



***SAUK CHIEF  
BLACK HAWK***

***AUTOBIOGRAPHY  
OF MA-KA-TAI-  
ME-SHE-KIA-  
KIAK, OR BLACK  
HAWK***



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**Sauk chief Black Hawk**

# **Autobiography of Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kiak-kiak, or Black Hawk**

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## NE-KA-NA-WEN.

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MA-NE-SO-NO OKE-MAUT WAP-PI MAK-QUAI. WA-TA-SAI WE-YEU,

Ai nan-ni ta co-si-ya-quai, na-katch ai she-ke she-he-nack, hai-me-ka-ti ya-quai ke-she-he-nack, ken-e-chawe-he-ke kai-pec-kien a-cob, ai-we-ne-she we-he-yen; ne-wai-ta-sa-mak ke-kosh-pe kai-a-poi qui-wat. No-ta-wach-pai pai-ke se-na-mon nan-ni-yoo, ai-ke-kai na-o-pen. Ni-me-to sai-ne-ni-wen, ne-ta-to-ta ken ai mo-he-man ta-ta-que, ne-me-to-sai-ne-ne-wen.

Nin-a-kai-ka poi-pon-ni chi-cha-yen, kai-ka-ya ha-ma-we pa-she-to-he-yen. Kai-na-ya kai-nen-ne-naip, he-nok ki-nok ke-cha-kai-ya pai-no-yen ne-ket-te-sim-mak o-ke-te-wak ke-o-che, me-ka ti-ya-quois na-kach mai-quoi, a-que-qui pa-che-qui ke-kan-ni ta-men-nin. Ke-to-ta we-yen, a-que-ka-ni-co-te she-tai-hai-hai yen, nen, chai-cha-me-co kai-ke-me-se ai we-ke ken-na-ta-mo-wat ken-ne-wa-ha-o ma-quo-qua-yeai-quoi. Ken-wen-na ak-che-man wen-ni-ta-hai ke-men-ne to-ta-we-yeu, ke-kog-hai ke-ta-shi ke-kai na-we-yen, he-na-cha wai-che-we to-mo-nan, ai pe-che-qua-chi mo-pen ma-me-co, ma-che-we-ta na-mo-nan, ne-ya-we-nan qui-a-ha-wa pe-ta-kek, a que-year tak-pa-she-qui a-to-ta-mo-wat, chi-ye-tuk he-ne cha-wai-chi he-ni-nan ke-o-chi-ta mow-ta-swee-pai che-qua-que.

He-ni-cha-hai poi-kai-nen na-no-so-si-yen, ai o-sa-ke-we-yen, ke-pe-me-kai-mi-kat hai-nen hac-yai, na-na-co-si-peu, nen-a-kai-ne co-ten ne-co-ten ne-ka chi-a-quoi ne-me-cok me-to-sai ne-ne wak-kai ne-we-yen-nen, kai-shai ma-ni-to-ke ka-to-me-nak ke-wa-sai he-co-wai mi-a-me ka-chi pai-ko-tai-hear-pe kai-cee wa-wa-kia he-pe ha-pe-nach-he-cha, na-na-ke-na-way ni-taain ai we-pa-he-wea to-to-na ca, ke-to-ta-we-yeak, he-nok, mia-ni ai she-ke-ta ma-ke-si-yen, nen-a-kai na-co-ten ne-ka-he-nen e-ta-quois, wa toi-na-ka che-ma-ke-keu na-ta-che tai-hai-ken ai mo-co-man ye-we-yeu ke-to-towe. E-nok ma-ni-hai she-ka-ta-ma ka-si-yen, wen-e-cha-hai nai-ne-mak, mai-ko-ten ke ka-cha ma-men-na-tuk we-yowe, keu-ke-nok ai she-me ma-na-ni ta-men-ke-yowe. MA-KA-TAI-ME-SHE-KIA-KIAK Ma-taus-we Ki-sis, 1833.

DEDICATION. [translation]

To Brigadier General H. Atkinson:

SIR—The changes of fortune and vicissitudes of war made you my conqueror. When my last resources were exhausted, my warriors worn down with long and toilsome marches, we yielded, and I became your prisoner.

The story of my life is told in the following pages: it is intimately connected, and in some measure, identified, with a part of the history of your own: I have, therefore, dedicated it to you.

The changes of many summers have brought old age upon me, and I can not expect to survive many moons. Before I set out on my journey to the land of my fathers, I have determined to give my motives and reasons for my former hostilities to the whites, and to vindicate my character from misrepresentation. The kindness I received

from you whilst a prisoner of war assures me that you will vouch for the facts contained in my narrative, so far as they came under your observation.

I am now an obscure member of a nation that formerly honored and respected my opinions. The pathway to glory is rough, and many gloomy hours obscure it. May the Great Spirit shed light on yours, and that you may never experience the humility that the power of the American government has reduced me to, is the wish of him, who, in his native forests, was once as proud and bold as yourself.

BLACK HAWK.

10th Moon, 1833.

ADVERTISEMENT

It is presumed that no apology will be required for presenting to the public the life of a Hero who has lately taken such high rank among the distinguished individuals of America. In the following pages he will be seen in the character of a Warrior, a Patriot and a State prisoner; in every situation he is still the chief of his Band, asserting their rights with dignity, firmness and courage. Several accounts of the late war having been published, in which he thinks justice is not done to himself or nation, he determined to make known to the world the injuries his people have received from the whites, the causes which brought on the war on the part of his nation, and a general history of it throughout the campaign. In his opinion this is the only method now left him to rescue his little Band, the remnant of those who fought bravely with him, from the effects of the statements that have already gone forth.

The facts which he states, respecting the Treaty of 1804, in virtue of the provisions of which the government claimed the country in dispute and enforced its arguments with the sword, are worthy of attention. It purported to cede to the United States all of the country, including the village and corn-fields of Black Hawk and his band, on the east side of the Mississippi. Four individuals of the tribe, who were on a visit to St. Louis to obtain the liberation of one of their people from prison, were prevailed upon, says Black Hawk, to make this important treaty, without the knowledge or authority of the tribes, or nation.

In treating with the Indians for their country, it has always been customary to assemble the whole nation; because, as has been truly suggested by the Secretary of War, the nature of the authority of the chiefs of the tribe is such, that it is not often that they dare make a treaty of much consequence, and we might add, never, when involving so much magnitude as the one under consideration, without the presence of their young men. A rule so reasonable and just ought never to be violated, and the Indians might well question the right of the Government to dispossess them, when such violation was made the basis of its right.

The Editor has written this work according to the dictation of Black Hawk, through the United States Interpreter, at the Sac and Fox Agency of Rock Island. He does not, therefore, consider himself responsible for any of the facts, or views, contained in it, and leaves the Old Chief and his story with the public, whilst he neither asks, nor expects, any fame for his services as an amanuensis.



THE EDITOR.

## **AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BLACK HAWK.**

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I was born at the Sac village, on Rock river, in the year 1767, and am now in my 67th year. My great grandfather, Nanamakee, or Thunder, according to the tradition given me by my father, Pyesa, was born in the vicinity of Montreal, Canada, where the Great Spirit first placed the Sac nation, and inspired him with a belief that, at the end of four years he should see a *white man*, who would be to him a father. Consequently he blacked his face, and eat but once a day, just as the sun was going down, for three years, and continued dreaming, throughout all this time whenever he slept. When the Great Spirit again appeared to him, and told him that, at the end of one year more, he should meet his father, and directed him to start seven days before its expiration, and take with him his two brothers, Namah, or Sturgeon, and Paukahummawa, or Sunfish, and travel in a direction to the left of sun-rising. After pursuing this course for five days, he sent out his two brothers to listen if they could hear a noise, and if so, to fasten some grass to the end of a pole, erect it, pointing in the direction of the sound, and then return to him.

Early next morning they returned, and reported that they had heard sounds which appeared near at hand, and that

they had fulfilled his order. They all then started for the place where the pole had been erected; when, on reaching it, Nanamakee left his party and went alone to the place from whence the sounds proceeded, and found, that the white man had arrived and pitched his tent. When he came in sight, his father came out to meet him. He took him by the hand and welcomed him into his tent. He told him that he was the son of the King of France; that he had been dreaming for four years; that the Great Spirit had directed him to come here, where he should meet a nation of people who had never yet seen a white man; that they should be his children and he should be their father; that he had communicated these things to the King, his father, who laughed at him and called him Mashena, but he insisted on coming here to meet his children where the Great Spirit had directed him. The king had told him that he would find neither land nor people; that this was an uninhabited region of lakes and mountains, but, finding that he would have no peace without it, he fitted out a napequa, manned it, and gave him charge of it, when he immediately loaded it, set sail and had now landed on the very day that the Great Spirit had told him in his dreams he should meet his children. He had now met the man who should, in future, have charge of all the nation.

He then presented him with a medal which he hung round his neck. Nanamakee informed him of his dreaming, and told him that his two brothers remained a little way behind. His father gave him a shirt, a blanket and a handkerchief besides a variety of other presents, and told him to go and bring his brethren. Having laid aside his

buffalo robe and dressed himself in his new dress, he started to meet his brothers. When they met he explained to them his meeting with the white man and exhibited to their view the presents that he had made him. He then took off his medal and placed it on his elder brother Namah, and requested them both to go with him to his father.

They proceeded thither, were where ushered into the tent, and after some brief ceremony his father opened a chest and took presents therefrom for the new comers. He discovered that Nanamakee had given his medal to his elder brother Namah. He told him that he had done wrong; that he should wear that medal himself, as he had others for his brothers. That which he had given him was typical of the rank he should hold in the nation; that his brothers could only rank as *civil chiefs*, and that their duties should consist of taking care of the village and attending to its civil concerns, whilst his rank, from his superior knowledge, placed him over all. If the nation should get into any difficulty with another, then his pucchawama, or sovereign decree, must be obeyed. If he declared war he must lead them on to battle; that the Great Spirit had made him a great and brave general, and had sent him here to give him that medal and make presents to him for his people.

His father remained four days, during which time he gave him guns, powder and lead, spears and lances, and taught him their use, so that in war he might be able to chastise his enemies, and in peace they could kill buffalo, deer and other game necessary for the comforts and luxuries of life. He then presented the others with various kinds of cooking utensils and taught them their uses. After having given

them large quantities of goods as presents, and everything necessary for their comfort, he set sail for France, promising to meet them again, at the same place, after the 12th moon.

The three newly made chiefs returned to their village and explained to Mukataquet, their father, who was the principal chief of the nation, what had been said and done.

The old chief had some dogs killed and made a feast preparatory to resigning his scepter, to which all the nation were invited. Great anxiety prevailed among them to know what the three brothers had seen and heard. . When the old chief arose and related to them the sayings and doings of his three sons, and concluded by saying that the Great Spirit had directed that these, his three sons, should take the rank and power that had once been his, and that he yielded these honors and duties willingly to them, because it was the wish of the Great Spirit, and he could never consent to make him angry.

He now presented the great medicine bag to Nanamakee, and told him that he "cheerfully resigned it to him, it is the soul of our nation, it has never yet been disgraced and I will expect you to keep it unsullied."

Some dissensions arose among them, in consequence of so much power being given to Nanamakee, he being so young a man. To quiet them, Nanamakee, during a violent thunder storm, told them that he had caused it, and that it was an exemplification of the name the Great Spirit had given him. During the storm the lightning struck, and set fire to a tree near by, a sight they had never witnessed before. He went to it and brought away some of its burning

branches, made a fire in the lodge and seated his brothers around it opposite to one another, while he stood up and addressed his people as follows:

"I am yet young, but the Great Spirit has called me to the rank I hold among you. I have never sought to be more than my birth entitled me to. I have not been ambitious, nor was it ever my wish while my father was yet among the living to take his place, nor have I now usurped his powers. The Great Spirit caused me to dream for four years. He told me where to go and meet the white man who would be a kind father to us all. I obeyed. I went, and have seen and know our new father.

"You have all heard what was said and done. The Great Spirit directed him to come and meet me, and it is his order that places me at the head of my nation, the place which my father has willingly resigned.

"You have all witnessed the power that has been given me by the Great Spirit, in making that fire, and all that I now ask is that these, my two chiefs, may never let it go out. That they may preserve peace among you and administer to the wants of the needy. And should an enemy invade our country, I will then, and not until then, assume command, and go forth with my band of brave warriors and endeavor to chastise them."

At the conclusion of this speech every voice cried out for Nanamakee. All were satisfied when they found that the Great Spirit had done what they had suspected was the work of Nanamakee, he being a very shrewd young man.

The next spring according to promise their French father returned, with his napequa richly laden with goods, which

were distributed among them. He continued for a long time to keep up a regular trade with them, they giving him in exchange for his goods furs and peltries.

After a long time the British overpowered the French, the two nations being at War, and drove them away from Quebec, taking possession of it themselves. The different tribes of Indians around our nation, envying our people, united their forces against them and by their combined strength succeeded in driving them to Montreal, and from thence to Mackinac. Here our people first met our British father, who furnished them with goods. Their enemies still wantonly pursued them and drove them to different places along the lake. At last they made a village near Green Bay, on what is now called Sac river, having derived its name from this circumstance. Here they held a council with the Foxes, and a national treaty of friendship and alliance was agreed upon. The Foxes abandoned their village and joined the Sacs. This arrangement, being mutually obligatory upon both parties, as neither were sufficiently strong to meet their enemies with any hope of success, they soon became as one band or nation of people. They were driven, however, by the combined forces of their enemies to the Wisconsin. They remained here for some time, until a party of their young men, who descended Rock river to its mouth, had returned and made a favorable report of the country. They all descended Rock river, drove the Kaskaskias from the country and commenced the erection of their village, determined never to leave it.

At this village I was born, being a lineal descendant of the first chief, Nanamakee, or Thunder. Few, if any events of

note transpired within my recollection until about my fifteenth year. I was not allowed to paint or wear feathers, but distinguished myself at an early age by wounding an enemy; consequently I was placed in the ranks of the Braves.

Soon after this a leading chief of the Muscow nation came to our village for recruits to go to war against the Osages, our common enemy.

I volunteered my services to go, as my father had joined him, and was proud to have an opportunity to prove to him that I was not an unworthy son, and that I had courage and bravery. It was not long before we met the enemy and a battle immediately ensued. Standing by my father's side, I saw him kill his antagonist and tear the scalp from off his head. Fired with valor and ambition, I rushed furiously upon another and smote him to the earth with my tomahawk. I then ran my lance through his body, took off his scalp and returned in triumph to my father. He said nothing but looked well pleased. This was the first man I killed. The enemy's loss in this engagement having been very great, they immediately retreated, which put an end to the war for the time being. Our party then returned to the village and danced over the scalps we had taken. This was the first time I was permitted to join in a scalp dance.

After a few moons had passed, being acquired considerable reputation as a brave, I led a party of seven and attacked one hundred Osages! I killed one man and left him for my comrades to scalp while I was taking observations of the strength and preparations of the enemy. Finding that they were equally well armed with ourselves, I

ordered a retreat and came off without the loss of a man. This excursion gained for me great applause, and enabled me, before a great while, to raise a party of one hundred and eighty to march against the Osages. We left our village in high spirits and marched over a rugged country, until we reached the land of the Osages, on the borders of the Missouri.

We followed their trail until we arrived at the village, which we approached with exceeding caution, thinking that they were all here, but found, to our sorrow, that they had deserted it. The party became dissatisfied in consequence of this disappointment, and all, with the exception of five noble braves, dispersed and went home. I then placed myself at the head of this brave little band, and thanked the Great Spirit that so *many* had remained. We took to the trail of our enemies, with a full determination never to return without some trophy of victory. We followed cautiously on for several days, killed one man and a boy, and returned home with their scalps.

In consequence of this mutiny in camp, I was not again able to raise a sufficient force to go against the Osages until about my Nineteenth year. During this interim they committed many outrages on our nation; hence I succeeded in recruiting two hundred efficient warriors, and early one morning took up the line of march. In a few days we were in the enemy's country, and we had not gone far before we met a force equal to our own with which to contend. A general battle immediately commenced, although my warriors were considerably fatigued by forced marches. Each party fought desperately. The enemy seemed unwilling



to yield the ground and we were determined to conquer or die. A great number of Osages were killed and many wounded before they commenced a retreat. A band of warriors more brave, skillful and efficient than mine could not be found. In this engagement I killed five men and one squaw, and had the good fortune to take the scalps of all I struck with one exception—that of the squaw, who was accidentally killed. The enemy's loss in this engagement was about one hundred braves. Ours nineteen. We then returned to our village well pleased with our success, and danced over the scalps which we had taken.

The Osages, in consequence of their great loss in this battle, became satisfied to remain on their own lands. This stopped for a while their depredations on our nation. Our attention was now directed towards an ancient enemy who had decoyed and murdered some of our helpless women and children. I started with my father, who took command of a small party, and proceeded against the enemy to chastise them for the wrongs they had heaped upon us. We met near the Merimac and an action ensued; the Cherokees having a great advantage in point of numbers. Early in this engagement my father was wounded in the thigh, but succeeded in killing his enemy before he fell. Seeing that he had fallen, I assumed command, and fought desperately until the enemy commenced retreating before the well directed blows of our braves. I returned to my father to administer to his necessities, but nothing could be done for him. The medicine man said the wound was mortal, from which he soon after died. In this battle I killed three men

and wounded several. The enemy's loss was twenty-eight and ours seven.

I now fell heir to the great medicine bag of my forefathers, which had belonged to my father. I took it, buried our dead, and returned with my party, sad and sorrowful, to our village, in consequence of the loss of my father.

Owing to this misfortune I blacked my face, fasted and prayed to the Great Spirit for five years, during which time I remained in a civil capacity, hunting and fishing.

The Osages having again commenced aggressions on our people, and the Great Spirit having taken pity on me, I took a small party and went against them. I could only find six of them, and their forces being so weak, I thought it would be cowardly to kill them, but took them prisoners and carried them to our Spanish father at St. Louis, gave them up to him and then returned to our village.

Determined on the final and complete extermination of the dastardly Osages, in punishment for the injuries our people had received from them, I commenced recruiting a strong force, immediately on my return, and started in the third moon, with five hundred Sacs and Foxes, and one hundred Iowas, and marched against the enemy. We continued our march for many days before we came upon their trail, which was discovered late in the day. We encamped for the night, made an early start next morning, and before sundown we fell upon forty lodges, killed all the inhabitants except two squaws, whom I took as prisoners. Doing this engagement I killed seven men and two boys with my own hands. In this battle many of the bravest

warriors among the Osages were killed, which caused those who yet remained of their nation to keep within the boundaries of their own land and cease their aggressions upon our hunting grounds.

The loss of my father, by the Cherokees, made me anxious to avenge his death by the utter annihilation, if possible, of the last remnant of their tribe. I accordingly commenced collecting another party to go against them. Having succeeded in this, I started with my braves and went into their country, but I found only five of their people, whom I took prisoners. I afterwards released four of them, the other, a young squaw, we brought home. Great as was my hatred of these people, I could not kill so small a party.

About the close of the ninth moon, I led a large party against the Chippewas, Kaskaskias and Osages. This was the commencement of a long and arduous campaign, which terminated in my thirty-fifth year, after having had seven regular engagements and numerous small skirmishes. During this campaign several hundred of the enemy were slain. I killed thirteen of their bravest warriors with my own hands.

Our enemies having now been driven from our hunting grounds, with so great a loss as they sustained, we returned in peace to our village. After the seasons of mourning and burying our dead braves and of feasting and dancing had passed, we commenced preparations for our winter's hunt. When all was ready we started on the chase and returned richly laden with the fruits of the hunter's toil.

We usually paid a visit to St. Louis every summer, but in consequence of the long protracted war in which we had

been engaged, I had not been there for some years.

Our difficulties all having been settled, I concluded to take a small party and go down to see our Spanish father during the summer. We went, and on our arrival put up our lodges where the market house now stands. After painting and dressing we called to see our Spanish father and were kindly received. He gave us a great variety of presents and an abundance of provisions. We danced through the town as usual, and the inhabitants all seemed well pleased. They seemed to us like brothers, and always gave us good advice. On my next and last visit to our Spanish father, I discovered on landing, that all was not right. Every countenance seemed sad and gloomy. I inquired the cause and was informed that the Americans were coming to take possession of the town and country, and that we were to lose our Spanish father. This news made me and my band exceedingly sad, because we had always heard bad accounts of the Americans from the Indians who had lived near them. We were very sorry to lose our Spanish father, who had always treated us 'with great friendship.

A few days afterwards the Americans arrived. I, in company with my band, went to take leave for the last time of our father. The Americans came to see him also. Seeing their approach, we passed out at one door as they came in at another. We immediately embarked in our canoes for our village on Rock river, not liking the change any more than our friends at St. Louis appeared to.

On arriving at our village we gave out the news that a strange people had taken possession of St. Louis and that

we should never see our generous Spanish father again. This information cast a deep gloom over our people.

Sometime afterwards a boat came up the river with a young American chief, at that time Lieutenant, and afterwards General Pike, and a small party of soldiers aboard. The boat at length arrived at Rock river and the young chief came on shore with his interpreter. He made us a speech and gave us some presents, in return for which we gave him meat and such other provisions as we could spare.

We were well pleased with the speech of the young chief. He gave us good advice and said our American father would treat us well. He presented us an American flag which we hoisted. He then requested us to lower the *British colors*, which were waving in the air, and to give him our British medals, promising to send others on his return to St: Louis. This we declined to do as we wished to have two fathers.

When the young chief started we sent runners to the village of the Foxes, some miles distant, to direct them to treat him well as he passed, which they did. He went to the head of the Mississippi and then returned to St. Louis. We did not see any Americans again for some time, being supplied with goods by British traders.

We were fortunate in not giving up our medals, for we learned afterwards, from our traders, that the chiefs high up the Mississippi, who gave theirs, never received any in exchange for them. But the fault was not with the young American chief. He was a good man, a great brave, and I have since learned, died in his country's service.

Some moons after this young chief had descended the Mississippi, one of our people killed an American, was taken

prisoner and was confined in the prison at St. Louis for the offence. We held a council at our village to see what could be done for him, and determined that Quashquame, Pashepaho, Ouchequaka and Hashequarhiqua should go down to St. Louis, see our American father and do all they could to have our friend released by paying for the person killed, thus covering the blood and satisfying the relations of the murdered man. This being the only means with us for saving a person who had killed another, and we then thought it was the same way with the whites.

The party started with the good wishes of the whole nation, who had high hopes that the emissaries would accomplish the object of their mission. The relations of the prisoner blacked their faces and fasted, hoping the Great Spirit would take pity on them and return husband and father to his sorrowing wife and weeping children.

Quashquame and party remained a long time absent. They at length returned and encamped near the village, a short distance below it, and did not come up that day, nor did any one approach their camp. They appeared to be dressed in fine coats and had medals. From these circumstances we were in hopes that they had brought good news. Early the next morning the Council Lodge was crowded, Quashquame and party came up and gave us the following account of their mission:

On our arrival at St. Louis we met our American father and explained to him our business, urging the release of our friend. The American chief told us he wanted land. We agreed to give him some on the west side of the Mississippi, likewise more on the Illinois side opposite Jeffreon. When the