

# Chief Simon Pokagon: "The Indian Longfellow"

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Pokagon is now an almost forgotten name except among those travelers in the Midwest who visit the Potawatomi Inn in Indiana's Pokagon State Park or the small village of Pokagon in Cass County, Michigan. But during his lifetime Chief Simon Pokagon of the Potawatomi<sup>1</sup> was known to many because of his two visits with Lincoln at the White House, his appearance as unassuming guest of honor and orator for the Chicago Day celebrations at the Columbian Exposition, his various other public addresses, and his articles on Indian subjects in national magazines.<sup>2</sup> His most extensive literary work, the prose-poetry romance of the forest entitled *O-Gi-Maw-Kwe Mit-I-Gwa-Ki (Queen of the Woods)*, was in type but not yet published at the time of his death in 1899.

His contemporary reputation was such that the editor of the *Review of Reviews* referred to "this distinguished Pottawattomie chieftain" as "one of the most remarkable men of our time. . . . His great eloquence, his sagacity, and his wide range of information mark him as a man of exceptional endowments."<sup>3</sup> A feature article in the *Arena* spoke of "this noble representative of the red-man" as "simple-hearted and earnest."<sup>4</sup> Looked on as the "best educated full-blood Indian of his time,"<sup>5</sup> he was called the "Longfellow of his

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<sup>1</sup> For a biographical study of his father, Chief Leopold, with brief notes on Simon, see Cecelia Bain Buechner, *The Pokagons (Indiana Historical Society Publications, Vol. 10, No. 5; Indianapolis, Ind., 1933)*, 279-340. Pokagon is accented on the second syllable, with the vowel in that syllable long.

<sup>2</sup> The most significant are: "An Indian's Observations on the Mating of Geese," *Arena*, XVI (July, 1896), 245-248; "The Future of the Red Man," *Forum*, XXIII (August, 1897), 698-708; "Indian Superstitions and Legends," *Forum*, XXV (July, 1898), 618-629; "The Massacre of Fort Dearborn at Chicago," *Harper's Monthly*, 98 (March, 1899), 649-656; and "The Pottawatomies in the War of 1812," *Arena*, XXVI (July, 1901), 48-55, published after his death.

<sup>3</sup> [Albert Shaw], "Simon Pokagon on Naming the Indians," *Review of Reviews*, XVI (September, 1897), 320.

<sup>4</sup> B. O. Flower, "An Interesting Representative of a Vanishing Race," *Arena*, XVI (July, 1896), 240, 248.

<sup>5</sup> Frederick Webb Hodge (ed.), *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* (2 vols., Washington, D.C., 1907-1910), II, 274. Hodge's *Handbook* is *Bulletin 30* of the Bureau of American Ethnology.

race' ”—<sup>6</sup>an epithet then considered a high compliment. And in an obituary notice a Chicago newspaper summarized: “He leaves behind him among the Indians no successor to his poetic and literary ability.” From our vantage point of some six decades later it seems fitting, therefore, to look again at the career of Chief Simon Pokagon, and, if necessary, to re-evaluate his literary contributions.

Unrestrained but honest emotion is perhaps the dominant characteristic of Pokagon's work as a whole. He is sorely troubled by the social and economic difficulties confronting the Indians of his generation. He is deeply sensitive to the romantic virtues and beauties of unexploited nature; and in *Queen of the Woods* his affection for his ill-starred family is poignant and personal. But stylistically it is obvious that Pokagon's English phrases and figures merely echo the polite literary conventions of his day (“the woodland choir,” “the happy hunting-ground,” “our pale-faced neighbours,” “sweet little rosebud,” “naked innocence,” “bloom of youth,” “all nature slept,” “the dark clouds rolled away,” and so on). This emulation of the popular and often trite phraseology of the romantic-sentimental tradition weakens the vigor of his English style and disappoints a modern reader. One feels that he is not speaking with the spontaneous voice of his own primeval culture, but rather is borrowing the white man's nineteenth-century clichés. Nonetheless, his intrinsic subject—to the extent that it may be distinguished from its verbal form—is original and fresh; and *Queen of the Woods* is a unique document from a genuine Indian source, an emotional and at times lyrical remembrance of things past rather than a synthetic, sterile exercise such as *Hiawatha*.

It may be gratuitous to point out, also, that in putting *Queen of the Woods* and his other manuscripts in order for the publisher, Pokagon doubtless had considerable editorial assistance. His handwritten letters which remain show a certain unconcern for the niceties of spelling and punctuation; and the syntax of some of his published work is not beyond reproach. Evidence of his own unpolished style may be found

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<sup>6</sup> “Chief Pokagon Dies,” *Chicago Inter Ocean*, January 29, 1899, reprinted in Chief [Simon] Pokagon, *O-Gi-Maw-Kwe Mit-I-Gwa-Ki (Queen of the Woods)* (Hartford, Mich., 1901), Appendix, 242. The Appendix to this volume (pp. 221-255) was arranged by the publisher, C. H. Engle. This book is hereafter cited as *Queen of the Woods*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

in a typical message which accompanied a gift copy of his little birchbark-bound booklet, *Red Man's Greeting*, here quoted verbatim:

Secretary of Chicago Historical Society

Dear Sir:

I notice in the Chicago Tribune of Sunday that the surviving infant of Fort Dearbourn is still alive.— I recall that my father was a chief at that time.

I take pleasure in presenting you a copy of my "Red Mans Greeting" printed on birch bark which I wrote in the year of the Worlds fair—

Perhaps you will recall I rode on the Float of 1812 on Chicago Day and was permitted to ring the Liberty Bell in the morning & make a short address.

I am getting to be an old man & wish to leave this greeting with you that it may be read by future generations.

I heard my father say many times before & after he was converted to Christianity if there had been no whiskey, there would have been no Fort Dearborn masacree—I shall write up our side of that sad affair during the winter— Hoping the little book will red with the same spirit in which it is sent I remain yours truly

S. Pokagon

Hartford Mich Dec 29 1896

Box 32<sup>s</sup>

But many otherwise able authors have shown some deficiency in verbal mechanics; and in view of the unusual background from which Pokagon wrote, any syntactical criticism here would be picayune. *O-Gi-Maw-Kwe Mit-I-Gwa-Ki (Queen of the Woods)* is not a masterpiece of world literature, it is true. It is indeed rare in its genre, a literary oddity. But the reader may overlook its sentimentalities and eccentricities in view of the novelty of its contents and depth of its feeling; and if he reads sympathetically his emotions may be touched. Too, this book vivifies a segment of our national past which often is conveniently forgotten. But perhaps its ultimate worth lies in the candid self-portrait of a son of the now-vanished forest. His prose style may have been vitiated by his superficial and uncritical contacts with English literature; but his integrity as an individual was not destroyed by the white man's culture. A member of a mistreated minority group, he was able to face his changing and difficult environment courageously.

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<sup>s</sup> The original letter is owned by the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Ill.

Turning now to a more specific investigation of Simon Pokagon's writings, we find that his *Queen of the Woods* is the central document. The events here related were derived directly from Pokagon's private life, and the book itself is the best exemplar of his literary style. Concerning this work the biographer of Chief Leopold Pokagon, Simon's father, comments thus effusively:

His *Queen of the Woods* has the tang, the zest, and the woodsy flavor of life. It is pulsing with sympathy, heartfelt emotion, and sensitive feeling; a quaint mixture of information, fact, history, pathos, romance, and poetry combined; a plaintive, yet uncomplaining plea for justice and an eloquent and stirring plea for temperance. Lofty sentiments, wise philosophical thoughts, and serious reflection temper and vivify all his writings.<sup>9</sup>

This tale (written first in his native tongue and then translated into English by the author) begins at the time of Pokagon's return to his people after his years of white schooling. It is narrated in the first person, and in spite of romantic overtones is largely a factual account. His friend and publisher, C. H. Engle, of Hartford, Michigan, referred to it as "the historical sketch" of Pokagon's life, and labeled it a "real romance of Indian life." "Nearly all the persons mentioned in the narrative bear their real names, and were personally known to many yet living."<sup>10</sup>

Some unusual aspects of the book immediately become apparent. The most obvious is the inclusion of many Algonquin-Algaic<sup>11</sup> terms, following which Pokagon gives the English translation in parentheses. This intrusion of unfamiliar and difficult Indian expressions results in a bumpy awkwardness which at first seems to break the flow of his English style. Careful reading indicates, however, that these interpolated words have a strong rhythm of their own. Most of these are single nouns or brief phrases, but in the latter part of the tale the author often inserts complete sentences. He defends this odd bilingual practice:

In consideration of the fact that the language of the great Algonquin family, which once was spoken by hundreds of thousands throughout more than half of North America, is fast passing away, I have retained such Indian words and expressions as appear in "Queen of the

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<sup>9</sup> Buechner, *The Pokagons*, 325.

<sup>10</sup> C. H. Engle, "Preface," *Queen of the Woods*, i.

<sup>11</sup> Ethnologists and linguists now prefer the term "Algonkian"; "Algaic" is used infrequently to refer to a subgroup.

Woods," as monuments along the way, to remind the reader in after-generations, that such a language as ours was once spoken throughout this loved land of my fathers.<sup>12</sup>

"The Algonquin Language," a prefatory treatise of thirteen pages, presents in a technical and succinct form the basic data of the speech system. Far from being a "sort of 'gibberish,'" according to Pokagon, Algaic contains some twenty thousand root words on which numerous variations may be built. The seventeen letters of the alphabet include only four vowels, of unchanging pronunciation, plus several diphthongs. Nine parts of speech are distinguishable. Peculiarities of the language include great liberty in transposing word order; a very involved use of different particles depending on gender and function of accompanying words; a clipping or shortening of words when grouped in phrases; and a comprehensive body of agglutinative terms to express family relationships. The basic structure of the sentence hinges on the verb, and "nearly all the words in our language can be transformed into verbs." His own view of the effectiveness and beauty of the Algonquin language is implicit in his apology that in translating his manuscript into English in many places he lost the "force and euphony" of the original.<sup>13</sup>

A second obvious feature of *Queen of the Woods* is its semi-poetic form. Although the story begins in ordinary prose, it soon shifts to comparatively regular iambs so that, had the author chosen, much of the tale might have been printed as blank verse. This style (no doubt derived from Pokagon's reading of the English poets) might have seemed to him also to reflect the patterns of his own speech. One undeniable echo is that of the King James version of the Bible. The resulting regular "beat" occasionally becomes obtrusive, but there is unquestionably more variety than in the insistent rhythms of *Hiawatha*, for example; and the highly sentimental-emotional-mystical mood occasionally reached in the tale might justify a "poetic" line.

The vital framework is the factual account of Pokagon's courtship, marriage, idyllic family life, and subsequent deep tragedy. To this are added many marginal notes on the natural scene and Indian domestic arts (more trustworthy and persuasive than Longfellow's eclectic data). But Poka-

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<sup>12</sup> Pokagon, *Queen of the Woods*, 36.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-41.

gon's chief concern is with the ethereal character of Lonidaw, the Indian princess who gently dominates the tale.

His initial joy in returning to his native haunts is reflected in an early rhythmical passage:

Just as "gi-siss" (the sun) was going down, we reached our landing-place. The shore on either side was fringed with rushes, flags, and golden-rod, and grasses tall between; and scattered here and there wild roses breathed their rich perfume, scenting the evening air.<sup>14</sup>

Off for a pre-dawn hunt, he sketches the scene:

It was a beautiful quiet morning. All nature slept. . . . Just as the sun tinged the topmost branches of the highland trees, a white fog-cloud appeared above the winding river as far as eye could reach. It looked as though the stream had risen from its ancient bed, and was floating in mid-air.<sup>15</sup>

Returning with a buck over his shoulder, he surprised his mother, who took hold of the arrows still fast in the flesh, praised him for his unforgotten skill, and exclaimed: " 'Kwaw-notch, kwaw-notch maw-mawsh-kay-she (beautiful, beautiful deer)! How could you have o-daw (the heart) to take nin bim-â-dis-win (his life) ?' " <sup>16</sup>

Pokagon's first view of Lonidaw, his future bride, with "raven tresses floating in the breeze," was on the further side of a stream where she was imitating the songs of wild pigeons and bobolinks as a snow-white deer gamboled about her. Pokagon thought that such creatures as she must be discovered only in the happy hunting ground beyond.<sup>17</sup>

An old Ottawa trapper, who had once given shelter to Lonidaw's mother on her flight from the forced tribal migration in the 1830's, appears and tells Pokagon of Lonidaw's birth in a swamp while her mother was hiding from the United States troops and of the child's being carried by her starving mother for fifty miles over rough country to his wigwam. Nature had taught her the language of the beasts and birds; and, he added in a practical mood, " 'if she would make use of her wonderful min-i-gowin (gifts), she could nish-iwe min-a-wa (kill more) game than a dozen old hunters.' " <sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-63.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

Away at school again after his vacation, Pokagon realized his inescapable love for Lonidaw, so when springtime came he went in search of her. Young love at first was inarticulate, and even after his declaration she protested that his white education had spoiled him for the simple life: "'I am but pa-gwag ab-i-not ji mit-tig (a wild child of the woods), wild as ben-ish ig (the birds) that gather round. . . but should we wed, I fear you soon would tire of my native woodland ways, and crush this childish o-daw nin (heart of mine).'"<sup>19</sup> But when the moon of flowers came and mating birds were moving north, young Pokagon and his beloved Lonidaw were united, without benefit of priest or formal ceremony. On an inland lake where wild rice was plentiful he built their wigwam home; and on his return from hunting trips he always hailed her, "'Hoi (Hallo), o-gi-maw-kwe mit-i-gwa-ki (queen of the woods).'"<sup>20</sup>

After two years Olondaw, their son, was born; then Hazeleye, their little girl. The children grew up happily, little Olondaw learning to make and handle a bow, and his sister playing with her Indian doll. A white priest offered to pay the expenses if Olondaw were sent away to school. Pokagon agreed, hoping that his son, now twelve years old, would become "learned, great, and good, and thereby be of great service to our race." But Lonidaw was fearful of the future; and on the eve of Olondaw's departure she dreamed that by the trail she found two young robins which were drawn hypnotically toward a monstrous snake. As she tried to grasp a club, it struck its victim; and in her dream "the snake within its jaws held fast, not the bird, but the living skeleton of her son, struggling to escape."<sup>21</sup>

This premonition proved tragically true, for after three years at the white man's school Olondaw graduated from bottle-hunting in the back alleys of the town to an ineradicable craving for the familiar firewater. Pokagon lowers the final curtain abruptly: "I do not wish to bleed my own heart, or sadden yours; suffice it to say, as darkness succeeds the meteor's sudden glare, so his young life went out and left us in the midnight of despair."<sup>22</sup>

But this was only the first act in the tragedy. "Dear little Hazeleye alone was left us then; that sweet rosebud,

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 164-171.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

just opening into maidenhood. . . .” But one day while Pokagon was absent and Hazeleye was fishing on the lake, two drunken white fishermen rammed their boat into her bark canoe, which capsized and threw her into the water. Lonidaw, on shore, screamed for help, but the drunken men made no effort to save the child. The mother plunged desperately to the rescue, but almost strangling was herself pulled to safety by Zowan, the faithful family dog. Lonidaw lingered briefly, partly in delirium, until one evening she said: “‘Pokagon, see ke-sus (the sun) is sinking low; while it is going down, I shall pass into manito aukee we-de (the spirit land beyond). You have always been kind to me, yet I must bid you farewell until we meet beyond tchi-be-gam-mig (the grave). . . .’”<sup>23</sup> Soon a simple procession of mourning, white-blanketed Indian friends bore her body to a beautiful headland overlooking the lake; white water-lilies were laid gently on her grave.<sup>24</sup>

The brief remainder of the book is made up of a sincere but disjointed temperance tract, inspired by the dying wish of Lonidaw that Pokagon should speak out against the source of the great triple tragedy in their own family circle.

Three short but unique publications by Pokagon also merit comment. The only other work listed on the title page of *Queen of the Woods* is *Red Man's Greeting* (originally—and more aptly—entitled *Red Man's Rebuke*).<sup>25</sup> This attracted some notice in the press, and a reviewer in 1893 commented:

Printed upon white birch bark in its natural state is an account of the cruel betrayal of this hunted race, dating from the advent of the white man to these shores up to the present time. One reads with unutterable sadness this voicing of the outraged spirit of a race, eloquent in its pathos, yet entirely free from wild vindictiveness.<sup>26</sup>

Another critic for a newspaper in Chicago, the home of the Columbian Exposition, also responded to this booklet's appeal: “No words of mine can tell the pathos of this tiny book. . . . It is told simply, and yet with a force that leaves an indelible

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 175, 179.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 181-182.

<sup>25</sup> *The Red Man's Greeting* (Hartford, Mich.: C. H. Engle, n.d.). Copies are in the files of the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, and in the Ayer Collection of the Newberry Library, of Chicago. To the staffs of these institutions, the author hereby expresses his appreciation for help given and for permission to use this and other materials.

<sup>26</sup> Mrs. Hattie Flower, Review of *The Red Man's Greeting*, *Arena*, VIII (November, 1893), book review section, n.p.



picture on your mind."<sup>27</sup> Its scope and mood may be suggested by part of Pokagon's dedication: "To the memory of William Penn, Roger Williams, the late lamented Helen Hunt Jackson, and many others now in Heaven, Who conceived that Noble spirit of Justice Which recognizes the Brotherhood of the Red Man."

Two other birchbark booklets remain as collectors' items: *Pottawatamie Book of Genesis—Legends of the Creation of Man*,<sup>28</sup> and *Algonquin Legends of South Haven*.<sup>29</sup> The first recounts an old tradition that the Great Spirit was dissatisfied with his lower animal creations and determined to make man who should possess superior intelligence. Some of the Spirit Chiefs who already held dominion over the earth resolved in a secret powwow to frustrate the plans of *How-wan-tuck*, the Almighty. The act of creation occurred by a beautiful inland lake in a great wilderness:

As he stood upon the shores thereof in the presence of them all, His eyes flashed waw-saw mo-win (lightning)! The lake became boiling water! The earth trembled! He then spake in the voice of thunder: "Come forth, ye Lords of Au-kee (the world)!" The ground opened. And from out of the red clay that lined the lake came forth au-ne-ne gaie ik-we (man and woman). . . . The bride and groom then each other fondly kissed as hand in hand they stood, in naked innocence, in the full bloom of youth. . . . They looked all about them in wonder and surprise.<sup>30</sup>

But when the evil Spirit Chiefs saw divinity shining in the faces of the newly created beings, they were stung by the wasps of jealousy and resolved to make man miserable. So ever afterwards man's life has been alternately controlled by good and evil forces.

Pokagon's retelling of *Algonquin Legends of South Haven* is most noteworthy for an Indian version of the rainbow tale, supposedly coming to the Potawatomi from the aboriginal *Mash-ko-de* or Prairie Tribe. After *Ki-ja Man-i-to* (the Great Spirit) had located his throne at *Ish-pem-ing* (a high place)

<sup>27</sup> Teresa Dean, in Chicago *Inter Ocean*, n.d., quoted in *Queen of the Woods*, Appendix, 251.

<sup>28</sup> (Hartford, Mich.: C. H. Engle, 1901). A copy is in the Ayer Collection of the Newberry Library, Chicago. It is reprinted in Charles S. Winslow, *Indians of the Chicago Region* (Chicago, 1946), 4-8; and is extensively quoted without reference to source in Cornelia Steketee Hulst, *Indian Sketches* (New York, 1912), 63-65.

<sup>29</sup> (Hartford, Mich.: C. H. Engle, n.d.). A copy is owned by the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago.

<sup>30</sup> Pokagon, *Pottawatamie Book of Genesis*, n.p.

on the shore of Lake *Mi-shi-gan*, he planted beautiful woodland flowers and filled the trees with birds.

He also made a great mit-ig-wab (bow) at least two arrow flights in length, and placed it along the shore. He then painted it from end to end in beautiful lines. . . . While thus at work a cyclone from the setting sun swept across the great lake! Waw-saw-mo-win (lightning) flashed across waw-kwi (the heavens)! An-a-mi-ka (thunder) in concert with ti-gow-og (the roaring waves) rolled their awful burden on the land! . . .

At length the dark clouds rolled away and the setting sun lit up the gloom. He then picked up the giant bow that he had made, bent it across mi-ka-tik (his knee), then with his breath blew a blast that swept it eastward between the sunshine and the clouds. . . .

As He gazed upon its beauty and grandeur arching the departing storm, He shouted in triumph above the roaring waves in thunder tones, saying, "Kaw-kaw-naw in-in-i nash-ke nin wab sa aw-ni-quod (All men behold my bow in the cloud.) See, it has no mit-ig bim-i-na-kwan ke-ma pin-de-wan (arrow, string, or quiver). It is the bow of peace. Tell it to your children's children that Ki-ja Man-i-to made it . . . that they might know He loved peace and hated war."<sup>31</sup>

From this perspective of Pokagon's literary contributions we might now glance briefly backward at the tribal environment from which he had emerged. Of the competitive cultural forces at work within him, the central drive was certainly to maintain and defend his own native values, with only a collateral concern for the veneer of white literary culture.

Simon Pokagon had succeeded his two older brothers in the tribal leadership handed down from their father, Chief Leopold Pokagon. For the forty years prior to his death in 1841, Leopold had been the head of the Pokagon band of the Potawatomi Indians, an offshoot of the larger Algonquin family.<sup>32</sup> Simon, the youngest of Chief Leopold's numerous children, was born in 1830 during the clan's annual migration north to their sugar-maple camps and cornfields across the Michigan border. Most of Simon's first eight years were spent, however, in the old Pokagon village in the St. Joseph River Valley in northeastern Indiana. Here he acquired his

<sup>31</sup> Pokagon, *Algonquin Legends of South Haven*, n.p.

<sup>32</sup> The "Pokagon band" is sometimes referred to as the St. Joseph Potawatomi. At the time of their maximum development in 1820 the entire tribe numbered about thirty-four hundred persons in some fifty villages in northern Illinois and Indiana and southwestern Michigan. Apparently they had lived earlier on the western shores of Lake Huron. See Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians*, II, 291; William Duncan Strong, *The Indian Tribes of the Chicago Region*, Chicago Field Museum of Natural History, *Anthropology Leaflet*, No. 24. (Chicago, Ill., 1926), 17; and Otho Winger, *The Potawatomi Indians* (Elgin, Ill., 1939), 147.

first skill in hunting and fishing from Joseph Bertrand, a half-breed French trader who had married Mona, the daughter of Chief Topenebee.<sup>33</sup>

This carefree chapter of his youth was terminated suddenly by the removal of most of the Potawatomi from their tribal lands.<sup>34</sup> A monument erected at Twin Lakes, Indiana, bears a succinct inscription:

IN MEMORY OF  
CHIEF MENOMINEE  
and his  
BAND OF 859 POTTAWATOMIE INDIANS  
Removed from this Reservation, September 4, 1838  
By a company of soldiers under the Command of  
COL. JOHN TIPTON  
Authorized by Governor David Wallace  
GOVERNOR J. FRANK HANLEY  
Author of Law  
REPRESENTATIVE DANIEL McDONALD, PLYMOUTH

This transfer<sup>35</sup> of the majority of the Potawatomi to Iowa and eventually to Kansas and Oklahoma burned so deep an impression on the mind of young Simon Pokagon that he

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<sup>33</sup> Father Badin, a French Jesuit priest, recorded that Chief Leopold had lost "six or seven" children before his baptism in 1830. See Buechner, *The Pokagons*, 303; Winger, *The Potawatomi Indians*, 141-158; Timothy Edward Howard, *A History of St. Joseph County, Indiana* (2 vols., Chicago, Ill., and New York, 1907), II, 605-612; contemporary newspaper accounts such as "Chief Simon Pokagon Dead," *Chicago Record*, January 28, 1899, p. 16; and autobiographical references in *Queen of the Woods*, 49-53.

<sup>34</sup> A detailed history of this event is found in Daniel McDonald, *Removal of the Pottawattomie Indians from Northern Indiana* (Plymouth, Ind., 1899). The most important documentary source is Nellie Armstrong Robertson and Dorothy Riker (eds.), *The John Tipton Papers* (3 vols., *Indiana Historical Collections*, Vols. XXIV, XXV, XXVI; Indianapolis, Ind., 1942). Many references are made throughout to negotiations, treaties, payments, and suits, with the climax, "Removal of the Potawatomi," *ibid.*, III, 659-770. See also "Journal of an Emigrating Party of Pottawattomie Indians," *Indiana Magazine of History*, XXI (December, 1925), 315-336; and Irving McKee, *The Trail of Death: Letters of Benjamin Marie Petit* (*Indiana Historical Society Publications*, Vol. XIV, No. 1; Indianapolis, Ind., 1941), 1-141.

<sup>35</sup> Colonel Tipton reported to Governor David Wallace: "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. . . . I did not feel authorized to drive these poor degraded beings from our State, but to remove them from the reserve, and to give peace and security to our own citizens." Robertson and Riker, *Tipton Papers*, III, 713-714.

later incorporated the event as one of the most moving sequences of his *Queen of the Woods*. His immediate family had not been involved, but the parents of Lonidaw, the girl he was to marry, were living at that time in Menominee's village. Thus Lonidaw's mother gives her version of the story concerning the arrival of the soldiers, the assembling of the Indians at the wigwam church, and the immediate eviction and march toward the setting sun. Although her husband was forced to accompany the migrants, she herself managed to escape northward.<sup>36</sup>

Chief Leopold Pokagon was more fortunate than most. He apparently had realized the inevitability of the treaty demands—which had been formalized by a Grand Council five years previously—so about a year before this crisis he had migrated with his immediate clan to his own property of some seven hundred acres on Long Lake, Michigan, which was not included in the ceded areas.<sup>37</sup>

When Simon was a youth of fourteen, some six years after this shattering of the Potawatomi patterns in Indiana, he was sent by his father to the Notre Dame preparatory school in South Bend. Then, according to his close friend, C. H. Engle, who later published *Queen of the Woods*, "returning home fired with zeal for a good English education, he succeeded through his own efforts, aided by his mother, in going to Oberlin College, Ohio."<sup>38</sup> One year's work at Oberlin, apparently with private tutors or on the preparatory level,<sup>39</sup> was followed by two more at the Twinsburg Institute near Cleveland, Ohio, an organization which offered free

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<sup>36</sup> *Queen of the Woods*, 79-83.

<sup>37</sup> See Buechner, *The Pokagons*, 312-313; and *History of St. Joseph County, Indiana* (Chicago, Ill.: Chas. C. Chapman & Co., 1880), 335.

<sup>38</sup> Engle's educational data, based on oral statements by Pokagon, are included in his "A Brief Sketch of Chief Simon Pokagon's Life," prefixed to *Queen of the Woods*, 5-6. Instruction at the University of Notre Dame was begun in 1842; and in 1844 two charters were issued, one to authorize the founding of the university and the other to establish a "trade or manual labor school," which was distinct from the preparatory department of the university. Pokagon presumably attended the trade school. "It is even possible that Simon was sent by his father to the Notre Dame Preparatory School in South Bend to perform errands, but Father Hope is almost convinced that Simon Pokagon did not enroll in the school itself. . . . None of this can be verified by records, since all records were destroyed in the great fires of the 1870's." Leo M. Corbaci, administrative assistant, University of Notre Dame, to the author, March 16, 1961.

<sup>39</sup> Oberlin officials report: "We have searched our records [under the variant spelling Pokagon, Pokegon, Pocagin, and Pugegun], but have been unable to find that the Indian Simon Pokagon was ever enrolled in Oberlin College." Robert R. Barr, acting secretary, Oberlin

tuition, board, and lodging to the several Indians then among its three hundred students. In this school "all necessary opportunities were afforded to prepare students for college."<sup>40</sup> This phrase clearly indicates the secondary level of instruction, so the assumption that Pokagon was college trained is erroneous. Nevertheless, he profited from some instruction in the classics and music, for a later visitor recalled that Pokagon came to his cabin door with an open Greek testament in his hand.<sup>41</sup> For several years Pokagon played the piano or reed organ in Indian churches, especially that at Rush Lake, Michigan, where he also translated many sermons from English into Algaic.<sup>42</sup>

Pokagon's autobiographical romance, as we have seen, presents details of his life with Lonidaw, daughter of Chief Sinagaw of the Rush Lake band (who had been able to rejoin his family after the tribal relocation). But after the death of their two children and of Lonidaw herself at the age of only thirty-five, Pokagon devoted himself to the welfare of his small tribal group and of the Potawatomi as a whole. He visited Lincoln in the White House shortly after his inauguration to plead the Indian cause, and again just before the President's death; and in 1874 he interviewed General Grant. Finally, in 1894 Pokagon succeeded in arranging the payment of \$104,000 by the government to the Potawatomi in compensation for the harsh terms of the original cession of their lands (at the price of about fifty cents per acre), and for various annuities previously withheld.<sup>43</sup> He also aided

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College, to the author, November 4, 1959. Pokagon's own explicit statement concerning his education is this: "About this time my dear father died; and, soon after, my mother, on the advice of one of the Catholic Fathers, sent me to Notre Dame School, near South Bend, Indiana, where I remained four or five years. But, desiring a more liberal education than I was likely to get there, I sought out my old missionary friend Coles, and laid before him my great anxiety to go to school at Oberlin, Ohio, where race and color were disregarded. The good man finally persuaded my mother to send me to that school." Pokagon, "Indian Superstitions and Legends," *Forum*, XXV (July, 1898), 618-619.

<sup>40</sup> William Henry Perrin (ed.), *History of Summit County* (Chicago, Ill., 1881), 658. Italics in the quotation have been added.

<sup>41</sup> Winger, *The Potawatomi Indians*, 153.

<sup>42</sup> C. H. Engle, "A Brief Sketch of Chief Simon Pokagon's Life," *Queen of the Woods*, 32.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Buechner, *The Pokagons*, 327. Pokagon gives a different figure in a letter to the editor of the *Review of Reviews*: "Our band received several annuities from the Government prior to 1860, at which time we received thirty-nine thousand dollars, partial payment of moneys due. . . . Last autumn we received the final payment of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars." [Shaw], "Simon Pokagon on Naming the Indians," *Review of Reviews*, XVI (September, 1897), 321.

the development of schools for the Indians, such as the Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas, where his own children by a second marriage and his grandchildren were sent. He likewise encouraged the production and sale of local Indian craft materials.<sup>44</sup>

In an address delivered, appropriately enough, to a lodge meeting of the Order of Red Men the year before he died, Pokagon reviewed his long career:

I have stood all my life as a peacemaker between the white people and my own people. Without gun or bow I have stood between the two contending armies, receiving a thousand wounds from your people and my own. I have continued to pray the great father at Washington to deal justly . . . and have said to my own people, when they were bitterly wronged, and felt mortally offended, "Wait and pray for justice; the war-path will but lead you to the grave."<sup>45</sup>

A Chicago paper in an obituary notice touched a eulogistic note:

The poet chief managed with consummate ability and skill the often conflicting and delicate interests and affairs of the band of three hundred Pottawattamie Indians scattered over the State of Michigan. Gifted with a fine education, and inspired by enlightened views, he was an instrument of far-reaching good to all his people.<sup>46</sup>

Chief Simon Pokagon lived simply and died simply, as a brief letter from his only surviving son to the Secretary of the Chicago Historical Society suggests:

Apr. 17, 1899

My father's last work "Queen of the Woods" is now ready for delivery. My father left but little means outside of the prospective value of his literary work. I therefore thought you might get a few copies for your library.

Charles L. Pokagon<sup>47</sup>

So it seems fitting that Pokagon State Park should bear his name, and that on the timbers of the great hall in the Potawatomi Inn should be engraved the legend: "O-Gi-Maw-Kwe Mit-I-Gwa-Ki Queen of the Woods," to remind us of a past which is now beyond recall.

<sup>44</sup> Engle, "A Brief Sketch of Simon Pokagon's Life," *Queen of the Woods*, 21-22; and *ibid.*, Appendix, 254-255.

<sup>45</sup> Given at the Gem Opera House, Liberty, Indiana, under the auspices of the Orinoco Tribe No. 184, I.O.R.M., January 7, 1898, reprinted in *Queen of the Woods*, Appendix, 224.

<sup>46</sup> "Chief Pokagon Dies," *Chicago Inter Ocean*, January 29, 1899, quoted in *Queen of the Woods*, Appendix, 240-241.

<sup>47</sup> The original letter is in the Gilpin Library of the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago.