

Spaulding's Funeral

Paul S Rykken

Introduction

The premise for this research is that we are defined by stories. I base that on years of oral history work starting with my senior thesis as a history major at Concordia College in the 1970s. My sense is that stories are singularly important for people who have been the object of oppression at the hands of those in political power. Having worked in this area of Wisconsin for over 20 years, I have become convinced that the removal stories of the 19th century were defining moments for the Ho-chunk people and remain central to their identity nearly a century and a half later. Further, I would argue that the memories attached to the removals, especially the 1873-74 episodes, impact contemporary perceptions of the political power structure within which they must operate. The past, as always, carries on. The role of Jacob Spaulding in all this, of course, broadens the story and challenges the standard perceptions we have of this time period. I have been sincerely surprised by how little attention the role of non-native people in resisting the removal efforts receives in our history books, and I see it as an unfortunate omission.

Our response to the stories of our past, and particularly the stories of people different from us, is important. Particularly, when it comes to race relations, it seems to me that members of the non-native community tend to fall somewhere within the following continuum when it comes to perceptions of the American Indian story. For some, the story is missed altogether due to their disinterest in history in general and a lack of appreciation for its relevance in their lives. Their perceptions of native people come primarily through media images and impressions received growing up in a culturally mixed community. Further, the evolution and impact of gaming tends to shade their lenses when it comes to the local native residents. They live with a narrative that native people have been on the receiving end of much federal help – help they perhaps resent, either for not having received it themselves or because of the capitalistic mentality prevalent in our society. Their ahistorical view provides no context for wider understanding. A second group has some sense of history but essentially argues that native people need to “get over it” - events from long ago should not drive current perceptions, the past is past, and yes, wrongs were committed, but there is nothing we can do about it now. Their semi-historical view lacks depth, and they lack appreciation for the power of memory, particularly as it relates to this story. They suffer from not knowing what they don't know. Interestingly, they may believe that memory is an extremely powerful motivator in their own family, their own story, but they do not transfer that to native people. A third group appreciates history on a deeper level and, therefore, comes at this with greater empathy for the native experience. Of all the by-products associated with authentic education in history, empathy for those different from us is perhaps the most important for citizens in a democratic-republic. Contemporary events must be framed within the context of the past. We dare not oversimplify that context, or we run the risk of reducing history to a “fable agreed upon.”¹

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¹ My reference here is to a cynical quote attributed to Napoleon Bonaparte: “What is history, but a fable agreed upon?”

Part 1: In Search of Spaulding

“It takes a thousand voices to tell a single story.”

Native American Proverb

Puzzled looks greeted me at the off-handed mention of his name. Though they had taken many a drive across the ridge named for him on the western edge of town, Jacob Spaulding, it seems, was a complete mystery to my students. They would have much to say about Abraham Lincoln or John Kennedy but knew nothing about Spaulding. This gap illustrates something important about their ahistorical world -- after all, it is not surprising that teenagers would have little time for seemingly mundane stories about the place they plan to leave someday. But having taught history in Black River for over 20 years, it is clear to me that knowledge of Spaulding’s story remains fragmented and lost on most residents of the small city he founded.

The name Spaulding evokes memories of a simpler time for me. Riding my bike over that ridge was a liberating adventure for a young boy growing up in the 1960s. After working my way up the eastern slope and cruising the top, I would fly to the bottom of that dramatic hill, winding my way through the gorgeous pastures of the Kenyon Valley. The old men of my youth talked about Spaulding, though I was never crystal clear on the details of his importance. And then there were the Spaulding twins, Mary and Jane, granddaughters of Jacob, referred to as “spinsters” – an odd word that seems to have faded from our modern vocabulary. Born in 1874, they were old women when I saw them. Along with my elderly neighbors, the Emerson “girls,” and their pals, the Oday sisters, the twins were a connection to another century. These iconic elders were old Black River, born and raised in a tough lumber town, young girls who attended school together, took road trips to Chicago, and shared memories and secrets far beyond my grasp. Someone told me the twins were “world travelers,” something that sounded exotic to a nine year old. Nearly as exotic as the stories Sylvia and Aggie, the Emerson sisters, shared with me about herding sheep in the grove, that section of town near the river, so named for the beautiful trees swept away in the raging waters of the 1911 flood. Or the trip their father and brother made seeking gold in the Klondike Rush of 1898, never to be heard from again. To my young imagination, these women stepped right out of a time machine. And then there were those red bricks of what was originally known as Union High School, built in 1871. Somewhere I learned that those bricks came from the Spaulding Brick Yard, located on the site of what is today the southern edge of our local golf course. For four years in the early 1960s, I attended elementary school at the old Union school, and those bricks formed part of the mosaic of my young life. Carved-in names whispered to us from the past and reminded my schoolmates and me that we were simply the most recent occupants of a building that echoed the history of our town. Old people who sat next to us in church learned to read in the same rooms, played recess-time kickball on the same playgrounds, and charged down the same fire escapes that we did. Such are the connections one makes in a small town.

So who was this character, and why does his story matter? Exploring local history starts from the premise that who we were has much to do with who we become, and Spaulding looms large from that perspective. His biography reads like a chapter from a James Fennimore Cooper novel. Born in 1810 in Massachusetts, less than 30 years after the American Revolution, Jacob Spaulding represented the eighth generation of an English family that first arrived in New England in 1619. He was the sixth of nine children born to Jeremiah and Wealthy Bennett Spaulding. Their story mirrored the growth and westward

movement of the rising nation. Coming of age in the confident, post-war “era of Good Feeling,” Spaulding’s formative years flowed within the emerging frontier, the spiritual energy of the Second Great Awakening, and the increasing removal of native people from their traditional lands, forces that dramatically impacted his life. When Spaulding was twenty years old, he moved with his parents to Saratoga County, New York, and three years later married Nancy Jane Stickney, the first of his three wives.² In 1836, Jeremiah and Wealthy Spaulding, along with other family members, including Jacob, Nancy, and their two-year-old son Dudley, moved to Hancock County in western Illinois. Joining thousands who traveled west in the Northwest Territory during Jackson’s presidency, the second wave New Englanders were unwitting beneficiaries of Indian removal policies aggressively pursued by Jackson and the War Department. The restless Spauldings settled in Warsaw, a Mississippi River community, and began their second fresh start in six years. At roughly the same moment, Joseph Smith led a band of Mormon believers from New York into Hancock County, settling in Commerce, Illinois, later renamed Nauvoo. Warsaw ultimately became a hot-bed of anti-Mormonism when Thomas Coke Sharp, the son of a Methodist preacher from New Jersey, purchased the Warsaw Signal and began his campaign against the Latter Day Saints. This would not be the last time that Spaulding’s life intersected with the Mormons.³

It was from Warsaw that Jacob Spaulding ventured north into the newly established Wisconsin Territory in search of timber. Arriving in Prairie du Chien in the early summer of 1839, Spaulding joined a party of 17 men who took a steamer up the Mississippi to LaCrosse where they navigated a series of bayous known as French Island, ultimately making their way 39 miles north and west on what the French called the River Noire, owing to its black color. Traveling by keel-boat, they arrived at the falls of the Black River, the place native people called Niosawani’eeja (Nee-oh-xah-wah-nee-ay-jah) – literally “where the water disappears.” Though not the first non-native people to venture into west-central Wisconsin, Spaulding and his companions, lured by the magnificent white pines and potential for water-powered mills, intended to settle and thrive. Staking claims on land that only two years earlier had been ceded to the U.S. government by the Winnebago (now Ho-chunk) people in a controversial and divisive treaty, these Euro-Americans were the first drops of a tidal wave that ultimately transformed the soon-to-be “Old” Northwest frontier.⁴

² Spaulding’s marriage to Nancy Jane Stickney lasted from 1833 until her death in 1849. They had two children – Dudley, born in 1834 in Saratoga County, New York, and Mary Jane, born in 1841 in Black River Falls. Mary Jane holds the distinction of being the first white child born in Black River. Spaulding’s second marriage was to Lucinda B. Tyler of Hebron, Connecticut and lasted from 1852 until her death in 1868. They had one daughter, Angeline Loraine, born in 1854. His third marriage was to Eliza Von Scoyke, widow of his brother David. They were married for seven years, from 1869 until Jacob’s death in 1876. His three wives are buried with him in Riverside Cemetery in Black River Falls.

³ Spaulding sparred with Mormon lumberman in the early 1840s over land and timber claims in the Black River Valley, ultimately selling his mill to them. It is probable that he had encounters with Mormon people while living in Warsaw and we know that Spaulding was in the region of Nauvoo at the time of the murder of Joseph Smith, a fact he relayed to the Mormon leaders in Jackson County. A thesis completed in 1925 by Richard Lewis Canuteson of UW-Madison, provides a good overview of the early days of the lumber enterprise in the region (*The Lumbering Industry of the Black River*). A copy is available at the Jackson County History Room at the Black River Falls Public Library. Mark Wyman’s *The Wisconsin Frontier* (Indiana University Press, 1998) provides an excellent history of logging in Wisconsin during this early period.

⁴ The Winnebago Tribe originally referred to themselves as Hochungra and today are called Ho-chunk in Wisconsin, although the band of the tribe that ultimately settled in Nebraska retains the Winnebago name. To avoid confusion, I will use Ho-chunk throughout the remainder of the document.

Part 2: Spaulding, the Elder

Spaulding met hardships and dangers as though they were but pastimes, and by the aid of his strong arm and unconquerable will, navigated again and again as occasion demanded, his keel boat, loaded with supplies, up the waters of the Mississippi and Black Rivers.

-- Calvin R. Johnson writing in 1869⁵

Spaulding's initial foray into the region was tenuous at best, and it is amazing that he and his fellow travelers even survived. Their initial encounters with native people, for example, were understandably tense. From the Ho-chunk perspective, Spaulding and the other Euro-Americans represented a potential threat to their survival. In addition, early land disputes between Spaulding and Andrew and Robert Wood, members of the party that arrived from Illinois in 1839, lingered for years in the Crawford County courts, ultimately being resolved in Spaulding's favor in 1857. Spaulding would spend 37 years in and around the Black River Valley making his mark as a lumberman, keel-boat operator, millwright, businessman, surveyor, justice of the peace, and real estate agent. His story, though unique, rings familiar with hundreds of similar stories throughout the upper Midwest during the 1840s and beyond.

Underneath this predictable story, however, lies a bit of a mystery. While foraging around in the archives of local papers, I stumbled upon Spaulding's obituary from January 1876. For local historians, obituaries are rich with history – ironically enough, they breathe life into the dry bones of the past. Indeed, in Spaulding's case, the accounts of his death and funeral speak volumes about his life in Wisconsin. Over 1000 people gathered at Freeman's Hall on a cold January day to pay their respects to the famous old pioneer. Among the mourners, and seated in the front rows of the packed hall, were John St. Cyr, a native language interpreter, and 40 Ho-chunk men who ultimately marched at the head of the dramatic funeral procession to the city cemetery.⁶ Their presence at Freeman's Hall at an event of this magnitude is nothing short of extraordinary and opens the door to a lost chapter in Spaulding's life.

Jacob Spaulding died of apoplexy while visiting Worcester, Wisconsin, in late January of 1876. He was in Worcester to transact some business with native people in the north central region of the state, although the nature of his business with them remains unclear. What is certain, however, is that Spaulding spent the last years of his life dedicated to the cause of resisting the removal of Ho-chunk people from Wisconsin. In 1860, at age 50, Spaulding transferred most of his considerable business enterprises to his son, Dudley.⁷ The exact nature of his work and business dealings for the remaining 16 years of his life is hard to discern, but, by the early 1870s, he was deeply involved in resisting the removal of Ho-chunk people from Wisconsin, an epic battle that eventually broke his health.

⁵ Jacob Spaulding established the first school in Black River Falls in 1847 and Calvin R. Johnson of Massachusetts was the first teacher hired. A few short months into the opening, Johnson left for service in the Mexican War, returning later to teach. He obviously had great admiration for Spaulding.

⁶ Spaulding's lengthy obituary and was printed in the *Milwaukee Sentinel* of 26 January 1876. Portions of it are included as an appendix to this account.

⁷ The story of Dudley Spaulding is rich and complex. Born in New York in 1834, he spent 60 years in Black River Falls. He ultimately overshadowed his father in terms of the breadth and depth of his imprint on the city of Black River Falls. The younger Spaulding died in 1900.

From his first arrival in the region in 1839, Spaulding's story ran roughly parallel to the bitter conflicts between the Ho-chunk people and the various government entities that sought their removal from Wisconsin. As early as the 1820s, the Ho-chunk dealt with land loss at the hands of an increasing stream of Euro-Americans moving onto the frontier. Two years prior to Spaulding's arrival, the Ho-chunk signed their fourth in a series of treaties with the US government, a controversial agreement that led to a split in the tribe.⁸ Between 1837 and 1874, one faction of the tribe honored the treaty, while another faction refused, based on the belief that they had been deceived in the negotiation process. The abiding faction agreed to a series of devastating removals from the state, while the non-abiding group resisted the removals for 37 years and remained as fugitives in defiance of authority.⁹ Though scattered in several areas of the state, many resisters congregated in Jackson County where they pursued a semi-nomadic life that included interactions with Euro-American settlers. It was natural that Spaulding and other residents of the village of Black River Falls developed relationships with the Ho-chunk people, connections that ultimately led to his vigorous actions in opposition to removal.

The story of that opposition has as its backdrop the incidents surrounding the Sioux Uprising of 1862 in neighboring Minnesota and the hysteria that gripped Wisconsinites based on isolated incidents of violence and rumors that spread like wildfire among the settlers.¹⁰ Throughout the Civil War period and beyond, tensions increased, and, by 1870, the calls for removal of the Ho-chunk people to Nebraska were being heard loud and clear in both Madison and Washington, DC. The Nebraska option stemmed from a treaty signed in 1865 between the Ho-chunk and President Lincoln, stipulating that all Ho-chunk people ultimately be moved to a Nebraska reservation. Those that remained in Wisconsin, however, were forthright in their opposition and, as they had done before, argued vehemently against removal.¹¹ They enlisted the help of attorneys and civic leaders to help represent them at meetings with government officials. It was within this context that Spaulding assumed a leading role in opposition to the removal. Joining forces with Henry Lee, a Portage attorney, Horace Beach of Prairie du Chien, and William Price, a prominent Black River Falls politician and civic leader, Spaulding sought to delay the removal through a variety of tactics. Beginning in 1873, he met directly with Governor Washburn, wrote letters to President Grant, enlisted support among county residents for non-removal in the form of written petitions presented to the Wisconsin Legislature and US Congress, traveled to Washington, DC to meet directly with leaders, and made trips to Nebraska to inspect the region, ultimately concluding that it was unfit for the Ho-chunk. In his role as agitator, Spaulding hoped to secure a reservation for the Ho-chunk people within Wisconsin, a goal never realized. It is clear, however, that he was largely responsible for convincing authorities to allow Wisconsin Ho-chunk to be eligible for homesteads, thereby enabling them to remain in the state. Removal efforts ultimately proved to be a dismal failure. The resilience of the

⁸ The Ho-chunk signed eleven treaties with the US Government between 1816 and 1865. For a full text of the treaties, go to: <http://www.ho-chunknation.com/?PageId=819>.

⁹ As has been cited earlier within this document, Lawrence Onsager's Thesis from 1985, *The Removal of the Winnebago Indians from Wisconsin in 1873-74*, provides a detailed account of complex story referenced here. A copy of his work is available at the Jackson County History Room located at the Black River Falls Public Library.

¹⁰ One such incident was the so-called "Salter Affair" that occurred near New Lisbon in July of 1863. The gruesome murder of Emma Salter at the hands of two Indian men led to revenge killings and the arrest of many Ho-chunk men, including Chief Dandy who long had resisted removal from Wisconsin. The incident led to calls for removal of the Ho-chunk, by force if necessary. Lawrence Onsager provides an excellent account of the Salter Affair in his thesis from 1985 (p. 103ff.).

¹¹ We have a written record of a statement by Chief Winneshiek to Governor Lucius Fairchild (of Civil War fame) in which he argues the Ho-chunk case for remaining in Wisconsin. See Appendix B for the full statement.

Ho-chunk people, their tough stubbornness in the face of powerful opposition, coupled with efforts on their behalf by men such as Spaulding, eventually caused the government to stop their efforts at removal.

Concluding Commentary: “Through a glass, darkly . . .”

*I am poor, and need money badly, but captain, you never saw money enough to induce me to be false to my Indian friends.*¹²

--Spaulding addressing a government agent in 1874

Historians attempt to provide a “reasoned reconstruction” of the past.¹³ The distance between what actually happened and our preserved memory of it is arguably vast and complex. In the case of Spaulding and the story of the Ho-chunk removal of 1873-74, my sense is that we are seeing only a dimly lit version of events. So often throughout this research, I hoped to find that “missing link” that would explain his actions regarding the plight of the Ho-chunk people. His extraordinary efforts, at least on the surface, speak for themselves but leave us wondering. Why did he take on this cause? What motivated him to dedicate so much time and effort to resisting the juggernaut of government-led removal efforts?

One way to understand Spaulding is to place him in the context of the early to mid-19th century spiritual movement known as the Second Great Awakening and the post-Civil War debates surrounding race in America. Born in 1810, his most famous contemporaries were Abraham Lincoln, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Lloyd Garrison, and Susan B. Anthony – members of the so-called Transcendental Generation, idealistic young people who came of age during a spiritual awakening and reached their elder years fighting moral battles against perceived injustices.¹⁴ Humanitarian reformers spoke out against Indian removal policies from the very start, and for those that wish to minimize the impact of the removals or apologize for those that engineered them, non-native dissenters like Spaulding stubbornly stand in the way. Though I could find no clear evidence of religious conviction on his part, it is worth noting that a Universalist clergyman presided over his funeral. The Universalist Church had its roots in New York in the early years of the 19th Century and was clearly associated with social reform movements of the period. The commentary offered by J. M. Gatchell, the Universalist minister that eulogized Spaulding, clearly reflected an interest in social justice on Spaulding’s part.¹⁵ In addition, during the last years of Spaulding’s life, the nation witnessed contentious debates about the citizenship of black people stemming from the Civil War. The correlation between the Black and Native American experiences was

¹² This quote is attributed to Jacob Spaulding in response to a government agent’s request that he assist authorities in convincing the Ho-chunk to agree to their removal to Nebraska. The quote appears in a variety of sources, including Wyman’s *The Wisconsin Frontier*.

¹³ In the introduction to his book, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War (2002)*, historian David Blight provides an excellent analysis of the confluence of history and memory. I’m drawing on his analysis here.

¹⁴ William Strauss and Neil Howe wrote *Generations: The History of America’s Future, 1584-2069* in 1991. For an excellent summary of their research, and particularly a description of the Transcendental Generation, consult *The TimePage*, a site developed by Bill Murray: <http://www.timepage.org/time.html>.

¹⁵ Note the obituaries of Jacob Spaulding, Appendix C. It is evident that the writer uses paternalistic and, in some cases, racist language when describing the Indian people, not unusual for the time period. Nevertheless, the attention given to their presence at the ceremony and the description of Spaulding’s relationship with them is unique.

not lost on northern Congressmen in “Jim Crow” America. In fact, some who spoke against the Ho-chunk removal in Wisconsin had been active in the abolitionist movement prior to the Civil War.¹⁶

At the risk of ascribing such grandiose motives to Spaulding, an alternate explanation may be much simpler and more personal. We learn in his various obituaries that native people, in fact, saved his life on more than one occasion, although no details are offered. This seems entirely plausible based on the dangers men like Spaulding faced as they came into the Black River Valley in the late 1830s. They were, after all, in unknown and formidable territory, and we can only imagine the difficulties they faced. Spaulding apparently felt a deep sense of gratitude for the help he had received in those early years from native residents. Further, we have clear evidence that Spaulding associated with Ho-chunk people, including them as traveling companions on trips to Washington, DC and inviting them into his home.¹⁷ Such personal connections were reflected in his willingness to circulate petitions among county residents in support of the Ho-chunk people during the 1870s removal crisis. He faced intense criticism by state and local officials due to his persistent agitation on their behalf, yet apparently had the credibility to sway hundreds of local residents to offer their support for the native people. At one point, in fact, federal and military authorities became quite concerned about citizens in Black River Falls who were organizing armed resistance to the removal.¹⁸

Finally, throughout this research I have been wary of over-romanticizing Spaulding’s role in fighting for the right of Ho-chunk people to stay in Wisconsin. It is tempting to apply 21st century sensibilities concerning race relations to a long-ago pioneer and community founder; yet, I am left with that image of 40 Ho-chunk men leading that impressive funeral procession up the hill in 1876. Their powerful presence within the story captures a part of our past that seems to have been hidden from view, that of native and white people coexisting, albeit tenuously, in and around frontier communities. It is an American story worth preserving.

¹⁶ Lawrence Onsager recounts an exchange on the floor of the US Senate from January of 1873 that illustrates the confluence of the Black experience in the South and the Native experience in Wisconsin, p. 141-142.

¹⁷ In Minnie Jones Taylor's *History of Black River Falls to 1940*, the author suggests that Chief Winneshiek (“Old Winneshiek”), Betsy Thunder and her husband “Big Nose,” referred to Spaulding as “Uncle Jake” and were guests in his home. Taylor’s short account is available at the Jackson County History Room at the Black River Falls Public Library.

¹⁸ Onsager, p. 226-227.

APPENDIX A: DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE REMOVAL EPISODE OF 1873-74

The story of the Ho-chunk removal and attempted relocation in 1873-74 is long and complex. Included here are excerpts from the local paper (the Badger State Banner) related to that episode. They are in chronological order to capture the story line. The ultimate order for the 1873 removal came from William Tecumseh of Civil War fame, who was the Commanding General of the US Army during this period.

“It is probable that the Winnebago Indians will be removed from Wisconsin next spring . . . We bid them good-bye in advance with pleasure – When they are removed it should be so far that they will never come back to trouble us in the future. You might as well try to civilize the pine trees as these same Winnebagoes.”

Editorial: Badger State Banner. 4 January 1873

“Capt. Hunt and F.A. Moore, Indian Commissioners, held a council with the Winnebagoes at Sparta on Friday of last week. There were eighty of the Indians present at the council, and a majority were opposed to being removed to a reservation in the far west. The Indians who have been to examine that country were not satisfied, and think it is too far away from the white settlements, and muskrats too scarce, and other Indians too plenty. Capt. Hunt informed the Indians that the government had determined upon their removal to a reservation, and that whether force would be used or not depended upon their submission or opposition to the policy of the government . . . The people in this region are generally in favor of their removal, and, if necessary, they should be forced to go. They are of no earthly use here except to steal and beg from their white neighbors, and the country would be better off for their removal.”

Editorial: Badger State Banner. 7 June 1873

“Last Tuesday Messrs. Moore and Hunt, Commissioners for the removal of the Winnebago Indians to their reservation in the far west, held another council with the Indians on Tuesday of this week six miles east of Sparta. It did not result satisfactorily to the Indians, who are determined not to leave their haunts in this region. They claim that the country is hot and unhealthy where their reservation is located, and will all die off in a short time. This is only an excuse not to go there. The country is said, by those who have been there, to be one of the best and healthiest locations in the Western Territories. Gov. Washburn was present, who made a speech to the Indians, and told them they must go, and that they were mistaken in regard to the country and climate to which the government was going to send them. The Indians asked for more time to consider the matter, which was finally granted them. Two Winnebagoes will go to Washington in a few days to see if the President will not permit them to remain in Wisconsin, and give them a reservation on the headwaters of the Black River. The people in this region will make objections to such a move and will insist upon the speedy removal to the reservation assigned them.”

Editorial: Badger State Banner. 14 June 1873

“The removal of the Winnebago Indians is exciting the people of this region considerably of late . . . That they should be removed to a reservation by themselves nearly all agree, but some persons believe that the government has no authority or right to compel them to go . . . At the council held near Sparta on the 10th, some remarkable things were said by Gov. Washburn, who speech was characterized by an unfeeling determination to drive them off. Black Hawk said to the Gov: ‘You are not our Great Father but our brother,’ then speaking of the delegation which visited Washington last winter to confer with the government about the removal, Black Hawk said: ‘The Great Father told them no soldiers would be sent to drive them off, and that they need not leave the State unless they chose to.’ Gov. Washburn told them ‘the Great Father had said no such thing, and unless he talked differently he did not want to hear him.’

Editorial: Badger State Banner. 5 July 1873

“At the Council held with the Winnebago Indians in Monroe County last week, E.P. Smith, Indian Commissioner, was present and told the Indians that they must go to their reservation in Nebraska. Some of the Indians declared they would not go, and left the council in a huff. About one hundred of them, however, signified their willingness to remove to the reservation, and Capt. Hunt started with them this week. The balance of the tribe in this region will be looked after in a short time, and those who refuse to leave will probably be compelled to remove with the rest. They are only a nuisance to the whites in this part of the country, and it would be better for them to go where the government can supply their wants and take good care of them.”

Editorial: Badger State Banner. 26 July 1873

“Capt. C.A. Hunt and F.A. Moore, special Indian Commissioners, have returned from Nebraska, where they recently took about one hundred Winnebago Indians to the reservation assigned them by the government. The Indians already located there are desirous that their Wisconsin relatives should join them in that region. The three leading Chiefs of that tribe – Little Decorah, Gray Wolf and Little Thunder – have returned to this State for the purpose of urging the band of Winnebagoes remaining in Wisconsin to go to the reservation in Nebraska at once, as it will be better for them to remove where they can receive their annuities and the government can supply all their wants. It is expected that another detachment of these Indians will leave for Nebraska some time during the present month, and all will go the coming fall.”

Editorial: Badger State Banner. 9 August 1873

“The United States troops captured seventy-five Winnebago Indians at Leroy, Juneau County, early last Tuesday morning, and they will be sent to Nebraska forthwith. This makes 175 captured since Friday last week. At this rate, the Indians will soon be picked up and removed to their reservation. The Government means business, and it would be better for the Indians to give themselves up at once. Our friend Jacob Spaulding was in Washington last week interceding with the government to give the Winnebagoes a reservation in this and the adjoining counties, but his mission is in vain it appears.”

Editorial: Badger State Banner. 27 December 1873.

“It is well known to most of our readers that the Winnebago Indians in this part of the state are to be removed to a reservation prepared for them in Nebraska, and it is also generally understood that the Indians refused to go voluntarily . . . About two weeks ago a small company of United States soldiers commenced picking up the Indians along the line of the Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway, and we learn that these soldiers have already succeeded in securing nearly 200 of these straggling red men . . . Some of our citizens are making an effort to secure the Indians a reservation in this State, and others think it is wrong to hunt the Indians down with soldiers and remove them by force.

Editorial: Badger State Banner. 3 January 1874

“A petition has been sent to Congress setting forth that the Indians have been greatly wronged under color of the United States by removal, that life has been destroyed, and the tribe deprived of liberty and property . . . These petitions and stories of cruel treatment by removing the Indians where they can be properly cared for and educated are generally circulated by men who desire to have them remain where they can sell whiskey or other articles, and fleece them out of what little money they may happen to have. Nine-tenths of the people in northwestern Wisconsin favor their removal, and we are foolish enough to think the wishes of the majority should prevail in such matters.”

Editorial: Badger State Banner. 7 February 1874

“The citizens of Necedah, Juneau County, recently held a public meeting, at which a long string of resolutions were passed relating to the Winnebago Indians, a large number of whom have located in that vicinity since their return from Nebraska. To show the nature of this meeting we publish the following resolutions passed at that time . . .

Resolved, that the presence of these Indians in our midst is prejudicial in the highest degree to the welfare of the settlers, and detrimental to the improvement and settlement of this part of the State.

Resolved, That we will use all lawful and proper means to cause their removal from our midst, and hereby notify all persons concerned that we recognize the right of no man or set of men to encourage these roving vagabonds to trespass upon our rights as citizens, and

Resolved, The in our opinion, those who advise and encourage these Indians to remain here, do so from selfish desire to promote their material interests by the sale of whisky at enormous profits and the purchase of their pelts, paying only nominal prices in cheap goods at triple prices, and that these miscreants are the Indians worst enemies.

Resolved, that after thirty days from the publication of these resolutions, we will proceed to regulate this matter in the most expeditious manner.”

Editorial Commentary: Badger State Banner. 14 November 1874

“It will be remembered by our readers that last week we stated that, upon the recommendation of Indian Commissioner E.P. Smith, a move was on foot to make the Winnebago Indians of this State citizens by act of Congress this winter. Jacob Spaulding of this village, is the head of the movement for this part of the State, and a large number of these Indians will meet here on Tuesday of next week for the purpose of taking the preliminary steps to that end. The mode proposed is to memorialize Congress, through our Legislature, to pass a law making them citizens, and also at the same time giving 80 acres of land to be selected in the eastern part of this county or counties east of this. We believe there will be no objections made by citizens of this region, as it is already well known that the plan of keeping them on a reservation has proved a failure. Most of the Indians have expressed a desire to become citizens and say they will cultivate farms for themselves if allowed to obtain land the same as white men.

After making sundry recommendations to Congress for the benefit of the Indians, now partially civilized, the Indian Commissioner uses the following language: ‘The third class, composed of Indians who, without violence to the term, may be called civilized, is most numerous. All of them have been greatly assisted in attaining this condition by the direct and long-continued religious teachings and influences of missionaries. They need some form of civil government, and the inauguration of a process through which they may cease to be Indians by becoming American citizens . . . In conclusion, I desire to reiterate my conviction of the entire feasibility of Indian civilization, and that the difficulty of its problem is not so inherent in the race, character, and disposition of the Indian, great as these obstacles are, as in his anomalous relation to the government, and in his surroundings, affected by the influences of white people.’”

Editorial and Commentary: Badger State Banner. 5 December 1874

The following excerpt comes from Mark Wyman's book, The Wisconsin Frontier (1998), and provides some illuminating commentary on the role of non-native people in our area who assisted the Ho-chunk in their resistance to removal:

"The Winnebago's' return in 1874 initially angered many whites . . . But during this debate something else happened, something that pointed to a transformation taking place within Wisconsin. Many white persons – and not just clergymen or fur traders – were beginning to defend the Indians, speaking for their right to remain in the state, urging that citizenship be granted; these critics even challenged the government's authority to force removal . . . It was part of a national development, for defenders of the Indians were becoming numerous and outspoken in many areas, sometimes revealing a belief in the 'noble Indian,' at other times seeking to bring Indians within the guarantees of American liberty . . . Reasons for Wisconsin whites' growing defense of the Indians are not entirely clear today, and may well have included (as was charged) an interest in tapping into tribal annuity payments. But it seems likely that less mercenary reasons were involved as well in the Winnebago controversy, when some 1000 citizens of Jackson, Clark, and Columbia counties petitioned the Legislature opposing removal and calling for the return of Winnebago's who had been snared by the Army."

APPENDIX B: STATEMENT FROM WINNESHIEK TO GOVERNOR FAIRCHILD (1870)

"I want to stay in Wisconsin and pick huckleberries. Got land here. Want to stay here trade and keep store. My brother has died here, this old man want to live here till he goes to the other world. Everywhere else is miserable country. My grandfather has been all over the country. He has seen it . . . he tells his children here is the best country to stay in and the place for Indian to die and lay bones with his father . . . I speak for myself and for all Wisconsin Indians. We want to stay here and we shall do no harm to any one. We want to stay in Wisconsin woods. I want Govr Fairchild to see this which I have spoken and you have written. I ask him to help these poor Indians to stay in the land which is their home. This Company and the Indians of Wisconsin don't like to go to the Territory. There it is sickly – a miserable country – the little Children all die. Every family loses its little Children. This is the reason we don't like to go there, but wish to stay here where the Children can live. My father and chief. We take care of ourselves. Some of my men have been around the state. They hear that the Great Father in Washington was going to move us away. I am afraid. My people are afraid and so, I come to see Govr Fairchild. Some of your people like me well. They trade with me. They tell me that they hear I am going away that I am going to be moved away. They counsel me that I shall come to the Govr and ask him to let me stay."

APPENDIX C: THE SPAULDING OBITUARIES

The following obituaries were published in the *Badger State Banner* and the *Wisconsin Independent*.

“Last Monday forenoon the citizens of this village were struck with surprise and sorrow at the announcement that Jacob Spaulding, a pioneer settler of this place, and who has resided here for over 35 years, died suddenly of apoplexy, at Worcester, Chippewa County . . . The disease that terminated the life of Mr. Spaulding was probably brought on by over taxing his strength by a journey to Washington, from which he had only returned last week . . . We understand that his object in going to Worcester was to transact some business with the Indians, to whom he was ever a father and a firm friend. Probably there was no man in northwestern Wisconsin who had so many acquaintances and friends as Mr. Spaulding. He was filled with kindness and humanity for all the human family. The body of Mr. Spaulding was brought here from Worcester on Tuesday night, and his funeral was held in Freeman’s Hall on Thursday. The funeral was the largest ever held in this village, and the large hall could not hold all the people in attendance. The funeral was conducted under the direction of the officers of the Masonic Lodge of this village, of which the body of the deceased was an old and honored member. Rev. J.M Gatchell, pastor of the Universalist Church, preached an eloquent and very appropriate sermon at the funeral . . . Some forty Winnebago Indians attended the funeral in a body and marched to the grave at the head of the procession.” (*Badger State Banner*. 29 January 1876)

THE FUNERAL SERVICES OF THE LATE JACOB SPAULDING

“Yesterday the body of the late Jacob Spaulding, pioneer settler of Northwest Wisconsin, was conveyed to its last resting place, and interred under the peculiarly impressive ceremonies of the Masonic order, to which he had belonged for many years. Freeman’s Hall, where the purely religious funeral ceremonies were conducted by the Rev. J. M. Getchell, Universalist minister, whose church the deceased attended, assisted by all the other resident clergymen, was packed to its utmost capacity, estimated to have contained, sitting and standing, at least one thousand persons, while as many more were unable to gain admittance.

A very interesting feature of the occasion was the presence of some forty male Winnebago Indians, who occupied prominent seats in the hall, and were under the immediate supervision of John St. Cyr, their interpreter, and, outside of the immediate family circle of the deceased, there were probably no sincerer mourners than these half-civilized Indians. The life of the deceased, in the early settlement days, was saved by individuals of the tribe, and ever since, up to the time of the sudden death of Mr. Spaulding, they had, through good as well as evil report, a steadfast and reliable friend in ‘Uncle Jake;’ in fact, when hungry, he fed them, and naked, he clothed them, advised them in trouble, and at the time of his death had nearly or quite secured to them for present use, a moiety from the reserve fund belonging to them now in the hands of the government, and it was a noticeable fact, that as the sad faced Indians, one by one, filed past all that was mortal of their great white chief, the rigid muscles on some of the faces relaxed

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and gave evident signs of a weakness that the nature and education of an Indian teaches him to avoid in the presence of whites.

The address of the eloquent preacher was founded upon these words, 'If a man die, shall he live again?' and his thousand hearers listened with wrapt attention to his handling of the subject, and his concluding words to the Indians (a portion of whom understood English), the members of the Masonic fraternity, the friends and near relatives were affecting and appropriate.

In forming the procession to the cemetery, the Indians had the advance, marching in two ranks, and keeping excellent time, then followed the silver cornet band, which furnished grand music for the occasion, then came about sixty-five members of the Masonic fraternity, followed by the hearse, in the rear of which came the relatives, friends, and acquaintances of the deceased; in all forming a procession nearly or quite a half mile in length, and the most imposing ever witnessed in our village.

At the grace, W.S. Darrow, Esq. P.M. of Black River Lodge No. 74, of F.&A.M., conducted the concluding ceremonies of the order in his usual, impressive manner, and in that connection, we may observe that Mr. Darrow may possibly have his equal, but no superior in his manner of rendering the solemn burial service of the order as found in its ritual.

The ceremonies were concluded by the reading of the following resolutions by Hon. C.C. Pope:

'Whereas, In the ordinary course of events connected with human existence, the spirit of Bro. Jacob Spaulding, the pioneer settler of the Black River Valley, a mason of good standing for many years, of irreproachable life and character, a favorite in the family circle, beloved by children, and everywhere respected by adults of his acquaintance, the constant, unwavering friend of the poor Indians for nearly forty years, oftimes the only one they had when white friends were sorely needed, has been suddenly called upon to cross the dark river, and enter as we hope and trust, upon a better and happier existence than falls to the lot of human kind upon earth, and where, in times to come, he will be ready in that pleasant spirit land, to welcome home his children, and childrens' children, relatives, and friends of the mystic tie to pleasures unspeakable and full of joy.

Therefore, Resolved, That in the death of Bro. Jacob Spaulding, the state has lost one of its pioneers; society, a valued and prominent member; his family, a kind father, and the great fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons, a devoted brother; and the Indians have lost a friend as true to them as the cord to the bow. In fact, the high, the low, the rich, the poor, the young, and the old, the white man and the red man all mingled their tears over the loss of their common friend.

Resolved, That standing here in this silent city of the dead, and around the grave of our venerable brother, we cannot fail to acknowledge the universal dominion of death. But we cannot look upon death as an enemy of mankind, but as a kind messenger sent from our Supreme Grand Master to summon us from the trials and tribulations of human existence to that grand celestial lodge above, where sorrow and mourning are unknown.

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Resolved, That we extend to the friends and relatives of the deceased our most heartfelt sympathy and condolence in this hour of their sorrow, and commend them to the care of that just God, who doeth all things well.

Resolved, That the Secretary of Black River Lodge furnish to the family of the deceased a copy of these resolutions; and that he spread the same at length upon the records of the Lodge.”

(Wisconsin Independent, 2 February 1876)



Jacob Spaulding is buried in Riverside Cemetery in Black River Falls, Wisconsin. His three wives are buried alongside him. Dudley Spaulding and his family are also buried in close proximity to the original settler, as is William Price, an early associate of Spaulding who later assisted him in his attempts to block the removal of the Ho-chunk people from Wisconsin.

(Photo courtesy of Cassie Colson, Jackson County Chronicle).