

am.  
V. H.  
dia

Bolliger

1750

# THE WISCONSIN WINNEBAGO INDIANS

AND

The Mission of the  
Reformed Church



*Winnebago Indian Mission School  
Neillsville, Wis.*

BY  
THEODORE P. BOLLIGER



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2016

<https://archive.org/details/wisconsinwinneba00boll>

THE WISCONSIN  
WINNEBAGO INDIANS



# THE WISCONSIN WINNEBAGO INDIANS

AND

The Mission of the  
Reformed Church



*Winnebago Indian Mission School  
Neillsville, Wis.*

BY  
THEODORE P. BOLLIGER

*Issued by*  
*The Tri-Synodic Board of Home Missions*  
*of the*  
*Reformed Church in the United States*  
1922

CENTRAL PUBLISHING HOUSE  
CLEVELAND, OHIO

## SOME INDIAN FACTS

*Total, 350,000 Indians*

Protestant Church Members and Adherents.....	19%
Catholic Church Members and Adherents.....	28%
Children without any Christian Opportunities.....	20%
Adults without any Christian Opportunities.....	33%
Churches composed of Indians.....	650
Missionaries, Protestant and Catholics.....	637





## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Some Indian Facts .....	3
Back in 1878 .....	9
The Winnebago under the Dominion of the French and English.....	9
Early Testimony to Winnebago Character.....	11
The Tragedies of the Treaties.....	11
The Wisconsin Strays .....	12
The Winnebago Religion .....	13
Home Life .....	16
Some Indian Habits .....	17
The Beginnings of the Mission .....	18
The Labors of Rev. Jacob Hauser, 1878-1885.....	19
Securing the Property of the Mission.....	21
Rev. Stucki Becomes the Missionary.....	22
The Trial of Faith.....	23
Some Experiences .....	25
The First Group of Converts.....	26
The Number of Converts Grows.....	28
The Winnebago Scriptures .....	30
The Property is Improved.....	30
Oil of Wintergreen.....	31
Sorrow in the Stucki Home.....	32
Transfer of the Mission to the Board.....	32
The Boarding School .....	33
The Teachers of the Past.....	35
Why don't the Winnebagoes go to Government or District Schools.....	35
The Boarding School is Transferred to Neillsville.....	36
The Aims of the School.....	38
Present Organization of the Mission.....	39
Our Fellow Laborers .....	40
W. M. S. G. S.....	41
Ways of Helping.....	41
Our Hope for the Future.....	42



## ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
Winnebago Indian Mission School, Neillsville, Wis.....	TITLE PAGE
Winnebago Wigwams .....	10
Ready for the Powwow.....	14
Heathen Winnebago Cemetery .....	15
Group of Indian Matrons.....	16
The Indian Chapel.....	20
Rev. Jacob Hauser.....	21
Rev. Jacob Stucki.....	21
Group of First Converts.....	27
A Sunday Congregation.....	28
Martin Lowe, David Decorah.....	29
Home of Missionary Stucki.....	31
Rev. and Mrs. Stucki, Children and Grandchild.....	32
Scholars Present 1921-1922.....	36
Neillsville Buildings, from the East.....	37
Neillsville Buildings, from the West Bank of Black River.....	39



# The Wisconsin Winnebago Indians

and

## The Mission of the Reformed Church

BACK IN 1878.

Among the scrub oaks and jack pines that covered the light, sandy soil in large sections of Jackson and surrounding counties of Wisconsin, the Winnebago Indians at last found a refuge after having been driven to and fro for fifty years. The land was so unproductive that the white man had not yet coveted it, and the Indian wigwams were safe for the time being. On this poor soil they tried to raise enough to live; but it was an almost hopeless task. Their small crops were supplemented by hunting and fishing, picking and selling blueberries, huckleberries and cranberries, and doing such work for the whites as was obtainable. Though the government held \$1,100,000 of Winnebago funds in trust and had promised to pay yearly to every member of the tribe his share of the interest of 5 per cent, this promise was not kept. In the wigwams and around the camp fires the story of their sufferings and wrongs was repeated, and suspicion and distrust towards the white man and all his ways and works filled every heart.

No denomination of Wisconsin had attempted to do missionary work among these scattered Winnebagoes, until the Sheboygan Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States in 1878, without waiting for any other agency to help, sent Rev. Jacob Hauser to begin Christian work among them. For twenty years the work of teaching the children and preaching to the adults was faithfully carried on before the first convert was baptized. The reason for this long faith-trying delay will become evident as the story of the Winnebagoes is told.

### THE WINNEBAGO UNDER THE DOMINION OF THE FRENCH AND ENGLISH.

The Winnebago tribe is a member of the Siouan family of North American Indians. Originally dwelling along the Atlantic coast, the pressure of other tribes drove them westward. They were the earliest tribe to settle upon the soil of Wisconsin. When the first white man came 300 years ago, the Winnebagoes were already old residents of several centuries. For nearly two hundred years, the French and the English held dominion over the territory occupied by the tribe. This territory included most of the southern half of the present state of Wisconsin and the northern portion of Illinois.

After 1634 large numbers of French traders lived among the Winnebagoes and freely married Indian maidens. Unfortunately most of these

marriages were for limited periods only; but this practice continuing for a century and a half, caused that strong admixture of white blood which is very evident to this day in the fair, regular features and the blue eyes of so many of the children.

Even before the coming of the white man, the Winnebagoes had acquired a certain degree of civilization. They lived in numerous large villages and their wigwams rudely constructed were strong and comfortable; as the Indian counted comfort. Large fields of corn were cultivated and thousands of bushels were stored for winter use. Smaller fields and patches of beans, melons, and tobacco abounded. Wild rice grew freely along the shores of lakes and streams and was carefully gathered. Much skill was displayed in the weaving of mats from grass and reeds which were used for the covering of floors and wigwams. Baskets, brooms, and various kinds of utensils and simple articles of furniture were made.



*Winnebago Wigwams*

The wigwam of the Winnebago was different from that of many other tribes; being circular in shape and somewhat flat at the top, and looking very much like a huge inverted bowl. The framework was generally made of saplings of one to two inches in thickness, fastened together at the top and strengthened by interwoven branches. This was covered with bark, mats, and hides formerly; at present, a heavy canvas is generally used. The fireplace was always in the center and a hole in the top served for the escape of the smoke. Mattings, blankets and robes commonly served as the beds; though for special comfort smooth heaps of pine branches might serve as a "bedstead."

The artistic skill of the Winnebagoes was shown in the production of numerous ornaments, unique designs in beadwork, decorated skins and weapons, and the distinctive clothes worn by the tribe.

The early French writers speak of the men as being "brave and fearless soldiers" and of the women as being "exceedingly diligent and neat in their houses."

#### EARLY TESTIMONY TO WINNEBAGO CHARACTER

After the war of 1812, with England, the territory of the Winnebagoes came under the jurisdiction of the United States and soon the first adventurous settlers began to spy out the land. One of the earliest investigators for the government describes their condition in 1822, as follows: The Winnebagoes "are industrious, frugal, temperate. They cultivate corn, potatoes, pumpkins, squashes and beans and are remarkably provident." Ten years later the wife of one of the first Indian agents, a noble Christian woman who lived among them for several years, speaks of their character in these words, "They have a strong appreciation of the great fundamental virtues of a natural religion, the worship of the Great Spirit, brotherly love, parental affection, honesty, temperance, chastity. That their practice evinces, more and more, a departure from them under the debasing influence of the proximity of the whites, is a melancholy truth."

#### THE TRAGEDIES OF THE TREATIES.

In 1816, the Winnebagoes made the first treaty of friendship with the United States, and in 1865, the last treaty was made. In between there were eleven other treaties. Every treaty was violated and broken; but not by the Indian. After each treaty, the tribe was driven back a little farther, found itself a great deal poorer, and mistrusted the white with more reason. Six times they were forced to forsake their homes before the onrush of the whites, and into four different states their wanderings extended. Finally in 1865, a permanent reservation was found for them in the northeastern corner of Nebraska, where nearly half the tribe still dwells. The rest, driven by homesickness for the woods and streams and lakes of Wisconsin, gradually wandered back to their native state. During the period of these wanderings, their number was reduced from 7000 to 2400 by hardships, disease and starvation.

Of the tragic and pathetic story of those years only a few facts can be given. As a result of the first eight treaties, the Winnebagoes had to surrender one section of their homeland after the other, until finally in 1837 all lands east of the Mississippi River had been ceded to the government. For this vast domain, they received a total of \$300,000 besides \$60,000 in goods and live stock and a promise of 5 per cent annually on \$1,100,000 to be held in trust by the government. Additional small sums for education and training were also to be expended for their benefit each year. The treaty of 1837 has always been denounced by the Winnebagoes as having been obtained by fraud and intimidation; but its terms were nevertheless rigorously enforced. All the Winnebagoes were promptly to go to their new reservation on the Turkey River in northeastern Iowa. Pathetic scenes ensued when the soldiers began rounding them up; many begged to be allowed to stay, kissing their ancestral soil with weepings and tears. Others asked the soldiers to bay-

onet them and bury their bodies among the graves of their fathers. Others took to the woods and hid. Gradually most of them found their way to the reservation and quietly took up the task of establishing new homes and farms. But already by 1846, they were removed to Long Prairie, Minn., above St. Cloud. Again new homes were established and many improvements had been made, when in 1855, by "force and fraud" they were transported to Blue Earth in southern Minnesota. This reservation was solemnly promised them as a "permanent home"; but many of the dissatisfied ones, during the removal, quietly stole away and wandered back to Wisconsin.

On the Blue Earth reservation, eight years of remarkable progress were spent. When the Civil War broke out, one-sixth of the total number of males showed their patriotism by enlisting. Nevertheless the Sioux massacre in 1863, in which the Winnebagoes had stood by the whites against the wild tribes, was made the occasion to start an agitation to remove them; the real motive, however, was the avaricious desire to gain possession of their very fine lands.

Almost without warning, they were driven from their homes, huddled together on steamboats, and without adequate food or supplies taken up the Missouri River to Usher's Landing, S. D. (below Pierre). Without proper preparation for their reception, no protection and no supplies, they were left on the sandy shores of the river. The soil was worthless and the water was bad. In the course of a few months, 800 had perished from exposure, disease, and starvation. To escape a like fate some fled back to Wisconsin, others built rude boats and drifted down the river to the Omaha reservation in the spring of 1864. A part of this reservation was thereupon purchased by the government for the Winnebagoes and all the members of the tribe were ordered to go there at once. In 1864, the superintendent of the reservation reported to the government that the Winnebagoes "were characterized by frugality, thrift and industry to an extent unequalled by any other tribe of Indians in the Northwest."

#### THE WISCONSIN STRAYS.

But the streams in Nebraska were so muddy and the prairies so bare of trees and shrubs, that many of the Winnebagoes soon became so homesick for the woods and streams and lakes of Wisconsin that they fled from the reservation and wandered back. The situation of these "stray-aways" was deplorable. Their lands in Wisconsin were gone; their funds were held "in trust" by the government; and the promised "annuity" of 5 per cent was refused them until they should return to Nebraska.

In 1873, another attempt was made to send back these "Wisconsin strays." The military was called out. In the dead of winter, men, women and children were rounded up at the point of bayonets, and huddled into freight cars. In some camps, the women and children were forcibly taken in the absence of the men. Quite a number had their own homes, farms and property; but all were forced to go. Families were broken up; even mothers were torn from nursing babes. No less than 240 perished from the exposure and lack of food on the way to Nebraska and after reaching the reservation.



Much popular indignation was aroused in Wisconsin, and since that time no other attempt has been made to remove them. In a few months, so many of those who had been forcibly taken to Nebraska wandered back again that the government adopted a new policy. Under the homestead law of 1875, every Winnebago could take up 40 acres of land and remain in the state; but, alas, the good lands were already in the hands of the whites, and the tracts secured by most of them were quite unsuited for agriculture. As the government punished them by withholding all annuities from 1863 until 1882, most of them had a desperate time to stave off starvation; hence, suspicion and hatred towards the white man grew. During this period, when success seemed most unpromising, the Reformed Church in the United States began its mission among the Winnebagoes.

### THE WINNEBAGO RELIGION

Before taking up the story of the development of the missionary work of the Reformed Church among the Winnebagoes, brief mention of their religion, homelife, and customs must be made.

The Winnebagoes had a simple nature religion. They believed in a creator, who was called Maura, which means "Earthmaker." The creation legend is rather long and has doubtlessly become colored considerably by the Bible story; but its essential Indian origin is unmistakable. Only a greatly condensed form can be given.

"When Maura opened his eyes, he was sitting upon a big stump. He looked up and down and about him, but there was nothing else anywhere; just himself and the stump. When he thought of this, he felt so bad he began to cry. Great tears rolled from his eyes and uniting, fell down. Now as they fell they became bigger, and bigger and bigger; and thus the seas were formed. So Maura said to himself: It is thus, if I wish anything; it will become as I wish it. So he wished for light and it came, and he wished for earth and it came. Then he wished for trees and grass to grow, and rocks and stones. Then he wished the four directions and the four winds and placed them on the four corners of the earth. Then Maura said: I will make one that is like me. So he did and talked to it; but there was no answer. Then Maura looked and saw that it had no mind, and he made it a mind. So Maura talked again, but there was no answer. So he looked and saw that it had no tongue, and he made it a tongue. Then he talked to it again, but there was no answer. Then Maura looked and saw that it had no soul, and he made it a soul. Then it almost said something, but it was unintelligible. So Maura breathed into its mouth, and it answered distinctly.

"Then Maura made seven others like it and sent them down to earth; but first he gave them two gifts. The one was a plant and he said: This shall you hold foremost in your life. So he gave them the tobacco plant. Then he said also: This likewise I shall send with you. Use it as your life. It will take care of you. It shall stand in the center of your dwellings. So he gave them the fire.

"Then Maura saw that they had nothing to eat and he prepared the animals for them. Then he prepared "many spirits" and gave them

much work to do in all the earth, and he went away and hid himself among the stars, and paid little more attention to the earth."

According to the Indian belief these "many spirits" now control all things. Nothing has happened in nature or can happen, except a personal spirit has caused it. The air is filled with spirits, the forests are their favorite homes, the lakes and streams are their delight, the mountains and valleys their abiding place. All sounds and changes in nature are caused by them. Knowing nothing of the laws of nature, these flocks of spirits perform the same service. The sighing in the tree tops, the gurgling of the waters, the blowing of the wind, the lightning flash, the rolling thunder; all these are proofs to them that the spirits are active. When the seed sprouts, the flower unfolds, the fruit ripens, the crops prosper, game is plentiful and the fish bite; the spirits are well disposed.

The principal spirits are the sun, moon, morning star, earth and water; as well as the four directions, the disease bringer and the thunder birds.

The thunder spirit is imagined as a gigantic being in human shape with many wings ending in hands, lazily sleeping upon the clouds. But occasionally he arouses himself; he opens his eyes, and the fire flashes forth; he shouts, and the thunders roll; he stretches himself and throws stones about, and, lo, the lightning has struck. In the fall this spirit goes west and does not return until spring.

Violent storms and tornadoes are caused by a spirit enclosing much air in his mighty hand and compressing it; the sudden opening of the hand causes this air to bound forth and rush over the earth.



*Ready for the Powwow*

When the northern lights show themselves in the heavens, it is caused by a family row among the spirits.

The religion of the Winnebagoes consists entirely of efforts to win the help of the good spirits and escape the displeasure of the evil spirits. All their religious observances, consisting of a great number of fastings to the point of exhaustion and hallucinations, sacrifices, dances, prayers, singing, and beating of drums, have this one end. Tobacco is a favorite sacrifice, as all the spirits delight in its aroma. Desirable articles of food, a favorite dog or horse may also be brought. Their dances all have a religious meaning. The merely social dance is unknown. The sexes never dance together. This would be accounted an indecent performance. When an Indian is converted, he gives up the practice entirely. Refraining from the dance, to them, is one of the distinguishing marks of a Christian.

An almost endless number of superstitions and ceremonies are connected with these religious observances. The purpose is not to learn to know the will of the Great Spirit, or to lead a better life, or to secure forgiveness of sin; but solely to secure favors for this life, such as good crops, plenty of game, health, long life, brave children. In fact the Winnebago in his heathen state has no sense of responsibility towards the Great Spirit, nor feeling of sin and guilt, nor thought of deserving punishment for sin either here or hereafter. His religious observances are practical, and intended to secure earthly rewards.

The Winnebago takes it as a self-evident truth that at death he will enter an abode of happiness and plenty. Some of the favorite possessions of a man, or the implements of labor of a woman, are buried with them. The body is placed in a grave and a little gable-shaped covering of boards is placed over it. At one end a small hole is always cut into this covering. This is to enable the spirit to freely pass to and fro. For some days food and tobacco are placed



*Heathen Winnebago Cemetery*

on the grave; occasionally even a horse or dog is sacrificed. The departed is thus aided in reaching the future abode and will not suffer from lack of supplies until he is able to find these for himself in his new home. A fire is also maintained for four nights to serve as a guide to the spirit on its "journey towards the West." Warriors who died in battle and those who diligently observed all the ritual of the secret societies might be permitted to come back, and be born again, and live a second time to old age. From all this it is plain that the Winnebago never had a doubt about a life beyond the grave.

## HOME LIFE

Marriage among the Winnebagoes in the olden days was a simple affair. The young man having made his choice, would watch his opportunity when the mother of the girl was at home alone, and enter the wigwam. If his wooing was acceptable the mother would sit perfectly quiet and would not touch the fire; if, however, his suit was unwelcome, the mother would stir up the fire violently and spit into it as a sign of her disgust. Thereupon the wooer beat a hasty retreat. However, a goodly present of a pony, furs, or trinkets would generally secure parental consent, and after the gift had been accepted by them, the youth and maiden started away together and she became his wife without further ceremony.

Marriage bonds unfortunately were as easily thrown off as they were entered and divorces were very common. To this day the heathen Winnebagoes enter the marriage relation according to the old tribal customs, and until recently the state of Wisconsin recognized the validity of such marriages. At present, however, the law insists that the Indians also must take out a license and a legal ceremony must be performed. Quite a number of the Winnebagoes ignore the law and insist that "the Indian way is just as good as the white man's way."

The women hold a somewhat subordinate position, though not more so than among certain foreign groups dwelling among us.

Children, without regard to sex, are tenderly loved by the parents, and in case of sickness are nursed with great devotion. Large families are common. When the payment of annuities was resumed in 1882, Green Grass came to Black River Falls and tried to collect for 15 children. As this was rather unusual even for an Indian family, the agent demanded the names of the children; but the father was unable to give several of these. Hence he was ordered to bring the children, and the next day arrived with the fifteen. It is possible, of course, that he borrowed a few for the occasion; but Green Grass was paid the cash.



*Group of Indian Matrons*

The children are allowed much freedom and generally are given their own way. Though frequently scolded, bodily punishment is rare. Nevertheless Rev. Stucki, after thirty-five years among them, declares: "Even so it can hardly be said that their children are rougher or behave worse than the children of many white folks. In fact, quite the contrary is the case."

A remarkable respect for age and authority is a distinguishing trait of the young.

Though very shy and reserved before strangers, especially white folks, when among themselves they are jolly and gay. They like jokes, indulge in merry pranks, and with joyous laughter play their games. They have adopted the favorite games of the white children though still retaining some of the old Indian games; such as, shinny on the ice; hurling a curved stick over the ice, the longest throw winning; sliding down hill on a narrow piece of bark or a barrel stave, feet placed tandem and holding only to a strong string or light rope tied to the front end; and the moccasin game. Coasting down hill on one five-inch stave is a remarkable feat of balancing. The moccasin game consists of dropping a pebble under one of several moccassins or pieces of skin or cloth, in such a way that the opponent cannot guess where it has been dropped. It may be played by two individuals or with several on each side. An uncanny skill both in hiding and guessing is developed. In summer time, a tag game in which any part of the body not under the water may be tagged, is wildly hilarious fun.

Hospitality among adults is carried to extremes. Anyone considers himself entitled to visit another without waiting for an invitation: he makes himself entirely at home; he eats with them; he sleeps with them; and stays on indefinitely. This ancient custom of hospitality has been especially hard on the diligent and thrifty members of the tribe; the lazy and shiftless simply come in and stick as long as the supplies are forthcoming. The Christian Winnebagoes have frequently been grievously imposed upon in this way by pagan acquaintances.

### SOME INDIAN HABITS

Truthfulness and honesty are frequently lacking among them; but there are many noble exceptions. More chickens and tools were stolen in nine months at Neillville while the new building was being erected, with no one but white folks about, than were stolen at the old mission station out in the woods in twenty years, with no one but heathen Winnebagoes about, and the nearest white man living six miles away.

The use of tobacco is almost universal among the Winnebagoes. Men, women and even children smoke or chew, and frequently do both. Tobacco is counted as the choicest gift of Maura (the Great Spirit); hence, frequent use is a way of showing him honor. As the innumerable hosts of spirits are believed to be especially delighted with the aroma of burning tobacco, and as they are unable to secure the "weed" in the spirit-world, a favorite way of securing the help of the good spirits is to make a liberal offering of tobacco.

Formerly the Winnebagoes were much given to drunkenness; not that stocks of intoxicants were kept on hand and used daily; but rather that occasional sprees, especially at the times when the annuities were paid, were considered the height of delight. Living a natural life ordinarily, the Indian was peculiarly sensitive to the influence of alcohol, so that a half pint of diluted alcohol would suffice to make three or four Indians helplessly drunk. During these drinking bouts, the old, savage nature would flare up and violent quarrels and fights were common. During the days when the annuities were being paid, Black River Falls formerly was a wild and uproarious place. Frequently on the way home an intoxicated Indian would lie down and fall asleep. During the winter many an Indian thus froze to death, or became permanently crippled, or contracted a fatal illness from the exposure. Before coming into contact with the whites, the Winnebagoes knew nothing of intoxicants; but, alas, the white man's "fire water" became his most dangerous foe. The influence of the preaching and teaching of our missionaries gradually worked a remarkable change among them; and today the Winnebago is apt to be quite as sober an individual as his white neighbor.

The Winnebago used the names of Maura (the Creator or Earth-maker) and the other chief spirits with reverence only. These names to him were not alone convenient signs by which the "spirits" were known, but were believed to contain something of the very nature of the spirit himself. Therefore such names were uttered only with honor and respect. His language contains no oaths or expressions of profanity. It is a melancholy fact that the Winnebago who curses uses only the sacred names of the Christian religion, which he has heard from profane white men.

#### THE BEGINNINGS OF THE MISSION

Early in the seventies of the last century when the college and seminary of the Reformed Church near Franklin, Wis., (the Mission House), were still in their beginnings, the institution was occasionally visited by wandering Indians who were generally looking for a "handout." Chief Solomon, who came frequently, described the place as "heap big white houses, good men there, much to eat, much money and tobacco." This led the professors to begin discussing the opening of an Indian Mission, but the project seemed impossible. Other ministers of the Sheboygan Classis took up the agitation and finally in 1876, the Classis adopted this resolution, "If we ever have a missionary and can gather together the necessary means, we will send him to the Indians who live nearest to us." By the end of another year, the plan had advanced sufficiently so that it was resolved, "We recognize it as a solemn duty to bring the Gospel also to the heathen living in our own land, the Indians; this duty, alas, we have too long neglected. Every minister of the Classis shall ask his congregation whether they are in favor of such a Mission and how much they will contribute for this year." Four months later at a special session of the Classis it was announced that \$239 had been paid or pledged and it was decided to go ahead. Rev. Jacob Hauser, who had spent several years as a missionary in India, was challenged to investigate the

fields. He visited the Oneidas, the Menomenees, and the Winnebagoes. The Oneidas had a Protestant missionary, the Menominees had a Roman Catholic missionary, and the Winnebagoes had no one. The Oneidas and Menominees were on reservations with the government providing for them; the Winnebagoes were mostly wanderers who had been reduced to beggary. Hence, the Classis decided to begin work among the Winnebagoes, and Rev. Jacob Hauser was appointed as the missionary on July 9, 1878.

#### THE LABORS OF REV. JACOB HAUSER 1878-1885

At that time nearly a thousand Winnebagoes were living in Jackson county and the surrounding counties. Within a radius of sixty miles from Black River Falls, which is the county-seat of Jackson, from 7-800 of them had settled down; most of these were within the boundaries of Jackson county. Throughout that portion of Wisconsin there are large stretches of worthless land and sand wastes, and other stretches of soggy, swampy soil. Large sections of "cut over lands" are also found everywhere. These were once covered with forests, but when the lumbering industry was done with them, they grew up once more with small trees and impenetrable underbrush. Taken all together, these lands were about as hopeless for agriculture as can be found anywhere; hence, the white did not yet care for them. Upon lands such as these most of the Winnebagoes were assigned homesteads of forty acres each in 1875. A white man could not have raised crops there; for the Indians without agricultural training or implements it was hopeless; nevertheless they tried bravely to make a living by farming, picking berries, working for the whites, as well as, by hunting and fishing.

For the location of the new mission that place was chosen where the largest number of Winnebagoes were living close together. This was found about seven miles from Black River Falls. Rev. Jacob Hauser reached Black River Falls in December, 1878. On Dec. 20, with an interpreter, he made his first visit to the Indian settlement for a conference. This resulted in a gathering three days later in the wigwam of the old chief, Black Hawk, at which Rev. Hauser explained to them the purpose of his coming. Black Hawk, who acted as spokesman for the Indians answered, "The words you have spoken are good. We also believe in God. (Maura, meaning the Creator.) We love our children and shall gladly see them well taught and well trained. We are glad that you have come."

Long before this meeting, the Indians had seen the necessity of giving their children school opportunities; hence, of their own accord, several years before, they had built a little log cabin for school purposes. As the Indian settlement was poverty stricken and was forced to pay the teachers themselves, only the most incompetent could be secured for the small salary that was offered. Even so the teachers could not be paid promptly and, therefore, the school was open only very irregularly.

On December 30, the school was opened in the little log school house with ten Indian children present; among these was the lad, John Stacy,

who many years later became a Christian and the valued assistant and interpreter to the missionary. Six days later on Jan. 5, 1879, Rev. Hauser preached his first sermon on the text, John 1: 29, "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" During the first eighteen months the missionary lived in Black River Falls and four days of the week walked the seven miles to the log-cabin school and back again. Chief Black Hawk watched this work for about a year and then evidently having satisfied himself that the results were satisfactory, he gave the missionary the use of a pony to ride to and fro. The preaching services were also conducted as often as possible by means of an interpreter; for only a few of the Winnebagoes were able to speak any English. The only interpreter available was a half breed Catholic and the manner in which the Gospel message was given to the Indians was very unsatisfactory; hence, public preaching services were given up.

Rev. Hauser devoted his time to the school, mastering the Winnebago language, and visiting the Indians in their wigwams and shacks. The Winnebago language is very difficult. No teacher was to be had, and not a word had yet been written down. As the Indians generally speak rather low and have a habit of slurring over entire syllables, it was extremely difficult to catch the words from their lips; as well as to find a combination of letters capable of expressing the unusual gutturals so common in their language. Words to express abstract, moral and spiritual ideas, quite apart from Christian conceptions, are almost entirely



*The Indian Chapel*



lacking. Such ideas can be imparted only imperfectly by long phrases and roundabout descriptions. In spite of these difficulties, Rev. Hauser compiled a dictionary of 1500 words and collected many examples of characteristic grammatical constructions. When the Indians were visited in their homes, they would listen attentively, puff their pipes, and shake their heads; or, when the message became too personal, they would slip away and take to the woods. The memory of their wrongs was still too vivid to accept the Word. Hence, the teaching and winning of the children gradually received the chief emphasis, as it appeared to give most promise for the future.



*Rev. Jacob Hauser*



*Rev. Jacob Stucki*

### SECURING THE PROPERTY OF THE MISSION

After Rev. Hauser had served for a few months, it became evident that a permanent mission station located among the Indians was an absolute necessity. In November, 1879, Jackson county presented to Sheboygan Classis 120 acres of land. The following spring a house built of logs was erected for the missionary, and he moved in with his family on June 30. A barn and shed were also built to accommodate the horse and wagon and other farm animals which were secured for his use.

As the little log schoolhouse had become inadequate, a chapel to be used also for school purposes, was erected in 1882. It is a neat frame building with a tower, in size 20x36 feet, and is located a short distance from the missionary's home. Whenever it was possible to hold a service, a little group of Indians would always assemble.

The death of the missionary's wife in 1882, brought deep sorrow to

Rev. Hauser and also a great loss to the work; but nevertheless he continued steadfastly at his post. In 1884, Rev. Jacob Stucki was appointed as his assistant, and when Rev. Hauser found it necessary to give up the work in 1885, Rev. Stucki was appointed as his successor, and has served the Church as Winnebago Indian missionary since that date.

### REV. STUCKI BECOMES THE MISSIONARY

Rev. Stucki continued the mission along the lines laid down by his predecessor. The school was open for 7-8 months each year and became very popular. Not only children but stalwart youths and buxom maidens enrolled; even married folks started in to acquire the white man's learning. Unfortunately the strain of sitting quietly and trying to master the white man's language and learning proved too tiresome for the adults, and generally after a few days or weeks they would "play hooky for keeps." Probably the fact that the Bible, the Catechism, and the Christian religion formed so large a part of the subject matter that was taught also had its influence in keeping them away. In the years 1885-1898, the smallest annual enrollment was 28, and the largest 85. Owing to the great irregularity with which the school was attended the daily average, however, was only 25-30. Rev. Stucki taught the school without help with the exception of two years, 1893-95, during which time Ewald Wickesberg acted as assistant.

During this period preaching services were conducted whenever it was possible to secure an interpreter. Rev. Stucki was forced to give so much time to the school work that systematic study of the Winnebago language so as to use it in a public address was practically impossible. John Stacy, who had been one of the ten scholars who attended the school the first day in 1878, had made splendid progress in his studies and shown much interest in Christianity. Though not yet a convert, he nevertheless became very useful to the missionary, and in 1895 was appointed as assistant and interpreter. In this capacity he rendered invaluable aid and made it possible for Rev. Stucki to conduct regular divine services each Sunday.

Rev. Stucki's activities gradually extended far beyond teaching and preaching. As the confidence of the Indians was won, he became their friend and adviser; he was called upon to act the role of doctor and lawyer; he was looked to as helper in every need, and the needs of the Winnebago settlement were multiplying alarmingly. The forests were rapidly being cut down; the years 1887-94 were very dry; most of the cranberry swamps dried up; and terrible fires swept over their lands. Consequently the crops of various wild berries were practically ruined and this source of income was wiped out; while the loss of their woods through the fire had robbed the Indians even of their fuel for the winter. In a section where the thermometer occasionally drops to 40 degrees below zero this brought great suffering. Many of the Indians were therefore forced to scatter and look for work among white farmers, sometimes going as far as fifty miles. In the spring with wife and children they would start out, erect their wigwams in some convenient spot and

perform any kind of labor available. In this way the strong and healthy Indians managed to make a scanty living; but the aged, the crippled and the blind of whom there were quite a number, were in a miserable plight. An attempt was made by Rev. Stucki to revive their ancient skill of basket weaving and the Indians took to it readily and produced some splendid work; but, unfortunately, the demand for such wares was not sufficient and the plan had to be given up.

Walking Cloud expressed the feeling of the older Indians one day when he complained: "You, white men! You have taken away our lands; they are gone. You have shot our game and caught our fish; they are gone. You have cut down and burned down our woods and destroyed our berries; they are gone. Now, you come and want to take away our religion." This last, seemed to him the crowning offence of them all.

As soon as the sufferings of the Winnebagoes became known to the people of our congregations, there was an instant response. Boxes and barrels, and bags and bundles of new and worn clothing, bedding, blankets, shoes, as well as food, were sent. A fund was also established from which help was granted either as a direct gift or as an interest-free loan; as the circumstances called for. By this means many a family was tided over those hard years.

This form of aiding the Winnebago has been continued until now; for distress and poverty are always very near to a considerable number of them. Requests sometimes come in from families living a hundred miles away. It is an encouraging result of the work of the mission that the necessity of giving such relief is gradually decreasing.

When this relief work was begun back in the '80's there were no Christian Winnebagoes and the inexperienced heathen Indians could not be trusted to spend money wisely; hence, aid was given in the form of goods and food supplies. The missionary frequently would send the Indians to a store in Black River Falls with an order calling for certain supplies. It was a matter of constant amazement to the fortunate ones that a piece of paper with some queer marks upon it should be able to bring such desirable results. One day a young brave had a bright idea. He borrowed an order from a friend and carefully copied it. Then with great confidence he presented it to the store keeper. The clumsy imitation was discovered immediately and the Indian was asked: Who wrote this? Proudly throwing back his shoulders and patting himself on the chest, the Indian answered: Me did it. When informed that it was no good, he insisted that it was quite as good as the one which he had copied; and he could not be made to understand why his "order" should not have brought forth the desired supplies as well as the other.

### THE TRIAL OF FAITH

The hardest trial of faith to Rev. Stucki and the entire church was the long wait before the first convert was won. The children were sent to the school; the adults came to the preaching services; but for thirteen years there was none to accept the Christian faith.

In conducting his services, the missionary had to adjust himself to

the peculiarities of his hearers. The men would enter the chapel and make themselves at home. Hats were kept on, pipes were smoked, tobacco juice would be spit carelessly about. Sometimes an argument would be started among themselves; again short grunts of approval would be heard when something pleased them; more often there were vigorous grunts of disapproval when something was said against their customs and religion; occasionally, one would grab his hat and stalk from the room. Frequently the mothers would bring their little papooses, strapped to a board, and carried on the back according to the Indian style. The crying of the babies became a common sound, but no one cared about that. The children cried at home, why should they not cry in the chapel?

One day Rev. Stucki had preached on the words, Acts 17: 26, "And (God) hath made of one blood all nations of men." At the close of the sermon, Hishgatewahiga arose, walked to the front and asked permission to put a question. Upon being told to speak, he said: Why is it that you have a beard and I have none? The missionary answered: I suppose it must be because God permitted one to grow for me and not for you. No, answered the Indian, that is a proof that the White Man and the Indian are not of the same blood. White Man's blood makes a beard grow, and Indian's blood does not make a beard grow. God wanted the two to be different. Therefore, he gave the White Man the Christian religion and he gave the Indian another religion. So the Christian religion is good for the White Man, and the Indian religion is the only thing for the Indian. It is so; because God arranged it so.

The Indians willingly admitted that the Christian religion and the Good Book were just the thing for the white man; but insisted that God had given the Indian another religion better adapted to his understanding. To prove this assertion, appeal was made to the following story: A young Indian began reading the Bible and became a Christian. Soon he fell sick and died. Some of the chiefs watched at the grave to see what would become of the spirit of the man. Their eyes were opened and they were permitted to see the spirit go forth. First, the spirit started for the Christian heaven; but he was stopped and could go no further. Then the spirit started west towards the Indian heaven; but again he was stopped and could go no further. So the spirit was forced to float forever between earth and heaven; for there was no place to go and no rest to be found. Therefore, let each one keep the religion that God gave him.

The Wisconsin Winnebagoes measured the worth of the Christian religion entirely by the character of the white men whom they had known, and the treatment they had received from them. As they generally came in contact with the drinking, cursing, cheating white man, and the memory of seventy-five years of grievous injustice was still rankling within them, their former attitude towards the white man's religion should not surprise us.

The greatest curse which the white man brought the Indian was "firewater." A hideous swarm of evils inevitable followed in its wake; such as, laziness, poverty, famine, quarrels, cruelties, murders, sexual vices, ruined homes, stunted childhood. The Winnebagoes suffered much

from all of these; and found in these sufferings another argument against Christianity.

### SOME EXPERIENCES

Rev. Stucki had many an experience with drunken Indians. Living as he did for years six miles from the nearest white family, without police protection, these encounters were not always without danger. One evening about a mile from the mission station, two drunken Indians were lying in the snow unable to get up. A white man passed by and tried to help them; but they cursed and fought him. The weather was so exceedingly cold that in a short time both men would have perished; so the man ran to tell Rev. Stucki of their danger. When he reached the spot, both Indians at once became quiet and began to apologize. With great trouble they were helped to their feet, but the liquor and the cold had so overcome them, that they were unable to walk until the missionary got between, put an arm about each one, and thus hanging together the homeward march was begun. One of them seemed to think that some explanations were in order, so he kept on repeating a little speech that ran thus: Teacher, you good man. You love Indian. You help Indian. You love God. Me help you. Me no drunk. Me good Indian. Between the two burly Indians, the missionary was nearly squeezed flat; but the wigwam of the one was soon reached and with the aid of the wife, the husband was quickly roped fast to his bed. Then the other was escorted home and also safely roped down. The practice of taking a drunken Indian home and roping him down was a rather common event in those earlier years of the mission.

The greatest danger of his life came to Rev. Stucki from a drunken Indian. One morning an Indian on his way to Black River Falls left a bundle in Mrs. Stucki's care, saying he would call for it in the evening. During the afternoon Mrs. Stucki became seriously ill, and just as Rev. Stucki was hurrying to go for a doctor, the Indian returned hopelessly drunk and insisted upon entering the house. Rev. Stucki had not been told about the bundle and could not understand the Indian's drunken explanations, and hence, as only women and children were in the house, he refused to let the man enter. The Indian, possibly thinking that this was a scheme to rob him of his bundle, became very angry, drew his revolver and pointing it at the missionary snarled: I've got something else here, and you will get it too. Rev. Stucki laughed and telling him to put his gun away, walked off. With revolver still pointing at the missionary, the Indian followed. At about that time, John Stacy, who possessed remarkable strength, appeared upon the scene, and directly the man was rendered harmless. In a little while he had sobered up enough to explain what he had really wanted; so he was given his bundle and taken home. Later on this man killed his wife and himself.

Many similar instances could be told but these two will suffice to show forth the general conditions caused by intemperance. The preaching of the Gospel has worked a remarkable change. This improvement was vividly set forth by a citizen of Black River Falls some time ago. Referring to the influence of the mission, he said: It used to be years

ago that, whenever the Indians came to town, they would tank up and raise a rumpus; but now you hardly ever see a drunken Indian anymore. (He did not use the word "rumpus," however, but preferred a shorter and a hotter word.)

To illustrate several other phases of the homelife, the following typical incidents are worth giving.

Chief Black Hawk had two wives as was formerly common among men of position and influence in the tribe. One of them had a severe attack of rheumatism and Rev. Stucki was called in to treat her. His home remedies were so successful that in a few days the husband reported that she could hobble about again. A second treatment was then given and after a few days, Black Hawk reported with joy: Her all right now. Can split all firewood again.

An addition to the family had come to a Winnebago home. The father was very happy and proud, and about a week later speaking of the event, he said: My wife is very well indeed. When the boy was three days old, she was able to chop wood again. Never before has this happened. It is good.

An Indian became very sick and having no confidence in the white man's drugs, he sent for a medicine man. Decorated with claws of bears and feathers of eagles, carrying bells of various kinds and holding in his hand the sacred rattle, the medicine man went through a lot of hocus-pocus and then announced that the trouble was caused by an evil-minded spirit lodging in the patient's stomach. Therefore, to effect a cure it was necessary to drive him out; hence, the medicine man proceeded to make it so unpleasant for the "evil spirit" that he would be glad to go. With shrieks and howls, he leaped and danced beside the bed, like one possessed, the bells ringing and the rattle sounding. Then the place of the pain was rubbed, a mounthful of medicine squirted upon it, and a bowlful of some bitter mixture was prepared. The patient was told to take large doses of this, and the evil spirit would be driven away.

If the sick person recovered, the medicine man claimed all the credit; but should he die then the spirit causing the sickness was too powerful, or some other excuse was invented. At the present time, these old superstitions are practically discarded; and the doctors and the drugs of the white man are relied upon in case of severe illness.

### THE FIRST GROUP OF CONVERTS

For twenty years the seed of the Word had been faithfully sown before the first fruits of the harvest appeared. In 1897, David Decorah, King of Thunder, John Stacy and his wife asked to be baptized. For years they had been faithful in listening to the preaching of the Gospel and gave evidence of growth in Christian grace; but to become the first of the tribe to forsake the religion and traditions of the fathers, required a degree of personal conviction and assurance that could be attained only slowly. They could have been persuaded to accept baptism much sooner, but the missionary wanted to make sure that the conversions were genuine before accepting their confession of faith. Jan. 2, 1898, was a day



*Group of First Converts*

*Mrs. John Stacy, John Stacy, David Decorah, King of Thunder.*

of rejoicing to the missionary; for the first Winnebago converts to Christianity were then baptized. Two years later, George Lowe and his entire family were also baptized and added to the little group of Winnebago Christians.

The number of converts has grown but slowly; for the standards insisted upon were high, and a degree of morality was required such as few pastors of white churches maintain. It was absolutely necessary to insist upon such standards; because the future success of the mission depended upon making the distinction between the Christian and those not Christians so plain that every one could see it.

The rigid insistence upon the difference between the Christian religion and the Indian religion displeased the heathen Winnebagoes greatly. One of these took the missionary aside one day and explained to him how all the Indians could be induced to attend the services regularly. Said this Indian diplomat: Me tell you, how you get Indians, come every Sunday. When Indians have dance, you go there, stay a while. You say: That's right; me like that. You need not stay all time; just a little while. You must not say anything against Indian ways. Indian ways just as good as white man's ways. All just the same. My boy says so; he know all about it. He say: White man preacher good pay; that's why he do it. Now you do as I tell you. Indians come every Sunday.

Even though the advice was not followed, the Indians kept coming to the services in growing numbers. As they knew nothing of a calendar and paid no heed to particular days, it was almost impossible for them to keep track of the Sundays. The difficulty was removed by using the bell in the chapel tower. During the week the bell called the children to school and on Saturday evening an extra long ringing sent its message out through the woods, proclaiming to the Indians: Tomorrow is Sunday. A new name for the day gradually arose among the Indians; namely, Harahmihehamb; that is, being interpreted, The Day of the Cross. On Sunday morning at nine o'clock, the bell pealed forth once more, and again at ten o'clock. Thus, the day with its invitation to come to the worship of the Christians' God was brought to the attention of the Indian settlement.



*A Sunday Congregation*

#### THE NUMBER OF CONVERTS GROWS

After the first Christians had been won, the Sunday services were conducted as is customary in our churches. At the invocation, all the Christians would arise and a few of the heathen also; but most of the latter would remain seated. A gospel hymn would then be read in English, after which it was translated into the Winnebago language, and as many as were able joined in the singing. Scripture reading, prayer, and sermon followed. After the sermon, one of the Christian Indians



would be asked to "make the Jesus prayer." Another song and the benediction closed the service.

A striking change in the behavior of the audiences also gradually took place. To be sure, occasionally some of the women would begin to tell each other the current news; or some of the older Indians would move nearer to the stove and light their pipes; or some man would comment adversely on the sermon; or the children would start a "concert." Generally it was sufficient for the missionary to simply pause in his sermon in order to restore order, but occasionally he would have to admonish the disturbers; or even invite some individual to come forward and make his speech so that all could get the benefit of it, if he felt sure that it was more important than the sermon. That always brought the de-



*Martin Lowe*

*David Decorah*

sired result. Today the audiences are as orderly and reverent as at any service of the pale face.

During the years since that first group of Winnebagoes was baptized, others have been won; so that today 66 adults and children are rejoicing in the Christian faith. But this does not tell the entire story; there were in addition many others, who never had the courage to publicly break away from friends and relatives, who yet by their evident interest and attendance at Christian worship showed plainly that God's Spirit had been working upon them.

The Winnebagoes who have become Christians have made a remarkable record. Not one has become a backslider. Not one has been guilty of a crime which the white man's law punishes. No one has brought disgrace upon the church. Every man is able and willing when called upon, publicly to pray or give a Christian testimony.

In the school between 1878 and 1922, a total of 472 individuals was enrolled. Quite a number of these remained for a brief period only; but about 300 of them learned at least to read, write and figure a little; three score passed through the eight grades in a modified course of study arranged for the Indians; five have taken some high school work; and three spent a year or two at college. One of these, David Decorah, served for some years as interpreter and is now assisting in the work as evangelist and preacher. Another, Martin Lowe, assists at the Sunday services as interpreter and organist.

### THE WINNEBAGO SCRIPTURES

The Christian life and faith can grow strong and beautiful only as they are directed and nourished by the Word of God. Believing profoundly in this truth, Rev. Stucki worked for years to give some of the choicest portions of the Bible to the Winnebagoes in their own tongue. In performing this arduous task, John Stacy rendered invaluable aid. It was necessary to create new words and forms of expression to bring out the Christian ideas; old words had to take on new and higher meanings; and the entire language had to receive a baptism of the Christian spirit. The four Gospels, Acts, Genesis, and Exodus 19, 20, were translated. The work was published by the American Bible Society in 1907. Thus was given to the 2500 remaining members of the Winnebago tribe the wonderful Word of God.

### THE PROPERTY IS IMPROVED

In the course of the years, the mission property has been improved in various ways. The house was enlarged, as it had become too small for the growing family of the missionary. A barn, sheds and pens were added to house the farm animals and farm implements. A little building, known as the "house for the sick," as well as a three-room home for John Stacy was erected. Permission was also granted to another Indian family to build a little house near the others on the property of the mission. The soil of the mission farm is generally light and sandy, although some parts are better and capable of growing small crops. Such parts

of the 120 acres as seemed promising were cleared off and enclosed with fences. The garden near the house, thanks to a small irrigation plant presented by the First Church of Milwaukee, and the agricultural skill of the missionary, usually proved very successful. In summer time the fields, the garden, the home, the numerous barns and sheds, the three small buildings mentioned, and the little white chapel, present a most inviting and attractive picture.



*Home of Missionary Stucki*

### OIL OF WINTERGREEN

Helping the Indians to help themselves has always been a chief aim of the mission. Formerly the Winnebagoes had remarkable artistic skill in bead working, quill working, basket making, bag weaving, etc. From time to time efforts have been made to revive these arts. The response of the Indians was immediate and surprising, and showed that the old skill has not disappeared; but unfortunately the cost of disposing of these products has always been so great that the middleman got the profits and the Indian got a mere pittance. In 1910, Rev. Stucki made a further effort to help the Indians through the distillation of wintergreen oil; for the wintergreen grows in great abundance in the woods about the mission. Suitable apparatus was purchased to establish an experimental station. The Indians gladly gathered and brought in large quantities of the leaves, and a good grade of oil was secured. But when it came to marketing it, this genuine product had to compete with "winter green oil" made from other plants or produced artificially. The result was that there was practically nothing left for the Indians, and the experiment was abandoned. All that remains today of this effort is a dis-

mantled still and a strong odor of wintergreen that has persisted for twelve years.



*Rev. and Mrs. Stucki, Rev. S.'s Children and Grandchild*

### SORROW IN THE STUCKI HOME

Rev. Stucki during the long years of his ministrations among the Winnebagoes has endured great privations and hardships. Sorrow and affliction also laid their heavy hand upon him. In 1894, his first wife died and in 1903, the second. They rest from their labors in the beautiful cemetery at Black River Falls. Their lives were given in service to their own home and to the Indian mothers and their children. Their was little time for rest or for relaxation; and the burden becoming too heavy was laid aside to enter eternal rest. Missionary Stucki was left with nine motherless children, but not for a moment did he consider giving up his work. For a while the home had to be broken up. The older children were entrusted to the care of the Orphans' Home at Ft. Wayne, Ind., and the younger ones were taken into the homes of friends. A son, William, who had grown to manhood, was also taken away by death.

### TRANSFER OF THE MISSION TO THE BOARD

With the passing years, conditions in the vicinity of the mission station changed greatly. As land values increased in Wisconsin many a half-section, which had been counted as worthless, found a purchaser. Conscienceless land agents also lured quite a number of Bohemians into the district. By hard work and special skill, the small fields of the mission farm generally looked rather promising; and the garden, thanks to the irrigation plant, was always a most pleasant sight. Hence, it became a practice of the agents to show the mission farm as a proof of the pos-

sibilities of the soil. Many Bohemian families were thus induced to their later sorrow to invest. As the lands were bought up and fenced in, many Indian families were forced to move away. Thus it came to pass that there were years when the school could not be conducted because not enough children of school age were within walking distance. Rev. Stucki then began taking a few Indian children into his own home, so that they might have school opportunities. Gradually it became clear that the period of the day school was passed and a boarding school was an absolute necessity, if the mission was to continue. The Sheboygan Classis was not able to finance such a project, even with offerings that had been coming in from all sections of the church, and therefore opened negotiations with the Tri-Synodic Board of Home Missions. On March 27, 1917, the mission property was transferred to the Board, and the latter assumed entire responsibility for financing and directing the Indian missions.

### THE BOARDING SCHOOL

"Will the Winnebago parents bring their children to a boarding school?" was the anxious question frequently asked during the summer of 1917. Modest accommodations to house and feed about twenty-five children were prepared. That there would be no vacant bed became evident as the opening day approached. The missionary was swamped with applications and actually accepted about thirty. The following two years the number was gradually increased to forty, and yet the list of those who had to be refused admittance became distressingly large. The rooms were crowded to the utmost. Twenty-one girls were put into two rooms, in size 12x12 and 12x14 feet. The beds were placed side by side so close that they touched. In every single bed there were two and in every double bed three occupants. Occasionally during the night, some of the smaller ones became frightened and would creep in with the older girls, and in the morning Mrs. Stucki would now and then find five in a double bed. To be sure, that made the bed somewhat crowded. The nineteen boys were all housed in one large attic room. The eating quarters were equally crowded. There was no proper place for the children to read, or play, or amuse themselves. Even under such conditions, the children were far better off than in the poor, unsanitary shacks and wigwams which they called home.

This crowded condition became a source of danger when sickness broke out. The severest trial through which the mission has passed came in January and February, 1920. Without any warning a few of the children began coughing one day, and within forty-eight hours thirty-five of them were down with influenza. Five of the cases developed into pneumonia. The wife of Rev. Stucki and son, Benjamin, were the only white persons able to be about. With the help of Gilbert Lowe, one of the Indian converts, and the older Indian girls in the school the patients were nursed. Only twice could a doctor be induced to make the trip from Black River Falls to minister to them. The temperature of the pneumonia patients ranged from 103 to 106 degrees. One of them was pronounced by the doctor to have "one chance in a thousand." The

heathen parents of the children looked upon the epidemic as a punishment sent by the Great Spirit, because they had allowed their children to go to a Christian school. Some of them decided among themselves to take the children away so soon as they could be moved. The Christian Indians met daily to pray for the sick and for their poor, blinded tribespeople. Benjamin Stucki, the teacher, worked five days and five nights without sleeping, or resting, or sitting down for one square meal. God wrought a miracle. From the jaws of death the patients were snatched. Everyone recovered. A profound impression was made upon the heathen. Within a few months five of the older scholars and several adults were baptized.

Almost equally remarkable is the fact that in all the years of the mission there has never been a fire which has done any serious damage. During seven months of the year in the several buildings, no less than ten stoves were constantly in use. Owing to the extreme cold peculiar to that part of Wisconsin these stoves must be kept very hot; the Indian children are apt to be quite as careless with fire as white children; and yet the mission was preserved. Verily, He has given his angels charge over them.

Incidents galore both grave and amusing might be given to show the working of the Indian mind; but a few must suffice.

One day an Indian woman made an unreasonable demand to Rev. Stucki. When he tried to explain to her that such a request could not be granted, she drew herself up with an injured air and exclaimed: Why, that's what you are here for. That's what you get paid for, to help us.

Two years ago a mother came about fifty miles with three children who had been accepted for the school. After her arrival, she looked up the superintendent, Benjamin Stucki, and demanded a return of the railroad fare for bringing them. Upon being told that such a thing was never done, she said: Then I take them back and go to another school. When she was told that this was her privilege, she laughed, showed a roll of bills, took her children to Black River Falls, and laid in a supply of clothes and shoe for them.

A disgruntled father one day took his son of fourteen years out of school because there was too much "Jesus" in the teaching, and placed him into a district school. About two months afterwards, the father came to Rev. Stucki and tried to collect payment for his son's board at home. When this was refused, the father declared: It belongs to me. If I had left him in your school, you would have given him the board. Look what you saved. Now that's mine.

Frequently when mothers came to visit their children, they have taken them aside, quickly removed the underwear and stockings, and carried these home for others of the family. They seem to think that since the school has a supply of underwear and they do not, it is perfectly proper to do this.

The heathen parents believe that they are doing us a real favor by permitting us to teach their children our religion; and hence, we should show our appreciation by making them a suitable present from time to

time; perhaps a blanket, or a coat, or a pair of shoes. If the present is not forthcoming, the adults do not hesitate to ask or write or send for what they want.

It will take years of careful and patient instruction to make them understand that they must depend upon themselves and work for what they expect to get.

### THE TEACHERS OF THE PAST

Rev. Hauser taught the school without assistance, as did also Rev. Stucki for many years. As the school grew, other teachers were appointed to relieve the missionary from the school work, so that his time might be devoted to other phases of the work of the mission. The names of these faithful helpers should be placed on record: 1892-94, E. Wickesberg; 1894-96, Rev. Stucki; 1896-97, Marie Vollrath; 1897-98, Mrs. Elizabeth Epper; 1898-99, Rev. Stucki; 1899-01, Emma Manthe; 1901-02, Martha van Hagen; 1902-06, no school; 1906-07, Edith Felt; 1907-08, William Stucki; 1908-09, Rev. Stucki; 1910-12, Joanna Grether; 1912-14, Emma Engelman; 1914-16, Louise Grether; 1917-18, Rev. A. Bock; 1918-19, Marie Lahr; 1919-1920, Benjamin Stucki; 1920-21, Louise Grether.

In the fall of 1921, the school was removed to Neillsville. The regular teachers were Marie Lahr and Paul Vornholt; with Marie de Keyser assisting with the first year children.

### WHY DON'T THE WINNEBAGOES GO TO GOVERNMENT OR DISTRICT SCHOOLS?

The question is frequently asked: Why does not the government educate and train these Winnebagoes in special schools or in the district schools? The answer is simple. The government does not have school facilities for them, and the district schools do not want them nor are they prepared to take care of them. Several facts must be considered.

First. Practically none of the small children can speak a word of English when they arrive at school age. Furthermore they are very timid and sensitive in the presence of strangers, and flee from their laughter or sneer as from the lash of a whip. Then, too, the average district school teacher is so crowded for time that the Indian can not be given the needed attention. The roving habits of many of the parents also makes regularity in attendance an impossibility.

Second. The pagan Indians are invariably filthy and covered with vermin. Before a pupil can be allowed the freedom of the Neillsville building, it is necessary to scrub him from head to toes. The head especially requires attention. The hair is washed with coal oil to rid it of the customary "livestock." The particular breed of "cooties" gradually developed by the Winnebagoes is so full of "pep," and so persistent in hanging on to life, that all the known formulas for getting rid of them must frequently be applied. As the district schools have no arrange-

ments for scrubbing, disinfecting and delousing the Indians, they are naturally not wanted.

Third. The insanitary homes are responsible for various disagreeable or contagious skin diseases; such as, rash, itch, scabs, and eczema. Hardly a child is entirely free. After the pupils have been cleaned up, the next step consists in giving proper treatments to free them from their various skin or other troubles. One of the regular duties of the missionary consists in attending to the many sores, bruises and wounds which the youngsters manage to get. An hour a day or more has to be given to cleaning, salving, and binding up the afflicted parts. Toothaches of course have to be attended to at any hour of the day or night.

Fourth. At least ninety per cent of the pupils enrolled in our school come from heathen homes. The government schools make no attempt to teach religion; but even these heathen parents prefer to have their children at a mission school, for they see the beneficial influence of the Christian religion. Said a heathen father to one of our workers recently: "If you will lead my boys to walk the Jesus Way, I will be glad." Though not willing to walk that "Way" himself, he was anxious that his boys should know the better faith.

Conclusion. Education of the Indian without Christianity is a failure. Only a Christian training can bring enduring benefit to the American Indian.



*Scholars Present 1921-1922*

#### THE BOARDING SCHOOL IS TRANSFERRED TO NEILLSVILLE

The Black River Falls station had become so crowded, and so many children had to be turned away, that the demand for a larger building could no longer be resisted. Neillsville, the county seat of Clark county,



about twenty-three miles away, was chosen as the location for the new building. A farm of 33½ acres was secured on the outskirts of the town, but still within the corporation limits. For a quarter of a mile the Black River forms the boundary of the farm. Woods, pasture, and tilled land alternate, making it an ideal location for the nature-loving Indians.

Ground for the new building was broken, April, 1920. The cornerstone was laid with an appropriate service on Sept. 5, 1920. The school was opened on Sept. 19, 1921, with 60 pupils present. Dedicatory services were held on Oct. 9, 1921, and the building was set apart "to the glory of God and the service of his children."

The new building is constructed of brick, tile and concrete. It is in the form of an L, 76x42 feet, with an annex 27x26. The basement contains playrooms, reading rooms, and washrooms for the children; and also the laundry and bakery; as well as rooms for storage and for the furnace. On the first floor are found the superintendent's office, the matron's room, the kitchen, dining room and two large school rooms. The second floor is used for sleeping purposes for the scholars and also has several private rooms for the teachers and helpers. The third floor is used mostly for storage purposes, but also contains a very large room which is put to various uses; though most of the time it is occupied by one or more persons who are sewing, patching or darning.

The building including the heating, lighting, and private sewer disposal systems; as well as the private water system and the city water connection, cost \$60,000. The furnishing and equipment of the building for school and living purposes cost about \$5000. Repairs and improvements on the farm house to fit it for living purposes, and moving and remodeling an earlier farm house to adapt it for manual training purposes, together with several large unforeseen items, amounted to \$5000 more. The farm and its equipment cost \$8000; but of this amount the people of



*Neillsville Buildings, from the East*

Manual Training, Main Building, Barns, Superintendent's Home

Neillsville gave \$3000. The entire plant represents an investment on the part of the Reformed Church of not less than \$75,000.

The entire enrollment for 1921-22 reached 73, with an average attendance of a few less. Fifty applications had to be denied as there was no room. The regular worker's staff consists of the superintendent, matron, three teachers and three helpers. The annual budget, with an enrollment of 75-80 will amount to about \$11,000. From these facts it is evident that with enough room, workers, and funds for running expenses, an enrollment of 140 could quickly be reached.

### THE AIMS OF THE SCHOOL

From the beginning the school has had three clearly defined aims and these have been steadily followed.

*First, To educate the head.* The course of study includes the work generally done in the eight grades of the public schools, modified somewhat so as to adapt it better to the needs of the Winnebagoes. Those who pass the eight grades are prepared to enter the High School.

*Second. To educate the hand.* For another generation at least, practically every Winnebago will have to earn his living by the labor of his hands; hence, manual training must be given a great deal of attention. The girls are being taught to patch, darn and sew; as well as to perform the usual household duties of kitchen, dining room and laundry. By and by, they will be able efficiently to preside over their own little households.

The older boys have their duties assigned on the outside in connection with the farm and the care of the farm animals. Furthermore a manual training building is ready and the necessary equipment is on hand to give them a simplified course in the use of tools. Instructions are given in the proper care and use of farm implements, the care of farm animals, the raising of poultry, the planting of crops, and the value of a well kept garden. The mission farm is valuable indeed on account of the large quantities of produce, eggs and meat that are secured; but especially because it offers an opportunity to show how a small farm should be conducted and how the work is most profitably done. The boys learn by helping.

The smaller boys are also taught how to mend, sew on buttons, darn stockings, make the beds and help about the building. This has a wholesome restraining influence upon them, impressing the lessons: Be careful; Keep things neat; Don't rip your clothes.

*Third. To educate the heart.* This is the most important of all. Unless the children are won for Christ, the Church, and the Kingdom of God, our work has not attained to its real purpose. Only the Grace and Spirit of God can transform the lives of these Indian children; but it is our part to give them every opportunity to make the Great Decision for Christ. A positive Christian atmosphere pervades the school and all its activities. Every meal is begun with a prayer repeated in concert, and ended with a verse of song or Scripture. Every evening the entire school

meets for a fifteen minute period of devotion, consisting of songs, prayer, and a brief talk, story, or other message. Two evenings of the week, classes for catechetical instruction are held for an hour. All those attend, who are old enough easily to read. Bible stories, choice verses, and great church hymns, are studied and many committed to memory as part of the regular school work. One evening a week is given to singing. On Sunday morning a carefully graded Sunday School is conducted. In the evening the older pupils attend church services in the town.



*Neillsville Buildings, from West Bank of Black River*

#### PRESENT ORGANIZATION OF THE MISSION

Rev. Jacob Stucki remains as the head of the Black River Falls station. He is the pastor of the Indian Christians and continues in his efforts to win others. David Decorah, the first convert and a licensed preacher, assists Rev. Stucki by conducting the services in the absence of the missionary, and by engaging in evangelistic trips under his direction. Martin Lowe acts as interpreter and organist. Rev. Stucki has also extended the work by beginning services at Greenwood, about thirty-five miles away. Several Christian Winnebago families are there. The services have been attended by audiences two and three times as large as the number of Christians. This work will be continued.

Benjamin Stucki, the son of Rev. Stucki, is the superintendent of the Neillsville station. Mr. Stucki is a graduate of the Mission House and later continued his studies at the University of California. A few weeks before graduation, he enlisted as a private in the army and went through the entire final campaign in Italy against the Austrians. In 1919, the Board appointed him as superintendent of the school. The first year he taught the school; then for eighteen months he supervised the erecting of the new building at Neillsville; since the fall of 1921, he is the head of the Neillsville station.

The Board of Home Missions has appointed a permanent committee of three, known as the "Committee on Indian Missions." This committee, acting with the head of each station respectively, directs the conduct of the work and the policies of either, as the case may be.

### OUR FELLOW LABORERS

This account of the Christian work being done for the Winnebago tribe would be very incomplete unless reference were also made to the blessed efforts of the "Norwegian Synod of the Lutheran Church" in Wisconsin; and the "Reformed Church in America" in Nebraska. The Norwegian Synod began its mission at Wittenberg (about 125 miles almost due north of Madison), in 1883. It has had a varied career. At first it was distinctly an enterprise of the Synod. Then for thirteen years it was conducted as a Mission and Industrial School under contract with the United States Government. The buildings were then sold to the Government and the Synod established its own school several miles away, where the work was continued for another thirteen years. Finally the Synod Mission was moved back to Wittenberg and the Government sold the old property back to the former owners several years ago. Prof. Axel Jacobson, who conducted the school during the Government period, is still the superintendent under the Synod. This mission is admirably equipped. The main buildings are the church, schoolhouse, office, home for the workers, and dormitories. There are also shops for carpentering, blacksmithing, and painting; as well as laundry, barns, sheds, etc.

This mission has followed the policy of taking members of various tribes. Among the 150 pupils the Oneidas, Stockbridges, Chippewas, Menominees and Winnebagoes are generally well represented. Forty-three Winnebagoes were enrolled in 1921. On the staff of workers, an ordained minister is also to be found. He is the pastor of the school and preaches to scattered groups of Indians in the vicinity. The work of this mission has been signally blessed of God.

The Reformed Church in America established its mission among the 1100 Winnebagoes living on the reservation in Nebraska, in the year 1908. Under the direction of Rev. G. A. Watermulder, this mission has passed through experiences "of marvels, of trials, of victories." A congregation of 250 communicants has been won from heathenism, and the number of Christians is steadily growing. A flourishing Woman's Missionary Society is maintained which contributed \$400 in one year. A Christian Endeavor Society aids in the training of the youth of the Church. The mission property consists of a church, a school which also serves as the home of some of the workers, a Y. M. C. A. building, and several cottages in which the children are housed. About 90 scholars are enrolled in the school, and three young men are attending Hope College in preparation for the ministry. In addition to the main mission there is also a West End Station where church services, Sunday school and other activities are carried on. A staff of twelve persons is in charge.

W. M. S. G. S.

The Woman's Missionary Society of General Synod and its auxiliary organizations have been supporting the Winnebago Mission in a wonderful manner. These organizations have assumed the support of two teachers; they have helped to secure the equipment for the new building, and have contributed largely towards the running expenses of the school. During a period of twenty-two months, ending April, 1922, the Mission Bands contributed \$656 towards the equipment; the Auxiliary Societies for equipment and the general work, \$3735; and various congregational, classical, and synodical organizations for running expenses, \$1073. Without this generous and valued assistance, the Board would have found itself greatly handicapped.

### WAYS OF HELPING

*"Adopting" a child.* For the current school year about thirty Individuals, Societies, and Sunday Schools have each contributed towards the support of a particular pupil in school the sum of \$50.00. To be sure, this is not enough to keep a child in school for a year and provide for all its needs, but it is a substantial help. The full cost of providing for a pupil during the school year amounts to more than \$100. We invite many new friends and organizations to "adopt" a child for a year and give towards its support \$50.00 or more. The name and picture of the "adopted" child are sent to the contributors and where it is desired, other information concerning the pupil will be sent. Inquiries should be addressed to, Superintendent Winnebago Indian School, Neillsville, Wis.

*Clothing and Bedding.* Even though the Indian parents do their very best for their children, they are not able properly to provide for their needs while at school. Clothing which is quite appropriate when worn around the shacks and wigwams out in the woods, will not do for the building at Neillsville. Hence, the friends of the Indians must provide what is lacking. To supply the necessities for seventy or more robust Indian children, whose ages range from six to seventeen years requires large quantities of clothing, underwear, stockings, caps, shoes, bedding, blankets, handkerchiefs, towels, etc. Articles of this kind that have been worn, if still in good condition, are always welcome. New goods also are desired. For full information concerning the things most needed at any particular time requests should be addressed to, Superintendent Winnebago Indian School, Neillsville, Wis.

*Little Extras.* Wholesome, nourishing food is always furnished, but the youngsters certainly appreciate "little extras" when they come. The good people of our congregations are remembering this; for numerous parcels of cakes, cookies, candies, fruit, jelly, etc. are being sent. Such "goodies" are necessary, and there is no danger of sending more than enough. At Christmas time, 1921, the school received a copious shower of parcels. A large assortment of articles suitable for Christmas gifts; such as books, games, toys, knives, wearing apparel, things to eat, etc., etc., were received. For several days the post office at Neillsville was

literally swamped. The school had to hire an extra dray to haul all the things away. It was a great Christmas treat. Don't forget the "little extras."

*Prayer.* Material equipment is not enough. Educational advantages alone will not suffice. Learning to make a better living will not ennoble character. We covet spiritual resources for our Winnebago School. The united prayers of the Reformed Church must lift this mission to the throne of God. His blessings alone can make it truly prosperous. Friends! "Pray without ceasing."

O, Christ our Lord, Thou Shepherd of the Indians, Thou Friend of the little red children, show Thyself to the Winnebago tribe. Subdue many hearts; shed divine peace into many lives; reveal the glory of Thy redemption to many souls. To Thee we consecrate this work. Amen.

### OUR HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Our hope for the future is well expressed in the words of a girl in the sixth grade. Let us call her Blue Feather. Her parents are still heathen and she had not yet at that time expressed a desire to become a Christian. The teacher had assigned a two-hundred word theme on the topic, "Why I am at the Winnebago Indian Mission School." The subject had never been discussed privately or in class before. Little Blue Feather expressing the feelings in her heart wrote down these words: "I am in the Mission School to learn and get a good education. I came to school to learn many things which our forefathers never learned about. I came to school here because I thought it was the only chance for me to come to school and learn while I am young. The only chance you have to come to school is while you are young.

"I was very anxious to come to school here. Because they teach us about our Lord, and to praise him too, every day. And teach us about the love of Christ and learn about our Lord so we may become good Christians and come unto Jesus when we die and live with Him forever.

"I hope I may learn many things about our Lord, so when I go home I can tell my mother and father about the good things I learned about Jesus, and ask them to worship him always so they may become good Christians also."

To bring to some the assurance of personal salvation and inspire them with the desire to win others, is verily the hope and crown of all our efforts.

This short history of the Winnebago tribe and the efforts that have been made to teach them and convert them to the Christian religion, may fittingly be brought to a close by referring to the words of consecration used on Oct. 9, 1921, when the building at Neillsville was dedicated to the service of God. The words used express both our hope and our prayer.

After reading Psalm 121, Rev. Theodore P. Bolliger, who had prepared the dedicatory liturgy, pronounced these words: "In the name of God, and in behalf of the consecrated men and women of the Reformed Church by whom this building has been erected, we now set it apart to

the glory of God and the service of His children; and under the name of "The Winnebago Indian Mission School of the Reformed Church in the United States," we hereby dedicate it to its purpose of bringing to the Wisconsin Winnebagoes the training of the hand in useful toil, the light of elementary education, and the transforming power of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"May it henceforth be a building where God's name is exalted, His Gospel reverently taught, education patiently imparted, character divinely ennobled, and lives steadily built up into the perfect stature of the fulness of Christ.

"May the protection of God ever hover over this building, His blessings prosper it, and His spirit direct all its activities.

"Yea, blessed be the Lord, our God, who has enabled us to see the desire of our hearts in the completion of this building, where His praises may resound from day to day. To Him be the glory forevermore." Amen.











