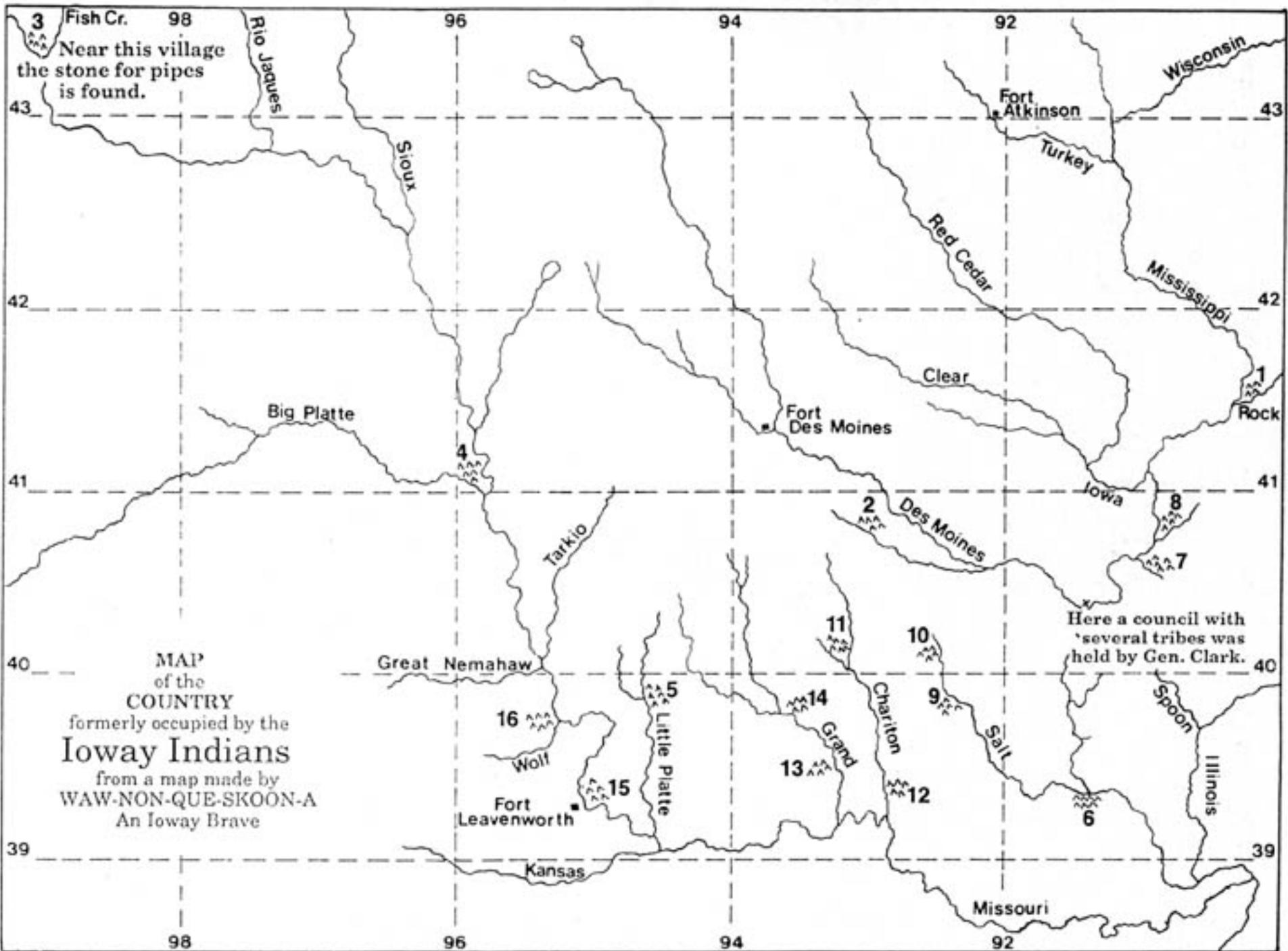


Migration *of the* Iowa Tribe



From: Henry R. Schoolcraft, Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States, vol. III (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Company, 1953), pp. 256-58.



The original outlines of the Indian map were drawn in the rough by Waw-non-que-scoon-a, an Iowa Indian, with a black-lead pencil on a large sheet of white paper, furnished at the mission-house on their reservation on the Kansas-Nebraska border (No. 16 on the map). It has been reduced in size, and its rigid lines adapted to the surveys of the public lands on the Missouri and Mississippi. The original is retained in the Indian Bureau.

The object of Waw-non-que-scoon-a was to denote the places where the Iowas had lived using the sixteen migrations which preceded their residence at their present location, the Missouri; and, in truth, it nearly exhausts their history. The marks to denote a fixed residence are a symbol for lodge. These are carefully preserved, with their exact relative position. Their order, as given, is also preserved by figures. Could eras be affixed to these residences, it would give entire accuracy to the modern part of their history. As it is, it depicts some curious facts in the history of predatory and erratic tribes, showing how they sometimes crossed their own track, and demonstrates the immense distances to which they rove.

The earliest date to which their recollection extends, as indicated by location No. 1, is at the junction of Rock River with Mississippi. This was, manifestly, in or very near Winnebago territory, and confirms the traditions of several of the Missouri tribes. From this point they migrated down the Mississippi to the river Des Moines and fixed themselves at No. 2, on its south fork. They next made an extraordinary migration, abandoning the Mississippi and all its upper tributaries, and ascending the Missouri to a point of land formed by a small stream, on its east shore called by the Indians Fish Creek, which flows in from the direction of, and not far from the celebrated Red Pipe stone quarry, on the heights of the Coteau des Prairies, No. 3.

They next descended the Missouri to the junction of the Nebraska, or Great Platte River, with that stream, No. 4. They settled on the west bank, keeping the buffalo ranges on their west. They next migrated still lower down the Missouri and fixed themselves on the headwaters of the Little Platte River, No. 5.

From this location, when circumstances had rendered another change desirable, they returned to the Mississippi, and located themselves at the mouth of Salt River, No. 6. Here passed another period. They next ascended the Mississippi and settled on its east bank, at the junction of a stream in the present area of Illinois, No. 7. Their next migration carried them still higher on the shore, to the junction of another stream, No. 8, which is well nigh to their original starting point at No. 1.

They receded again to the south and west, first fixing themselves on Salt River, No. 9, above their prior site, No. 6, and afterwards changing their location to its very source, No. 10. They then passed, evidently by land, to the higher forks of the river Chariton, or Missouri, No. 11 and next descended that stream to near its mouth, No. 12. The next two migrations of this tribe were to the west valley of the Grand River, and then to its forks, No. 14. Still continuing their general migrations to the south and west, they chose the east bank of Missouri, opposite the present site of the Fort Leavenworth, No. 15, and finally settled on the west bank of the Missouri, between the mouth of the Wolf and Great Namahaw, No. 16, where they now reside.

These migrations are deemed to be all of quite modern date, not exceeding the probable period to which well known tradition could reach. They do not, it would seem, aspire to the area of their ancient residence on the lower and upper Iowa Rivers, and about the region of St. Anthony's Falls.

We were taught something by these migrations. They were probably determined by the facility of procuring food. They relied, ever, greatly on the deer, elk, and buffalo. As these species are subject to changes, it is probable they carried the Indians with them. It is not probable that their locations were of long continuance at a place – not over a dozen years at a location, on the average. It might be longer at some places, and less at others. This would not give a period of more than 180 years, before their arrival at their present place. Marquette found them, in 1673, at the mouth of the Des Moines. This, it is seen, was their first location.