

INDIAN DAVE

The following are two newspaper articles on Indian Dave and an obituary. All from local newspapers. Three different sons are mentioned in the articles. Bill, John and James.
--Dave Celani

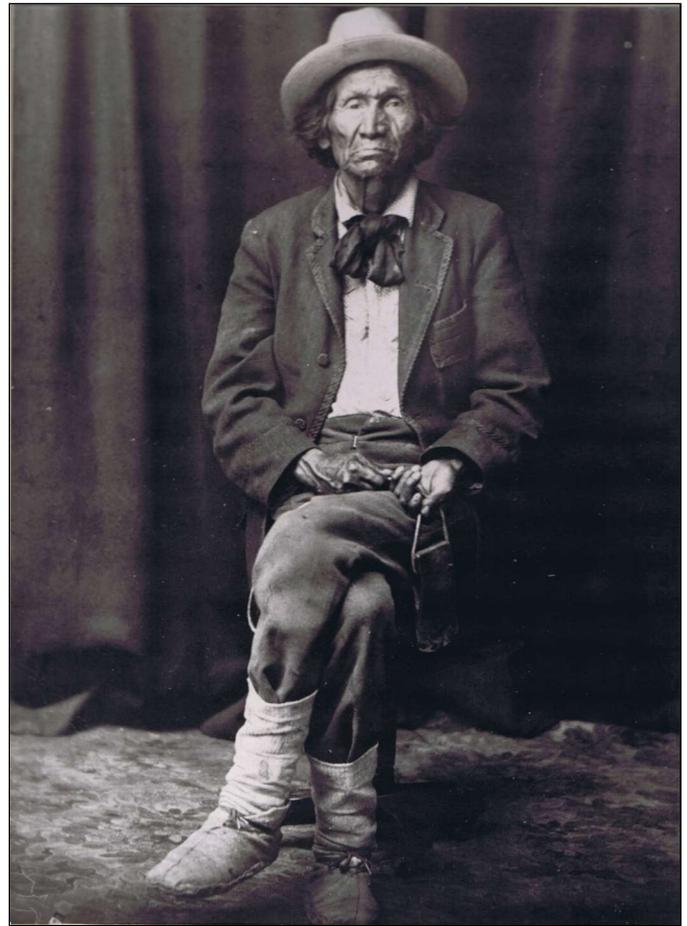
05-10-1907 Vassar Times

MORE ABOUT INDIAN DAVE

Followed by his faithful son, "John" old "Indian Dave" as he is so familiarly known throughout the length and breadth of Tuscola county stepped into Vassar about noon Tuesday covered with mud and slush. Dave earned a huddle of bows, arrows, whip stalks and gun-wipers all made of the very best grade of hickory, which he endeavored to sell about town. John carried a sack containing the carcasses of a couple of muskrats, a number of hides and several traps. The inseparable pair, upon reaching the city made a bee-line for a place that served free lunch where they filled up, but owing to the exactness of the law, were unable to obtain a drop of liquor of any kind with which to wash down their eatables. Wednesday they started for Tuscola where Dave claims to have a canoe that he hides in a certain place and is always able to find when wanted. He does not think that a person has ever yet discovered its hiding place. He will spend the next few weeks trapping along the river from Tuscola to the Shiawassee river and will do some fishing on the side. He claims that the herbs which have been so profitable to him in the past are fast becoming scarcer and in a short time says "all will be gone." He says that trapping is also becoming less profitable every year.~Vassar Times.

04-05-1907~Saginaw Evening News

Indian Dave, Chippewa chief, whose claim to have passed the century mark is upheld by the testimony of the oldest inhabitants of Tuscola county, accompanied by his son, "Bill" who in reality looks the older of the two, landed at Vassar recently on their return from their winter's stay at Midland, the Indian's rendezvous for the season of ice and snow. Old Dave is and has been for generations, a familiar figure in this section and his appearance has made no perceptible change in many years.



His eyes are still as bright, his step as quick and firm, and his glossy hair as black as when he followed his chieftain father, as his son now follows him, single file, through the primeval forests before the sound of the settlers ax and the hum of the white man's industry drove the Indians from their old familiar haunts along the shores of the Cass River, when they set their traps and lines and hunted the abundant game. Old Dave and his son, who is nearly 60, will spend the warm season in the neighborhood of Murphy's lake, which is about eight miles southeast of Vassar, where they will gather ginseng roots and cure them for market, the finished product bringing them \$8 a pound. Indian Dave has many friends and is much thought of. Several years ago his tent in which he was staying got afire in the night and he was badly burned, and at another time he was shut in the woods by forest fires, and when able to escape was again badly burned.

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June 4, 1909 - Cass City Chronicle

Old "Indian Dave" is dead. He died last Thursday from the infirmities of age in his wigwam in Gilford Township, where he had made his home for upwards of 60 years. It is questionable whether he knew his exact age, but he was sure he had passed his 106th birthday. The oldest settlers as far back as 1836 knew him and he was then considered quite old. Dave claimed to be a son of Chief Nipmup of the Chippewa tribe, but he was never recognized as such by his tribesmen who regarded him only as an outcast. He was well known all over the Thumb as "Indian Dave" but was recorded as David Stocker as a citizen. He spent his winters in his bark and bide hub in Gilford Township, manufacturing baskets' and bows and arrows and during the summers traveled about the resorts of the state selling his wares. One son, James, survives him.

We have additional information on Indian Dave but space limitations require that we hold it for another issue of our newsletter.

HISTORIC MARKER

Registered Site L0761 - Erected 1981
WISNER TOWNSHIP CEMETERY
Location: M-25 east of Conger Rd
Wisner Township, Tuscola County

The Wisner Township Cemetery is very well maintained but the Historic Marker for Indian Dave is showing signs of age. After 35+ years, it is probably time to be refinished. It has not withstood the ravishes of time as well as Indian Dave.

It is not noted exactly where he is buried in the cemetery. It is probably in an unmarked grave. Back then, cemeteries were segregated.



Marker Inscription

(SIDE ONE)

Indian Dave was one of the last Chippewas to hunt, fish and trap in the old manner in the Tuscola County area. Dave was born around 1803 and given the name Ishdonquit. According to legend, in 1819 he attended the gathering at the Saginaw River where 114 Chippewa chiefs and braves signed the Treaty of Saginaw. The treaty ceded about six million acres of land in central eastern Michigan to the United States. Indian Dave fascinated youngsters with his tales and native customs. A mural portrait honoring him has hung in a Vassar bank for decades.

(SIDE TWO)

The earliest recorded inhabitants of Tuscola County were Sauk Indians. But Chippewas occupied the area by the time of the first permanent white settlement in 1836. Exactly when Indian Dave settled here is not known. However, in 1866, in order to resolve the Vassar/Caro county-seat dispute, he and Peter Bush transported the county records to Caro by canoe. Dave was an expert at making bows and arrows, which he often sold for his livelihood. When he died in 1909, he was believed to be 106 years old. He is buried nearby in Wisner Cemetery.

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Compiled by Dave Celani

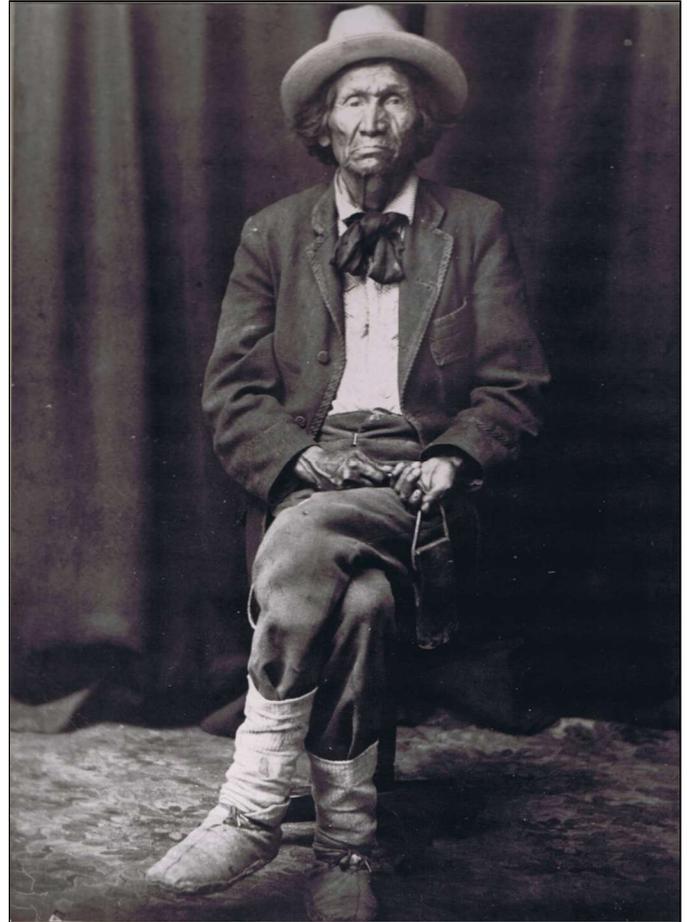
The following article on Indian Dave is from *The Tuscola County Courier*, May 17, 1904.

INDIANS FOUND IN THE SNOW

An indian known as "Indian Dave" and his son, were found one day last week lying in a drunken condition by the roadside two miles from Vassar. The deputy sheriff was notified and went out with a wagon and hauled the two red men into town where they were thawed out. Had they been left exposed for an hour longer, it is likely that they would have perished. Of course, there is a law which forbids the sale of liquor to an indian, but the fact of such laws does not seem to have any material effect on these cases in this section.

The following information is compiled from several un-credited sources.

On the subject of Indians, a Chippewa, Algonquain Indian who was friendly with the white settlers became a legend in the Thumb area. His name was Indian Dave Stocker and he claimed that he was present when the 1819 treaty between the Indians and the U.S. Government was signed. It has been said that he was an Indian Chief. In his younger days, he and members of his tribe roamed the Saginaw Valley selling hides, baskets, hampers, whittled toys, ginseng, fish and game to the settlers. "Black Smallpox" wiped out most of his family including his first and second wife. He was mostly known in the eastern Saginaw Valley all the way from Otter lake and on up into the tip of the thumb. In his wondering, he was accompanied by his oldest son, John who always walked respectfully behind him according to the ancient custom.



Local boys were delighted when Indian Dave came around for he made them bows and arrows and showed them how to trap animals. Dave often shared a meal with a white family. Often leaving a freshly killed animal in return for their hospitality. He shunned modern conveniences like beds preferring to sleep on a hard floor behind a stove or outdoors on the ground. He became a Christian. While sleeping outdoors during a snowstorm on one occasion, rolled up in his blanket. He placed a sharp stick into the ground next to himself, the reason being, so the Lord could find him should he die during the night, while buried under a fresh snowfall.

It is said that Indian Dave was found dead, by his son in a shanty, where Dave lived in the woods of the John Hickey farm at 1918 Merry Road, Fairgrove. The date was May 26, 1909. The story goes that Dave was 109 years old.