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Ho-Chunk Powwows: Innovation and Tradition in a Changing World

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Ho-Chunk Powwows: Innovation and Tradition in a Changing World

Abstract
One hundred years ago members of the Ho-Chunk Nation held their fifth annual homecoming powwow on the homestead of John Blackhawk, just outside of Black River Falls, Wisconsin. The Black River Falls Badger State Banner reported that the event "consisted of a series of dances, pony races, ball games, [and] foot races" and attracted three hundred HoChunk and other American Indian participants from around the state, as well as "the interest of many of our citizens, who drove out at intervals to witness the festivities." In a large, circular dance arbor roofed with freshly cut pine branches specially constructed for the event, men and women danced around a central drum in regalia described as "very elegant" and of "dazzling beauty," while a group of singers were "beating the drum with sticks in perfect time." Inspired by the beauty of the dance, Ho-Chunk participants occasionally presented the master of ceremonies, George Monnegan [George Monegar], with a blanket, piece of bead work, or other valuable object to be used as a prize for the dancers and for competitors in the athletic contests. Mr. Monnegan, "very masterful in his management," gave a speech acknowledging each gift. The dancing was periodically interrupted so that the crowd could relocate to a half mile long racecourse and ball field for athletic contests. The powwow grounds also featured the camps of the visiting delegations, as well as a number of tents for vendors selling ice cream and other refreshments.'

Disciplines
Cultural History | Dance | Indigenous Studies | Performance Studies | Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies

Comments
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One hundred years ago members of the Ho-Chunk Nation held their fifth annual homecoming powwow on the homestead of John Blackhawk, just outside of Black River Falls, Wisconsin. The Black River Falls Backer State Banner reported that the event “consisted of a series of dances, pony races, ball games, [and] foot races” and attracted three hundred Ho-Chunk and other American Indian participants from around the state, as well as “the interest of many of our citizens, who drove out at intervals to witness the festivities.” In a large, circular dance arbor roofed with freshly cut pine branches specially constructed for the event, men and women danced around a central drum in regalia described as “very elegant” and of “dazzling beauty,” while a group of singers were “beating the drum with sticks in perfect time.” Inspired by the beauty of the dance, Ho-Chunk participants occasionally presented the master of ceremonies, George Monnegan, with a blanket, piece of beadwork, or other valuable object to be used as a prize for the dancers and for competitors in the athletic contests. Mr. Monnegan, “very masterful in his management,” gave a speech acknowledging each gift. The dancing was periodically interrupted so that the crowd could relocate to a half-mile long racecourse and ball field for athletic contests. The powwow grounds also featured the camps of the visiting delegations, as well as a number of tents for vendors selling ice cream and other refreshments.
The 1908 Ho-Chunk powwow took place at a moment of cultural innovation by the Ho-Chunk people, during which they made the powwow a new local event for the celebration and enjoyment of indigenous dance, music, and social traditions. This era gave birth to a tradition of Ho-Chunk powwows that continues to the present day. The Ho-Chunk Nation’s powwow is the oldest held in Wisconsin, and one of the oldest held throughout the country, and it continues to serve as a time of gathering and reunion for a Nation whose members now live across the continent. Although much has been written about the creation of powwows by the American Indian Nations of the Plains, the rich and complex history of Ho-Chunk powwows in Wisconsin remains largely unknown to non-Indian Americans.

The Origins of the Powwow

Early Ho-Chunk powwows were often described as “homecomings,” an idea of special significance because of the Ho-Chunk people’s long struggle to remain in their homeland following the rise of the United States. Between 1829 and 1837, following the invasion of Ho-Chunk territory along the Rock River by American lead miners, the Ho-Chunk people were forced to cede their territory to the United States in three treaties (1829, 1832, 1837), and were expected to move to reservations west of the Mississippi. Half the nation eventually ended up settled on a reservation in Nebraska purchased from the Omaha Tribe, after a series of earlier reservations in Iowa and Minnesota were taken away to be given to white settlers, and after a disastrous attempt by the U.S. government to move Ho-Chunk families to uninhabitable land in South Dakota. The ancestors of today’s Ho-Chunk Nation were the families who rejected removal and spent four decades resisting military efforts to remove them from Wisconsin. Removal efforts ceased in 1875, and an extension of the Homestead Act in that year, along with special legislation passed in 1881, allowed Ho-Chunk people to take up 40-acre homesteads. Homesteads clustered near the towns of Black River Falls, La Crosse, Tomah, Wisconsin Rapids, Kilbourn (later renamed Wisconsin Dells), and Wittenberg became the foundations for the reorganization of a collective life amid the new world order.

Living on their homesteads, the Ho-Chunk faced challenges similar to those of other American Indian peoples in late-nineteenth-century America—in particular, cultural survival in a radically-altered environment that offered new economic, political, and social challenges. The inter-tribal world of the late nineenth century was the context for the creation of two major inter-tribal traditions: the Grass Dance or Helushka Society, and the Drum Religion, which provided the cultural foundations for the creation of powwows. The Grass Dance codified ancient warrior traditions in a form fit for an era when inter-tribal warfare had ended, and was developed in its most popular and influential form by the Omaha, Ponca, and Osage Nations. From them it disseminated around the Plains in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Drum Religion originated in a vision received by a Sioux woman on the Plains, and was a religion of peace centered on a sacred drum and ritual that gave spiritual power to its members and helped strengthen their bonds with their neighbors (it was often known colloquially as the “friendship dance” in distinction to “war dances” like those of the Helushka Society). Both these traditions emphasized generosity and gift-exchange, central values and prestigious acts in most, if not all, traditional American Indian communities.

Relatives of the Ho-Chunk Nation living on the Nebraska reservation first acquired the Helushka Society ceremony as a gift meant to heal a rift in their relationship with their neighbors in the Omaha Nation. The Nebraska Ho-Chunk community used the Helushka Society ceremony as a framework for an annual gathering they started in 1866 to celebrate the service of Ho-Chunk warriors with the “Omaha Scouts” during the Civil War (this Nebraska powwow continues to this day and is considered the oldest powwow in the country). The Helushka Society arrived at Black River Falls in 1902 or 1903, where it was first held “in honor of two elderly men who had fought with the Omaha Scouts during the 1860s.” These two men were Green Cloud and the son of Ho-Chunk leader Ahoochoka (Blue Wing). Adam Thundercloud explained in 1957 that during the course of the dancing, donations of money and goods were made to these men by people who admired them and “wished to express their appreciation for the hardships they had endured.” The honorees also received the proceeds of wagers placed on games and races that were held in connection to the powwow.

Although the Helushka Society dance provided the foundation for the creation of the Ho-Chunk powwow tradition in Wisconsin, years before they had also encountered the other major cultural source for powwows, the Drum Religion. In 1965 Flora Bearheart explained to Black River Falls librarian Frances Perry that a powwow “from the Chippeway [sic] preceded those which began after the Omaha helushka dances in 1903.” In June 1888 an Ojibwe delegation from an unidenti-
Initially, some Ho-Chunk resisted attempts by non-Indians to view powwows, a sentiment expressed by this cartoon, created by Ho-Chunk activist, David Goodvillage, which shows an Indian chasing away two white spectators.
graphs of commercial performances during this time show the Ojibwe drums being used with little evidence of ceremonial protocol. Recalling this era, some knowledgeable Ho-Chunk people describe the powwow itself as a product of the “secularization” of the Drum Religion.5

By 1908 the Ho-Chunk community near Black River Falls had developed an annual celebration that was a unique local product of the inter-tribal creativity of the late nineteenth century. Through powwow performance, they created a space in which traditional Ho-Chunk institutions, such as clans, could continue to function: at Ho-Chunk powwows, men from the Chief clan acted as sponsors; members of the Bear clan fulfilled their traditional duty by acting as tribal police; and members of the Buffalo clan often drew upon their traditional duty to be “village criers” by acting as announcers and emcees. Powwows allowed Ho-Chunk people to celebrate the aesthetic beauty of Ho-Chunk dance and music, express core tribal values such as generosity and mutual aid, and renew enduring connections to friends and relatives.
The Problem of White Spectators and Development of Tourist Powwows

Despite the deep significance of the new cultural connections established through the gift relations of the Helushka Society and Drum Religion, the Ho-Chunk people also lived in a world in which images of American Indians had become commodified, and in which non-Indian Americans tended to seek out Indian cultural activities as opportunities for secular entertainment. Whites living near the Ho-Chunk community demonstrated a strong interest in Ho-Chunk ceremonies and other cultural activities well before the arrival of the powwow. In 1895, when a local newspaper reported that an “Indian war dance” with a delegation from the Meskwaki Nation in Iowa was in progress at the Ho-Chunk settlement, it noted that “a large number of our citizens drove out Sunday to witness the proceedings” and had “some Kodak views . . . sprung on them.” The Ho-Chunk resisted such attempts by local whites to observe their community ceremonies and gatherings. A cartoon created by Ho-Chunk artist David Goodvillage around the turn of the century shows an iconic Indian warrior using a knife to scare two men, Lein and Olson (two local businessmen), away from the Black River Falls “powwow,” yelling, “you white faced got no business here.” By 1905, however, it seemed that the community had decided that whites would be permitted at the annual powwow, although not at private religious gatherings.

The Badger State Banner reported that the Ho-Chunk organizers of that year’s “corn dance” had explained their intention to remodel the activity, “after the fashion of the white man’s field meet,” and that, “Quite a number of white people from the city went out to see the sport.” In 1909 the Ho-Chunk organizers of the powwow introduced a “new method of charging a fee for admittance to the grounds.” The local newspaper noted with interest that this fee “acted rather as a stimulus than a discouragement to attendance of whites to witness the ceremonies, sports, games, and dances.” On Sunday, a reported 150 to 200 people made the journey to the Ho-Chunk settlement, and “there would have been more had there been convenient conveyance at a moderate fee.” The powwow organizers also granted a concession allowing a white “sutler” to sell refreshments to the visitors.7

These innovations reflect the Ho-Chunk community’s long experience performing in various venues within American show business. They had first presented a commercial performance in 1828 while in Washington, DC, to discuss the conflict in the lead region with president John Quincy Adams. While awaiting their audience with the president, they charged spectators one dollar to watch as they performed a war dance. In 1877 Ho-Chunk people in Minnesota participated in the earliest performances of what would become Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show in Lanesboro, Minnesota. Among these early Ho-Chunk performers was Moses Decorah, who met Buffalo Bill in Tomah and went to work for him as an interpreter and horseman, traveling throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. By the 1880s a number of members of the Ho-Chunk community had begun to work as “show Indians” in circuses and Wild West shows. The Badger State Banner reported in the 1880s that twenty local Ho-Chunk performers had joined Casey’s Wild West Show in Philadelphia, and were traveling with it around the country. In 1893 thirty Ho-Chunk dancers and their families traveled to the World Fair in Chicago, setting up a camp and an Indian village exhibition on the Midway.8

Having incorporated commercial activities into their local powwow tradition, Ho-Chunk leaders began to act both as traditional hosts for Ho-Chunk and American Indian delegations visiting the annual powwow, and as entrepreneurs promoting
the powwow by actively encouraging whites to attend. In 1912 Frank Big Soldier, the “general manager of the powwow,” made a special trip to the offices of the Badger State Banner to “invite . . . the white people as well as the Indians to come and see the big sport.” In 1914, Thomas Thunder stopped by the newspaper office “and requested us to tell all the White folks of the State of Wisconsin that the Winnebagoes will hold a fair at the well known ground about six miles east of the city.” In 1920 the Badger State Banner announced that the Ho-Chunk powwow officials were out distributing handbills announcing the upcoming powwow. As a commercial activity, such tourist powwows helped bring much needed cash to the members of their community, and did so through an enterprise controlled by the Ho-Chunk people, rather than white entrepreneurs.9

War and Commerce

By 1920 the Ho-Chunk people’s annual powwow had evolved to promote the aesthetic and moral values central to their identity as an indigenous community while also creating a productive commercial relationship to non-Indian spectators. This hybrid form of powwow performance proved very popular for both Indian and white audiences; by 1919 a network of similar events could be found throughout the upper Midwest. Yet, even as such powwows became widespread, the continuing articulation of the Ho-Chunk community into American society would begin to pull the communal and commercial aspects of their powwows in divergent directions because of the different demands of white spectators and Ho-Chunk participants.10

The entry of the United States into World War I in 1917 produced perhaps the most important developments both for Ho-Chunk powwows and in Ho-Chunk social and cultural life more generally—the reinforcement of Ho-Chunk warrior traditions. Ho-Chunk men had served in the U.S. military since the Civil War, and warrior values remained central to Ho-Chunk cultural life, but in the early twentieth century, there had been relatively few opportunities for most men to earn the status of warrior and the right to take on the roles reserved for warriors in the ceremonial life of the community. In 1917 at least seventy Ho-Chunk men volunteered for service in the Wisconsin National Guard. Ho-Chunk soldiers fought in the 128th Infantry of U.S. Army's 32nd Division, which became known as the “Red Arrow” division in recognition of its place as the first to break through Germany’s “Hindenburg Line.” At least three Ho-Chunk soldiers died in battle, including Robert and

A large parking lot was necessary to accommodate the many spectators at Stand Rock.

Native American dancers perform in a crowded amphitheatre in the mid-1960s.
Foster Decorah, killed in the Aisne-Marne offensive, and Dewey Mike, killed at Juvigay.  
During the War, the Ho-Chunk community hosted a special five-day powwow in Monroe County to raise money for “the benefit of the boys in the trenches,” and as an expression of their patriotism. During the powwow, the father and mother of Foster Decorah gave away a horse in honor of their son. Throughout the powwow, the Monroe County Democrat reported, “performances, utterances, and doings” demonstrated “the loyal and patriotic spirit of those present to the US and their deep interest in the success of this nation in the present European struggle.”

When Ho-Chunk soldiers returned from the war, they were greeted with private and public ceremonies, and helped inaugurate a general revitalization of Ho-Chunk warrior ceremonialism. Many of these ceremonies were sacred religious functions, and so necessarily private. Ho-Chunk powwows became the main public occasions for the recognition of veterans. The Crandon Republican reported during the first week of June 1919, that “an old time Indian war dance and powwow” with three hundred participants had been held near Valley Junction to welcome home Hugh Lonetree, John White Eagle, and Leo White Eagle. Those who served composed a number of songs centered on the American flag under which they fought, two of which are used today for the flag song performed at the beginning of every Ho-Chunk powwow.

In addition to illustrating the impact of military service on Ho-Chunk powwows, the Valley Junction powwow also demonstrates the way commercialization opened powwows to the influence of the American entertainment industries. In 1920, over three thousand people attended the second annual Valley Junction powwow to watch the dances. In 1921, the Baraboo Daily News announced, “the Winnebago Indians of the Northwest at a council meeting have decided to move their annual powwow from Valley Junction to Kilbourn [Wisconsin Dells].” The Wisconsin Dells had been the site of Ho-Chunk dances for tourists at Stand Rock starting around 1918. The “Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial” rapidly became one of the most popular attractions at the Dells, expanding from an event lasting only five days in 1918 to twenty days in 1919 and then to thirty days by 1920. By 1928 an estimated twenty thousand people attended the Ceremonial during its two-month season. The Stand Rock Ceremonial marketed itself as possibly the last chance tourists would have to see an authentic Indian ceremonial, and emphasized the presence of Ho-Chunk elders as

Although advertised in the 1920s as the last chance to see an authentic Indian ceremony, the performances at Stand Rock were a popular draw in the Wisconsin Dells until the 1990s.
guarantors of authenticity. A 1922 article in the Wisconsin State Journal informed readers that “These harvest festivals were formerly held by practically all American Indians but few tribes now remain who reproduce the genuine thing,” and warned that “The old Indians are fast becoming extinct, and it is predicted that it will not be many years until this custom of bidding the summer farewell and the harvest season welcome will be forgotten.” This marketing ballyhoo, as with other such predictions of the imminent extinction of Ho-Chunk culture, proved highly inaccurate; the Stand Rock Ceremonial endured into the 1990s as one of the central attractions at the Dells.14

In the same period, another tourist powwow developed in Wood County from local “friendship” gatherings (Drum Religion ceremonies) of Ho-Chunk and Potawatomi communities living near Wisconsin Rapids. The Pittsville Record reported that the impetus for the transformation of the friendship dance into a powwow had come from the Wisconsin Rapids Chamber of Commerce and “twelve councilmen of the Indians,” which included many of the leaders of Ho-Chunk powwows in Wisconsin during this period. After beginning in Wisconsin Rapids, the powwow relocated to Pittsville in 1925, where local business and civic boosters attempted to use the powwow to draw tourists to their town and to raise money to fund the development of the local park.15

By 1930 American Indian powwows had become the newest form of Indian show business, available to civic boosters in towns throughout the area. A number of local communities either held their own powwows or attempted to do so. This trend included an attempt by civic boosters in the Black River Falls area to co-opt the Homecoming powwow. In 1937 the Ho-Chunk powwow was staged in the nearby town of Merrillan, and the local paper reported that “Mayor Hendrix and Alderman Erickson of the 37th ward” were out distributing powwow advertising. The powwow was located in Merrillan’s Oakwood Park in 1938, but the following year the dance arbor was rebuilt at the traditional powwow grounds near the local

Harry Funmaker, left, and Ray Tahawah perform at Wisconsin Woodland Indian Powwow near Waterford in August 1967.
World War II and the Remaking of the Powwow

World War II marked a change in Ho-Chunk powwows. Military service and work in war industries occupied many members of the community. Anthropologist Nancy Oestreich Lurie reported that Ho-Chunk powwows were discontinued during the war in part because of Ho-Chunk involvement in war work, but also because many Ho-Chunks had come to disapprove of the commercial nature of the performances. Once the war ended, a new phase of Ho-Chunk powwow history began. In July 1945, John Blackhawk hosted a homecoming celebration to welcome home veterans who had served overseas, including Emmanuel Thundercloud, Johnny White dog, Martin Stacey, George Johnson, and Merlin Redcloud. Around the same time, Ho-Chunk columnist Mitchell Redcloud Sr. reported in his Banner-Journal column, “our erstwhile chief Tom Thunder has been talking and trying to promote a ‘good old time powwow’ as a homecoming celebration some time this summer.” The project depended on the support of the families of the veterans, and Mitchell Redcloud opined that it was “a worth-while undertaking” as “a great get-together for veterans of foreign wars of two world conflicts in one generation, to honor those who will have come back and as a memorial to those who made the supreme sacrifice.”

In a later column, Mr. Redcloud wrote about a song his cousin Harold “Jones” Funmaker Sr. had made to honor his son Harold Funmaker Jr., who had served in the Marine Corps, and explained the protocol surrounding the performance of such songs:

At any Indian gathering, whether it be a welcome dance for visiting members of other tribes, or an informal, friendly get together, or at the regular annual tribal powwow, if this song is sung in honor or in courtesy of any member or members, veteran or veterans of the Marine Corps who may be present, they are obliged to enter the “arena” and dance, head uncovered, and if they are too shy to dance as these fighting men usually are they can just put in an appearance. After the song and dance is ended, relatives, friends and admirers can come in a give gifts to the honored guest, who in turn will show their appreciation by giving some present to the singer who first started the song.

The link between Ho-Chunk veterans and powwows solidified in the 1950s as the powwow grounds became a site associated with the commemoration of Mitchell Redcloud’s son, Corporal Mitchell Redcloud Jr., who was a posthumous Congressional Medal of Honor winner for heroism in the Korean War. In 1955 the return of his body for burial in the Decorah Cemetery at the Ho-Chunk settlement near Black River Falls was the occasion for public memorial in both the Ho-Chunk community and among whites in Jackson County. The Winnebago Veterans Association, organized in 1949, took charge of local preparations for his burial, and two elaborate ceremonies were held, one by white townspeople and the other by Ho-Chunk veterans. The community dedicated a memorial to Corporal Redcloud at the powwow grounds on Labor Day in 1957. According to some observers, the powwow’s association with Corporal Redcloud created pressures to emphasize the memorialization of veterans, and shift the focus away from the more celebratory character the powwow inherited from the earlier social dances. The Veterans Association took on an increased role in running the powwow, sharing or alternating management of the powwow with the traditional chief, John Winneshiek.

By the 1950s inter-tribal circuits of powwows connected American Indian communities throughout the Midwest and the Plains. As in the Ho-Chunk community, returning veterans helped create a new vision of community development, asserting pride in Ho-Chunk identity while developing connections both to other American Indian communities and to the wider American society. As a result, the powwow became a central manifestation and symbol of this new assertion of indigenous activism. Inter-tribal dance contests provided a new form in which to continue the established tradition of honoring dancers with gifts. Unlike commercial performances for non-Indian audiences, contest dancing combined participation in a cash economy with an orientation to the evaluations of an indigenous audience, since elders and ex-dancers traditionally judged such contests. In 1956 the Winnebago Veterans Association sponsored a dancing contest at the Labor Day powwow, announcing that the winner would represent the state in “the World Indian Dancing Contest” to be held in Sheridan, Wyoming. The local paper reported that the state contest “assures the coming powwow of participation by the leading Indian dancers of our area,” most of whom worked during the
summer as dancers at the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial. They arrived for the Monday contest, and were judged “on a point system based on 60 points for execution of the dance and 40 for costuming.” Judges were chosen by the Veterans Association and Edward Cloud of Baraboo won the contest and the $150.00 prize for first place.

When Andrew Blackhawk donated his homestead land to the Ho-Chunk Nation in 1964, he specifically requested that it be used as a place of gathering and celebration for future Ho-Chunk generations. In recognition of this donation, when Ho-Chunk veterans organized an American Legion Post in 1972, they named themselves the Andrew Blackhawk American Legion Post #129. They soon became the sponsors of the powwow, which continued to combine contest dancing with ceremonies honoring the Nation’s warriors. Ho-Chunk powwows had taken on a new sort of hybrid form. The commercial side of the powwow was no longer directly oriented to white spectators, although they still attended the powwow, but was institutionalized in dance and drum contests that oriented the performance to the evaluations of an indigenous audience. It was thus much more compatible with the communal side of the powwow, which emphasized Ho-Chunk warrior traditions. The powwow remained an important cultural form as the Ho-Chunk community continued to seek ways to preserve local cultural traditions and promote inter-tribal solidarity while facilitating participation in American society on Ho-Chunk terms.

**The Past Meets the Present**

A century after the powwow of 1908, tradition and innovation continue in Ho-Chunk powwows. Every Memorial Day and Labor Day weekend, the Ho-Chunk Nation hosts a three-day powwow at the Andrew Blackhawk Powwow Grounds near
Black River Falls. Over the course of the powwow, Ho-Chunk individuals and families still make donations to the powwow, which the master of ceremonies announces to the crowd. For many years, the main master of ceremonies was Douglas Long, a member of the Buffalo clan. Long’s role is an example of the way in which powwows continue to offer a space for traditional clan duties. Members of the Bear clan fulfill their traditional clan duty by providing security for the powwow, and several times in recent years the family of the Ho-Chunk Nation’s traditional chief, Clayton Winneshiek, has sponsored the powwow. Powwow dance and drums contests have continued, and grown in scale thanks to financial support from Ho-Chunk Nation business enterprises. By 2006 the Memorial Day Powwow sponsored by the Andrew Black American Legion Post (with the budget funding approved by the Ho-Chunk Nation and from the Majestic Pines Casino) advertised over $56,000 in prize money. The growing scale of the contests has led to renewed concern over the influence of money on the powwow among some participants, and several recent powwows (2006 Labor Day and 2007 Memorial Day) were conducted as non-contest traditional powwows in order to assert the central importance of local traditions. Powwows continue to be important as times for the Nation to honor and remember the service of Ho-Chunk warriors, especially on Memorial Day, when the powwow grounds are the site of a spectacular ceremony in which families raise American flags to honor particular veterans. As at the 1908 powwow, Ho-Chunk families bring to the speaker stand monetary donations, now often given in memory of family members, and their donations are announced to those assembled, exemplifying the complex nature of Ho-Chunk powwows as an ever-changing cultural form in which long-established Ho-Chunk traditions endure.  

Members of the Ho-Chunk Nation post the colors at a powwow in 2002.
Donald Blackhawk, a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation Traditional Court, died on December 17, 2007. Mr. Blackhawk was a leader of the Warrior Clan, and his Ho-Chunk name was Wipamakerega (pronounced: Wee-Pahm-Ah-Kay-Ray-Gah), which means “Rainbow.” He was the final surviving founder of the Traditional Court that formed in 1995, following the approval of the Constitution of the Ho-Chunk Nation on November 1, 1994. Mr. Blackhawk was the son of Andrew Blackhawk, who had donated his homestead land to the Ho-Chunk people for use as powwow grounds. The dances and other community events held at the powwow grounds continue to play a significant role in the lives of the Ho-Chunk people today. The Blackhawk Powwow Grounds were listed on the State Register of Historic Places in January of 2007 and on the National Register of Historic Places in March of 2007.

Notes
1. “Great Pow-Wow by the Indians,” Black River Falls Badger State Banner, August 27, 1908. The newspaper does not specify the exact location of the powwow grounds, so I have relied on notes made by Frances Perry based on conversations with William Hall, Agnes Clinier, and Flora Beahart in the 1960s, now in the Frances Perry papers at the Milwaukee Public Library. Frances Perry headed the Black River Falls public library for many years and was closely associated with the Ho-Chunk people. She kept meticulous notes on ethnographic information they shared with her. In the late 1960s, a few years before her death, she gave the notes over to her longtime friend Nancy Oestreich Lurie to be archived at the Milwaukee Public Museum. Frances Perry was closely associated with the Ho-Chunk people. She kept meticulous notes on ethnographic information they shared with her. In the late 1960s, a few years before her death, she gave the notes over to her longtime friend Nancy Oestreich Lurie to be archived at the Milwaukee Public Museum. According to these notes, the powwow had been moved to the Blackhawk homestead in 1907 after being held previously at other locations in the area. The homestead was the original 40-acre federal government allotment granted to John Blackhawk (Wau-che-raw-wos-kaw) in 1896, according to Jay Toth of the Ho-Chunk Nation's Department of Heritage Preservation.
originaly published in 1911, is still a basic source on the Grass Dance. The ethnological study of the Drum Religion, focusing on the Ojibwe tradition, is Thomas Ver­


10. By contemporary powwows in other Midwestern American Indian Communities, see Arndt, op. cit.


12. Walter Decorah wrote a circular explaining the history of the powwow (connecting it to Drum Religion) and motivations of the sponsors to a number of local papers for Mr. Decorah's account and information on the 1918 powwow, see Monroe County Democrat, August 8, 1918; Badger State Banner, August 15, 1918; Badger State Banner-Journal, August 16, 1918.

13. On the 1919 Valley Junction powwnow, I have used the reprint of the Republic article published in the Menominee County Advocate, June 19, 1919; on Ho-Chunk flag songs and AW veterans, see Frances Perry, "Wa-o-ke-wa-Mizt," unpublished manuscript, ca. 1940. Manuscript. 8951. Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives, pages 230-234. Denmore provides more to one such song, made by Andrew Blackhawk and James Carlinus (in translation: Andrew Thunderbird) as "I've had my flag, so I went to the old world to fight the Germans. If I had not loved the American flag it would not have come back, but now we are still using it.


15. "Big Pow-Wow at Granny Seat Town," Pittsville Review, August 4, 1922; "To Have Heart Horse Dance," Pittsville Review, June 13, 1927; "William Hiles Sr. and Sheryl Hiles, "Winnebago Pioneers" (Amherst, WI: Plemme Publications/Pittsville Historical Society, 1987). 57. The original council listed in the articles comprised "Chief George Carlinus," Andrew Blackhawk, Dan Bear Heart, Alex Lone Bear, Young Swan, E. Wilson, Bill Short Horn, Tom Walker, Ray White, Fred, Lincoln, and Jim White Pigeon," with Albert Thunder as "legal interpreter." For more on the history of the Pittsville powwows, see Arndt, op. cit.


