our Journey to Independence where we expect to take stage for st Louis

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<sup>154</sup> A transcription of the original muster roll is online at <http://www.kansasheritage.org/PBP/history/rolls.html>, accessed March 31, 2021.