Although the Missouri Sacs, like the Iowas, have remained relatively unknown, their kinfolk, the Sacs and Foxes of the Mississippi, have been the focus of considerable attention. American literature and folklore have centered on the exploits of Black Hawk, who led the Mississippi Sacs in a bloody struggle to reclaim their western Illinois lands. Although the Black Hawk War of 1832 proved disastrous for the Indian participants, Black Hawk himself has been proclaimed a courageous hero by many scholars.

Historian Donald Fixico has recently maintained, however, that Keokuk, Black Hawk's rival for leadership of the Mississippi bands, was the real hero of the Sacs. Advocating peaceful coexistence with whites, Keokuk remained neutral during the 1832 war and afterward saved his people from complete annihilation. He agreed with federal officials that the Indians should abide by their 1804 removal treaty and settle in Iowa. Before his death in 1848, Keokuk consented to another treaty, ceding the Iowa lands for a reservation along the Marais des Cygnes River in eastern Kansas. "Although personal gain motivated Keokuk," writes Fixico, "he probably did more good things for the Sac and Fox than Black Hawk did."

Black Hawk was indeed courageous, but his leadership resulted in the death of many people. Keokuk advocated peaceful relations with whites, but he always seemed eager to exploit his friendships with them. In fact, Keokuk often connived with Indian agents and traders to make quick profits, and he willingly accepted bribes in exchange for tribal lands and resources, hardly a mark of integrity. It is clear that although some of their actions may have been praiseworthy, neither Black Hawk nor Keokuk was truly heroic.
There was one Sac leader, however, who always seemed to place the welfare of his people above his own personal interests. He was Mokohoko, the "fine featured" and "stalwart" man who had once spoken on behalf of the Missouri Sacs before the commissioner of Indian affairs. Although his actions may not have been heroic in the classical sense of the term, Mokohoko was indeed a champion of the Indian cause. A member of the Sturgeon clan, which had traditionally provided the foremost chief of the Sacs, Mokohoko possessed sound leadership abilities. In the early 1860s, he left his home near the Kansas-Nebraska border and assumed a leading role among the Mississippi Sacs and Foxes, living ninety miles to the south in present-day Osage and Franklin counties.

When Keokuk's son, Moses Keokuk, moved the Mississippi bands to Indian Territory in 1869, Mokohoko and over one hundred followers refused to surrender their lands, declaring that leaving Kansas "would be like putting our heads in the mouth[s] of great Bears to be eaten off." Without financial assistance from the federal government, they defied removal attempts, maintaining themselves on small tracts of marginal land while peacefully and unobtrusively working as seasonal farm laborers. Their unwavering determination to hold on to at least a portion of their Kansas holdings rested on Mokohoko's sound leadership.

Although Mokohoko had never been the dominant chief of the Missouri bands, he was intelligent and had endeavored to emulate the methods and actions of tribal elders. He had been a longtime protégé of Nesourquoit, the same Missouri Sac whom federal officials and missionaries had denounced as an "aspiring demagogue." He had twice accompanied Nesourquoit and other Missouri Sac delegates to Washington, gaining valuable insight into the workings of the federal bureaucracy. But unlike his mentor, who eventually caved in to governmental demands, Mokohoko was not mollified by official assurances that his band's rights would be respected. Indeed, his mistrust of whites and their intentions was confirmed during the late 1850s as Indian agents and missionaries pressed forward with the civilization program, and traders continued to cheat the Sacs and Iowas on the Great Nemaha reservations.

With white settlements surrounding their lands, Mokohoko realized that the Missouri Sacs faced an uncertain future. Because the Mississippi Sac bands seemed more stable and secure than his own bands, he
decided that the time had come to rejoin those kinfolk to the south. By July 1860 Mokohoko and several followers had merged with Makasawpe’s band, whose traditionalist members most likely realized that their aged chief’s days were numbered. They would need a capable man to lead them in the difficult years ahead.6

Despite his proven leadership abilities and his stature as a member of the Sturgeon clan, Mokohoko would need to win a following at his new location. Ironically, Nesourquoit’s decision to sell a considerable portion of the remaining Missouri Sacs’ lands contributed to Mokohoko’s rise as a chief. On March 6, 1861, Nesourquoit and three others signed a treaty that not only brought the Missouri Sacs much needed annuities but also granted each chief 160 acres of valuable land. Because the chiefs already received a five-hundred-dollar annual salary, it appeared that they had become more interested in their own welfare than in that of their followers.7 With nowhere else to turn, a number of discontented Indians went south and joined forces with Mokohoko. By the time Makasawpe died shortly thereafter, more than one hundred had moved, and Mokohoko’s ascendancy as a chief had been assured.8

His rapid rise as leader was not welcomed by everyone on the Marais des Cygnes reservation. As elsewhere in Kansas, Indian agents and missionaries were endeavoring to supplant traditional ways with their own, urging the Sacs and Foxes, the neighboring Chippewas and Munsees, and other bands to accept Christianity, farming, and formal schooling. Most whites naturally praised Indians willing to cooperate and denounced traditionalists such as Mokohoko’s followers, who clung to their old ways. Those Sacs “would never have any Missionary among them,” recalled settler Cyrus Case, “so their children . . . got no schooling. They were detirmined [sic] to stick to their wild tribal customs.” Case admitted, however, that the Sacs “had good moral virtues, and when they sat at my table adopted our ways.”9

In October 1863 Agent Henry Martin complained that Mokohoko “bids defiance” to education and mission work and “refuses even to live in the house built for him, and pitches his bark wickyup right under the very eves [sic] of the houses.” Indeed, most Sacs and Foxes rejected white ways and refused to live in the stone or frame houses. “The Indians didn’t want the houses,” government-employed stonemason Henry Judd recalled. “They would build fires in the middle of the floor. They would live in their wickyups, stable their ponies in the house and cover the walls with their Indian drawings.”10
Even though more than half of the approximately seven hundred Sacs and Foxes now considered Mokohoko a leading spokesman, Martin dismissed him from the government-recognized tribal council. The agent assigned to Moses Keokuk (also known as Keokuk) the important function of distributing the semi-annual tribal annuity payments. Predictably, the junior Keokuk made the most of this opportunity to enhance his prestige and to ensure his own profits. Like his father, he readily adapted to the federal bureaucracy. Unlike Mokohoko, he had no hereditary claim to the title of chief; his power lay in his ability to win the recognition of federal officials as a leader to the Indians. Keokuk realized that this government-granted political power was a means to wealth, and by obtaining and selling tribal land allotments in Kansas he made considerable profits.

Mokohoko, on the other hand, generally placed his followers' well-being above his own. By observing the actions of Nesourquoit on the Great Nemaha reserve, he had learned his lessons well; unlike Nesourquoit, however, neither threats nor monetary considerations could induce him to yield to governmental demands. His efforts to protect his people's interests became an unending crusade against federal officials and Indian rivals such as Moses Keokuk.

Complaining bitterly about his dismissal from the tribal council, Mokohoko directed his energies over the next couple of years toward resisting the federal civilization program. He actively lobbied officials to remove Martin as agent to the tribes. When Moses Keokuk journeyed to Washington to defend the agent in the spring of 1866, Mokohoko could hardly conceal his anger. On April 12 he and fifty-one other leading Sac and Fox men sent a harshly worded letter to the commissioner, asking that Keokuk's defense of Martin be ignored and demanding the immediate dismissal of the agent. "Our people feel that in this matter they have been outraged and wronged," the Indians proclaimed. "They know that their Agent is not placed over them for the benefit of any one clique or faction, but for the benefit and welfare of the whole nation." Martin had not been unbiased but had "singled out a chosen few and made them the recipients of all the honors and emoluments which it has been in his power to bestow — and no matter what asserting may be made to the contrary, they do desire the appointment of an Agent who will deal fairly and impartially with all of our people." 

Receiving no immediate reply to their complaints, Mokohoko
stormed off to Washington in May to confront federal policymakers. The nation’s capital city held little awe for the experienced Sac chief; his previous visits had given him a sophistication that most other traditional Indians lacked. After consulting a lawyer, he informed Indian Office officials that Agent Martin had removed him from the tribal council because he “would not be mixed up in his schemes to steal the Indians’ money.” Mokohoko accused the agent, the traders, and Keokuk of conspiring to “wrong us very much.”

Fearing that an investigation of the matter would be undertaken, Martin had already rushed to defend himself in Washington. On May 18 he told superiors that Mokohoko had no authority to represent the Indians. “He was at one time a chief,” Martin admitted, “and was removed because of his contumacious and most unreasonable and stubborn opposition” to assimilation. “He is opposed to schools, to all religious influences, to holding lands in severalty, to agriculture, to living in houses, to wearing civilized apparel, to all kinds of manual labor, and in short to everything that can be supposed in any manner to tend towards civilization.” The agent demanded that Mokohoko be ordered back to Kansas without delay, before the “spirit of insubordination and discontent” spreads to others on the reservation.

Martin knew that he had the support of Moses Keokuk and the other governmental chiefs back in Kansas. But he also realized that those Indians represented a distinct minority of the tribe. Negotiations had been under way for a treaty that would move the Sacs and Foxes to Indian Territory, and Mokohoko’s actions threatened to upset those plans. Keokuk and the agent stood to make huge profits from the land sales, and they were unwilling to let the traditionalist factions get in their way. But a July 1866 petition signed by Mokohoko and one hundred forty-five other men complaining about Martin’s highly questionable conduct proved hard to counteract—a thorough investigation would have to be made.

Special Agent W. R. Irwin and other officials arrived on the reservation in the fall of 1866 to conduct the inquiry. When Irwin called the Indians together for a council on October 6, Mokohoko informed him that the Indians resented Martin’s efforts to steal their lands and change their ways. The Sac leader then vented his anger against Keokuk, who dressed like a white man, sent his children to school, and lived in a government-built house. “It looks a white man’s house,” he
said in disgust. Because of its carpets and fancy furniture, he added, one could not even "spit towards the wall or on the floor."  

Although his testimony caused Martin and Keokuk some concern, Mokohoko realized that the investigation would probably end without punitive action against his adversaries. After consulting his followers, he agreed to drop all charges and accepted the offer of recognition as chief with full authority and the payment of expenses for his trip to Washington. The outcome of the incident strengthened Mokohoko's belief that whites had a low opinion of Indians who resisted assimilation; governmental officials rarely ruled in their favor.  

His suspicions were confirmed in February 1867 when Martin and others connived with Moses Keokuk to sell the Indians' homeland. Mokohoko was on his winter hunt beyond the Arkansas River and was not consulted about the treaty that would move the Sacs and Foxes to Indian Territory. Special Commissioners Vital Jarrot and Hiram W. Farnsworth informed superiors in Washington that Mokohoko suffered "a bad ulcer on his thigh" and was unable to attend the proceedings. But they both had "not the least doubt that the treaty just made will be satisfactory to all the tribe, Mokohoko included."  

They were either naive or less than honest, but even as late as July 1867 the new agent, Albert Wiley, predicted that Mokohoko and his "peaceable, docil [sic], and inoffencive [sic]" followers would comply with the government's wishes. Wiley admitted, however, that Mokohoko, whose followers comprised over half of the Indians, insisted that officials listen to his demands. Increasingly impatient, Mokohoko warned Wiley that there might be trouble, for even "a snake will squirm when tramped upon."  

Mokohoko realized, of course, that violence was not a feasible option for small numbers of Indians completely surrounded by white settlements. Until Keokuk's faction moved to Indian Territory, therefore, Mokohoko desperately sought other ways to invalidate the treaty and save the Sac and Fox lands. Like Kenekuk, the Kickapoo prophet, he hoped to maintain the sympathy of the local white community by encouraging his followers to treat even the most offensive settlers kindly. Refusing to acknowledge the legality of the removal treaty, Mokohoko, over the next two years, boycotted council meetings, avoided the agent, and refused to send delegates to select new homes in Indian Territory.
But when his efforts to overturn the treaty seemed hopeless, he finally consented to meet with Central Superintendent of Indian Affairs Enoch Hoag and other officials. Local settler Jabez Adams, Jr., later recounted the details of that meeting of August 19, 1869:

The council was held in an enclosed greensward—embellished by fine shade trees. Besides the Chiefs and Braves whose business it was to be there, it seemed that every Indian living on the Reserve was there. Indians formed an inner circle around the officials; whites the outer circle. The ground was covered with people for many rods.

My first surprise that day was the intelligent features of many of the noted Indians. In this brief account only two chiefs, Keokuk and Mokohoko, will be mentioned. In symmetry and physique they were perfect. Keokuk fair, almost like a white man; Mokohoko, dark. Their physiognomies beamed with intellectuality and showed strong marks of philanthropy. They were neatly dressed and made a fine appearance before the vast audience.

Keokuk and Mokohoko were the principal orators, and responded promptly when called. With the Sac & Fox Tribe they were the Clay and Webster. For, like them they were noted for their eloquence, and esteemed for their untiring efforts for Right. Adams was somewhat mistaken about the motives of Keokuk, whose untiring efforts were aimed at negotiating a more favorable land deal for himself in Indian Territory. Keokuk put on quite a show of denouncing the treaty—which he had already signed—before white officials and the Indians. He finally conceded that the Sacs and Foxes would move, but he resented “the Treachery of the Paleface” in forcing Indians out of Kansas.

Following Keokuk’s speech, Mokohoko pointed out that he had not been party to the treaty; thus his people would remain in “peaceable possession” of their present homes. With an ironic wit honed by many past encounters with white officials, he continued:

Now my dear people, our noble Keokuk has been persuaded to put his hand to a “Paleface” paper; and they say it gives away our Kansas homes. O, tell me not such sad words! We cannot give up
Mokohoko, leader of the traditionalist Sacs. (Courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society)
Moses Keokuk. (Courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society)
this happy home we have loved so long. I'll never, never, never put my hand to the paper that says we must leave here!

My own people who follow me shall live here in peace with these good paleface people so long as the moon and stars shine by night and the sun illumes the day. 25

But Mokohoko lacked the power to stop the federal bureaucracy, which declared the treaty valid. On November 25, 1869, therefore, while whites waited eagerly to claim reservation land, the Sac and Fox emigration from Kansas began. Most of the Fox Indians, weary of feuds between the leaders of the Sac bands and distrustful of Keokuk, decided to join kinfolk who had resettled in Iowa many years before. There they would remain, resisting all attempts to remove them.

Mokohoko had similar plans to defy the authorities, and when several hundred Indians and twenty-nine ox-drawn wagons started the journey south, most of his followers had already left for their annual winter hunt on the western plains. Federal officials expected—or at least hoped—that the Sacs would leave for Indian Territory soon. But Mokohoko refused to abandon Kansas and demanded to speak with the president, who he thought would look sympathetically upon their cause. "Mokohoko declines to go at present," Superintendent Hoag reported that December. "Most of his band are hunting buffalo, and it is thought they will go direct from the plains to their new reservation, south. Mokohoko claims that he is not a party to the late treaty, and expresses a desire to visit his 'great father' in Washington. I am informed that he is operating with the Prairie band of Pottawatomies, and would suggest that an interview with the Commissioner [in Washington] might result in good." 26

Throughout the following year, the chief remained steadfast in his determination to stay in Kansas, repeatedly disobeying agents' orders to leave and insisting on visiting the president. Attracted by Mokohoko's courageous stand, many Sacs who had already moved to Indian Territory returned to Kansas. Even the loss of federal annuities that this entailed did not prevent their return. 27 Because they had moved onto marginal lands in scattered locations near the Marais des Cygnes, white settlers put little pressure on the peaceful Indians to leave. A valuable asset to farmers in need of cheap labor, the Indians were considered a harmless curiosity bedecked in their ceremonial bear-claw necklaces, colorful robes, beaded moccasins, and jewelry.
In February 1871, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Ely S. Parker granted Mokohoko permission to present his case in Washington. The chief left the following month accompanied by Chippewa leader Edward McCoonse, a trusted friend who was actually allied with white interests. But all attempts by McCoonse and others in the capital to persuade or cajole Mokohoko into leaving Kansas failed. Federal officials asked only that Mokohoko take his followers to Indian Territory "within a reasonable time."28

Fortunately for the Sac chief and his followers, federal officials were reluctant to evict them forcibly because President Ulysses S. Grant's Indian Peace Policy was currently in vogue. This program, also known as Grant's Quaker Policy, was a cooperative effort on the part of the federal government and various churches to bring fundamental change to the administration of Indian affairs. Humanitarians who had once fought to abolish slavery now admonished federal policymakers to right the wrongs done to the nation's Indians, and President Grant answered their plea. Grant's plan originally called for appointing Quakers, or Friends, to the Northern and Central superintendencies—parts of Nebraska, Kansas, and Indian Territory—and military officers to the nation's other agencies. Members of Congress, urged on by reformers, rejected this proposal, and as a result representatives of several other religious groups filled the remaining agency assignments.29

Shortly after taking office, Grant had appointed Ely Parker, a Tonawanda Seneca and his former aide-de-camp, as commissioner of Indian affairs; under the direction of Parker and subsequent commissioners, Protestant and Catholic church officials nominated Christian superintendents, agents, and teachers to take charge of the reservation system and to hasten the assimilation of the nation's Indians.30 To facilitate the entire process, the president agreed to the formation of an independent Board of Indian Commissioners, made up of leading Christian reformers who would monitor federal expenditures for Indian affairs and watch over other aspects of Indian policy. Grant and other policymakers hoped that this board, along with the preachers, priests, and other "honest Christians" working on the reservations, would ensure fair treatment for the tribespeople and eliminate the rampant corruption in the Indian service.31

Considering the relatively small size of their memberships, both branches of Quakers—Hicksite and Orthodox—played a leading role
in the attempt to provide better treatment for the Indians. The Orthodox Quakers took charge of the Central Superintendency, which was headquartered in Lawrence, Kansas, and included Kansas and Indian Territory. These Friends earnestly believed that all humans had the potential to realize God’s "universal divine light" and that patience and mildness on the part of Quaker agents would prove successful in civilizing the Indians. In 1869 Enoch Hoag, a self-educated Iowa farmer and former abolitionist, became the first Quaker superintendent at Lawrence. The kindly Hoag, who continually tried to coax Mokohoko's people into leaving the state, was generally unwilling to take decisive action against the stubborn Sacs. Such indecisiveness, as well as the inability to understand tribal customs, contributed to the ultimate failure of efforts by Quakers and other religious denominations to revitalize the Indian service.

The Sacs often took advantage of the Quakers' warmheartedness. When he returned from Washington in the spring of 1871, Mokohoko continually ignored Hoag's orders to emigrate, insisting that the vague instructions issued in the capital allowed his people to remain in Kansas. Indian Office officials had already cut off the Sacs' annuity payments in an effort to force the recalcitrants to leave. Refusing to bow to financial pressure, the Indians survived by their own resourcefulness. They still ventured west to the hunting grounds each winter; but as the buffalo herds diminished during the 1870s, the Sacs had to rely more on smaller game such as deer, rabbits, raccoons, and prairie chickens. Women planted corn in small clearings and gathered nuts and berries along wooded river banks. The people raised dogs for the meat, a delicacy served at the frequent feasts and ceremonies that helped to reinforce tribal cohesiveness. To supplement their hunting, gathering, and planting, the Sacs hired themselves out to settlers in Osage County. The women and children washed clothes, churned butter, tended livestock, and performed other domestic chores; the men split rails, mended fences, made hay, and helped with the harvests.

Local settlers, who had initially demanded that the band be removed, found Mokohoko's Indians to be trustworthy and hard-working. Settler Max Morton recalled that they were always "perfectly honest, no good in threshing, but good workers in cutting and husking corn." When Charlie Cottrell bought a farm near Melvern, Kansas, in the early 1870s, he discovered that his one hundred Indian neighbors were quite an asset. "Of course they could draw no annuities as long as
they remained away from their tribe,” he remembered, “so they worked for the ‘whitey’ man, in corn hoeing or corn cutting or husking, they did well, we had them, they were good workers.” A local storekeeper reported that the Sacs worked hard and “earned very much more than if they had been with their tribe. I have met bands of 20 or more corn cutters and huskers going to and from work.”

The Sacs were always friendly toward whites, who appreciated their kindness, although they sometimes misunderstood their ways. Charlie Cottrell’s son Bayard became close friends with an Indian boy named Sioke. “Bayard was shown many tricks of Indian hunting and fishing,” his father related. “He was always welcome to their camp. One Sunday morning he went down to their camp, and they insisted that he stay for their dinner. They went so far as to kill a fat puppy for soup. After giving many excuses, he managed to get away.”

The Indians were eager to please. The elder Cottrell noted that they “attended all Fourth of July or other big white folks’ celebrations, dressed in picturesque garb, partly white and partly Indian folks style.” Local resident Elmer Calkins recalled that no celebration “was held near or far by old settlers but there was a good attendance from Indians generally well dressed in a semi-civilized manner.”

Although Mokohoko’s people often pleaded poverty and asked governmental officials for food and clothing, the income from part-time employment provided for most of their relatively modest needs. They never got federal assistance, but they owned an abundance of ponies, in earlier times a sign of wealth and prestige, and whites who dealt with these “sober and honest” Indians found that “they always had money to spend.” Merchant Charlie Cochran recalled that he often saw them at Lemuel Warner’s store in Melvern. “I used to trade with them some,” Cochran wrote, “and I used to see the old Sac & Fox squaws of Mo ko ho ko’s Band trading there [Warner’s] a lot; they liked Warner and his wife. They always kept their word with him. The bucks worked out and allowed the squaws to buy living with some of the earnings.”

In May 1873 the tribal council members asked permission to return to Washington and restate their case to remain in Kansas. Following the example of the Chippewas and Munsees, the Sacs offered to relinquish their tribal status—to stay in Kansas, they would become citizens, dependent on themselves for survival. It “would be to our perma-
nent good," they declared, "to sever our relations to the tribe and become the adopted children of the United States."\(^{37}\)

That summer Mokohoko again prodded reluctant officials to allow him to visit the federal capital "to say our sayings, [and] lay our grievances before the department by words of our own mouths and receive an answer ... as to whether we have any rights for a home here." He was sure that the president would be sympathetic, for had not the "great father" once promised that they "should have this land for [their] home as long as the water run"? Although Mokohoko assured officials that he would accept the president's decision in the matter, neither he nor his followers had any intention of leaving Kansas voluntarily.\(^{38}\)

Superintendent Hoag believed that Mokohoko's powerful influence was the major obstacle to the Indians' removal, and late in 1873 he granted the chief's request to visit Washington. But Mokohoko was sick and unable to make the journey; he died in January 1874. Fearing that news of his death would accelerate their removal, his followers did their best to conceal it. They never revealed the location of his grave, but they likely honored his request for burial in a timber bottom along the Marais des Cygnes River. "When my life is out," he had instructed them, "wrap me in my blanket, ... circle around my grave and let my friends and brothers say the last words for Mokohoko."\(^{39}\)

It was Mokohoko's own last words, not those of his mourners, that had a lasting impact on the Sacs of Kansas. He had admonished them from his deathbed never to abandon their lands and to inform the president about their mistreatment. Sympathetic to Mokohoko's traditionalist views, the Indians were inclined to heed his advice. In November 1874, therefore, council members again won permission to present their case in the capital. Pledging to emigrate peacefully if that should be the president's decision, tribal spokesmen Pawshepawho and Mayapit arrived in Washington early the following year. Keokuk's removal treaty, they declared, "was consummated against our will. We at that time protested and we still protest against said treaty." They asked officials "to let us retain our land and homes in Kansas."\(^{40}\)

On February 1, 1875, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Edward P. Smith emphatically denied their request. "The question is settled," Smith told them, "if you remain in Kansas you remain without any country.... [Y]ou cannot do anything for yourselves so long as you
wander about Kansas without any homes." The commissioner tried to appeal to their cupidity by pointing out that both chiefs would receive a five-hundred-dollar yearly salary if they agreed to take their people to Indian Territory. "If I had an offer to go down into the Indian Territory and have a farm, cattle, and $500 a year, and be a King," he intoned, "over against staying in Kansas and being kicked about by everybody and having nothing, and not being a King, I think I should go."41

Three days later, the chiefs met with President Grant, who claimed that he lacked the power to allow the tribe to stay in Kansas and warned that they must abide by the treaty.42 Although Pawshepawho and Mayapit returned to their people without achieving their goal, they resolutely resisted all efforts to remove their tribe. The Sacs would rather be "vagabond trespassers" in Kansas, as officials called them, than "kings" in an alien land.

In November 1875, Superintendent Hoag reluctantly ordered Agent Levi Woodard, a fellow Quaker, to evict the Sacs from Kansas. When Hoag visited them to ask for their cooperation, they bluntly replied: "We don't harbor anything bad. The most we have in our minds is the welfare of our children—we are not going to the Territory. That is all we have to say."43 But on November 20 Woodard arrived with a detachment of United States infantry to remove them.

The removal proved almost as difficult for the whites as it was for the Indians. Gathering and transporting the tribespeople, whose camps were scattered several miles along the Marais des Cygnes, was a perplexing logistical problem for Woodard and the soldiers. Making matters worse, most of the men had already left for the winter hunt; they had no intention of moving to Indian Territory. Hostility from the forty-five remaining Sacs would have complicated matters even more, but they offered no resistance and willingly helped load the wagons. After the women and children climbed aboard, the chiefs requested that they be allowed to remain briefly in order to conduct religious rites.44 Their houses rested on sacred ground and could not be abandoned without the proper rituals.

After an eighteen-day journey, the Sacs arrived in Indian Territory, where Agent John Pickering attempted to mollify the newcomers. Pickering noted that they seemed "sullen and indifferent, but manifest a feeling of kindness toward their relatives here, and are being better reconciled to their situation." His assessment was far from accurate, however. Agent Woodard reported in March 1876 that Mokohoko's
people still refused "to affiliate in any way that will indicate their recognition of [Keokuk's] treaty." By the end of the month, as rumors abounded that they intended to return to Kansas as soon as there was sufficient grass to feed their ponies, George Nicholson, chief clerk of the Central Superintendency, informed Woodard that every effort must be exerted to keep them on the reservation. "If they should leave they will be compelled to return, by force if necessary," wrote Nicholson. "Thou art requested to inform this office of their departure, should they do so, in order that steps may be taken to return them."45 But these instructions were never acted upon; force was a necessity alien to Nicholson as well as most of his Quaker colleagues.

Some federal policymakers were willing to employ harsh measures to force their will on Indians. But Washington bureaucrats were shocked when a bill for twenty-five hundred dollars arrived for the removal of Mokohoko's band from Kansas. The Indians could have moved themselves much more quickly and economically, as they proved in mid-April 1876 when they packed their belongings and returned to their old homes. There they remained for several more years because officials refused to allocate funds for another costly relocation attempt.46

Back in Kansas, the Sacs continued as before, hunting small game and raising corn in isolated plots not wanted by whites. They worked for neighboring Chippewa and white farmers, who, appreciating their services, spoke out on their behalf. Edward McCoonse of the Chippewas beseeched Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz "to do something for these poor wandering Indians" determined to stay in Kansas "'til they die." McCoonse suggested that the government purchase two sections of land from his band and donate it to the Sacs. Not noted for his philanthropy, the Chippewa was very likely trying to dispose of inferior acreage for a profit.

Local white citizens petitioned Congress in 1879 on behalf of the "industrious and honest" Indians, who "would do well here if they had a section of land." They argued that it was "unjust to force away people from their homes against their will and consent." But their intentions were also questionable—a few offered land for sale and others urged federal officials to pay the band's arrears in annuities, a potential windfall for local merchants.47 Regardless of the motives behind these recommendations, Mokohoko's people would have been able to remain in the state if federal bureaucrats had approved them. Washington
officials, however, were still determined upon removal and ignored all pleas to allow the band to remain. Whether logical or not, decisions had to be carried out regardless of circumstances, and years earlier it had been decided that they must move.

In the East, meanwhile, a heated debate raged between well-meaning humanitarians and the Interior Department over the nation’s treatment of Indians. The policy of assigning Quakers and other religious denominations to the Indian service had been largely abandoned by the late 1870s, and officials were groping for a new direction in Indian affairs. The Indian Peace Policy had failed to stem corruption in the Indian service; two of Grant’s commissioners of Indian affairs—Ely Parker and Edward P. Smith—had resigned after being accused of questionable dealings. Throughout the 1870s, Indian agents, various federal officials, and governmental contractors had routinely cheated the Indians. The reformer Carl Schurz, who became secretary of the Interior in 1877, discovered the difficulties involved in eliminating corruption when his own commissioner of Indian affairs, Ezra Hayt, was charged with irregularities and had to resign.48

Schurz also found himself embroiled in disputes with eastern humanitarians over what direction a new Indian policy should take. The humanitarians focused particular attention on the celebrated **Standing Bear v. Crook** case of 1879. In an effort to retain their Nebraska homes, Ponca Chief Standing Bear and thirty of his followers had offered to sever their relations with the main body of the tribe, which had been transferred to Indian Territory. The Poncas’ lawyer had asserted that under the Fourteenth Amendment Indians who surrendered tribal affiliations were free of governmental authority and enjoyed the same rights as white citizens. Acknowledging that he had never been called on to hear a case that appealed so powerfully to his sympathy, United States District Judge Elmer Dundy agreed with the lawyers; he ruled that individual Poncas had an inalienable right to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” and that federal officials could not force them to return to the reservation.49

The Ponca trial became a cause célèbre in the East during the early 1880s as philanthropists Helen Hunt Jackson, Wendell Phillips, Herbert Welsh, Sen. Henry L. Dawes, and others stepped up their criticisms of federal Indian policy. The so-called Friends of the Indian, who championed individual land allotment, formal education, Christianity, and citizenship for American Indians, expected Secretary Schurz and
federal officials to make broad application of Dundy's ruling. But Wash­
ington bureaucrats, although sympathetic to the plight of the tribes­
people, refused to permit any other Indians to leave their reservations
and lead "wandering vagabond lives" in the nation's territories or
states. 50

The Ponca decision should have given individual Indians the right to
choose between affiliation with their tribes or American citizenship; it
failed to do so, however. By the mid-1880s, most humanitarian groups
were directing their energies toward devising a general allotment act, and
they paid little attention to governmental actions against other
Indians who attempted to sever relations with their tribes and abandon
their reservations.

In September 1886, federal officials finally announced that the Ponca
decision did not apply to Mokohoko's people, who must be expelled
from Kansas. In a statement that blatantly contradicted the facts,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs John D. C. Atkins announced that the
Sacs had "no rights" where they were and must be removed for their
own benefit, for they were "of the very lowest grade of humanity.
[G]rossly ignorant and steeped in superstition . . . they are simply a
roving band of ignorant vagabond trespassers, naked and starving,
without any means of support whatever, and in fact are in a most
deplorable and pitiable condition." 51

This assessment of Mokohoko's Sacs, as Atkins probably realized,
had no basis in reality. Although the Indians adhered to their tradi­
tional customs and religion, it would take a narrow-minded man to call
them superstitious. They depended on their own resourcefulness to
earn their living, not on governmental largess, which was denied them,
and they were rather prosperous considering their modest needs. For
seventeen years after Keokuk's removal treaty had taken effect, they
had defied the authorities. It was Mokohoko's leadership that gave
them the strength and courage to persevere. In contrast to Black
Hawk's dramatic and seemingly heroic actions, Mokohoko's peaceful
stratagems appear cautious and colorless; yet because of them his
people remained entrenched for years on lands they did not legally
own. Their passive resistance came from inner strength and courage,
qualities less conspicuous than heroism on the battlefield but, in this
case, more productive of results.

Now, to justify their unwarranted removal from Kansas, Atkins and
other officials used the lame excuse that the Indians were "utterly
ignorant and devoid of reason” and had been “mere dependents for existence upon the bounty of the Government.” Of course, that “bounty” had been cut off seventeen years earlier. Ignoring this fact and insisting that they were a “nuisance to the white settlers,” Secretary of the Interior Lucius Q. C. Lamar ordered Inspector E. D. Bannister to remove them. Lamar advised the inspector “to make the Indians feel that they are consenting, though it may be reluctantly, to return to the reservation [and] not that they are being driven there by military force.” Bannister, who apparently lacked confidence in his ability to manipulate Indians, ignored the suggestion and requested the Army’s assistance.

Although the Sacs were neither “devoid of reason” nor dependent on governmental largess, Lt. John Haines with twelve United States cavalrymen arrived on October 15, 1886, to escort them south. When the removal began about a week later, the Indians again offered little resistance. On the first day of their grim pilgrimage, a few attempted to flee, but the soldiers quickly tracked them down. Many settlers and even the troops were sympathetic to the “crying and weeping” Indians who were forced to abandon their Kansas homes.

Lieutenant Haines reported that although the Indians were “sulky” and “somewhat stubborn” during the two-week journey, they gave him “no trouble whatsoever, being orderly and well behaved in every way.” The somewhat perplexed army officer also noted that “these Indians are hardly the ‘Ignorant vagabond trespassers, naked and starving without any means of support’ as reported” by civilian officials. “The extent of their trespassing,” he wrote, “was living on a narrow strip of land on the river-bank about twenty yards wide, and using a private road to reach this land.” When they stopped at the various towns on their trek south, furthermore, they paid for their own provisions, refusing to accept any money from Inspector Bannister.

Unlike most governmental officials who decided Indian policy from behind desks in Washington, Haines evidently had much firsthand experience. He knew the difference between poor, naked tribespeople and prosperous “‘blanket’ Indians” such as Mokohoko’s band. From many local settlers he learned that the Indians were not considered a nuisance, had “never been known to steal, and have been honest and straightforward in all their dealings, and with few exceptions the people in this neighborhood were sorry to see them go.”

Arriving in Indian Territory on November 5, Pawshepawho and the
other chiefs advised their followers not to accept annuity money from the authorities. When they refused to cooperate with the inspector and the agent attempting to settle them on their new lands, Capt. Edward M. "Jack" Hayes arrested Pawshepawho and a few of his "most stubborn" supporters. "Persuasions, arguments, appeals to their interests,
[and] threats had no effect on them," Hayes informed superiors, "and, as a last resort, it was decided to try severe treatment." Although the army officer reported that "the Indians were in a bad frame of mind" and capable of violence, after four days in the army guardhouse they relented and agreed to settle peacefully on their new lands. 56

Like Mokohoko before them, the chiefs understood the futility of violence and sought other solutions to their problems. They again demanded the right to argue their case in Washington; but, although Pawshepawho and six others visited the capital in February 1887, their pleas were in vain. 57 They returned in March, defeated but still determined to maintain their traditional ways in Indian Territory. Although the land was soon to be distributed in individual family allotments, they insisted upon tribal ownership and erected fences to separate themselves from Keokuk's people. For years they remained aloof from outsiders and clung to their traditional ways. 58

Even though their strategies resembled those of the Vermillion Kickapoos and others who managed to remain in Kansas, Mokohoko's people were forced to move to Indian Territory. Like Kenekuk of the Kickapoos, Mokohoko had advised his people to work hard and to remain at peace with their white neighbors. They had readily accepted a new economic outlook when survival made it necessary to work for white farmers, but they clung to their traditional ways in most other respects. In Mokohoko they had a leader who eloquently and forcefully voiced their traditionalist views, and his legacy of intractability in the face of financial, social, and physical pressures sustained them even after his death. Officials assumed that without his leadership, the Indians would voluntarily move to Indian Territory, but the Sacs remained adamant. Their strategy of passive resistance should have succeeded—their cause was just and their methods appropriate.

Although Mokohoko's people failed to retain their Kansas homes, they did manage to maintain a separate and distinct way of life. If they had been made citizens and given farmland in Kansas, it seems likely they could have continued to support themselves without governmental assistance, as they had for more than a decade and a half. But unimaginative bureaucrats robbed them of their chance.