

Standing Bear's Farewell

Omaha Herald
May 20, 1879

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Courtesy Nebraska State Historical Society

Omaha Herald, May 20, 1879

STANDING BEAR'S FAREWELL

**He Makes Some Presents to
Messrs. Poppleton and Web-
ster in Token of His
Gratitude.**

**One of the Most Remarkable Indian
Speeches on Record**

Standing Bear and his party having been discharged in obedience to the order of Judge Dundy they took up their line of march yesterday for the north. Before leaving, Standing Bear came down to the city to bid Messrs. Poppleton and Webster good bye, and to make each a present in token of his gratitude for their service in his case. He went to Mr. Webster's house first, and presented him with a tomahawk which he had carried for many years as a chief, and emblematic of his rank, and which had his own name engraved upon it. Upon rising to speak he shook hands with all present remarking that he wished to pay respect to the ladies and he would shake hands with them first. He then spoke as follows to Mr. Webster:

"You are I are here. Our skins are of a different color but God made us both. A little while ago when I was young I was wild. I knew nothing of the ways of the white people. I see you have a nice house here. I look at these beautiful rooms. I would like to have a house too, and it may be after a while that I can get one, but not so good a house as this. That is what I want to do. For a great many years, a hundred years or more, the white men have been driving us about. They are shrewd, sharp and know how to cheat. But since I have been here I have found them different. They have all treated me very kindly. I am very thankful for it. Hitherto when we have been wronged we went to war. To assert our rights and avenge our wrongs we took the tomahawk. We had no law to punish those who did wrong, so we took our tomahawks and went to kill. If they had guns and could kill us first it was the fate of war. But you have found a better way. You have gone into the court for us and I find our wrongs can be righted there. Now I have no more use for the tomahawk. I want to lay it down forever. (Here he stooped down, laid the tomahawk on the floor, and then stood erect and folded his arms and said:) I lay it down, I have no more use for it. I have found a better way. (Then picking it up he handed it to Mr. Webster and said:) I present it to you as a token of my gratitude, that you may keep it in remembrance of this great victory you have gained. I have no further use for it. I can now seek the ways of peace."

Mr. Webster replied as follows:

"I rejoice to know that you and those who are with you desire to become civilized and like the white people of America. We know that for the last hundred years your tribe has always been the friend and protector of the white people. The ways of the whites may seem to you to be difficult and hard to learn. Our ancestors were born white, while your (sic) were born red, but a thousand years ago, when they inhabited the central and northern portions of Europe, they followed the same manner of life that you have lead. We have progressed slowly from that time until we are now as you see us. I think it is the duty of the government and all the people to aid the friendly and peaceful Indians in every way possible to acquire the arts of civilization. When the whites landed on these shores they found here at least 4,000,000 of your people, and now you are reduced to 250,000, and we have absorbed nearly all your lands. I think it a duty to humanity and to God to extend to your people the benefit and protection of our laws. ..."

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