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THE  
BAPTISTS

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THE  
METHODISTS

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AND THE  
SHAWNEES

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# Conflicting Cultures in Indian Territory, 1833–1834

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by Stephen A. Warren

Following the death of Tecumseh at the Battle of the Thames in 1813 and the defeat of the British in the War of 1812, the Shawnees and many other tribes in the Midwest could maintain neither their traditional culture nor their autonomy from the advancing white settlements.<sup>1</sup> Black Hoof, Wapapilethe, and Chilitica were three chiefs who guided the Shawnees away from hunting and trading with the French and the British. Their leadership encouraged the Shawnees at Wapakoneta, Ohio, and in southeastern Missouri to begin seeking accommodations with the United States government to ensure their tribe's survival.

From 1825 to 1833 many Shawnees removed to what is now the state of Kansas from their lands in Missouri, Ohio, and Indiana. Most of the approximately twelve hundred Shawnees who settled in Indian Territory favored some adaptations to American culture.<sup>2</sup> Those Shawnees who advocated acculturation, compromising with the dominant society by borrowing some cultural traits while retaining their own cultural autonomy, requested the assistance of missionaries whom they hoped would facilitate improved conditions for the tribe. Shawnee requests for missionary aid created conflicts between the missionaries and the Shawnees. The disputes that arose over the propagation of Christianity and the integration of the Shawnees into American culture is the focus of this article.

The first agreement that began the Shawnees' removal to Indian Territory was the treaty of Castor Hill, signed on November 7, 1825, by the Black Bob band of the Cape Girardeau Shawnees. One of the bands that left Cape Girardeau, Missouri, as a result of this treaty was the Fish band. These Shawnees removed to Indian Territory in the spring of 1830. The Fish band settled on the northeast corner of the 1.6 million-acre reservation that stretched from the mouth of the Kansas River beyond Fort Riley to the Solomon Fork of the Kansas River.<sup>3</sup>

The first deputation of the Ohio Shawnees to arrive in Kansas was led by William Perry, Cornstalk, and Tecumseh's brother the Prophet. They started from Wapakoneta, Ohio, on September 20, 1826, and finally arrived on May 14, 1828. The journey's length

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1. R. David Edmunds, *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1984), 211.
2. Joseph B. Herring, *The Enduring Indians of Kansas: A Century and a Half of Acculturation* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 2.
3. H. Craig Miner and William E. Unrau, *The End of an Indian Kansas: A Study of Cultural Revolution, 1854–1871* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 19.



*Following the 1813 death of Shawnee leader Tecumseh, the Shawnees could maintain neither their traditional culture nor their autonomy from the advancing white settlements.*

and the deplorable conditions that the Wapakoneta Shawnees experienced were indicative of many of the Shawnee removals. One chief lamented:

We your red friends & brothers Shawanees wish to represent to you our situation brought on us by removing to a new country, when we arrive hear [sic] our horses were poor we had traveled a long ways & had met with many losses, many of our horses died after we arrive at this place for the want of food. We were unable in consequence of poor horses & the want of agricultural implements to raise grain to bread, and if we had hogs given to us when we arrive we have not had time to raise pork. some of us have tried to get meat in the woods. we find there is hardly a deer. . . . we hope you will represent our situation to the President and to Congress.<sup>4</sup>

Lack of supplies, exhausted horses, and white deprivations plagued many of the Shawnees on their way to Indian Territory following the treaties of 1825 and 1831.<sup>5</sup>

Separate Shawnee bands in Ohio, Indiana, and Missouri were debilitated economically by the losses incurred during their removal to Indian Territory in 1833 and 1834. These losses forced them to make compromises with the missionaries and agents, who brought “improvements” such as plows, mills, and oxen. Together the Shawnees and the missionaries hoped to use these tools to increase the number of acres under cultivation and to ensure the tribe’s food supply. The Shawnees’ desperate need for these supplies following removal to Indian Territory allowed the missionaries and agents to use these improvements as a tool to advance Indian assimilation and thus eradicate tribal culture. The missionaries and agents who worked with the Shawnees believed that the tribe would become extinct if they did not give up communal land holding and Shawnee religious practices and become a part of white society.

Most Shawnees disagreed. Although chiefs such as Wapapilethe, Black Hoof, and Chilitica believed in

4. John Perry et al., Shawnee Subagency, to Lewis Cass, March 21, 1834, Letters Received, Office of Indian Affairs, Fort Leavenworth Agency, 1824–1851, Record Group 75, microcopy 234, roll 300, National Archives, Washington, D.C., hereafter cited as Fort Leavenworth Agency.

5. R. David Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 174–83.

cooperation and the modification of their traditional practices through the aid of the United States government, none wanted to completely abandon their culture.<sup>6</sup> After they arrived in Kansas, the Shawnees attempted to recreate the way of life they had followed in Ohio and Missouri. They hoped that the missionaries would assist them in agriculture and in maintaining good relations with the federal government.

Black Hoof's father, also named Black Hoof, had cooperated with Quaker missionary William Kirk in changing his tribe's economy in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Kirk's mission near Wapakoneta, Ohio, operated successfully only for a short time and did not convert large numbers of the tribe to the Quaker faith. Yet some agricultural success was achieved through Kirk's help. The Shawnees at Kirk's mission enjoyed their greatest agricultural success in the years immediately preceding the War of 1812. Approximately five hundred acres of corn, squash, and other vegetables were under cultivation in the spring of 1808.<sup>7</sup>

Proacculturation Shawnees from Ohio also had experienced Baptist missionaries preceding the War of 1812. Stephen Ruddell, formerly a captive of the Shawnees, had been freed and then served as a Baptist missionary to his former captors. Ruddell helped maintain peace between Black Hoof and his rivals, Tecumseh and the Shawnee Prophet, who led factions of the more traditionally oriented Shawnees. Ruddell and Kirk's beneficial assistance prior to the Shawnees' removal from Ohio prompted the Indians to ask for assistance from the Baptists and Quakers after their arrival in Indian Territory.<sup>8</sup>

Shawnee settlements in Cape Girardeau incorporated white agricultural techniques without the immediate aid of missionaries such as Ruddell and Kirk. Chief Wapapilethe of Cape Girardeau ardently pursued peaceful relations with the Americans in his region without the assistance of missionaries. Wapapilethe cooperated with white authorities when

members of his band committed crimes against whites in the area. In one instance he executed a member of his tribe who had murdered a white woman. The man was "shot, killed and decapitated" by Wapapilethe's warriors. They then "brought the head to Wapapilethe who sent it to be placed on a pole where the assassination took place."<sup>9</sup>

Chief Chilitica of Cape Girardeau also maintained friendly relations with Americans in southeastern Missouri to keep the bands he controlled on good terms with neighboring whites. Although squatters began establishing homesteads on Shawnee land, taking as much timber as they could in the process, Chilitica reacted by enlisting the support of many Americans in the region, who petitioned the governor of Missouri in support of his band. The Missourians did not oppose the presence of Chilitica and his band and stated:

He has always sustained a good character, privately and morally strictly honest—almost to a proverb, and industrious in the extreme. Cultivates the soil in the summer extensively—and spends the winter seasons alternately at hunting and taking care of his stock. He is now owner of two hundred head of fine hogs, horses and cattle in proportion.<sup>10</sup>

In spite of the Missourians' petitions, the government removed the Cape Girardeau Shawnees to Indian Territory in November 1831.<sup>11</sup>

The Cape Girardeau Shawnees' removal is exemplary of the removal process in many Shawnee villages. Shawnees who favored adopting aspects of American culture and cooperated in maintaining peace on the frontier could not lawfully defend themselves from being forced off their land. Neighboring whites' petitions to the government and Shawnee cooperation with the authorities in the region did not prevent incoming white settlers from illegally using the Cape Girardeau Shawnees' land. These illegal en-

6. R. David Edmunds, "'A Watchful Safeguard to our Habitations': Black Hoof and the Loyal Shawnees," *Proceedings of the Capital History Society Conference*, 1992 (in press).

7. R. David Edmunds, "'Evil Men Who Add to Our Difficulties': Shawnees, Quakers, and William Wells, 1807–1808," *American Indian Journal of Culture and Research* 14 (Winter 1990): 5–7.

8. R. David Edmunds, "'A Watchful Safeguard to our Habitations,'" 12.

9. *Ibid.*, 2. Robert L. Wilson to Lyman C. Draper, June 28, 1887, Shawnee file, Draper Manuscripts, Great Lakes–Ohio Valley Indian Archives, Glenn E. Black Laboratory of Archeology, Bloomington, Ind., hereafter cited as Draper Manuscripts.

10. Godfrey Lesieur to John Miller, October 6, 1831, U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, St. Louis Superintendency (also known as William Clark Collection), Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society.

11. Chilitica to John Miller, October 1831, *ibid.*

croachments resulted in the forced resettlement of the Missouri Shawnees to Indian Territory.<sup>12</sup>



*An adversary of Tecumseh and the Prophet, Black Hoof believed in cooperation with white society and modification of the Shawnees' traditional lifestyle.*

Difficulties arose between the Ohio and Missouri Shawnees when they arrived in Indian Territory because each faction of the tribe wanted to invite the missionaries whom they had known prior to removal. This situation was further complicated by the two main factions of the tribe having been separated for many years, and many of the Ohio and Missouri Shawnees had little affinity for one another. The largest schism occurred between Tecumseh and Black Hoof during the War of 1812. Tecumseh and the Prophet rejected the United States by allying their faction of the tribe with the British. The elder Black Hoof, the most powerful Ohio chief at the time, made alliances with the United States, which was quickly overtaking the British in the region. American victory strengthened Black Hoof's following and increased the enmity between the Shawnees. Differences such as these resulted in the Shawnees' inability to agree over which missionaries to invite to the territory. As a result, both the Methodists and Baptists arrived in the summer of 1830.<sup>13</sup>

The younger Black Hoof moved to Kansas with John Perry and Cornstalk. These chiefs were part of the pro-American faction in Ohio that had gained power following the British defeat in 1815. Black Hoof and John Perry were willing to cooperate with the government. Following their arrival in Indian Territory, they petitioned their subagent Major John Campbell for the assistance of the Baptist missionaries they had known in Ohio. Stephen Ruddell did not appear, but Isaac McCoy, another prominent Baptist who had worked at Fort Wayne in Indiana and at Carey mission in Michigan, arrived on the Shawnee reservation in August 1830 with plans to establish a mission.<sup>14</sup>

The Shawnees' failure to agree upon one missionary organization created a conflict in July 1830 when the Cape Girardeau chief, Fish, asked Shawnee agent George Vashon to write to "Jesse Greene, presiding

12. Martha B. Caldwell, *Annals of the Shawnee Methodist Mission* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1977), 17.

13. Grant Foreman, *The Last Trek of the Indians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 60.

14. Isaac McCoy, *History of Baptist Indian Missions* (Washington, D.C.: n.p., 1840), 404-5.

elder of the Missouri district of the Methodist Episcopal Church, asking that a Methodist missionary be sent to them."<sup>15</sup> In response, the Methodist missionary society dispatched Thomas Johnson and Alexander McCallister to establish a mission among the Shawnees. Johnson and McCallister did not arrive, however, until November 19, 1830.<sup>16</sup>

Fish's request for a Methodist mission greatly disappointed McCoy, who felt that Johnson and McCallister had cheated him out of a position that belonged solely to the Baptists. McCoy found Fish's small band of forty members appealing because of their desire for assimilation and missionary support. In fact, Fish was white and was active in both Shawnee and American society. McCoy hoped that the Baptist plan of assimilating the Shawnees through emphasizing education and separation from the influence of white civilization could be promoted to the entire tribe through Fish.<sup>17</sup> McCoy mistakenly believed that one chief could unite the entire tribe under the Baptist effort and failed to recognize the many different Shawnee communities that were forced to live together on the reservation.

McCoy was distraught at the prospect of establishing a mission among the Ohio Shawnees. He felt that proacculturation Ohio chiefs such as Cornstalk and William Perry "felt little desire for schools, and still less to hear preaching." He lamented that "I felt a disappointment which I could not remedy." However, lack of cooperation between the Cape Girardeau Shawnees and the Ohio Shawnees did not disturb chiefs Cornstalk and William Perry. Unlike McCoy, the Ohio Shawnees realized that the Missouri and Ohio Shawnees did not make decisions as a unified tribe.<sup>18</sup>

John Campbell helped to quell McCoy's misgivings. Subagent Campbell was aware of the divisions within the tribe and downplayed the Methodists' success with the Cape Girardeau band. In November 1830 when Thomas Johnson arrived at the reservation in response to Fish's request, Campbell informed Johnson that the Baptists already had established a



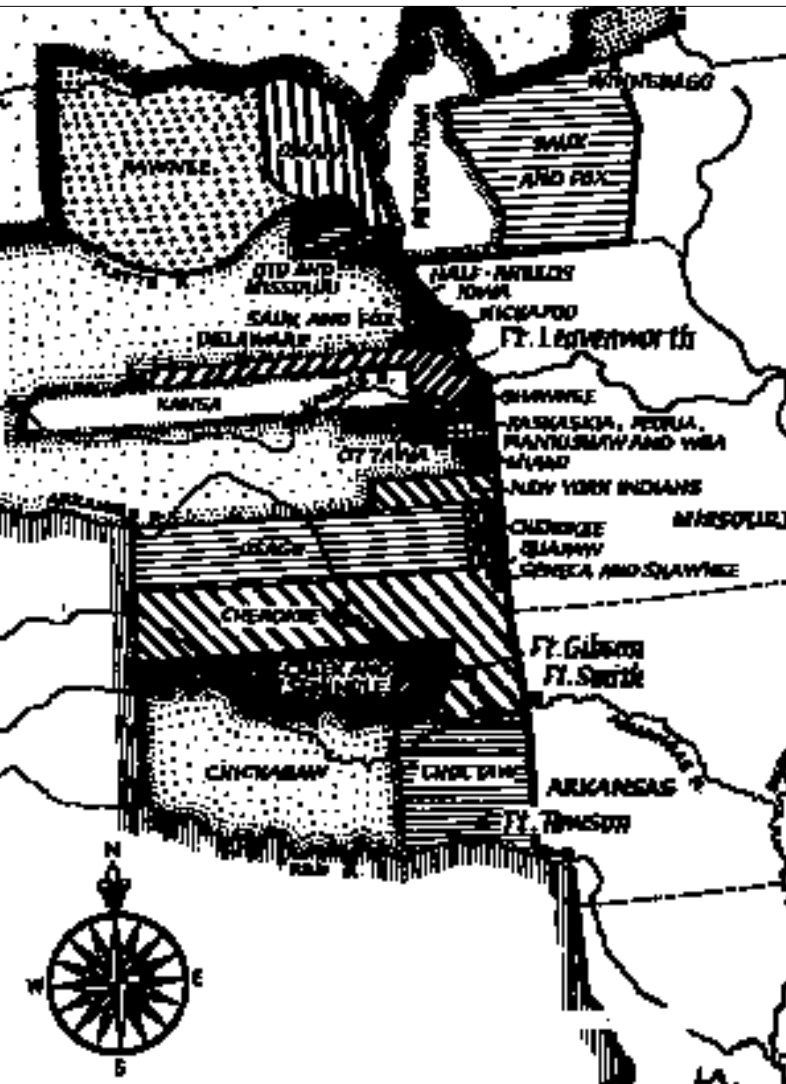
*From 1826 to 1828 the Prophet led the first deputation of the Ohio Shawnees to Kansas. There the tribe's traditional culture was threatened by missionaries and agents who sought Indian assimilation.*

15. R. David Edmunds, "A Watchful Safeguard to our Habitations"; Caldwell, *Annals of the Shawnee Methodist Mission*, 8.

16. Caldwell, *Annals of the Shawnee Methodist Mission*, 9.

17. McCoy, *History of Baptist Indian Missions*, 406; Caldwell, *Annals of the Shawnee Methodist Mission*, 15.

18. McCoy, *History of Baptist Indian Missions*, 405.



"The Permanent Indian Frontier in 1840." From Ralph K. Andrist, *The Long Death: The Last Days of the Plains Indians*.

mission and that the Shawnees did not need another one. But Johnson disregarded Campbell, met with Fish, and established the Methodist mission near present-day Turner in Wyandotte County.<sup>19</sup> The Shawnee Baptist mission was in present-day Mission, Kansas, approximately three miles west of the Kansas–Missouri border.

In May 1833 enmity between Johnson and Campbell reached its apex when Johnson requested that General William Clark, superintendent of Indian Affairs for the St. Louis Superintendency, remove Campbell from office. Johnson accused Campbell of habitual drunkenness and of telling the Shawnees not to attend school. Campbell defended himself by explaining that when some of the Ohio Shawnees requested advice upon enrolling their children in school, he had recommended the Baptist institution. In his reply to Clark's inquiry he admitted, "If this is a crime, I am guilty."<sup>20</sup>

The Ohio Shawnees wrote a letter to Clark in Campbell's defense. They charged that Johnson was trying to establish the Methodists among their band by attempting to remove Campbell. Chiefs John Perry and Cornstalk clearly wished to remain autonomous from the Methodists' influence. Perry and other Ohio chiefs stated:

This man Johnston [*sic*] speaks bad of all our friends the Missionaries and he meddles himself too much about our business. he dont want anybody to have schools but himself amongst all our brothers the redskins. This we dont like. We gave him leave to have a school for our friend Fish, but we dont want him to meddle himself with our people. Let him stay with Fishes party and do good if he can for them. We are satisfied. . . . Our father Clark this man Johnston cultivates too much of our land and builds to many houses and cuts too much of our timber.<sup>21</sup>

Other whites in the area, such as Robert Johnson, came to Campbell's defense, stating that "[Thomas]

19. Ibid, 404; Robert Johnson to John Ruland, June 19, 1833, Fort Leavenworth Agency; Caldwell, *Annals of the Shawnee Methodist Mission*, 12.

20. John Campbell, Shawnee Subagency, to William Clark, May 26, 1833, Fort Leavenworth Agency.

21. John Perry, et al., Shawnee Subagency, to William Clark, June 5, 1833, *ibid*.

Johnson charges his ill success with these chiefs and their bands to the interference of Campbell, but I have always considered this to be unjust.”<sup>22</sup>

In spite of the many testimonials in Campbell’s defense, his open alliance with the Baptists gave Thomas Johnson the perfect opportunity to challenge the subagent’s power. Clark was frustrated with the inefficiency of the subagents under his jurisdiction. Campbell’s immediate superior, Richard Cummins, who served as the agent for the Fort Leavenworth Agency, also was unhappy with Campbell’s performance, stating that “my sub-agent is an old man, very ineffective [and] not able to render much assistance.”<sup>23</sup> Johnson’s indictment of Campbell solicited an immediate response from Campbell’s superiors. As a result, Johnson eliminated a strategic Baptist advantage at the Shawnee agency when Campbell was removed from his position in July 1833. Captain Natcoming of the Ohio Shawnees was bewildered and asked Campbell “why the two missions were opposed to each other . . . because they were all one people.”<sup>24</sup>

Part of the Ohio Shawnees’ opposition to Johnson stemmed from his plan for assimilating the Shawnees into American society. Johnson believed that “those who have yielded to the salutary influence of the christian religion are always found first, in opening farms, raising stock, accumulating property and adopting the habits of civilized life.”<sup>25</sup> Yet difficulties arose in this plan when the Methodists used resources on the Shawnee reservation, such as timber, for personal purposes. For the Methodists, opening farms involved building fences, mills, and other industrial features. Shawnee children’s labor was essential to supposed improvements such as these on the reservation. The Shawnees approved of this assistance but were angered by the Methodists’ use of their property.

The Methodists’ heavy emphasis on agriculture, however, coincided with the tribe’s rationale for en-

listing missionary support in the summer of 1830. Upon arriving on the Shawnee reservation, McCoy found that “few were either so comfortably or so decently clothed as to make it pleasant for them to attend school.” The Methodists also were aware of these problems, and they clothed and fed many of the Shawnees who were in regular attendance at their mission. The Baptist operation was chronically plagued by underfunding, and they could not afford to compete with the Methodists.<sup>26</sup>

The Methodists’ emphasis on agriculture was reinforced by training in the “industrial arts” for men, and “the business of the house” for women. Of the six men and women employed at the Methodist mission in the summer of 1833, only one man, the Reverend E.T. Peery, was in charge of instructing the Shawnees at the Methodist school. Two men and two women, including Thomas Johnson’s wife, Sarah, were in charge of training the Shawnee boys and girls in labor common to their gender-related fields. All children worked at the mission. By the summer of 1833, thirty-eight acres of land were under cultivation, largely through the efforts of the children.<sup>27</sup> In exchange for their labor, the Methodists supplied them with a new home, separate from their families.

Manual labor boarding schools were essential to the Methodists’ missionary operation. They believed that boarding schools were an effective means of “creating the self respect which is of so much importance in civilized life.” Boarding schools were used to “civilize” the Shawnees by destroying tribal bonds. Centralized missions disrupted communal farming and tribal affiliation by eradicating family ties. The Shawnee children attended class early in the morning and evening, interspersed by labor for the mission throughout the morning and afternoon. The Methodists hoped that the Shawnees would assimilate into American society by owning their land independently “as an encouragement to enterprise” following their education at the school.<sup>28</sup>

22. Robert Johnson to John Ruland, June 19, 1833, *ibid.*

23. William Clark to Elbert Herring, April 29, 1833, St. Louis Superintendency, Schools, 1824–1873, RG 75, microcopy 234, roll 776, National Archives, hereafter cited as Schools, 1824–1873; Richard W. Cummins, Shawnee Subagency, to Herring, April 9, 1833, Fort Leavenworth Agency.

24. John Campbell, Shawnee Subagency, to William Clark, May 26, 1833, Fort Leavenworth Agency.

25. Thomas Johnson to Secretary of War, September 19, 1834, Schools, 1824–1873.

26. McCoy, *History of Baptist Indian Missions*, 490; Thomas Johnson to Secretary of War, September 19, 1834, Schools, 1824–1873.

27. Thomas Johnson to Elbert Herring, August 16, 1833, Shawnee Mission School Report, *ibid.*

28. Joshua Soule, Missouri Conference, to John McLean, February 3, 1834, *ibid.*





*Pah-te-coo-saw led a community west of the Mississippi that became known as the Absentee Shawnees because of their refusal to remove to the Kansas reservation. His people traveled southward into Mexican Territory to avoid forced removal.*

The manual labor school could not fully erase the close bonds between Shawnee families. The Methodists attempted to remedy this by preaching to the parents. They realized that the success of their

schools has been in exact proportion to the influence of the Gospel upon the hearts of the parents of the children, and in no instance have we been able to succeed in bringing under a regular course of instruction, where the influence of the Christian religion was not previously felt by the parent or guardian of that child.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the fact that they emphasized the assimilation of the Shawnee children, the Methodists recognized that a lasting influence could not be attained without also converting and assimilating Shawnee adults.

Thomas Johnson augmented the Methodist efforts at the manual labor school through preaching and other religious festivals such as camp meetings. He achieved some initial success by delivering a sermon on the creation that adhered to several basic points of the Shawnees' creation beliefs. Their familiarity with the sermon's message pleased the Shawnees in council; they "later agreed that the preacher knew just what they did, only better." Johnson realized that he could gain recognition from the tribe through the sermon because "the Shawnees had a tradition of the creation that in all essential points agrees substantially with the Bible account."<sup>30</sup>

Johnson and the Methodist missionaries also used their evangelism to appeal to the Shawnees. Methodist camp meetings were strikingly similar in practice to the Shawnees' Green Corn Festival and the feast for "Our Grandmother." During the Green Corn Festival "the chief would sit in the center of a circle and make music" while "the men and women would dance" around the chief.<sup>31</sup> The fervent activity of the festival resembled the Methodist camp meeting in which people gathered for many nights, camping in a circle around a central preaching site. The camp meeting, according to Russell E. Richey, "was a

29. Thomas Johnson to Secretary of War, September 19, 1834, *ibid.*

30. Joab Spencer, "A Short History of the Shawnee Methodist Mission," *Annals of Kansas City* (Kansas City: Missouri Valley Historical Society, 1921-1924), 1: 449.

31. Robert L. Wilson to Lyman C. Draper, June 28, 1887, Draper Manuscripts.

historical drama, a play that the Methodists performed for themselves and the world, a staging of their own history by which they drew upon and shared what had created them."<sup>32</sup> The evangelical nature of the Methodist religion resembled many aspects of Shawnee religion and was an avenue through which the Methodists initiated their involvement with the tribe.

That the Shawnees were racially different from the Methodists who worked among them did not inhibit the Shawnees' chances of becoming Americanized. In 1842 J.C. Berryman, who served as superintendent of the Methodist manual labor school and worked among the Shawnees and the Kickapoos, reported that "From experiments already made, we are fully satisfied that there is no essential difference between white and red children; the difference is all in circumstance."<sup>33</sup>

Because the Methodists believed that the Shawnees were capable of becoming the equals of whites, they did not believe that it was necessary for them to totally acquiesce to Shawnee culture. Johnson believed that the best way to "find access to those who are capable of understanding the nature and enjoying the influence of our holy religion" was through first improving the economic situation of the Shawnees, then educating them as soon as possible in the English language.<sup>34</sup> In fact, as soon as a sizeable congregation of Shawnees began to regularly attend the Methodist mission, compromises between the two cultures began to decrease. Johnson felt that the Methodists' "grand object was to bring the Shawnees to a correct understanding of our language, and enable them to speak it fluently."<sup>35</sup>

The Methodists' success among Fish's band of Cape Girardeau Shawnees did not alleviate the ongoing dispute between Johnson and the Ohio Shawnees. John Perry, Cornstalk, and other Ohio chiefs contended that Johnson used Shawnee



*Lay-law-she-kaw worked with Pah-te-coo-saw to create a separate reservation for the Absentee Shawnees. They argued that "there [was] now but little feeling of blood & friendship" between the Missouri and Ohio Shawnees.*

32. Russell E. Richey, *Early American Methodism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 24.

33. Quoted in J.J. Lutz, "The Methodist Missions Among the Indian Tribes in Kansas," *Kansas Historical Collections, 1905-1906* 9 (Topeka: State Printing Office, 1906): 176.

34. "Letters of Rev. Thomas Johnson," *Christian Advocate Journal and Zion's Herald* 6 (February 10, 1832): 94.

35. Thomas Johnson to Secretary of War, September 19, 1834, *Schools, 1824-1873*.



*Prominent Baptist missionary Isaac McCoy arrived at the Shawnee reservation in Kansas in August 1830. His plan was to create a stable environment for the Shawnees, through education and religious teaching, that gradually would evolve into a model of Christian civilization.*

resources, such as timber, without the approval of the entire tribe. One of the essential reasons for Johnson's use of Shawnee resources was not simply greed, however, but a desire to be self-sufficient. The meager funds allotted to their people through the educational clauses of the Shawnee treaties were not enough to sustain the missionaries, laborers, and the many other improvements of the Methodist operation. The Missouri conference that supported them was extremely small, numbering approximately thirty members in the early 1830s.<sup>36</sup> As a result, the Methodists utilized parts of the reservation for their own needs and not for the benefit of the Shawnees.

The Methodists' use of the tribes' resources greatly angered the Ohio Shawnees. The tribe viewed Methodist benefit from Shawnee land and labor as callous and greedy during the summer of 1833 because of a smallpox epidemic that forced many Shawnees to abandon their farms and villages. Their struggle to survive in Indian Territory was juxtaposed with the Methodist operation, which was able to continue because of Shawnee labor and reservation resources. Shawnee animosity intensified when promised treaty provisions did not arrive. The Shawnees also were angered by the Methodists' unwillingness to assist them if they did not conform to the mission's rules.<sup>37</sup>

The Ohio Shawnees' animosity toward the Methodists did not extend to the Baptist operation. The Baptists' emphasis on educating the Shawnees in their own villages was part of an overall plan to create a stable environment for the Shawnees that gradually would evolve into a self-sufficient model of Christian civilization. The Baptists hoped to catalyze this design through the "improvement of their minds and manners," the effect of the "doctrines of religion," and the "love of virtue." The Baptists' emphasis on Christian teaching relegated farming to a minor aspect of the overall Baptist operation, and therefore, reservation labor and resources were not a significant part of Baptist-Shawnee relations.<sup>38</sup>

36. Quoted in Lutz, "The Methodist Missions Among the Indian Tribes in Kansas," 160–61.

37. Thomas Johnson to Elbert Herring, August 16, 1833, Shawnee Agency School Report, Schools, 1824–1873; Daniel Cobb, Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends, to Lewis Cass, November 27, 1833, Fort Leavenworth Agency.

38. Isaac McCoy to Brother, November 18, 1833; McCoy to Gentlemen, October 15, 1832, Isaac McCoy Collection, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society.

The Baptists wanted every preacher in their employ to be “free as sound reason will make him to preach and teach.” Unlike the Methodists’ continual requests for laborers such as smiths and farm workers, the Baptists lamented the lack of missionaries and teachers. Robert Simerwell, a missionary who worked closely with McCoy on the Shawnee reservation, wrote: “How hard my dear brother that among the many thousands of Baptists in our United States, all professing an interest in the cause of Christ, yet not a sufficient number found to engage in their cause.”<sup>39</sup>

The Baptist missionaries who were employed at the Shawnee reservation worked both in the separate Shawnee villages and at the central mission. The Baptists preferred that their students continue to live with their parents. Boarding many children at the mission was expensive and made the missionaries “so entangled in secular concerns and so much engaged in corporeal labor that it is impossible to attend to true missionary labor.” Village schools also allowed the Baptists to impart instruction to both children and parents and to train native teachers to help the Shawnees “prosecute their studies.”<sup>40</sup>

The tools utilized by the Baptists for importing American culture to the Shawnees were books and other objects that the tribe would use to assimilate themselves through their own free will. The Baptists also wanted a printing press to print hymns and other religious books for the Shawnees and to publish “a weekly or semi-monthly periodical devoted chiefly to the promotion of the interests of the Indians.”<sup>41</sup> After repeated requests to the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, they finally received a printing press in March 1834. Jotham Meeker served as printer and immediately began to translate the Shawnee language into print using a unique phonetic system he devised. McCoy wrote that “upon the new system, every uncompounded sound which can be distinguished by the ear is indicated by a character.”<sup>42</sup>

39. L. Bolles to Isaac McCoy, January 3, 1833, *ibid*; Robert Simerwell to G.B. Davis, April 25, 1831, Robert Simerwell Collection, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society.

40. L. Bolles to Robert Simerwell, March 29, 1831, Simerwell Collection; Johnston Lykins to Elbert Herring, September 21, 1834, Schools, 1824–1873.

41. Charles E. Wilson to Isaac McCoy, May 15, 1832; McCoy to Brother Stephen, n.d., McCoy Collection.

42. McCoy, *History of Baptist Indian Missions*, 473.

The printing press was well received by a small portion of the tribe. The publication of a Shawnee newspaper, the *Shawnee Sun*, began, and the press also became a popular item among whites in Indian Territory.<sup>43</sup> Ironically, the press also increased the rivalry and controversy between the Baptists and Methodists. The Methodists became alarmed at the possibility of increased Baptist success among the Shawnees through the use of the press. As a result, Johnson visited Meeker in the summer of 1834, inquiring about the possibility of using the press to publish some Methodist hymns in the Shawnee language.<sup>44</sup>

Johnson realized that he had to adapt to the press, and he consented to teach in the Shawnee language in order to prevent the Baptists from gaining in popularity over his mission. The Baptists consented grudgingly and assisted Johnson in printing tracts for his operation. McCoy viewed the Methodists’ interest in the printing press with skepticism, stating that “they had not done so much from inclination, as from the necessity of gratifying a popular desire among the Shawanoes.”<sup>45</sup> Preventing the Methodists from utilizing the press would have been a critical violation of protocol between the missions. Such an open display of enmity would undercut the benevolent purposes of the missions and make them vulnerable to renewed criticism from the Shawnee tribe itself, which already was aware of the animosity between McCoy and Johnson.

The Shawnees’ frustration with the missionaries also was aggravated by the actions of the agents on the reservation. One problem involved the location of a mill site that the Shawnees had been promised by the treaty of August 8, 1831. Fort Leavenworth agent Richard Cummins believed that the tribe’s choice for a mill site was on a creek that did not have a sufficient supply of water. When funding for the mill finally arrived in the fall of 1834, Cummins ignored the Shawnees’ choice of location and left the final decision to Superintendent William Clark. Cummins challenged the tribal leaders in spite of the Shawnees’ “full confidence in their own judge-

43. *Ibid.*, 486; Caldwell, *Annals of the Shawnee Methodist Mission*, 19.

44. *Ibid.*, 18.

45. Douglas C. McMurtrie and Albert H. Allen, *Jotham Meeker: Pioneer Printer of Kansas* (Chicago: Eyncourt Press, 1930), 29.



*Methodist missionary Thomas Johnson, who arrived in Kansas in November 1830, strongly believed in assimilating the Shawnees into American society. His plan involved religious preaching, agricultural improvements, and creating boarding schools which he believed would “civilize” the Shawnees by destroying tribal bonds.*

ment” and his admission that the Shawnees “will be very much displeased if their wishes are not complied with.”<sup>46</sup>

Cummins’ refusal to build the mill on the Shawnees’ selected site resulted in an eruption of protest. By the summer of 1834 the Shawnees still were unable to plant most of their crops due to the lack of promised treaty provisions. Plows and other farm implements had not arrived. Visiting Quakers had protested the tribe’s condition to the government to no avail in the summer of 1834. Cummins also was aware of the situation, writing to Secretary of War Elbert Herring that the Shawnees had “no money to purchase” and were “scarce of provisions,—they said to me surely Government will furnish us with provisions until we receive our tools.”<sup>47</sup>

In October 1834 the Shawnees gathered in council to discuss what action should be taken. They requested of their new subagent Marston Clark that “all the Indians and missionaries settled on their land” be removed. The Shawnees intended to take back control of their tribe and their reservation. The majority directed their animosity at Richard Cummins who, they stated, “was not to be trusted, or else why dont they [the United States] bring us our money.” The Shawnees requested that the missionaries and all other Indians also be removed from the reservation, clearly indicating they wanted to regain complete control of the tribe and the land they had treated for.<sup>48</sup>

The Shawnees needed the money because of the debts they had incurred to men such as Joseph Parks who had financed the removal of the Hog Creek band of the Shawnees and who acted as an interpreter for the tribe. Many of the Shawnees’ urgent requests for provisions in the summer of 1833 consistently included mention of the debt to Parks, who was clamoring for his money.<sup>49</sup> The Shawnees stated:

46. Richard W. Cummins to Elbert Herring, June 30, 1834; William Clark, St. Louis Superintendency, to Herring, January 30, 1834; Cummins to Clark, April 20, 1834; John Ruland to Herring, November 25, 1834, Fort Leavenworth Agency.

47. John Perry et al., to William Clark, November 19, 1833; Daniel Cobb to Lewis Cass, November 27, 1833; Richard W. Cummins to Elbert Herring, June 30, 1834, *ibid.*

48. Marston G. Clark, Shawnee Subagency, to William Clark, October 7, 1834, *ibid.*

49. John Perry et al., to William Clark, February 7, 1835, *ibid.*

Before we left our country the commissioners told us we would get a great deal of money when we get here, but we have been here 3 years and have not got it yet, we were to get \$2000 yearly for 15 years from the year 1831—all along we expected to receive \$9000—we looked for that amount much. We wish to know what became of that money.<sup>50</sup>

The legality of the Shawnees' claims did not improve their chances of having their treaty recognized. The missionaries and agents controlled the flow of information in and out of their reservation. Subagent Marston Clark and Isaac McCoy downplayed both the sincerity of the Shawnees' demands and the number of those who had made them. McCoy wrote to Herring:

I feel confident that this matter has not originated among the Indians. I believe that, excepting the party of the Shawanoe prophet, the dissatisfaction is limited to some six or eight persons, and even these I believe have been prompted by white men to say. I assure you, sir, that the operations of these missions at present, both in matters of religion and education are uncommonly auspicious.<sup>51</sup>

The letter convinced Herring that the Shawnees' desire to remove all non-Shawnees from their reservation was not important. In fact, McCoy manipulated the event so well that Herring reassured McCoy that "The Department has felt too warm an interest and taken too active a part in the missionary cause to abandon it now." Herring's letter ended the discussion over the Shawnees' request and established the missionaries' complete control over the tribe's relations with the government.<sup>52</sup>

Neither the Baptist nor the Methodist mission delivered the aid that the Shawnees had expected. The

Baptists offered Christian education, not the food, clothing, and agricultural assistance the tribe so badly needed. Although the Baptists made a concerted effort to teach the Shawnees in their native tongue and pressured the federal government for improvements on their behalf, the tribe desperately required immediate assistance for survival in Indian Territory. Benevolent actions such as vaccination drives spearheaded by Baptist preacher Johnston Lykins were appreciated by the Shawnees but still did not solve their problems.<sup>53</sup>

The Methodists also did not meet with the approval of a large majority of Shawnees. The mission operated for the benefit of only those Shawnees who were willing to give up their tribal affiliation. Members who wished to retain their tribal affiliation were expected to overlook the Methodist missionaries' continual destruction of the valuable timber that grew sparsely throughout the Kansas grasslands on which the Shawnee reservation was located.<sup>54</sup>

Shawnee interaction with the missionaries and agents who worked with them in 1833 and 1834 was indicative of the tribe's uncertainty of how adaptations to American culture should proceed. The Shawnees realized that without assistance, survival in their changed world would be impossible. But they did not want such help if it required them to completely abandon their culture. At the same time, the Americans felt that integration into the dominant society was essential to the tribe's survival. The conflict of cultures between the Shawnees and the missionaries and agents continued and, not surprisingly, was not resolved in the confrontation of the winter of 1834. The Shawnees continued to struggle for their autonomy and the survival of their culture despite Euro-American efforts to control the tribe and supplant its beliefs.



50. "Speech of Black Hoof after the Explanation of the Act Regulating Intercourse," 1834, Shawnee Subagency, *ibid.*

51. Isaac McCoy to Elbert Herring, January 19, 1835, McCoy Collection.

52. Elbert Herring to Isaac McCoy, February 18, 1835, *ibid.*

53. McCoy, *History of Baptist Indian Missions*, 443.

54. Thomas Johnson to Secretary of War, September 19, 1834, Schools, 1824–1873.