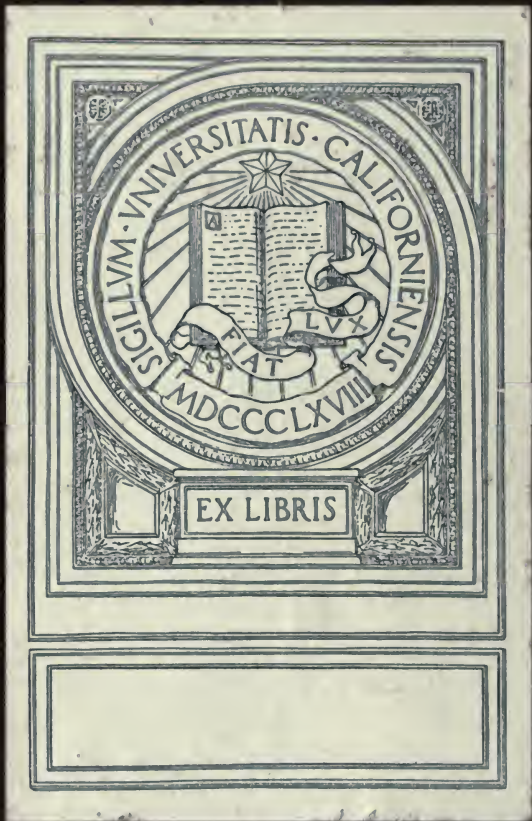


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HISTORICAL AND ARCHÆOLOGICAL TRACTS, NUMBER EIGHT.

INDIAN AFFAIRS AROUND DETROIT IN 1706.

Speech of Miskouaki, an Ottawa Chief to the Marquis Vaudreuil, Governor General of Canada and his reply, September 1706. Translated by Col. Charles Whittlesey from a manuscript brought with other historical papers, from Paris by Gen. Lewis Cass.

These transcripts are so negligently made, on poor paper and in a hurried chirography; that it is frequently difficult to read them. They give a vivid idea of Indian ferocity, duplicity and cruelty, depicted by one of their own number; from personal observation. It is not known that this remarkable speech; or the reply of Vaudreuil have before this appeared in print. Miskouaki certainly appears well as a narrator and a speaker. The Manoir Menard is presumed to be near Quebec.

SPEECH OF MISKOUAKI, BROTHER OF JEAN LE BLANC AN OTTAWA OF DETROIT, WHO CAME FROM MACKINAW TO THE MANOIR MENARD TO MONSIEUR THE MARQUIS DE VAUDREUIL, SEPTEMBER 26th, 1706.

My father you will be surprised by the bad affairs that I am about to inform you of on the part of Pesant, and of Jean Le Blanc touching what has passed at Detroit. I desire you my father to open to me your door, as to one of your children, and listen to what I have to say.

When I left Mackinaw, my father, our old men did not expect me to come so far as this place, hoping you would be still at Montreal. The time is short for me to return. I desire you to be willing to listen to me.

Listen—The Ottawa nations who were at Detroit the Kikakous the Sinagoes and the nation DuSables have been killed, and such as have returned to Mackinaw, came in the greatest distress. It is the Miamis, my father, who have killed us.

The reason we were obliged to fight the Miamis is, that having gone to war against the Sioux, as we have said to Sieur

Bourmont, we had been informed by a Potawatomie encamped near the fort of the Hurons, that the Miamis, who were at Detroit, had resolved to allow us to depart and march three days, after which they would attack our village and eat our women and children. My father, we were unable to comprehend, and you yourself will be surprised, as well as we, when you know that Quarante Sous, who was employed by Le Sieur La Mothe to bring all the nations to Detroit, made use of this pretext, to give them wampum privately, to engage them to destroy us. I have not come, my father, to lie to you, I have come to speak the truth. You will do after this what shall please you.

We have learned by a Pottowatomie named ——, who married a Miami, that the Miamis would eat our villagers. Upon this news, my father, the war chiefs of three nations of Ottawas with whom we had set out, held a council, and concluded that we should not deliberate upon an affair of this consequence without the consent of Pesant and of Jean Le Blanc, who are their principal chiefs, and who were sent for at once. Le Pesant and Jean Le Blanc, after having heard the news told us by the ——, concluded by stamping his foot, that since the Miamis had resolved to kill and boil us, it was necessary to forestall them.

When Pesant had said it was necessary to strike, we soon saw, and Jean Le Blanc first of us all, that he was going to do a wicked thing, but no person dared contradict him, on account of his influence and because we should then have made ourselves contemptible, in the eyes of the young men. My father; my brother and myself inquired what Pesant thought, of striking while our people were divided. Some were at war with the Hurons, some at Montreal, and what would the commandant at Detroit say if we struck at his gate.

We said thus to Pesant, but he would not listen. It is he, my father, who has caused all the misfortunes that have happened.

Jean Le Blanc, my father, would have come with me but being stripped of everything, and not daring to come as a malefactor he told me to come, and know your mind. He would have come, my father, but according to our custom during all the time we were at war, being at Detroit; he had given the Sieur Bourmont all that we had, thinking it more safe there, than in our fort, and in consequence of the

misfortunes that have happened, since our departure to war with the Sioux, it remains there, and all I can do is to offer you this wampum, on the part of my nation, which is all I have, and have taken this from my pouch.

According to our resolution, we resumed the way to our fort, and as we approached the fort of the Hurons, we found eight Miami Chiefs, who were going there to a feast.

As we met them Pesant said, behold our enemies. These are the men which wish to kill us. Since there are the leaders, it is necessary to rid ourselves of them, and thereupon made a cry as a signal, encouraging us to let none of them escape. At the first cry no person moved, but Pesant having made a second, as we marched along on each side of the way, and as we were in the midst, we fired; and none of them saved themselves but Pama-kona, who escaped to the French fort.

I dare tell you one thing, that I have never said before, and it is, that he is a strong friend of mine. I made a signal to him before the discharge to withdraw, and it is thus he was saved.

After those were killed, our young men rose to take such as might remain in the lodges, and as LePesant and Jean Le-Blanc could not go as fast as the others, I was one of the first to reach there, but to prevent this some one forced me between the French and our people.

The Miamis being camped near their fort when I arrived I found the Miamis had withdrawn into the fort of the French, and one of our young men, a chief, had been killed, and that our youth in despair on account of his death, resolved to burn the Fort. I threw myself in the midst of them, and many times snatched the burning arrows repeatedly imploring them with vehemence, not to do the French any injury, for they were not connected with the quarrel we had with the Miamis.

I heard during this time a voice cried there is a Black Robe (a priest) and I saw my brother sending the PereRecolet into the Fort, having not harmed him, and having desired him to say to Sieur Bourmont, that he should not fire upon us, nor give any ammunition to the Miamis, but put them out of the fort and leave us alone.

We had not known, my father, that a Pere Recolet and the French soldiers, had been killed, but the next day those who had fired upon them, not being (illegible) then I blamed my brother very much, that

he had not detained the Reolet father and the soldiers; who replied that he thought they would be more safe there than in our fort, on account of the irritation among our young men, for the death of two chiefs that we had lost.

The next day, my father, my brother took a flag that you had given him, and insisted on speaking to Monsieur Bourmont, desiring him, our arms reversed all around, to give us Missionaries, an opportunity to explain. He said he had no reply for us, but that the Sieur De La Foret, whom he had expected early in the spring, would soon arrive with five canoes when we could give our reasons. Seeing he did not wish to listen to us, we were obliged to return; and that night our young men determined to burn the fort. Our old men were embarrassed, and to prevent them passed three entire days in council.

After having been three days in council Jean Blanc rose and said to Pesant, "since it is you who has caused all this difficulty what do you say? what do you think?" As for me I say we are dead, and that we have killed ourselves by striking the Miamis at the French stockade. In turn the Miskowakies and the Sinagoes will say the same thing.

As soon as the Sieur De Tonty was gone, we were well agreed that affairs were becoming embroiled, of which there were sure signs in this last matter; since the Sieur De Bourmont being able to arrange everything did not wish to listen to us, referring us always to the arrival of the Sieur De La Foret.

However we had certain signs that he wished to fight (illegible) for he put swords at the end of his pike staves. We continued some time to have parleys with him, and went without fear to the fort of the Hurons, believing that they were our allies, but for fear of the Miamis we always went in canoes.

My father, the Hurons called the Ottawa Sinago, and said to him, "my brothers it is a long time that we have been brothers, and that together we have fought the Iroquois." When we speak to you we speak to all the nations, "Ottawase," (Ottawas,) Sacs, Sauteurs, Poutawatamies, Saukies, Chippeways and Mississaugies.

"Look at this string of beads, my brothers, I take it out for you to look at. It is a long time our old men have preserved it. Upon this string there is seen the figures of men. This string (or belt) signifies much. It is never shown unless we

give life or death to those to whom we speak. I return it, and say to you on the part of the French, that he wishes you to meet him at the feast. It will not be in the lodges, for you might thus have apprehensions, but it will be near this spot, on the prairie, where the French flag will be planted, and there you will come to the feast."

On the morrow the day of the feast, we were to have, Jean Le Blanc having his garden, near the place where the French flag was planted, was walking there and saw a number of the French bring wheat and throw it upon a sail cloth, spread out upon the prairie. The Huron women did the same, and brought the wheat and poured it upon the cloth. Then my brother thought the Hurons had spoken truly, and that we should have a good time, nevertheless being with Pesant they reflected, that the French had never been willing to speak to them.

It might be that under the name of this feast, the Hurons would betray them, and give the Miamis the opportunity of attacking them, while their women and children were gone to fetch the wheat. They resolved to send out scouts for discovery in the woods, and four young men departed, who returned and said, they saw many ways which led into the depths of the forest, and seemed to encircle those which led to the wheat. As some of our people had already departed we caused them to be recalled, seeing clearly it was a bait which they had spread for us. We then knew it was a design of the French, of the Miamis, as also of the Hurons, as soon as we should leave our Fort to go to the wheat which was intended for us; and when they thought as we were very hungry, we should enjoy ourselves very much, the greater part of the Miamis and the Hurons, who were in the thick woods, were to come to take the fort, and the other portion, composed of French, Hurons and Miamis, were concealed in the glades opposite the flag, and from thence would fall on us. As we had recalled all of our people, and no one went for the wheat, they were much deceived on their part, and the Miamis who were in the thick wood, thinking that we had gone out of our fort, or at least a great part of us, rushed forward with great shouts to take it. Our young men who were in the bastion, having discovered them afar off, we fought them all day with guns, and lost one of our men, who

was killed by a woman. In the evening the Miamis returned, without our being able to determine how many of their people were killed. In returning they met Katalibou and his brother, whom they killed and scalped.

The Miamis in attacking our fort took the precaution to form two companies, and one of them came along the water, where they threw away such of our canoes as they found, for the purpose of depriving us of the means of escape.

The next day, my father, we were convinced that the Hurons had joined the Miamis. They came together to attack us at our fort, and this day more of the Miamis were killed, than the day before. They returned again the next day. We attacked the Hurons, who undertook to overwhelm us with injuries. We had so little powder we dare not fire, though we had some. They took new life since Onontio had abandoned (MSS. not legible here).

Cletart, the brother of Quarante Sous, said then that our young men, indignant at the injuries that the Hurons had done us, should make a sortie, and we fought against them and the Miamis, a long time out of the fort. The Hurons held their ground, but the Miamis fled, although there were 400 of them.

On this day one of our people who had been at war with the Hurons at the (not legible), arrived at our fort, and said that all the others who had started with him and had returned, were bound in the French fort; that the Hurons had bound them, and that they had sent him to let us know of it; that two of our war allies of the Hurons were prisoners in their fort, and that the rest had been taken to the French fort, for what reason we did not know.

The next day the Hurons and Miamis came again and attacked our fort. They had apparently lost some person of consideration among them. They shot before they left one of their prisoners, who was one of our allies.

Some time after the Hurons (Wyandots) sent for the relatives of those who were confined in the French fort, saying that they well remembered what we had done to them, and that it was by way of reprisal that they had bound our people, but that they did not wish to kill them. We had but to come and cover them according to custom. We caused some to carry blankets thither, and they told us to come and cover them to-morrow (MSS. defective,)

we observing a place at the gate of the French fort where the cannon was, and where they placed poles.

They ordered us to bring presents then, according to the favors they were granting us. Our people, believing them to act in good faith, returned, and each one exhausted their goods and carried them, even to the beads of our children.

Scarcely had we put on the poles (or pickets) ten pieces of porcelain beads, twenty kettles, two packs of Beaver, and all that we had brought, when Quarante Sous gave his hand to Jean Blanc. At this moment Jean Blanc received a shot, and at the same time a discharge was made from the fort, upon us, who being there in good faith, were without arms, relying upon the sincerity of the French, and were obliged to fly. The Hurons and the Miamis having made a sortie, those of our people who remained in the fort came to the assistance of those who fled, and the remainder of the day was passed in fighting on both sides. We lost in this treachery, two men, killed at the discharge from the French fort, and five wounded. The last stroke which the Miamis have given us, my father, was done at our homes by their young men. There they killed a woman and took another prisoner, and as we sent after them to know what they would do with her, our people heard cries in the French Fort where they were burning her.

The exhaustion of war and hunger, obliged our people to send (not legible) one of our chiefs to speak to the Ouyatanons. Heretofore the Ouyatanons (a tribe on the waters of the Wabash, a Miami tribe) had danced with him the calumet of peace. Our people employed this man to speak to the Miamis. He said, my father, the Ouyatanons had treated us as sons in dancing this calumet, and also "I am astonished that you remain so long to kill us at our palisades. Art thou not wrong in killing us, and dost not thou kill thyself also, hast thou no pity on thy young men."

An Ouyatanon replied "that it was not his tribe who had done that, but it was the Hurons and the French who wished to oblige them to remain until the Ottawas should perish in their fort by hunger," and the Ouyatanons ceased to speak. Having determined to return the slaves, we separated. Two of our people were given to the Ouyatanons, two were given to the nation of the Crane, Miamis, who are of the river St. Josephs; one was burnt in

the French Fort, another shot, and the son of Aiontache a Mississauga saved from death by the commandant of a French Fort. There was one of our men married to a woman of whom we have no news. The two others, Sieur De La Mothe has restored to the Mississaugas. Behold my father all which I know, and the old men have requested me to say to you, that on account of all the treachery that the Hurons have done them, it is with difficulty they can restrain their young men from going against him, so long as he remains at Detroit, from whence we have withdrawn only to be less exposed.

The two Ottowas, my father, who were given to the Ouyatannos saved themselves on the way and came to rejoin us. They say they were not misused by the Ouyatannos. They report that the Miamis have in killed and wounded fifty persons; and we have lost twenty-six, including those who were returned from the war, and those the Hurons bound through treachery.

My father, I speak in the name of all nations, Ottowas, Poutawotomies, Saukis, Outagamies, Kickapous, Quinepigs, Matamini, Sauters and Mississaugas, all the people of the county bordering upon the Lakes, in short of all our allies, and of their indignation against the Hurons for the treachery they have done us. They desire you through me to allow us to fight him. I desire you, my father, to tell me your thoughts, so that I may report the same to our people, and that we may fully know each other's wishes.

REPLY OF MONSIEUR DE VAUDREUIL TO
MISKOUAKI, BROTHER OF JEAN LE
BLANC, AN OTTOWA CHIEF OF THOSE
WHO WERE AT DETROIT, SEPTEMBER
28, 1706.

I have listened quietly Miskouaki to all you have said, and although I am already informed of what has passed at Detroit, could not fail to be greatly surprised by your recital. I do not reply, because it does not appear to me that you are sent by all the nations, as you say: but only by your brother, Jean Le Blanc to pre-occupy my mind, and for this purpose you left Mackinaw, intending to remain here. It is only the arrival of your brother that has given you a desire to return.

However that may be, I am not sorry to have seen you, and am glad to hear what you have said, touching the conduct of your brother.

You wish to know my thoughts Miskouaki, you desire me to give them to you. Listen to me well, I am a good father, and so long as my children listen to my voice, no evil will happen to them. You have proofs of this in what happened at Detroit, and if Le Pesant and Jean Le Blanc, had not undertaken anything without knowing my wishes, you would not have attacked the Miamis. You would not have killed of mine, and you would not have been in the distress and misery where you are now.

We have been killed Miskouaki, and until I see all the nations whom I have always regarded as my children, come here, recognize their fault and ask pardon, I cannot forget that I have lost at Detroit a missionary and a soldier, who are of value among us.

This is what you can say to your brother and to all the nations, when you arrive there. I have seen and examined the speech you have delivered. As you have yourself said that the belt you drew from your pouch, was not given you by your people when you departed, I return it to you, and do not receive it, not because I despise it as coming from you, but because I cannot reply to it, since it does not come directly from them, and I am pleased to return it to you as a thing that belongs to you, that you may use it to accommodate the bad affairs which might happen.

In regard to what has passed at Detroit, I say to all your people that I stop the tomahawk, and prohibit them from going to war, either with the Hurons or Miamis, or any one else, and order them to remain strictly on the defensive, until I am better informed. As to other matters, I expect news daily from M. De La Mothe, and during the winter I shall examine all you have said, and that which he shall advise, in order to be able to regulate affairs.

If the recital you have made us is true, as a consequence of the present state of things, you cannot move aside very far in hunting this winter. Your people will be able to come here early in the spring, with the Frenchmen I leave above; to know my thoughts.

This is what they should have done this year, and not to have sent you alone, and

without belts on the part of all the nations. It is not beads, Miskoukai, that I demand, neither presents where my children have disobeyed, and done such wrongs as you have. The blood of Frenchmen is not paid by beaver skins.

It is constant reliance in my goodness that I demand, a real repentance of faults they have committed, and entire resignation to my will. When your people shall be in this state of mind, I will accommodate everything as before; but for this it is necessary to come early in the coming spring, or at least a part of the chiefs. It is necessary that they lead here all the French, and that your young men assist them to bring down their furs.

It is necessary also that they remain quietly upon their mats, without going to war, either with the Hurons or the Miamis or others, that they remain entirely on the defensive, and even if they are attacked at

home, to be content until the coming year to defend themselves, and to come here and make their complaints to me.

These, Miskouaki, are my thoughts and it is thus you can speak to all the nations on my part. I do not make you presents for your brothers nor the other chiefs, it not being natural to recompense children when in a state of disobedience like you. I take pity however on you on account of the trouble you have been at, and the confidence you have shown in me. I give you a blanket, a shirt, some trinkets, powder lead and tobacco, to excite you to diligence on your return and in the expectation you will behave yourself, in the upper country and also that the father Marest, will report to me in such a manner that I shall have consideration for you and it will be for you to conduct yourself, so as to receive evidences of my goodness, when you shall return here with the others.



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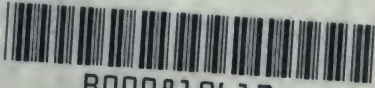
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