Contents

Introduction ................................................. 4
Chapter 1: Life as a Boy ......................... 6
Chapter 2: A Time of Change ................. 13
Chapter 3: The Ioway’s First Treaty ........ 20
Chapter 4: Big Neck’s Battle ................. 28
Chapter 5: Big Neck’s Trial ................. 37
Legacy: Great Walker as an Ioway Leader .... 44
Timeline ...................................................... 45
For Further Reading .............................. 46
Index ......................................................... 48
Image Credits ........................................... 48
Introduction

Great Walker was a warrior and a leader of the Ioway people during a time of great change. In the early 1800s, when Great Walker was young, the Ioway lived on land that is now part of the states of Iowa and Missouri. By the time Great Walker was an adult, settlers had begun to move west of the Mississippi River in large numbers. Their hunger for land threatened the Ioway’s way of life.

In 1821, much of the Ioway’s traditional homeland became part of the new state of Mis-
souri. Great Walker, along with his good friend White Cloud, believed there was nothing they could do to stop settlers from coming. In 1824, they traveled together to Washington D.C. to sign a treaty with the United States government. In that treaty, the Ioway promised to give up their right to hunt and live on all land located inside Missouri.

After he returned home from Washington, Great Walker realized he had made a mistake. He regretted selling the Ioway’s claim to the land on which his ancestors had lived and died. Vowing to defend their right to live on the land of their forefathers, Great Walker led a group of about sixty people to live just outside Missouri’s northern border. They set up their village along the Chariton River on land the Ioway still had rights to use under the treaty. There, they did their best to carry on the lifestyle and traditions of their ancestors, even when it meant defending themselves and their land against settlers. 🌿
Like most Native American people who lived long ago, the Ioway did not keep written records about such things as births, deaths, and other important events. For this reason, we know very little about Great Walker’s childhood. In fact, we don’t even know what he was called as a child. He earned the name Great Walker as an adult because, according to one legend, he once walked one hundred miles in twenty-four hours.
to conduct a raid on a Dakota Sioux enemy.

When Great Walker was born, his parents most likely gave him a name that indicated his birth order among his siblings. He would have been called by this name throughout his childhood, even after elders from his clan gave him a clan name. His clan name was likely a name that had been used by an ancestor who was no

George Catlin made this painting of members of the Ioway nation who traveled to London with him in 1844 and 1845. The people of England were fascinated by the Ioway’s songs, dances, and clothing.
In 1812, the settlers who were living on Ioway land organized the Missouri Territory. Nine years later, in 1821, the United States admitted Missouri to the Union as its twenty-fourth state. The leaders of Missouri did not want the Ioway, or any other Native American group, living inside the state’s borders. They wanted them to move west, far away from the settlers’ farms and
towns. Missourians who tried to force all Native Americans out of the state faced one big problem. According to U.S. law, several Native nations still had a right to live and hunt on most of the land inside the state.

The Ioway, the Sac, and the Fox still claimed the right to use all the land in Missouri that was north of the Missouri River. The United States government asked all three tribes to sell this right. The famous explorer William Clark invited Great Walker and White Cloud to Washington D.C. to talk about selling their land rights. In the summer of 1824, the two men and their families made the long trip with Clark.

William Clark was an explorer and soldier. He was governor of the Missouri Territory from 1813 to 1821.
Chapter 4

Big Neck’s Battle

After buying all the Ioway’s claims to land in Missouri, the government gave them two years to move outside of the state. Most of the Ioway people agreed to live near a new agency the U.S. government created for them. It was located on the Platte River, where the town of Agency, Missouri, is now located in Buchanan County. At that time, Buchanan, Andrew, Holt, Nodaway, and Atchison Counties were not part of the
state of Missouri. The U.S. government set that land aside as a place where only Native American people could live.

The United States government operated the Ioway Agency, which was a small group of simple wooden buildings. It was a place where the Ioway people could go if they needed protection or help from the government. The Ioway Indian agencies had offices for the Indian agent, a doctor, and other officials, plus a trading post and sometimes a school. Most treaties included a promise to provide food and other supplies, so the agency also needed space to store things.
Great Walker as an Ioway Leader

Great Walker, or Big Neck, believed the Ioway’s ties to the land of their ancestors were stronger than any treaty. He thought it was important for his people to honor the culture and customs that had help them survive for hundreds of years.

Great Walker broke his promise to live near the agency with White Cloud and the other Ioway, but he kept his promise to leave Missouri. He chose to live with his band outside the state on land the Ioway still claimed as their own. One year after his murder trial, Big Neck died in a battle with a group of Dakota Sioux.
1780s: Great Walker was born, probably near the Des Moines River in what is now the state of Iowa.

1803: The Louisiana Purchase made the Ioway's land part of the United States. The United States government made the agreement with France without the Ioway's knowledge.

August 10, 1821: Without the Ioway's approval, much of the land on which they lived and hunted was made a part of the new state of Missouri.

August 4, 1824: White Cloud and Great Walker agreed to give up all the Ioway's claims to land in Missouri for five thousand dollars. The United States government told the Ioway they had two years to leave the state of Missouri and move to the new Ioway Agency.

1825: Great Walker refused to move to the Ioway Agency. He led a group of about seventy Ioways to live north of Missouri near the Chariton River. He began using the name Big Neck.

June 1829: Big Neck and other Ioway men discovered settlers living on land they believed was not a part of Missouri.

July 1829: Big Neck and his followers were involved in a gun battle with militiamen. Three militiamen and three Ioway died.

August 1829: General Henry Leavenworth arrested and jailed White Cloud and several other Ioway who were not involved in the gun battle with the militia.

Fall 1829: Indian Agent Andrew Hughes found Big Neck and his band. He led thirteen Ioway to St. Louis to jail.

March 1830: In a trial in Huntsville, Missouri, a jury of settlers found Big Neck and other Ioway not guilty of murder. Big Neck returned to his village north of Missouri after the trial.

Summer 1831: Big Neck was killed in a battle with some Dakota Sioux men. Most of those who lived with him returned to live near the Ioway Agency.
For Further Reading

Books for Young Readers


Websites of the Ioway


Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska: iowatribeofkansasandnebraska.com.


**Documentary Movies**


**About Great Walker/Big Neck**


**About the Ioway**


Index

battles, 14, 15, 35–36, 41

crops, 10, 11–12, 16–17

Des Moines River, 9, 10, 19

hunting and fishing, 10, 12, 16–17

Indian agents and agencies, 25, 28–31

land claims of Ioway, 11, 17, 21–24, 28, 31–32, 41

leader, Great Walker as, 13–14, 21–23, 31–33, 37, 39

militia and soldiers, American, 33, 35–36, 37–38

names and naming, 6, 7–9, 32–33

state border disputed, 41–42

trade and traders, 10, 16, 18–19, 25, 32–33

treaties, 21–22, 25–27, 33

trial of Big Neck, 41–43

villages, Native, 9–10, 17, 19, 35

White Cloud, 14–15, 21, 22, 26, 31

white settlers, 15–18, 19, 20, 26, 33–35, 37, 41, 42–43

Image Credits

Original artwork by John Hare: pgs. 6, 13, 20, 28, 37.

Maps by the author: pgs. 8, 17, 25, 35, 41.


Courtesy of the State Historical Society of Missouri: p. 16, Portrait of Joseph Robidoux (SHS MO 015226); p. 23, Washington D.C., 1832 (SHS MO 027808); p. 32, Sketch of settlers and a log cabin (SHS MO 014141-1); p. 38, Portrait of General Henry Leavenworth (SHS MO 95-0115); p. 40, St. Louis, 1832 (SHS MO 003697); p. 41, Jefferson Barracks (SHS MO 028700).

Courtesy of Special Collections, Pickler Memorial Library, Truman State University: Drawings from Thomas McKenny and James Hall, History of the Indian Tribes of North America . . . 2 vols. (1848–50) on cover and p. 4, Great Walker; p. 15, White Cloud (Mahaska); p. 22, Female Flying Pigeon; p. 39, Appanoose.


Courtesy Research Division of the Oklahoma State Historical Society: p. 9, Photo of Ioway houses, 1887.


Courtesy of Missouri State Archives: pgs. 30–31, Capitol Mural of Andrew Hughes; p. 43 Albert Lee, Map showing the disputed boundary of Missouri and Iowa, 1839.

Courtesy of Lance Foster: p. 10, Our Crops, by Lance Foster.

Courtesy of University of Missouri Library: p. 24, cover of Harpers Weekly, January 27, 1866.
Great Walker

For centuries, the Ioway people lived on land that is now part of Missouri and Iowa. But settlers started moving into the area and wanted land for themselves. Great Walker, an Ioway leader, reluctantly agreed to sign a treaty giving up their traditional homeland. Many of the Ioway moved to an area set aside for them in Missouri, but Great Walker and his band refused to go along. They settled along the Chariton River and carried on with the customs and culture that had helped them survive for hundreds of years, even when it meant defending themselves against those new American settlers.

Greg Olson has an MA in history from University of Missouri, Columbia, and an MFA in art from University of South Dakota. He is curator of Special Exhibits and Special Projects at the Missouri State Archives, and author of *The Ioway in Missouri* and *Noble Savages, Voodoo Priests and Ozark Gypsies: The Life of Folklorist Mary Alicia Owen*, as well as several articles on Missouri history.

John Hare is an illustrator, graphic designer, and artist. He lives in Gladstone, Missouri.