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SPALDING, Arminta Scott, 1921-
CYRUS KINGSBURY: MISSIONARY TO THE CHOCTAWS.

The University of Oklahoma, Ph.D., 1975
History of Science

Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

CYRUS KINGSBURY: MISSIONARY TO THE CHOCTAWS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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Norman, Oklahoma

1974

CYRUS KINGSBURY: MISSIONARY TO THE CHOCTAWS

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PREFACE

This is the story of the impact of Cyrus Kingsbury and the Choctaw Mission schools on the Choctaw Indians. Seeds sown by dedicated missionaries were nourished in the minds of the Choctaw people and matured into a harvest of educated leaders and citizens. The principles learned in these schools became the fundamental components of the social, political and economic institutions of the Choctaw Nation and the State of Oklahoma.

Today, Native Americans comprise more than two hundred fifty tribes--each with its own language, religion, customs and goals. Some desire to remain independent nations separated from the society around them and live by their "old ways." Others seek out the best from the "two worlds" and send their young people to the universities and cities to gain skills and knowledge which they take back to their reservations and people. Still others join the mainstream of a competitive and dominant society through education and training without sacrificing their their Indianness. The Five Civilized Tribes chose the latter path.

I first became interested in the Choctaws while writing a seminar paper in Western history under Dr. James Nichols at Stephen F. Austin State University. My subject was the Natchez Trace, a trail running through Choctaw country in Mississippi. My interest in

this area culminated into a master's thesis, "The Natchez Trace Parkway."

The more I learned about these extraordinary people and their quest for knowledge, the more I realized the important role played by the missionaries and teachers in guiding them into the fulfillment of their goal of coping with an Anglo-American dominated society. The story can best be summed up in the life of Cyrus Kingsbury, the "Father of the Choctaw Missions." He was the first missionary to answer the Choctaws' plea for education and knowledge of the "Good Book" in Mississippi in 1818. He removed with them to Indian Territory and served them until his death in 1870 which ended fifty-two years of selfless service.

At this point in time when much is written and said accusing missionaries and Christianity of contributing to the abuses suffered by the Native Americans through their relation with the government and the dominant society, I feel this story needs to be told. Cyrus Kingsbury and the missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions came to the Choctaws at their invitation at a time when their culture was fading. They devoted their lives, tirelessly and sacrificially, under extreme hardships and with no personal gain to themselves. The missionaries were motivated by only one objective--what they believed to be the ultimate good and welfare of the Choctaw people. This study is an attempt to show that they did not destroy and rob the Choctaws of their cultural heritage and values, but instead, enhanced and enriched their lives.

For the sake of understanding, it is necessary to define a few terms used throughout this study, such as "civilization" or "civilized,"

"progress," "heathen" and "Christianity." Today, one often hears a Native American say that his ancestors had Christianity long before the appearance of the Christian white-man on this continent. For the purpose of this work, "Christian" is a term used to denote one who believes in Jesus Christ. In this context, Native Americans did not have "Christianity" although they had a belief in a Supreme Being. Which brings us to the term "heathen," which was used by early 18th and 19th century Christians to describe non-believers or non-Christians in the same manner that Gentile signifies non-Jewish. "Civilized," "Civilization" and "Progress" were terms used by government leaders for the want of better terms to indicate a goal and a state of progression to acceptance of the economic, cultural and moral standards and customs of the dominant society. This is not to say that a minority culture should be "forced" to submit to the larger one and that in doing so, it would be necessarily an improvement, but these definitions are an attempt to explain terms as used in the milieu of this study. No term or word used in this study is meant to be degrading or demeaning to the values held sacred to Native American people--either directly or by inference.

My search for materials led me to Harvard University where I found an abundance of primary sources, letters of the missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. I found hundreds of letters, reports and manuscripts written by Cyrus Kingsbury and other missionaries and teachers to the American Board. Here was the history of the Choctaw Missions from the "felling of the first tree" in August, 1818 to the final separation of the missionaries from the A.B.C.F.M. in July of 1859. Letters from Kingsbury disclosed insights

on the nature of the Choctaws and the relationship of the United States government with them, and revealed the true character of Kingsbury--his "unfeigned love" and concern for the Choctaws and their welfare. Furthermore, the manuscripts contained definitive accounts of the building and operations of the missions schools, the curriculum and all phases of the work. I am particularly grateful to Carolyn E. Jakeman, Assistant Librarian for Reference for Houghton Library of Harvard University, for assisting me in collecting this rich primary source from which the bulk of this work is derived.

My appreciation for the material relating to the study of Cyrus Kingsbury and the Choctaw Missions after their separation from the A.B.C.F.M. until Kingsbury's death (1859-1870) goes to the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Gerald W. Gillette, Research Historian and Frederick Scholom, Records Manager; the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina, Mrs. M. N. Lane Librarian, and Microcopy from the Presbyterian Historical Society at Tulsa University, Sue Aikens, Librarian. My special appreciation to Mrs. Lane for researching and microfilming extra data pertaining to Kingsbury and the missions from the Foundation.

Before leaving Philadelphia, I visited the American Philosophical Society Library where Murphy D. Smith, Assistant Librarian, pointed me to a few select books and manuscripts on the Choctaw Indians.

Washington, D.C., proved to be another area rich in source materials. There I spent many hours and days reading microfilm copy of Letters to and from the Secretary of War to the Choctaw Missions. My thanks go to Mr. Kvasnicka and to Milton Ream, a former classmate in

the doctoral program at the University of Oklahoma, who went "beyond the call of duty" in assisting me. Other libraries in Washington containing interesting materials were the Library of Congress Manuscript Division, the Indian Office Library of the United States Department of Interior and the National Anthropological Archives of the Smithsonian Institution, where Mrs. Margeret C. Blaker, Archivist, directed me to the Swanton Manuscripts--a valuable aid in writing the second chapter on legends and customs of the Choctaws. I am grateful to Congressman Tom Steed for providing me access to the government archives.

Next in value as primary source material were the Sue McBeth Papers in the Indian Archives of the Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, where Mrs. Rella Looney directed me to Cyrus Kingsbury's autobiography. At the Oklahoma Historical Society, I am especially grateful to Muriel Wright, granddaughter of Allen Wright and editor of the Chronicles of Oklahoma, who encouraged me in long interviews where she shared her vast knowledge of the Choctaw Indians and missionaries and invaluable material from her own manuscript collection.

Oklahoma was a center of much of my research. In Tulsa, I not only found microfilm copies of Presbyterian Mission letters at Tulsa University, but also the Cyrus Byington Letters at the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art.

In Eastern Oklahoma I visited the Museum of the Five Civilized Tribes at Muskogee and the area office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Bill Shipley, Adult Education Officer, and others brought me up to date on government programs in education to the Choctaws. Southeastern State College, Durant, Oklahoma, provided additional information on the

current Choctaw bilingual program directed by T. D. Nicklas. The American Indian Institute under the direction of Boyce Timmons, University of Oklahoma, supplied further information on programs for the Choctaw Indians today.

The University of Oklahoma, especially the Western History Collection, provided a large part of my secondary and manuscript materials. Curator Jack Haley and June Witt cheerfully directed my way through the Manuscript Division and Alice Timmons, Research Librarian of the Phillips Collection, tirelessly guided me through books, periodicals, reports, journals and bibliographies and unearthed rare old books which added indispensible information. I cannot express too much appreciation to Alice, who became a personal friend and a never-failing source of encouragement and inspiration when I needed it most. Through Boyce Timmons I received the Doris Duke American Indian Research Grant which made my research trip to the Northeast possible. My sincere thanks to Boyce and Alice Timmons.

I am also indebted to the Graduate School of the University of Oklahoma for a grant enabling me to conclude my research in Mississippi where my story began. The archivists of the Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi, and Natchez Trace Parkway Headquarters, Tupelo, Mississippi, were most helpful.

My very special indebtedness and appreciation to my graduate reading committee: Dr. Duane H. D. Roller, McCasland Professor of History; Dr. William H. Maehl, Jr., Professor of History; Dr. Norman L. Crockett, Associate Professor of History and Dr. David W. Levy, Associate Professor of History; and especially to Dr. Arrell M. Gibson, George Lynn Cross

Research Professor of History at the University of Oklahoma, for his encouragement and counsel throughout my whole endeavor and for his patience and skill in correcting my manuscript.

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CYRUS KINGSBURY: MISSIONARY TO THE CHOCTAWS

CHAPTER I

GENESIS OF CHOCTAW MISSIONS

In the Old Boggy Depot cemetery, Atoka County, Oklahoma, is a marble stone bearing this inscription: "C. Kingsbury, D. D., died June 27, 1870. Aged 83 yrs., 7 mo., 4 ds. 'Live for Christ' was his Living and Dying theme."[1] This marker at the grave of the Reverend Cyrus Kingsbury, "Father of the Missions," is a silent tribute to a life devoted to establishing mission schools and churches among the Choctaws.

Cyrus Kingsbury was born in Alstead, New Hampshire, on November 22, 1786.[2] His mother died when he was seven days old and he was a "feeble, sickly infant" no one expected to live.[3] When he was only seven weeks old, his father took him to Worcester, Massachusetts, to live with his uncle and aunt. His attention was first drawn to religious matters during a visit by his maternal grandfather who requested him to read the twenty-third Psalm.

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[1]Miscellaneous Manuscripts, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

[2]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 4.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 1.

When only thirteen or fourteen years old, Kingsbury lived with Mr. and Mrs. Aaron White of Boyleston, Massachusetts, for a year working as a clerk in their store and tavern. Next, he moved to Medway, Massachusetts, to become an apprentice in the cabinet and chair business under Major Luther Metcalf. There he attended the preaching of the Reverend David Sanford, and became impressed with religion. His conviction was deepened by an incident in which he was spared from death in a scythe accident. He joined the church and shortly afterwards entered the ministry as his life's work.[4]

In the autumn of 1808, Cyrus Kingsbury entered Brown University in Providence, after completing preparatory studies at Northbridge, Worcester County, Masachusetts. At the end of four years, he received the bachelor of arts degree, and was awarded the valedictory of his class. Turning his mind towards a missionary life, he soon entered Andover Theological Seminary. He taught school and held other jobs to pay his educational expenses, and he underwent rigorous exercise to prepare himself to endure the labors and hardships of a missionary life.[5]

Toward the end of his residence at Andover, he and Samuel J. Mills spent much time discussing whether they would minister to Indians or Africans, particularly slaves. They concluded that Mills should work with Africans and Kingsbury should direct his attention to Indians. On September 29, 1815, Cyrus Kingsbury was ordained by the Association of Congregational ministers at Ipswich, Massachusetts, and soon after was commissioned by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions

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[4]*Ibid.*, p. 3.

[5]*Ibid.*

as a missionary to the Indians of the Southwest. "After preaching for a brief period to vacant congregations in Massachusetts & New Hampshire," he left in February, 1816, for his field of missionary labor--first among the Cherokees and then to the Choctaws.[6]

The idea of mission schools to the Indians had its origin in the "haystack prayer meeting" of three students at Williams College in New England in 1806. This led to the organization in 1810 of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, a non-denominational agency supported by members of the Congregational and Presbyterian churches of New England and New York.[7] Four students from Andover Theological Seminary, Adoniram Judson, Jr., Samuel Nott, Jr., Samuel J. Mills and Samuel Newell, some of whom had been students at Williams, presented a brief petition to the assembled Congregational clergy in Bradford, Massachusetts, on the duty and importance of personally attempting a mission to the "heathen."[8] The report was adopted unanimously by the General Association. Nine members of the American Board--five from Massachusetts and four from Connecticut--were selected.[9]

Although the divinity school at Andover was scarcely three years old when it adopted missionary goals, Judson, Nott, Mills and Newall all belonged to a secret fraternity called the "Brethren," whose members had

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[6] Ibid., p. 6.

[7] Ibid.

[8] History of American Missions to the Heathen, From Their Commencement to the Present Time (Worcester: Spooner & Howland, 1840), pp. 28-30. "Heathen" was a term used to denote non-Christian.

[9] Clifton J. Phillips, "Protestant America and the Pagan World: The First Half Century of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1810-1860" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1954), p. 22.

pledged themselves to work in foreign mission fields. This secret society continued at Andover until after 1870 and furnished over two hundred candidates to the American Board. Mission board directors were suspicious of city-bred candidates and the majority of these missionaries came from the villages and rural areas of New England.[10]

All four of the original subscribers to the Bradford memorial had graduated from different colleges, but shared in the common evangelical movement and took part in the revivals which swept the colleges at that time.[11] Samuel Mills was an enthusiastic leader of the Brethren in spite of "an awkward figure and ungainly manners, and an unelastic and croaking sort of voice."[12] He formed another group at Andover called the Society of Inquiry which was a public fraternity that served as a façade for much of the secret work of the other organization. Both societies were a powerful force in the early missionary endeavors of the American Board.[13] The ferment of missionary enthusiasm in New England, which captivated Kingsbury, spread slowly westward. Students at Brown, Williams, Yale, Amherst and Dartmouth felt a special responsibility to go to the "gentile."

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was primarily concerned with missions overseas, but by late 1815, the Board decided to expand the work to the "Pagan Aborigines." Cyrus Kingsbury, who was employed under a temporary commission from the Connecticut

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[10] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

Missionary Society in the state of Tennessee, was directed to proceed as soon as convenient into the Cherokee country, "for the purpose of making the requisite preparations for the establishment there of a mission, and of mission schools. . . ."[14] The American Board was influenced, perhaps, by a speech Kingsbury had delivered before the Andover Theological Seminary in Massachusetts, on August 15, 1815, in which he suggested that:

> To dispel this moral darkness & cruel superstition requires only the light of the gospel. And on which way can this be so effectually communicated, as by sending missionaries to establish schools among them, where the minds of children & youth would be early impressed, with correct religious & moral instruction, & where they would be gradually formed to habits of sober industry. In these schools they would acquire a knowledge of the English language, which would at once place in their hands not only the Bible, but other valuable books. The industrious habits which they would require would also be of a vast importance to their religious improvement.[15]

In February, 1816, Kingsbury left for Washington to call on the Secretary of War, William H. Crawford of Georgia. After Crawford pledged the favor of the government and "such aid from time to time as circumstances and success of the mission should seem to justify," conversation between him and Kingsbury turned to the condition of the "colored people." They both expressed a warm interest in African Colonization.[16]

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[14]First Ten Annual Reports of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Boston: Printed by Crocker and Brewster, 1834), p. 134. Hereafter cited as First Ten Annual Reports.

[15]Sue McBeth Papers, Indians Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society.

[16]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 4.

While in Washington, Kingsbury obtained letters of introduction to several men in Virginia, with whom he had "free and very satisfactory conversation respecting the condition and prospect of the colored people." These included Thomas Jefferson, who said: "I had hoped the present generation would take some measures in relation to this subject, but I now despair of it untill they are compelled to do something."[17] Kingsbury was not an Abolitionist in the strictest meaning of the term, but was a friend to the Colonization Society and gave it his influence and his means.

Of primary importance to the missionary, however, was the welfare of the Indian tribes. Therefore, he set out to visit the Cherokee country in Tennessee armed with a letter of introduction to Colonel Rehvin Q. Meigs, United States Indian Agent. There he talked with some of the principal chiefs and Meigs, who promised that the agents could be relied upon, "as a firm and substantial friend to the object of the missions."[18]

During the fall of 1816, Kingsbury met with delegations of Cherokee and Creek Indians and government officials in Washington to discuss the establishment of tribal schools. General Andrew Jackson was present at this meeting.[19] Kingsbury presented to tribal leaders and government officials the American Board plans for mission schools for Indian youth:

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[17] Ibid., p. 5.

[18] History of American Missions to the Heathen, p. 62.

[19] Ibid., p. 63.

> To establish schools in the different parts of the tribe under the missionary direction and superintendence, for the instruction of the rising generation in common school learning, in the useful arts of life, and in Christianity, so as gradually, with the divine blessing to make the whole tribe English in their language, civilized in their habits, and Christian in their religion; this is the present plan: and the more it has been contemplated, the more it has presented itself to the minds of the Committee, as being decidedly preferable to any other which has been adopted or proposed.[20]

During the council, Kingsbury made arrangements with the Cherokees for the opening of a boarding school in their nation, "the first mission of the Board to the Indians of this continent."[21]

For this purpose, Kingsbury purchased a small tract on Chickamauga Creek, about seven miles from the present site of Chattanooga on Missionary Ridge. Arriving on January 13, 1817, he spread a bearskin for a bed and commenced his missionary labors among the Indians. The school he established was named Brainerd.

Kingsbury labored alone at Brainerd until March 7, 1817, when Mr. and Mrs. Moody Hall and Mr. and Mrs. Loring S. Williams, both from the state of New York, joined him. They sailed from New York on January 22, arrived at Savannah on January 30; then proceeded to Augusta and across the country to Chickamauga.[22]

Writing from Chickamauga, Cherokee Nation, June 30, 1817, Kingsbury gave this account:

> Since their [Williams and Hall] arrival we have all, . . . been employed from Monday morning till Saturday night, either in hard

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[20] First Ten Annual Reports, recorded September 18, 1816, by Samuel Worcester, Clerk, Prudential Committee, p. 135.

[21] History of American Missions to the Heathen, p. 66.

[22] Missionary Herald, XXI (1817), p. 509.

> labor, or on journies for the mission. . . . Soon after our arrival in the nation, we opened our doors to receive children into our family, to teach them the rudiments of the English language, the principles of the Christian religion, and the arts of civilized life. The present number is 26.
>
> These children are of different ages from 4 to 18 years old. Some are full-blooded Cherokees; others 3/4 white. All speak the English well, except nine.
>
> We have preaching on the Sabbath, and our congregation is respectable and constantly increasing. Last Sabbath there were nearly 100, most of whom could understand our language.[23]

Within about a year the pupils numbered forty-six, and eighty-three the year following. Their studies included English and domestic industry. Each student was required to labor on the school grounds and fields when not in class.[24] The church, organized in September, 1817, added nine members in less than a year including a Cherokee woman, Cathrine Brown, the first "fruit of missionary labor."[25]

According to the Report of the Prudential Committee to the American Board in August, 1817, the new mission at Brainerd was not without its problems. The Secretary of War had assured Kingsbury that the government would erect a schoolhouse and a dwelling house and provide various farming implements; but due to failure on the part of the person contracted to erect the buildings, there was a long delay. "This," said Kingsbury, "has subjected us to great inconvenience and much expense. We have been obliged to build four log cabins for dwelling houses. These will accommodate our school when our other houses are erected."[26]

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[23] Ibid., pp. 384-385.

[24] Walter Chapin, The Missionary Gazatteer (Woodstock, Vt.: Printed by David Watson, 1825), p. 59.

[25] Ibid., p. 60.

[26] Missionary Herald, XXI (1817), p. 509.

The Reverend Elias Cornelius, an agent of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, made a tour to the southwestern parts of the United States after conferring with department heads in Washington on the subject of schools for the American aborigines. Upon arrival in Chickamauga in the fall of 1817, he sent a report stating that in less than a year, the missionaries, who labored under great disadvantage, had completed: "A dwelling house 52 feet by 27, two stories high, a large school house, 36 feet by 22, a grist mill and numerous smaller buildings."[27] In order to complete this work, the missionaries found themselves engaged in making twenty thousand bricks, burning lime, digging cellars and a well, "besides the by-play of bringing their meal forty miles, and planting twenty or thirty acres of corn, some cotton, flax and potatoes, . . ."[28] In addition to this, they operated a school for twenty-six young Cherokees, held Sunday school for thirty blacks and preached every Sunday. The Prudential Committee stated that the object of its report to the Board and to the community at large, was to give a just impression of the "indefatigable exertions of Mr. Kingsbury and his faithful assistants, . . . and the high importance of the mission."[29]

Cherokee leaders also recognized the importance of the mission schools and expressed their views in a communication to the Secretary of War on February 5, 1818. In this they stressed the matters they

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[27] Ibid., pp. 564-565.

[28] Samuel C. Bartlett, Sketches of the Missions of the American Board (Boston: Published by the Board, 1872), p. 179.

[29] Missionary Herald, XXI (1817), p. 509.

conceived as most important--that is, "the mental improvement, civil government and a progressive approach towards civilized life."[30]

A similar view was expressed in a letter from the Superintendent of Indian Trade, Thomas L. McKenney, on July 7, 1817, to several Indian agents:

> I have long believed the key to the civilization of our aborigines, to be the knowledge of our Christian language--but especially the English, in this case, inasmuch as information would be conveyed to these people through this Channel. This can be furnished, only by the agency of schools of instruction. . . . there can be no question of its favorable results, unless it be in the minds of those who believe Indians to be incapable of reform; and those who indulge the opinion, are certainly not conversant with the history of these peoples.[31]

Agreeing with McKenney, members of the American Board stated that the American Indians were remarkable in ability and readiness to understand and accept the value of Christianity and civilization.[32] Representatives of the Board who had visited Brainerd Mission only eighteen months after its commencement had found that the Indian boys were

> willing to work, docile to learn, and orderly and gentle in their behavior. They could plant an acre of corn before breakfast; fifteen of them could read in the Bible, and eleven in easy lessons; and eighteen could write. Their deportment at prayers, at table, at school, would have been creditable to white children.[33]

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[30]Cherokee Deputation to the Secretary of War, February 5, 1818, Letters Received, Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800-1823, Washington City, National Archives, Microcopy 271.

[31]Thomas L. McKenney, Circular Letter, July 7, 1817, Supt. of Indian Trade Letters Sent, Vol. D., April 12, 1816-April 11, 1818, National Archives, Microcopy 16.

[32]History of American Missions to the Heathen, p. 26.

[33]Bartlett, Sketches of the Missions of the American Board, p. 179.

Officials pledged to continue the financial support of the United States government which had begun as early as March 2, 1802, when Congress had authorized the President to spend $15,000 annually for the purpose of civilizing the Indians.[34] Most of the money was used to employ temporary agents and to purchase domestic animals and farming implements. In 1818, the Committee on Indian Affairs of the House of Representatives recommended a new policy concerning the education and civilization of the Indians with the establishment of schools. Its members stated:

> Your committee are induced to believe that nothing which it is in the power of the Government to do would have a more direct tendency to produce this desirable object [civilization] than the establishment of schools at convenient and safe places amongst those tribes friendly to us. . . . In the present state of our country one of two things seems to be necessary: either that those sons of the forest should be moralized or exterminated. Humanity would rejoice at the former, but shrink with horror from the latter. Put into the hands of their children the primer and the hoe, and they will naturally, in time take hold of the plough; and as their minds become enlightened and expand, the Bible will be their book and they will grow up in habits of morality and industry, leave the chase to those whose minds are less cultivated, and become useful members of society . . . .[35]

On March 3, 1819, Congress appropriated $10,000 per year to instruct the Indians in the "mode of agriculture suited to their situation; and for teaching their children in reading, writing, and arithmetic. . . ."[36] On September 3, six months later, Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun, issued a statement of policy concerning the utilization of the fund for the civilization of the Indians:

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[34] U.S., Statutes at Large, Vol. I, pt. 2, p. 143.

[35] American State Papers, Indian Affairs, Vol. II, p. 152.

[36] U.S., Statutes at Large, Vol. II, pt. 3, pp. 516-517.

> In order to render the sum of $10,000 annually appropriated at the last session of Congress for the civilization of the Indians, as extensively beneficial as possible, the President is of an opinion that it ought to be applied in cooperation with the exertion of benevolent associations, or individuals who may choose to devote their time or means to effect the object contemplated by the act of Congress. But it will be indespensible, in order to apply any portion of the sum appropriated in the manner proposed, that the plan of education, in addition to reading, writing and arithmetic, should, in the instruction of the boys extend to the practical knowledge of the mode of agriculture, and of such of the mechanic arts as are suited to the condition of the Indians; and in that condition of the Indians; and in that of the girls to spinning, weaving and sewing.
>
> In proportion to the means of the government, cooperation will be extended to such institutions, as may be approved, as well in erecting necessary buildings as in their current expenses.[37]

On February 29, 1820, the Secretary of War proclaimed "Regulations for the Civilization of the Indians"[38] for the distribution of the Indian civilization fund among individuals in societies who had established or contemplated establishing schools for the education of Indian children.[39] President James Monroe was interested in the education of the Indians and he and General George Gaines personally visited Brainerd in May of 1819--unannounced. President Monroe was pleased with all that he saw at the school, and "on the spot, he ordered a much better building for the girls' school, at the public expense."[40]

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[37]Letters sent by Secretary of War, September 3, 1819, Letters Sent, Secretary of War, Indian Affairs, 1800-1824, National Archives, Microcopy 15.

[38]See Appendix, "Regulations for the Civilization of the Indians," February 29, 1820, Letters Sent by Secretary of War, Indian Affairs, 1800-1824, National Archives, Microcopy 15.

[39]*Ibid*.

[40]Bartlett, *Sketches of the Missions of the American Board*, p. 179.

The Committee on Indian Affairs in the House of Representatives believed that the establishment of schools for the education of Indian children on or near the frontiers would be beneficial both to the United States and the Indian tribes. This plan was considered to be the best possible means of securing the "friendship of those nations in amity" with the United States.[41]

The Cherokees were not the only Indians to receive missionary attention. The American Board believed that schools also would be acceptable to the Choctaws, Chickasaws and the Creeks. It was reported that "an ardent desire has been expressed by chiefs of these several tribes, and by government agents in them, that schools might be established among them."[42] These Indian communities comprised four of the five principle tribes of the southeastern United States, designated the Five Civilized Tribes since the Civil War because of the progress they made in adopting Anglo-American culture. Four of these tribes--Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek and Seminole--belong to the Muskhogean linguistic family. The Cherokees are classified as Iroquoian.[43]

Federal officials were prepared to support schools among other Southern tribes. The Secretary of War pledged "that the same patronage will be extended to any establishment made within those nations for the objects stated, as have been given to the establishment for similar

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[41] American State Papers, Indian Affairs, Vol. II, p. 152.

[42] U.S., Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Muskogee Area Office, Marie L. Wadley, The Five Civilized Tribes--Their Contribution to Our Civilization (1970), p. 6.

[43] First Ten Annual Reports, p. 157.

purposes, made under the direction of Mr. Kingsbury in the Cherokee nations."[44]

It was not long before the Choctaws petitioned the American Board to send missionaries to them. They stated that they wished their children to be taught the way of life found in the "White Man's Book." They said they were just as worthy as the Cherokees; that they had always been at peace with the whites and had never shed a white man's blood in war.[45]

The visit of Cornelius to the Cherokee, Choctaw and Chickasaw nations in 1817 prepared the way for the missionary establishment in the Choctaw nation.[46] Satisfied that the Choctaws were receptive, the American Board resolved to commence an establishment in the Choctaw nation. Some of the reasons for the selection of the Choctaw nation for the next mission were that the

> Choctaw nation is the largest nation of the four, consisting of about twenty thousand souls. They have a fine country, are possessed of considerable wealth, and have strong tendencies toward a civilized state. The government agent, Col. M'Kee, takes a lively interest in their welfare, and is disposed to exert his great influence in favor of our design.[47]

The committee chose Kingsbury to establish the Choctaw mission because in its judgment there was "no man in the country more suitable; he understood the Indian character better than any other missionary at

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[44]Muriel H. Wright, A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951), p. 7.

[45]Missionary Herald, XXI (1817), pp. 509-510.

[46]W. R. Morrison, "The Choctaw Missions," Chronicles of Oklahoma, IV (1926), p. 171.

[47]Conversations on the Choctaw Mission (Boston: Massachusetts Sabbath School Union, 1830), Vol. I, p. 8.

their disposal, and had enjoyed great opportunities of acquiring a correct knowledge of men and things."[48] The committee felt it very important that Kingsbury accept the new position in view of his experience in beginning and directing the establishment at Brainerd and his "high standing in the esteem and confidence of both red men and white."[49]

Kingsbury accepted the appointment and in May, 1818, he was relieved at Brainerd by the arrival of the Reverend Ard Hoyt and family from Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Immediately he and Mr. and Mrs. Williams left for the Choctaw nation, over four hundred miles distant.[50] Kingsbury departed on horseback earlier than the Williamses in order to visit with Meigs at the Cherokee agency. The Williamses left later by boat with a wagon and supplies and met Kingsbury at Colbert's Ferry on the Tennessee River.

After resting two or three days at the landing, the Williams began their journey again with the wagon while Kingsbury remained behind to arrange transportation for the rest of their supplies. However, their progress was delayed by frequent mishaps. They had not traveled far when they had to turn back to recover a bundle of clothes lost from their wagon. As nightfall overtook them, Mrs. Williams and the baby became ill. Since the road had become too hazardous and rough for them to continue in the wagon and there was no means of making a fire for camp for the night, their only recourse was to abandon the wagon and travel by

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[48] First Ten Annual Reports, p. 199.

[49] Conversations on the Choctaw Mission, Vol. I, p. 9.

[50] H. R. Schermerhorn, "Beginnings Among the Choctaws," Home Missions, Manuscript Collections, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pa.

horseback until the moon went down. They stopped and asked for shelter in Indian cabins along the way, but they were "repeatedly and promptly denied."[51] Finally, they found a stump on fire by the road and stopped for the remainder of the night. Collecting some bark for a bed and using their saddle blanket for covering, the couple lay down with their sick baby.

The next evening, as prearranged, they met Kingsbury at a spring. After hobbling their horses securely, they rested. But the following day they discovered that their horses were gone. Some Indians nearby promised to find them for a dollar and soon returned with them. A few hours later, a heavy rain fell. Mr. and Mrs. Williams, who were quite ill by this time, found shelter in the wagon which, fortunately, they had retrieved earlier.

The next day, they continued their arduous journey cutting their way through cane thickets through the Chickasaw Nation as they followed the "Path to the Choctaw Nation," later called the Natchez Trace.[52] With a swamp to every creek and a creek every few miles, their horses frequently sank to their bodies in the mire and sometimes the wagon fell three feet without any warning sign on the surface of the ground. At times, it became necessary to unharness the horses, unload the wagon and roll it by hand to a place where the horses could stand.

After several weeks of difficult travel, they finally reached Yalobusha Creek settlement, the site of their new mission. As they

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[51] Conversations on the Choctaw Mission, Vol. I, pp. 8-10.

[52] Dawson A. Phelps, "The Natchez Trace Indian Trail to Parkway," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXI (September, 1962), p. 3.

approached their destination, they were met by Captain Harry Perry, a mixed-blood Indian who welcomed them and treated them with great kindness.[53]

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[53]C. K. to J. Evarts, June 23, 1818, Yellow Busha, #3, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 2, pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

CHAPTER II

CHOCTAW LEGACY

To understand the social and cultural milieu of the Choctaws at the time of Cyrus Kingsbury's arrival, it is necessary to briefly review their history before that time. The Choctaws had resided east of the Mississippi River for approximately one thousand years. Other tribes occupying this domain were the closely related Chickasaw Indians and the Natchez. The Choctaws, about 15,000 to 20,000 in number, were concentrated in east central Mississippi northwest of present day Meridian. The Chickasaws, numbering about 3,500 were located north of the Choctaws. In early colonial times, approximately 3,500 Natchez occupied a restricted territory between the Choctaw area and the Mississippi River in what is now southwestern Mississippi.[1] The Choctaw and Chickasaw Indian tribes belong to the Muskhogean linguistic family. The dialects of the two branches are so closely related they are considered practically identical.

George Catlin was one of several authors who concluded that the Choctaws migrated from a great distance in the west to their lands east of the Mississippi River.[2] H. B. Cushman, who lived among the Choctaws

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[1]U.S., Congress, Senate, Natchez Trace Parkway Survey, S. Doc. 148, 76th Cong., 3d sess., 1941, p. 10.

[2]George Catlin, North American Indians, Vol. II (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1926), pp. 128-129. An interesting account is found in "A

in the early nineteenth century, wrote a history of the Choctaw Indians in which he gave a similar account. Based on stories related to the missionaries in 1820 by aged Choctaws, it stated that "their ancestors dwelt in a country far distant toward the setting sun; and being conquered and greatly oppressed by a more powerful people resolved to seek a country far removed from the possibility of their oppression."[3]

Most of the authors believing the west-origin legend accepted the idea that the early migrants entered America by way of the Bering Strait from the "country far distant toward the setting sun." Papers of the Reverend Israel Folsom, a native Choctaw missionary, as recorded by his daughter, D. N. Robb, relate a similar legend adding that Chata was a Prophet Warrior who led his people eastward four years after the Cherokee and Muskokee migrations.[4]

The Choctaws believed that there was an appointed time for everyone to die; therefore suicide was considered an act of cowardice. They paid great respect to the dead and practiced elaborate burial ceremonies.[5] When a person was sick unto death, the medicine man informed the relatives who washed and painted the ill person and dressed him in his finest. Then they threw themselves prostrate upon him mourning and

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Promising Nez Perces Chief--Origin of the Name Flat Head," in "Indians West of the Rocky Mountains--Letter from Mr. Spaulding," dated September 30, 1836, in Missionary Herald, XXXIII (October, 1937), pp. 425-526.

[3]H. B. Cushman, History of the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Natchez Indians (Greenville, Texas: Headlight Printing House, 1899), p. 19.

[4]D. N. Robb MS, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

[5]Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 191.

weeping loudly until he died. After death, a scaffold was built high above the ground--higher than a wolf or dog could jump--and he was placed on it on his left side and covered with a bear skin. Relatives placed food and drink, clothes--and gunpowder if we were a warrior--for they believed that the spirit after death took a trip and traveled the same road that the deceased traversed during his life.[6] This journey took at least four days, after which time the spirit left never to return. During the four days, young men built a fire near the grave and watched over the body day and night. At sunrise each morning four men faced north, south, east and west and fired a gun at the same time.[7] The Choctaws believed that "bodies are only instruments of souls, which are their 'owners,'"[8] and that all animals had spirits; therefore, when a man died, his dog was killed also so that his spirit could accompany his master. After horses were introduced, they too were killed so that the deceased could ride.[9]

The body remained on the scaffold until the flesh had rotted so that the bones could be scraped clean. Since it was not permitted to cut the flesh of the deceased, professional bone-pickers or foni kashopa, were called in to clean the bones. The bone pickers wore very long

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[6]John R. Swanton, Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians, Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 103 (Washington, D.C., 1931), p. 170.

[7]Joe Bruner, "Legends and Traditions of Muskogee Indians Revealed," The American Indian, I (June, 1927), p. 6.

[8]Hartley Burr Alexander, North America, Vol. X of The Mythology of all Races, Edited by Louis Herbert Gray, Archeological Institute of America (Boston: Maeshoe Jones, Company, 1916), pp. 53-74.

[9]Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 302.

fingernails to facilitate their work. They buried every remaining part of the body except the bones which they washed, cleaned and sun-dried. Then they packed the bones carefully and placed them in a bag of deer-skin to be carried to the bone inspector or foni pesat akostininchi. If there was no odor or flesh about them, the bones were delivered to the bereaved family who placed them in a box and took them to the Bone House--a structure set apart for this purpose--on the edge of town. Twice a year, the people assembled and danced and mourned over the boxes of bones.[10] Some believe that these bone houses were the origin of the Indian mounds found in Mississippi and Alabama.[11]

Shortly before the missionaries came to the area, the burial custom changed. Instead of using a scaffold, the body was buried in a grave in a sitting position. Seven men set up smooth red poles around the grave. To these were added a ladder of thirteen hoops and a small white flag. The ladder enabled the spirit to ascend easier, it was believed. Periodically, hoops were pulled down and cries were made in behalf of the deceased at the graveside for thirteen moons. After the last hoop was gone, the people gathered for the final funeral ceremony called Fabussa halut akuchchih--the pole-pulling ceremony. Each time the Choctaws pulled down a pole they carried it into the woods with the hoops and observed a day and a night of feasting and dancing.

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[10]"Notes from Dr. Gideon Lincecum's Manuscript Entitled 'Traditional History of the Chahta Nation,'" Swanton MSS, No. 4146, Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives, Washington, D.C.

[11]Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 303.

Afterwards, each returned to his home and the name of the deceased was never mentioned again.[12]

Long before the influence of Christianity, the Choctaw Indians believed in a great good spirit called Hashtahli--Hashi meaning sun; and after the arrival of the missionaries, he was called Aba Pi Ki, our Father.[13] The ancient Choctaws proclaimed "the sun is my Father, and the Earth is my Mother."[14] The sun was represented on earth by fire and held the keys to life and death and controlled the warriors' success in war. The Choctaws of a later period viewed the Great Spirit as possessing a human shape and poke of him often as the "man above."[15] After creating the earth and its inhabitants, he delegated civil regulations to them and returned to his place above no longer concerned over the affairs of man. Hence, no manner of worship, homage or supplication was required. Kingsbury commented, "I cannot think that they ever offered sacrifices, or had any form of public worship, or practiced any of those ceremonies which are common among other tribes, . . ."[16] Therefore in times of distress such as in times of drought, they appealed to rainmakers; during floods, to fair-weather makers and to doctors when illnesses prevailed.[17]

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[12] Ibid., p. 169.

[13] Swanton, Choctaw Social and Ceremonial Life, p. 195.

[14] John Madden, "The Choctaws Once Were Said to be 'Sun Worshippers.'" The American Indian, I (July, 1927), p. 3.

[15] Missionary Herald, XXIV (1828), pp. 179-180.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

The Choctaws also believed in a great evil spirit or devil, whom they called Na-Lusa-chi-to or "Great Black Being" or "Soul Eater" who "found full occupation in terrifying and doing all harm to people."[18] This evil spirit was believed to hang around at least four days after a person died who either went to the "happy hunting ground" or to "a land of thorns, briers, and prickly plants, of every description which could inflict deep cuts, causing intense suffering which they could not escape."[19] They believed that the spirit of one who had been virtuous, honest and truthful while on earth would go to the "happy hunting ground," to the home of Aba, their father, where it was always spring and sunshine. But the spirit of one who had died violently with any loss of blood, or who had committed--or even attempted--murder, could not go to the home of Aba regardless of how he had spent his life otherwise.[20] His spirit was confined to earth near the place where he had died. But "Nanapolo, the bad spirit, is never able to gain possession of the spirit of a Choctaw."[21] Previous to a spirit's admission to the "happy hunting ground," it was examined by an angel at the gate to determine its fate.[22]

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[18]D. N. Robb MS, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

[19]Ibid.

[20]David I. Bushnell, Jr., The Choctaw of Bayou Lacomb St. Tammany Parish Louisiana, Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 48 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1909), pp. 28-29.

[21]Robb MS, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

[22]Ibid.

Cushman gave a somewhat different account of the spirit's departure. He said the spirits had to cross a "fearful river" that had but one crossing where a peeled sweet-gum log, smooth and slippery, reached from bank to bank. Here the spirit was attacked by two spirits to keep it from crossing, but if the spirit had belonged to a good person in life, the spirits had no power over it and it crossed safely. But the spirit of a bad person was pushed into the whirling waters and borne by the current to a "cold and barren desert to wander, naked, cold and hungry."[23]

Although the Choctaws believed that spirits seldom visited earth, they attributed supernatural powers to some of their own people. Witchcraft, or holkkunda, was an occult power practiced by both men and women. They believed the witches exerted evil powers against others and were able to fly at night to their victims.[24]

The medicine man claimed hidden powers over nature and the elements, fish and animals. He was an object of great veneration because of his "supernatural powers to foretell coming events, to exorcise evil spirits, and to perform all kinds of marvelous works."[25]

Another dignitary greatly revered was the rain-maker or hut-tak um-ba-ik-bi. It was believed that he and he alone had the power to create rain so that in times of drought the people sought him with offerings and supplications. If it did not rain at the time he

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[23]Cushman, History of the Indians, pp. 167-168.

[24]Bushnell, The Choctaw of Bayou Lacomb, Louisiana, p. 29.

[25]Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 172.

predicted, he blamed it on the wrath caused by another rain-maker in the nation.[26]

Both men and women practiced medicine.[27] Their Materia Medica consisted primarily of roots and herbs and Mesmerism. The doctors used the herbs and roots in different forms as emetics, cathartics and sweats. Also, they used cold baths, scarification, cupping and blisters as treatments. They were particularly successful in the treatment of poisonous snake bites.[28] Mental or nervous diseases were unknown to the ancient Choctaws; and idiocy and deformity were seldom seen.[29]

The Choctaws were very fond of dances. Many of these were named from different animals and wildlife such as the terrapin dance, snake dance, bear dance and turkey dance.[30] They had fewer ceremonial dances than most other tribes, but of these, the war dance was one of the most important. Only men performed this dance. They were painted and dressed for war and the dance was a mimic battle. Following the war dance, young women who were dressed in men's apparel and had their

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[26]Ibid., pp. 201-202.

[27]Robb MS, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 172.

[30]Frances Densmore MSS relating to study of Choctaw Music, Swanton MSS, No. 3258, Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives, Washington, D.C. Bushnell, The Choctaw of Bayou Lacomb, Louisiana, pp. 20-22, writes about "one dance ceremony, which is in reality a series of seven distinct dances, performed in rotation, and always in the same order. . . . the Man Dance, Tick Dance, Drunken-man Dance, Going-against-each-other Dance, Duck Dance, Dance Go-and-Come, and Snake Dance."

lips painted black, carried war clubs and silently danced the Black Mouth Dance.[31]

On the return of a successful war party, the village celebrated the triumph and hung their trophies of scalps, which they painted red, on poles. They then held war feasts, songs and scalp dances. The sounds were mixed with wailing, however, from a nearby hill where the women mourned those slain in battle.[32]

The most colorful and festive ceremonial dance was the Busk Festival, the green corn dance.[33] The origin of corn among the Choctaws is uncertain. One legend holds that a grain of seed corn was dropped by a crow and found by a child whose mother planted it.[34] The Cushman account, however, attributes the source to the tradition of "Ohoyo Osh Chisba," The Unknown Woman, who visited the Choctaw hunters' encampment and ate a roasted hawk with them. She promised to remember their kindness when she returned to her father, Shilup Chitoh Osh, the Great Spirit. She said she would meet them the next summer on the same spot. At the

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[31]Notes from Dr. Lincecum's MS, Swanton MSS, No. 4146, Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives, Washngton, D.C.

[32]Cushman, History of the Indians, pp. 197-198; Williams, Adair's History of the American Indians, pp. 298-299.

[33]Missionary Herald, XXIV (1828), p. 180. Some Indians denied that they had practiced ceremonial dances such as the Green Corn Dance performed by other tribes because "their Maker prescribed no form of worship, nor did he require any homage to be paid him. Nor did he . . . make any revelation of his will for the regulation of their conduct."

[34]"Legends," Swanton MSS, No. 4132, Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives, Washington, D.C.

appointed time and place, the hunters found a strange plant growing, which they cultivated and named Tunchi, corn.[35]

Regardless of the origin of the corn, a festival--the Green Corn Dance--was celebrated each year at roasting ear time in thanksgiving to the Great Spirit for the expected crop. The day of celebration was set and all were notified by being sent a set number of small sticks--the amount signifying the number of days before the festival. In preparation for the dance and feast, medicine men administered emetics to the celebrants to cause vomiting. The first day, the women danced all afternoon dressed in their finest with rattles on their legs, while the old men sang songs. The younger men and boys danced all night.

The following day, the ceremony began with the building of a new fire by the medicine man who lighted four sticks of wood representing north, south, east and west. These were carried by four aides to each camp to start their fires. The new corn or roasting ears were cooked on the new fires, which were not allowed to go out for one year--even though the fires were carried home many miles. This day was designated "eat day," and both men and women enjoyed roasting ear corn and playing ball, their favorite game.[36]

Toli was played with a heavy ball of deer skin or rags and two sticks hooped at the ends. After selecting a level playing field, the Choctaws placed two long straight poles at each end and the players divided themselves into two groups, often numbering as many as one

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[35]Cushman, History of the Indians, pp. 214-216.

[36]Bruner, "Legends and Traditions of Muskogee Indians Revealed," p. 6.

thousand. The spectators wagered personal goods on the game's outcome. Before starting the game, each team waited for the conjurer's pot of medicine to work, even though it might take a half day. They divested themselves of most of their clothes for the game except a breech cloth, paint, and some feathers. Each team tried in every way to throw, carry or roll the ball between its poles outwards while the opposite team did all in its power to prevent the count. Eleven counts constituted a game. The women played among themselves after the men ended their game.[37]

Although custom allowed women to participate actively in dances and ballgames, they were not permitted to accompany the hunters. Their duty was to make a crop for bread while the men furnished the meat by hunting. Warriors went on long camp hunts. They never went about women--even their wives--for one moon before the hunt and the starting date of the hunt was kept secret until they were gone.[38] Bruner gives an interesting description of their elaborate preparations:

> The Redman preparing to go on a hunt cleanses his system by vomiting and then he takes a sweat. He will go to some stream of water and build a tepee which is air-tight. He will build a fire and place rocks on the fire and heat them red hot and then carry them into the tepee in some way.
>
> Then all of the hunters get into the tepee squatting around the hot rocks. Water is poured upon the rocks creating a great lot of steam and gets up a great lot of heat and perspiration. This is kept up until the hunters are almost suffocated. At a signal all jump up and run out of the tepee into the first hole of water, where all dive in and wash off. This practices for four days before going on a hunt.

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[37] Notes from Dr. Lincecum's MS, Swanton MSS, No. 4146, Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives, Washington, D.C.; Cushman, History of the Indians, pp. 123-135; Catlin, North American Indians, Vol. II, pp. 140-244, gives the most vivid description of the games as well as exquisite sketches.

[38] Joe Bruner, "Many Clans Were Formed in Ranks of Native American," The American Indian, I (August, 1927), p. 10.

> They claim that this process carries away all human odor or smell so that game will not smell them during the approach.[39]

The Indians consumed much meat and some bread. The woman could make bread that would last a long time and would not spoil in any kind of weather. She took corn roasted in wood ashes and parched it brown. Then she pounded it into fine meal and dripped lye out of the wood ashes on it. She baked it in the shape of a doughnut and dried it in the sun without salt or shortening. The bread was taken on camp hunts and hung on limbs of trees until needed.[40]

The clearly defined division of labor between men and women was vividly illustrated in the courtship and marriage ceremony, where meat and bread were used as symbols of the separate duties of the couple. At the wedding ceremony, when the two were seated on the marriage ground, they were presented with a bag of bread from her family and a bag of meat from his thus signifying the custom of the man's provision of meat to the family as the hunter and the woman's practice of cultivation of the corn and making of bread. Concluding the ceremony, friends and relatives threw presents at the head and shoulders of the bride and scrambled after the gifts for themselves. After all gifts were distributed, the couple rose as man and wife. A merry festival followed.[41]

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[39]Bruner, "Legends and Traditions of Muskogee Indians Revealed," p. 16.

[40]Bruner, "Many Clans Were Formed in Ranks of Native American," p. 10.

[41]H. S. Halbert, "Courtship and Marriage Among the Choctaws of Mississippi," American Naturalist, XVI (1882), pp. 222-224; Swanton, Choctaw Social and Ceremonial Life, pp. 127-138; and Cushman, History of the Indians, pp. 309-311.

Courtship was equally simple. When a young man decided to marry, he visited the girl of his choice in her home. During the conversation with the family, he slyly threw pebbles and sticks at the girl. If she approved of him as a husband, she slyly threw them back at him. If not, she frowned at him and immediately left the room.[42]

Following the courtship and wedding ceremony, the new couple observed certain taboos and customs in their marriage. The Choctaws required complete separation of their women from the household during every menstrual period. The woman left the house and hid herself from her husband. When she was pregnant, the husband abstained from salt and pork with the idea that these foods would harm the unborn child. At the time of delivery, the woman left her dwelling and gave birth to the child in the woods without assistance. After delivery she returned to her daily tasks.[43]

After the child was born, it was placed in a wooden box or receptacle called Ullosi afohka (infant receptacle) where it spent most of its first year of life. The mother then applied a mass of earth or bag of sand to the forehead of the child which load they increased as fast as the infant could bear it. The head took the form of a brick from the temples upwards and sloped off backwards. For this reason the Choctaws were called tetes plates, or Flatheads, by early French voyageurs.[44] Catlin gives an excellent description of the custom although he admits that "this mode of flattening the head is certainly one of

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Swanton, Choctaw Social and Ceremonial Life, pp. 115-116.

[44] Ibid., p. 116.

the North American Indians."[45] Adair wrote that the custom quite deformed their faces and gave them an appearance which was disagreeable to any but those of their own likeness. "Their features and mind, indeed, exactly correspond together. . . ."[46] More favorable in observation Catlin stated that although the brain was changed from its natural shape in the flattening process, that "in all probability, not in the least diminished or injured in its natural functions." He said that that testimony was taken from many credible witnesses who closely scrutinized them and ascertained that "those who have the head flattened, are in no way inferior in intellectual powers to those whose heads are in their natural shapes."[47]

According to most sources, the Choctaw men and women were handsome and graceful people, not large of stature, and both wore their hair long.[48] Men and women painted themselves especially for dancing and practices tattooing to a limited extent. They liked bright colors and wore many silver ornaments, glass beads and bright-colored ribbons.[49]

The Choctaws were never named from their parents, but assumed names from some animal or incident at moment of their birth. Later in

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[45]Catlin, North American Indians, Vol. II, pp. 125-128.

[46]Samuel Cole Williams, Adair's History of the American Indians (Johnson City, Tennessee: Watauga Press, 1930), p. 305.

[47]Catlin, North American Indians, Vol. II, p. 126.

[48]John Upton Terrell, "Southwestern Woodlands," American Indian Almanac (New York: World Publishing Company, 1971), p. 148 says that the Spanish documents of the sixteenth century used the words Pafallaya and Apafalaya for a Choctaw province. These appear to be derived from the Choctaw world pa'sfalaya, meaning "long hair."

[49]Bushnell, The Choctaw of Bayou Lacomb, Louisiana, pp. 10-11.

life they were often given new names signifying some remarkable events or battles in their lives. The Choctaw man rarely told anyone his name and his wife never addressed him or referred to him by his name.[50]

The education of both male and female children was the responsibility of the mother until they reached the age of twelve, although the mother was never permitted to correct the boys. At the age of twelve, they were turned over to a tutor or "Ancient" who was the oldest maternal uncle if alive, or the nearest male relative in that line. He schooled the boys in hunting and fighting and ball playing. He gave lectures on the subject of bravery, and sincerity, truth and justice toward friends.[51]

The girls were trained to work in the fields and to perform various kinds of domestic duties including the manufacture of all earthenware, cooking utensils, baskets, cloth, blankets and shawls made from the down of turkeys and other birds.[52] After cotton was introduced, they became skilled in raising their own cotton and operating the cotton card, spinning wheel and loom.[53]

The Choctaws excelled most of the North American Indians in agriculture. They subsisted on the produce of their fields, chiefly corn supplemented by potatoes, beans, berries and nuts. The early French

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[50]J. F. H. Claiborne, Mississippi as a Province, Territory, and State, Vol. I (Jackson, 1880), p. 517; Swanton, Choctaw Social and Ceremonial Life, pp. 119-120.

[51]Robb MS, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Cushman, History of the Indians, pp. 308-309.

[52]Robb MS, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

[53]Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 194.

depended largely on them for grain which the women sowed and harvested. The man was a fisherman and hunter and killed game only for necessary food; never for "sport."[54] He was very fond of other sports, however, and when he was not engaged in the "war path, the chase and council life," he spent his time in games such as ball play, horseracing, footracing, jumping and wrestling.[55]

According to legend, the whole Choctaw nation was divided into two clans or great families by the Great Spirit soon after creation. They held this to be an important and necessary custom to be sacredly kept by them at all times and under all circumstances.[56] The clans or iksa were the Kashapa Okla and the Okla in Holahta or Hattak in Holahta. Husbands and wives had to be of different clans and clan intermarriage was strictly forbidden. The law was that the children were to belong to the iksa of their mother; hence the discipline and training of the children was directed by the mother's brothers. The parents were to assist only by advice and example.[57] Each of the great clans was divided into subdivisions. All of the clans lived together in the same towns but adhered to the customs of their own particular clans and subdivisions.

The Choctaw territory was bounded by the Chickasaw and Creek domains and the Mississippi River with a few tribes scattered along the gulf coast of Mississippi and Alabama. The greater part of the Choctaws

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[54]Madden, "The Choctaws Once Were Said to Be 'Sun Worshippers,'" p. 3.

[55]Swanton, Choctaw Social and Ceremonial Life, p. 139.

[56]Robb MS, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

[57]Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 362.

had their villages in the interior along the Pearl, Chickasawhay, Big Black and Tombigbee rivers. They were divided into three beats or districts, each under the charge of a head chief.[58]

The western district was known as the Okla Falaya, "The Long People"; the eastern section was originally called the "People of the Opposite Side (or Party)," Okla tànnap. Later this division became known as the Ahepat Okla, "Potato-eating People," or Haiyip atokolo--"Second Lake," or "Two Lakes." The southern district, Oklahannali, or "Six Towns," was somewhat different from the others linguistically and culturally. In fact, there were variations of speech in all the groups, although in time, the Long People, or Western group became recognized as the standard Choctaw.[59]

In governmental organization, each of the three districts had a principal chief elected by the people from the hereditary maternal line of the leading clan.[60] Each of the three districts was divided into smaller areas over which there were subchiefs or captains called mingos who were elected by the people of their clan. They had authority in all matters of local concern as the leaders of their town. In case of war, the mingos or war chiefs led the warriors of their villages. The men of

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[58]Frederick Webb Hodge, ed., Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 30, Part I (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1907), p. 289; Swanton, Choctaw Social and Ceremonial Life, pp. 55-58.

[59]Swanton, Choctaw Social and Ceremonial Life, pp. 55-58.

[60]Madden, "The Choctaws Once Were Said to Be 'Sun Worshippers,'" p. 3. Madden wrote that this custom was practiced by the Maya of Guatemala and Yucatan when the Spaniards found them them and therefore substantiates the "south migration" legend.

each town were divided into four classes; the mingos or village and war chiefs; followed in rank by the Hatak holitops, "beloved men," or leading warriors; third, the Tashka or common warriors and finally atac emittla--"those who have not struck blows or who have killed only a woman or a child."[61]

The office of the chief of a district was merely one of supremacy of leadership. He received no pay and exercised no authority without the advice and consent of the council. On the day of the council meeting, the chiefs and mingos assembled in an open space of the town in the council square. They were seated on two rows of wooden benches and slowly smoked their pipes passing them from one to another. The speaker or orator usually opened with a speech explaining why the assembly had been called and disclosed the views of the chiefs. "Their orations were very concise, animating and abounding in many beautiful metaphors."[62] Only one person ever spoke at a time before silent and attentive listeners. Utmost decorum always prevailed in meetings whether in public councils or social gatherings and ample time was allowed for the expression of opinions. After the debates were finished and the pipe had been passed all around, the head chief or speaker gave the "Big Talk"--his conclusion drawn from the different views. "He spoke deliberately and at the end of each sentence, if what he says be approved, the Mingos exclaim Ma! (yes) in a loud voice."[63]

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[61]Swanton, Choctaw Social and Ceremonial Life, pp. 84, 91.

[62]Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 197.

[63]Ibid., p. 112; Claiborne, Mississippi as a Province, Territory, and State, I, pp. 490-491.

Disputes and problems were settled in open council. They had no officers similar to constables or sheriffs, although the chief had power to order out any number of warriors at any given time to bring order or justice.[64] Their treaties were ratified by smoking the pipe of peace--a symbol highly respected and honored. War was the most patriotic avocation in which a man could engage.[65]

Sometimes the councils met at night and all members sat on the ground in a circle around a fire. The chiefs and old warriors formed the inner circle; the middle-aged next and then the young warriors in the outer circle. Women and children were excluded. Often the old men would relate the history of the nation and their past experiences, successes and defeats, achievements in war and the chase. In this manner, all the traditions and legends of the nation were handed down to each generation.[66]

The criminal code for the Choctaws was very simple--the law of retaliation, retribution or "blood revenge,"--in other words, a life for a life even if a substitute was necessary from the family or clan of the murderer. After the trial, the convicted person was allowed his freedom, for there were no jails in the country for many years. On the day set for his execution, he returned punctually to meet his sentence of death, after European contact, usually from the rifle. The Choctaws were noted for their stoicism in meeting the death sentence. If the condemned

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[64]Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 300.

[65]Ibid., p. 197.

[66]Ibid., pp. 147-148.

should fail to appear, it would disgrace him and his family.[67] They regarded lying and stealing as crimes and whipping was the punishment for these and other minor offenses.[68]

Land was held in common by the nation and title to their houses and fields was strictly by occupancy. When a Choctaw built a house, resided in it as his home and planted his corn and other products, it was exclusively his. But if he left it he forfeited his claim, and anyone could take possession without regard for the former occupant.[69]

Their first experience with Europeans occurred in 1540 with the arrival of a "tattered calvacade of pigs and horses accompanied by Don Hernando de Sota, Knight Commander of the Order of St. James of Compostela, Governor of the Island of Cuba, Adelantado of Florida, and marquis of lands yet to be subdued,"[70] in early October. At De Soto's demand, the Choctaws accompanied him and his men to Mobila, capital of the nation, where fighting erupted and Mobila was destroyed by fire. Many Choctaws lost their lives.[71]

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[67] Ibid., pp. 158-159.

[68] Swanton, Choctaw Social and Ceremonial Life, pp. 114-115.

[69] Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 178; Swanton, Choctaw Social and Ceremonial Life, p. 103; Claiborne, Mississippi as a Province, Territory, and State, I, p. 494.

[70] Jonathan Daniels, The Devil's Backbone: The Story of the Natchez Trace in The American Trails Series, ed. by A. B. Guthrie, Jr. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1962), p. 3.

[71] Edward G. Bourne, ed., Narratives of the Career of Hernando De Soto (New York: 1922), II, pp. 127-128. Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 23. Mobila is a corruption of two Choctaw words moma, all and binah, a lodge--literally a lodge or encampment for all.

Thereafter, the Choctaws were undisturbed by white encroachments until the eighteenth century rivalry among the French, Spanish and English powers. From the King William's War beginning in 1689 until the close of the Seven Years' War in 1763, France and England were in war with one another almost continually in North America. The Choctaws occupied a strategic position in the conflicts and became actively involved in the ensuing battles, even to the point of internecine tribal strife for the French had gained the friendship and confidence of the Choctaws and the English had secured that of the Chickasaws. Spain, too, was involved.[72]

In 1716, the French built Fort Rosalie on a high bluff beside the villages of the Natchez Indians 300 miles up the Mississippi River from New Orleans. In retaliation for abusing the temple rites in 1729, the French were attacked by the Natchez. The French immediately enlisted the aid of several hundred Choctaw warriors and the combined forces completely annihilated the Natchez tribe except for the few that were sold into slavery in the West Indies and some who fled to the Chickasaws for refuge.[73] As allies of the French, the Choctaws found themselves against the Chickasaws and their English friends. The French suffered many defeats at the hands of the Chickasaws and English, however, the most significant battle being the one fought at Akia in 1736. Many historians point to this battle as historically important in that it "saved

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[72]Angie Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), p. 27; Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 29.

[73]Daniels, The Devil's Backbone, pp. 18-20; Angie Debo, A History of the Indians of the United States (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), p. 58.

the country for the English" and foreshadowed the final defeat of the French in America.[74]

Strife among the tribes over the French and English trade intensified. Factions within the Choctaw nation between the pro-French and pro-English followers engaged civil war. Equally devastating to the Choctaws at this time was an epidemic of smallpox depopulating them as much as the civil war.[75] Finally, in 1750, the English sympathizers were defeated by the French and their Choctaw allies and the Treaty of Grandpré placed all the Choctaws under French control and called for a commitment to continue the war against the Chickasaw nation "as long as there should be any portion of it remaining."[76] The conflict was resolved, however, a short time later when the French were expelled from the continent by the Treaty of Paris of 1763, ending the French and Indian War. This marked the end of the long struggle between France and England for colonial supremacy and the Choctaws became a part of the British Empire. The Louisiana area occuped by France was ceded to Spain. Yet the French influence continued among the Choctaws especially through marriages. Some of the descendants such as LeFlore and Durant, became important leaders in the affairs of the Choctaws.[77]

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[74] Muriel H. Wright, A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma, The Civilization of the American Indian Series, Vol. 33 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951), p. 86; Daniels, The Devil's Backbone, pp. 22-23; Cushman, History of the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma, p. 101.

[75] Williams, Adair's History of the American Indians, p. 364.

[76] Wright, A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma, p. 101; Debo, A History of the Indians of the United States, p. 59.

[77] Wright, A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma, p. 102.

Through a series of councils with the leaders of the Indian nations, the British informed them of a plan for administration and trade under the supervision of an agent. In one council the eastern boundary of the Choctaw Nation was defined and peace was restored between the Chickasaws and the Choctaws.[78] Soon afterwards, however, war broke out between the Choctaws and the Creeks and continued for six years with heavy losses on each side, although little was recorded about the war.[79]

Since Choctaw land was directly north of Spanish-held New Orleans and on the eastern border of Louisiana, Spanish intrigue increased each year. The British warned the Indian leaders against the Spanish and assured them protection under their government.[80] Eventually, the Choctaws sold a small portion of their country east of the Mississippi River, known as the Natchez District, to the English Superintendent of Indian Affairs.[81] Notwithstanding, British influence began to wane during the American Revolution since the Choctaw warriors chose to serve on the side of the Americans.[82]

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[78]Arrell M. Gibson, The Chickasaws (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), pp. 60-61.

[79]Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 61; Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 41.

[80]Gibson, The Chickasaws, pp. 70-71.

[81]Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 41; Claiborne, Mississippi as a Province, Territory, and State, I, p. 113.

[82]Wright, A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma, p. 102; Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 238.

When the American Revolution ended, the English were expelled from the United States by the Treaty of Paris of 1783, reminiscent of the French fate twenty years earlier. Spain assumed control of East and West Florida and the entire southern part of the Choctaw Nation came under the Spanish rule. A boundary dispute between Spain and the United States developed over a strip of land between the thirty-first and thirty-fourth parallels, called the Yazoo strip. As a result, Spain attempted to unite the southern tribes of Indians as a barrier against the United States. Failing at this, the Spanish made treaties with the Chickasaws, Choctaws and Creeks in June 1784 in which the Indians acknowledged Spanish protection and promised to trade exclusively with persons holding Spanish licenses.[83]

The Spaniards were remiss in keeping their trade promises, however, and the Choctaws accepted an invitation by the Americans to meet with them in council at Hopewell, South Carolina, on January 3, 1786, and made their first treaty with the United States. They established peace and friendship with the United States, defined the eastern boundary of the Choctaw Nation and gave the United States the right to establish three trading posts within the Choctaw Nations.[84] Through the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the United States acquired a vast territory west of the Mississippi River and settled the "Mississippi

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[83]Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 32. See list of signatures of Choctaw Chiefs at the Treaty of July 13-14, 1784, Swanton MSS, No. 4128, Smithsonian Institute, National Anthropological Archives, Washington, D.C.

[84]Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 32; Charles J. Kappler, Indian Affairs--Laws and Treaties (Washington, 1904) II, pp. 11-14.

Question" that had plagued the inhabitants for years. In less than thirty years, through a series of treaties, the Choctaws would cede all of their land east of the Mississippi River to the United States.[85]

Meanwhile, the Choctaw country in the Mississippi Territory became an important link between the Southwest and the rest of the nation. The increased navigation and commerce down the Mississippi River, the right of deposit at New Orleans and the population growth pointed to the urgent need of better communication and transportation through that area. The United States designated the Natchez Trace, a trail crossing 500 miles of wilderness between Natchez and Nashville, a post road. In 1801 and 1802 the Chickasaws and Choctaws respectively gave their consent to the United States "to lay out, open, and make, a convenient wagon road through their land . . ." The Choctaws added that "the old path is not to be thrown away entirely, and a new one made."[86] Work was begun immediately by troops under the supervision of General James Wilkinson, commander of the Western Department, in agreement with the Postmaster General, Joseph Habersham. Appearing in the legend of the first survey of the route which General James A. Wilkinson submitted was this statement: "This road being compleated I shall consider our Southern extremity secured, the Indians in that quarter at our feet, & the adjacent Province laid open to us."[87]

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[85] Natchez Trace Parkway Survey, 76th Cong., 3d sess., pp. 42-43; Ray Allen Billington, Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier (New York: Macmillan Company, 1960), pp. 241-243.

[86] Natchez Trace Parkway Survey, 76th Cong., 3d sess., pp. 36-37.

[87] Ibid., p. 81.

The first cession of land the Choctaws made was in December 1801 at Fort Adams, on the Mississippi River. It cleared the right of way with the Choctaws for the road "and the same shall be and continue forever a highway for the citizens of the United States and the Choctaws."[88] Also the eastern boundary was reaffirmed and the Natchez District, a small triangular tract in the southwestern section of the Choctaw Nation, was relinquished for: "two thousand dollars in money and merchandise, and three sets of blacksmith's tools."[89]

The Choctaws made a second land cession in 1802 at Fort Confederation. A small circular tract of land north of Mobile was ceded to the United States with no compensation to the Indians, although the chiefs who signed the Treaty of 1803--another delineation of the eastern boundary--were rewarded with: "15 pieces of strouds, 3 rifles, 150 blankets, 250 rounds of powder, 250 pounds of lead, 1 bridle, 1 man's saddle, and 1 black silk handkerchief."[90] The Choctaws ceded a large part of their southern territory by the Treaty of Mount Dexter, in 1805, in return for a $3,000 annuity, $48,000 in appropriations and some personal considerations. The remainder of the Choctaw land east of the Tombigbee River was ceded in 1816.[91]

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[88]Arminta Scott Spalding, "The Natchez Trace Parkway: A Study of Origins of an Interstate Federal Highway" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Stephen F. Austin State University, 1965), p. 23.

[89]Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 34; Kappler, Laws and Treaties, II, pp. 56-58; Charles C. Royce, "Indian Land Cessions in the United States," Eighteenth Annual Report Bureau of American Ethnology, Part 2 (Washington, 1899), pp. 660-661.

[90]Natchez Trace Parkway Survey, 76th Cong., 3d sess., p. 77.

[91]Ibid.

The cessions of Choctaw land, construction of roads and a series of Indian Intercourse Acts passed by Congress increased the activities of traders in the Choctaw country. An Indian agent was provided to protect the Indians from intruders and numerous regulations were set forth to control hunting, herding, buying and selling and settling on Indian lands. Licenses were required of traders and intruders were removed by United States soldiers.[92]

The Choctaws maintained friendly relations with the United States. Peace was threatened in 1811 by the gathering war clouds between the United States and England. The Choctaws were visited by the great Shawnee chief, Tecumseh, accompanied by thirty warriors. He presented a plan of Indian Confederation against the United States at a combined council of Choctaws and Chickasaws on a point on the Tombigbee River, five miles north of present-day Columbus, Mississippi.[93]

Both tribes refused to join Tecumseh in his proposed war on the United States. Later the Choctaws joined the United States in the war against the Creeks.[94] They fought with General Andrew Jackson at Horseshoe Bend and later against the British at the Battle of New Orleans.

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[92]Ibid., pp. 38-39.

[93]U.S., Congress, House, Hearings Before the Committee on Roads, House of Representatives, on H.R. 7312 and H.R. 7345, 73d Cong., 2d sess., 1934, p. 17.

[94]Thirty young Choctaw warriors under a sub-chief Illi Shuah, Dead Stink, joined the Creeks, in spite of a public warning from Pushmataha that they would be shot if they returned home, relates Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 262.

A few years later, the Mississippi Territory area incorporating the Choctaw Nation became a state of the union and the Choctaws invited missionaries to establish schools in their country. Their primary motive in requesting the missions was educational rather than religious. Earlier attempts to convert them had been initiated, even before the advent of the itinerant preachers, by Roman Catholic missionaries who established a mission in the Six Town district in 1726 and another the next year at Yazoo on the Mississippi.[95] But all of these endeavors to Christianize the Choctaws were without known results, until a decade after the establishment of the first mission school begun by Cyrus Kingsbury through the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.[96]

Choctaw leaders believed that the nation's future lay in education. The absorbing ambition of Pushmataha, Choctaw Chief, was that his people might become the "equal of the whites in education and civilization and take their place beside the white man in a business way, in a professional way, and in the councils of the Nation."[97]

The influence of missionary educators and mission schools exceeded all Choctaw expectations. They became a major influence in the future of the Choctaw nation. With great anticipation, the Choctaw

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[95]Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 30.

[96]Arminta Scott Spalding, "Natchez Trace to Oklahoma: Christian Choctaw Civilization," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XLV (Spring, 1967), p. 7.

[97]Hearings Before the Committee on Roads, 73d Cong., 2d sess., p. 16. Pushmataha was "always an advocate of education and industry among his people and contributed much not only of his time, but of his small income, to that end." Ibid.

leaders awaited the arrival of "Father Kingsbury" and the opening of the schools in 1818.[98]

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[98]Spalding, "Natchez Trace to Oklahoma: Christian Choctaw Civilization," pp. 7-9.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST SCHOOLS

Cyrus Kingsbury and Mr. and Mrs. Loring S. Williams reached their destination at Yello Busha,[1] Mississippi, in June 1818. They stayed with Captain H. Perry for ten days while selecting a site for the school. The place they chose was two miles south of Yello Busha River and about thirty miles above its junction with the Tal-ka-hack-y or Yazoo. This "tongue of land in the fork of a small Creek called Coney Creek" was about two miles from a store. The river was navigable for keelboats except at low water. The agency was nearly due south at a distance of from 100 to 120 miles. In the southeast direction "the nearest point in the Kentucky trace,"[2] was about sixty miles.

The Choctaws who understood the object of the missionaries appeared highly gratified at their arrival and treated them with kindness. Others looked upon all white people who came into the country with suspicion. Consequently, the missionaries thought it best not to begin the settlement until the agent could explain the goals to the people.

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[1]Corruption from the Choctaw words Yaloba aiasha: Tadpoles abounding. Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 71. Site of first mission named Elliot.

[2]Another name for Natchez Trace. See supra, Chapter II, p. 42.

With this purpose in mind, Kingsbury set out for the agency to see Colonel John McKee in early July, but learned upon arrival that he had gone to Natchez on business. While waiting for his return, Kingsbury traveled on to Walnut Hills, which is now Vicksburg, on the Mississippi River twelve miles below the mouth of the Yazoo. There he inquired of a shipment of clothing and furniture which had been sent by keelboat from Brainerd. Finding the goods intact but wet, he dried and repacked them and returned to the agency to meet with McKee. The agent promised to aid the mission establishment although he was uncertain of the amount of government aid available at that time.[3]

The commencement of a mission school in the wilderness was fraught with many problems. Immediate concerns of the missionaries included acquiring needed articles for the school, recruiting laborers and mechanics, planning the buildings, and availability of meat and corn in the neighborhood.[4]

The most difficult matter to be dealt with was the unexpected high prices and wages demanded for goods and services as compared with the Cherokee Nation. For example, a mechanic in the Choctaw Nation received $400 for a job which paid only $130 at Chickamauga, Cherokee Nation. This made it impossible for the missionaries to hire laborers except in cases of necessity or to purchase goods locally if they could

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[3]Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, July 31, 1818, Choctaw Missions, #5, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Part I, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[4]Cyrus Kingsbury to Colonel John McKee, January 20, 1818, and Colonel McKee to Cyrus Kingsbury, February 25, 1818, #1, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Part 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

be shipped from the East.[5] Most of the needed articles, medicines and books were shipped to New Orleans and then transported by river barges to the establishment. Although this method of securing articles proved to be much cheaper than purchasing them in the Choctaw Nation, it was less than satisfactory since shipments were often delayed for months due to scarcity of funds and low water.[6]

Obtaining adequate foodstuffs was another major problem. Corn was a necessary commodity. Corn bread made from coarse meal and dried beef were the principal foods. Corn was brought by keelboat from Walnut Hills at a cost of $3.00 per bushel. After a while, a mill was located in the vicinity which was operated by two horses.[7]

Having arranged for their supplies and completed their plans, the missionaries were ready to begin work. "On August 15, 1818, the first tree of the dense forest was felled, and on the 18th, their first log house, 15 feet by 18, was raised." The mission was named Elliot from John Eliot, the "Apostle to the American Indians."[8] A few days later, their "hearts were cheered" and their "hands strengthened" by the arrival of Moses Jewell and wife from Chenango County, New York, and Mr. and Mrs. John G. Knouse and Peter Knouse from Rockaway, New Jersey.

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[5]Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, July 31, 1818, #5, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Part 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[6]Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, September 1818, December 1818, #9, 10, 20, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Part 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[7]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 7.

[8]The missionaries spelled Elliot with two l's although it was named for John Eliot.

However, in spite of the additional laborers, they began to experience many hardships. In less than a month, almost the whole mission family became severely ill. Williams and Kingsbury suffered severe attacks of dysentery and fever and Mrs. Williams became so acutely ill with bilious fever that she almost died. Peter Knouse determined to leave the mission soon after becoming sick with a fever. His younger brother, already suffering with a "consumptive complaint," became ill with an inflamed swelling of his hand.[9]

Additional hardship was created by delay in transportation of their stores and goods. The men whom they had hired were a disappointment not only because of high wages, but in lack of skills and production. Yet the missionaries "persevered without repining, and in their toils and sufferings, laid the foundation of much good to the people to whom they had been sent."[10]

Commenting on some of the environmental problems with which they had to cope, Kingsbury wrote:

> The prospect in this nation is on the whole favourable; but there are some circumstances which at times bear down our spirits, and sink our hopes. [That] is the immoral & impious lives of multitudes of whites who are either passing through the Choctaw country or sending in. Another is the prevalence of intemperance. This vice has of late increased to a most alarming degree. About 40,000 dollars have been paid them this year for services during

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[9] Conversations on the Choctaw Mission, Vol. I, pp. 11-12; Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 7; Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, Esq., September 21, 1818, #8, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[10] History of American Missions to the Heathen, p. 72.

> the war. A large proportion of this it is supposed has been laid out for whiskey; . . .[11]

Convinced more than ever of the need to educate and Christianize the Indians, the missionaries concentrated their energies on the immediate task at hand--establishing the mission school. Additional helpers arrived to assist them in their labors. Shortly after Kanouse left, Aries V. Williams, brother of Loring S. Williams, arrived. On November 15, Miss Sarah B. Varnum, from Dracut, Massachusetts, and Miss Judith Chase of Cornish, New Hampshire, left Salem, Massachusetts, for Elliot by way of New Orleans. Miss Varnum was the future Mrs. Cyrus Kingsbury and Miss Chase became the bride of A. V. Williams.

Although not knowing exactly when Miss Varnum and her friend would arrive in New Orleans, Kingsbury left the station in early December to meet them. On route he passed through Jefferson County, Mississippi, where he was pleased to learn of an organizational meeting called by the Reverend Joseph Bullen for the purpose of forming a society or auxiliary to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions--its "funds to be employed exclusively for the benefit of the Choctaws."[12]

He reached New Orleans on December 21, two days before Miss Varnum and Miss Chase arrived in good health on the Andrew Jackson after a passage of thirty-eight days. Kingsbury met them on board ship and conducted them into the city where friends received them kindly.[13] On

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[11]Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, July 31, 1818, #5, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[12]Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, December 21, 1818, #17, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[13]Miss Chase to Jeremiah Evarts, December 28, 1818, #19, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Christmas Eve, Cyrus Kingsbury and Sarah B. Varnum were married in New Orleans by the Reverend Sylvester Larned, who performed the ceremony in a "very solemn and impressive style." Having been separated from Sarah three years with a "conditional engagement of marriage" before leaving New England, Kingsbury wrote in his autobiography that "the kind providence of God which permitted us to meet after so long a separation and under circumstances so favorable called forth our devout gratitude and praise."[14]

The Kingsburys and Miss Chase remained with friends in New Orleans until January 2, waiting for a steamboat. They arrived in Natchez, Mississippi, on January 7 and completed the journey to Elliot (230 miles) on horseback. Although traveling in January, they had to camp out part of the time with very little to protect them from the cold. They were frequently awakened by wolves and other wild beasts which inhabited the country.[15] Travel was slow because of the scarcity of corn for the horses and the many creeks that had to be crossed. Luckily, the creeks were unusually low for that time of the year. At one crossing, Miss Chase fell into a creek; but she continued traveling without adverse effects. Referring to their journey, Kingsbury wrote: "We have trials but they seem only such as are calculated to keep us humble and teach us our dependence."[16] They arrived at Elliot on the

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[14]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 7.

[15]Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, February 2, 1819, #23, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[16]Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, February 2, 1819, #24, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

first of February and found the peach trees in bloom and much work to be done before the opening of the first church and school two months later.[17] Preparation for the beginning of the school were "put forward with all possible dispatch."

On the fourth Sunday of the following month, March 28, a mission church was completed and the Lord's supper administered for the first time at Elliot. There were ten members, all of whom were connected with the mission. No natives participated in the first service, although some looked on with apparent wonder. Before the building had been completed, there had been preaching every Sunday at the Kingsbury home where mixed-bloods, whites and blacks attended and occasionally several of the "natives." "But the expectations of the Indians was that all their efforts should be directed towards the commencement of a school."[18]

Work on the school progressed as rapidly as health and circumstances allowed but several buildings lacked completion due to insufficient labor. Several Choctaws, unaware of the difficulties, by the middle of April brought eight children to the school from a distance of 160 miles. The missionaries faced a dilemma--to accept them before the establishment was completed would add to their problems. On the other hand, to refuse them would disappoint the children and parents and might make an unfavorable impression on the whole nation. They decided to keep the children. Thus, on the 19th of April, 1819, school was commenced with ten Choctaw students.[19]

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[17]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 8.

[18]Conversations on the Choctaw Mission, Vol. I, pp. 15-16; Missionary Herald, XV (1819), p. 243.

[19]Sarah B. V. Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, April 25, 1819,

The Choctaws were eager to bring more students to the school, but were told that only twenty could be received until October.[20] But the "importunities of parents and children broke over these limitations,"[21] and "as accommodations and means of support were provided" fifty-four scholars were admitted in October, most of whom were boarded in the mission family. By this time seven comfortable cabins used as dwelling houses had been erected. Also completed were a log dining room-kitchen with a piazza on each side, a log school house, a house for a horse mill, a lumber house and a granary, a blacksmith shop, a stable and three other out buildings.[22]

On the plantation, they had cleared and fenced about forty acres of land, of which about thirty were cultivated. Since a part of this land was covered with heavy timber, hard labor was expended in chopping, burning and rolling the logs. Several Choctaws assisted the missionaries. They also enclosed yards for cattle and a garden and planted peach, apple, quince and plum trees.[23] But progress was greatly retarded from the want of oxen. In the whole neighborhood, there were only three pairs which were occasionally loaned to the missionaries. In vain, men of the mission family traveled one hundred miles seeking a few yoke.[24]

#12, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Missionary Herald, XV (1819), p. 243.

[20] History of American Missions to the Heathen, p. 72.

[21] Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 8.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.; Missionary Herald, XV (1819), p. 242.

[24] Conversations on the Choctaw Mission, Vol. I, p. 17.

Considerable labor was spent in cutting roads and constructing small bridges in order to transport articles by wagon. For this, they had to make many of their tools.[25] All of the furniture and buildings were made by the missionaries and Choctaw helpers and whatever hired help they could find and afford. The laborers were furnished the materials and received room and board as well as wages. They hand-sawed thousands of feet of cypress and poplar boards and split thousands of rails.[26]

No missionary received compensation beyond board and clothing.[27] In fact, members of the Choctaw Mission contributed, in addition to their personal services, money from their private funds for the support of the school and mission.[28] When Kingsbury was offered a salary of $666 in August, 1819, through a resolution of the Congregational and Presbyterian Missionary Society of South Carolina, he refused their offer on the grounds

> that soon after I entered on a mission among the Indians, my assistants and myself, cordially and deliberately resolved to accept of no stated salaries. We were induced to take this measure from two considerations.
>
> 1st. The plan of the Mission was such, as to render it expedient, that there should be no private property attached to it.
>
> 2ly. The urgent need of extending to the Indians, as far as possible, the benefits of instruction; made us unwilling, that the means provided for this object, should be diminished, by any demand of our own, not absolutely necessary. . . . I have no necessity for a salary, further than to furnish myself & wife with clothing, & to meet some little personal expenses. . . .

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[25] Missionary Herald, XV (1819), pp. 242-243.

[26] Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, November 10, 1818, #13, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Conversations on the Choctaw Mission, Vol. I, p. 16.

[27] Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 8.

[28] Ibid., p. 22.

> I must therefore beg, that your Reverend & worthy Board, will permit me to decline their truly generous offer, if it is to be considered as a salary for me. Should it meet their wishes, that my clothing & other personal expenses should be taken out of that sum, & the balance appropriated to the benefit of the Mission, it will be most thankfully accepted.[29]

Kingsbury continually wrote to the American Board requesting more workers for the Choctaw Mission:

> But it is extremely painful to me, that for want of help our progress must be so slow. It is impossible for me to express my feelings on this subject. There is a whole nation with their eyes fixed on us to see if we will redeem our pledge.[30]

He wrote that it was not to be expected that all of the missionaries would be equally qualified, but that they certainly all ought to be able to support themselves, and to contribute something "towards the common family." He enumerated particular characteristics he felt necessary for the western missions. He listed natural ability to labor as of great importance, and a habit of industry and economy. Then he stressed the need for peace and harmony in the mission family: "Mutual confidence among brethren, is of great importance," and he admitted that there had already been "not a little disappointment." He expounded on the need for "industry, subordination, & a thorough & practical devotedness to the cause. There must be a head, lest there be anarchy & confusion," he warned.[31] His last point was the relationship of the western missions to the Board--particularly the need for their duties to be clearly defined.[32]

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[29]Cyrus Kingsbury to Dr. James E. B. Finley, August 12, 1819, #32, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[30]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, May 12, 1819, #26, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[31]Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, May 5, 1820, #58, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[32]Cyrus Kingsbury, November 24, 1819, #41, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Expressing a need for compatible workers and spiritual fellowship, he wrote to the Prudential Committee in late spring of 1819 to send out a colleague from Andover to work with him. He explained:

> Shut up here in this wilderness I am losing all mental energy--growing old & rusty. "As iron sharpeneth iron, so the countenance of a man his friend." It will be of great advantage, to have some person with me, who has been educated in the Missionary School.[33]

On the first of August the mission family was cheered by the arrival of Dr. William W. Pride, a young physician from Cambridge, New York, and Mr. Isaac Fisk, a blacksmith and farmer from Holden, Massachusetts. Although re-inforcements encouraged the missionaries, their hearts were saddened by the departure of others. Ill health caused several to return to their homes in New England and death claimed others, one of whom was A. V. Williams, the nineteen-year-old brother of Loring S. Williams.[34] His wife, the former Judith Chase, died two years later on the Choctaw mission field.[35]

Soon after, Kingsbury was invited to attend a national council of the Choctaw Nation. Delivering a short speech to the "Chiefs, Brothers, & Warriors," he said:

> I am happy to meet you here in council, & to take you by the hand. Your Father the President & the good people at the north; have sent me, & my friends, a long way to instruct your children, . . . You sent us word, you wanted us to come. We have come, &

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[33]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, May 12, 1819, #26, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[34]First Ten Annual Reports, pp. 293-294.

[35]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, October 25, 1821, #91, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University; see infra, p. 76.

> you have been true to your word. You have taken us by the hand & treated us as Brothers. We thank you for all your kindness. . . .
>
> Brothers--It will make the good people who sent us, very glad, when they hear how kindly you have treated us, & that you wish to have your children instructed. They have a great desire that their Brothers, the Choctaws, should know the good things that they know; & have the good things that they have. You see that you can no longer live by hunting. You must raise corn, & cattle, & cotton, that your women & children may have plenty to eat & to wear. . . .
>
> Brothers--We wish to do all for your children that we can. It costs us a great deal to buy provisions for them. Your Brothers, the White people have given some money, for this purpose. King Puk-sha-hub-bee has given two hundred dollars. This he said was but little, but it would help some. If your people could do something to find bread and meat for your children we could teach many more. We wish to see all your children educated, & to know as much as the children of white people. . . .[36]

Kingsbury cautioned them against the expense and evils of drinking whiskey and proposed that individuals interested in the school could give cows, calves and money as they felt so disposed. Consequently, a subscription was opened at the council-house and $700 was donated to the mission; eighty-five cows and calves were subscribed and $500 was voted to be given annually.[37]

A council held in September, 1819, in Mushulatubbee's District voted unanimously that $2,000 be appropriated annually from their annuity[38] for the support of a school in that distict, similar to the

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[36]Cyrus Kingsbury speech to "Chiefs, Brothers, & Warriors," August 11, 1819, #33, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Part 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[37]Missionary Herald, XV (1819), p. 244; Conversations on the Choctaw Mission, Vol. I, p. 19.

[38]At a treaty with the United States in 1816, the Choctaws sold a tract of country for which they were to receive from the United States $6,000 annually in cash for seventeen years. The nation was divided into three districts--Upper, Lower and Six Towns. Each district was to receive $2,000. Missionary Herald, XVI (1820), p. 29.

one at Elliot.[39] A few months later, while visiting the district at Pigeon Roost in the absence of Chief Mushulatubee, Kingsbury was addressed by Captain David Folsom who expressed confidence in Kingsbury's leadership. Major John Pitchlynn interpreted Folsom's speech, which said in part:

> You [Kingsbury] are the person named, whom they wished to direct the business. . . . I have no doubt of the good intention of the other missionaries who have written to us, but from our acquaintance with you & the recommendation you brought from our red brethren the Cherokees, we wish to have the school under your direction. All of us who have seen the school at Yello Busha, are highly pleased with the manner in which the school is there managed.[40]

When Kingsbury related Folsom's sentiments in a letter to the Board, he explained that although Folsom was not nominally the head chief, he was first in influence, "& a true & able friend to the Board & their Missionaries."[41] "We consider the Lower Town district as one of the most promising fields in the circle of Western Missions; principally

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[39]Kingsbury reported that "one of the principal chiefs detained the Council 2 days, by tarrying at a drunken frolick, & lost many of his clothes"--illustrating his word of caution earlier. Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, September 28, 1819, #34, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Part 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, pp. 8-9.

[40]Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, December 4, 1819, #43, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[41]Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, December 4, 1819, #43, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University. David Folsom's father was Nathaniel Folsom, English trader among the Choctaws. David was one of the first Choctaws to ask for schools to be established among his people. He served in the Indian wars assisting General Andrew Jackson in taking Pensacola and was mustered out with rank of colonel. He was the first chief of the Choctaws to be elected by ballot--"the first Republican Chief of the Choctaw Nation. The promoter of industry, education, religion and morality . . ." Czarina C. Conlan, "David Folsom," Chronicles of Oklahoma, IV (December, 1926), pp. 340-355.

on account of the great influence which Capt. Folsom has in that part of the nation; who tho not pious, is a true friend to the missionaries and to his nation."[42]

Although Elliot was generally a success and the missionaries had favor with the people, the school experienced some problems. At the beginning of the year 1820, Kingsbury stressed again the pressing need for more money, goods and laborers.[43] Moreover, he lamented their deadness in spiritual things.[44] In fact, as the months passed, Kingsbury became increasingly alarmed over the necessity of spending so much time in secular and temporal duties. This made him feel unprepared and unfit for his important duties on the sabbath. He said the burden was wearing out his constitution and destroying the energies of his mind.[45] Describing his frustration, he wrote:

> I feel incapacitated for any mental exertion. The preaching when I attempt it is such as to be unedifying to the brethren & sisters, & I have reason to think to the people generally. . . . My cares and duties are daily increasing while my ability to sustain & discharge them is sensibly diminishing. When I had indulged the hope that I should soon have the assistance of a Missionary Brother, but it is now doubtful when I shall have that privilege. You will not understand me to express the least dissatisfaction with the arrangements of the Committee. I am however apprehensive they have placed too much dependence on me. I think it is my sincere desire to serve the cause in the best way I am able. I hope the Committee will take the subject into serious consideration, & send out another

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[42]Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, July 10, 1820, #65, ABC 18.3.4, Choctaw Missions, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[43]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, January 4, 1820, #47, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. I, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[44]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, January 29, 1820, #48, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[45]Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, June 21, 1820, #64, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

> Missionary as soon as circumstances will admit. This subject has been strongly impressed on my mind by a very just remark in your letter, that which ought ever to be kept in mind, "that the spiritual concerns of the Mission are after all the great thing."[46]

In another letter he expressed a similar concern for the need for another missionary:

> You can hardly conceive how much we need another Missionary. We must have faithful able preaching or all will be lost. The superintendance & general arrangements relative to the Missions, are more than sufficient to occupy all my time, including the necessary correspondence . . .[47]

He continually proclaimed his unfitness to be the head of the establishments and asked that a competent committee visit the schools to report and advise as to their general management.[48] After the schools grew in number, he even suggested that the office of superintendency be abolished "as it overwhelmed one man with the secular cares of all the stations and nearly destroyed his usefulness as a preacher, and gave him at least an apparent importance, which made him an object of jealousy among the natives, if not among his brethren."[49] But in spite of the fact that he repeatedly proclaimed his unfitness for the superintendency throughout his more than fifty years of labor in the Choctaw Missions, his work was more than satisfactory and the American Board continually expressed confidence and dependency on him.

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[46]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, May 29, 1820, #61, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[47]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, July 12, 1820, #65, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[48]Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, January 2, 1821, #72, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[49]Missionary Herald, XXII (1826), p. 59.

Not only spiritual, but physical problems continued to be a major area of concern at Elliot. The first week of February, 1820, thirty-eight children were ill. The complaints consisted mainly of mumps and severe colds with pleurisy in some cases. The immediate causes of the two latter illnesses were "apprehended to be due to the severe and very changeable weather; want of suitable clothing and the exposed situation of the school house, dining and prayer room, for want of windows."[50]

But despite the cares of the first school at Elliot, Kingsbury had accepted the responsibility of establishing another school in the Lower District and set out on February 10 "with two hands, & such small articles as we could take with us for the purpose of commencing the contemplated establishment." It was agreed by the brethren that he should select the site, erect a house and make preparations for raising a crop.[51] Traveling directly to Pigeon Roost, Colonel Folsom's mansion, Kingsbury remained there two days during a heavy rain before continuing his journey accompanied by Folson to Major John Pitchlynn's home.

Pitchlynn was an Englishman who had married a Choctaw woman and had acquired great wealth. While at his home, Kingsbury preached on the sabbath to two or three captains who expressed gratitude for the "prospect of schools and preaching among their long neglected people." The following day, Folsom and Pitchlynn set out with Kingsbury in his quest for the best site for the new school. At the end of the day, they were

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[50]Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, February 8, 1820, #49, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[51]Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, March 11, 1820, #56, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

unable to get back to Pitchlynn's house before dark so they "gathered some long grass in the woods and retired to their grassy couch without food or fire." The next day, they decided on that very spot for the school.[52]

The site chosen was on the south side of Ook-tib-be-ha Creek, about thirteen miles above the point where it emptied into the Tombigbee River. It bordered an extensive prairie near the dividing line between the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations. Eighteen miles from the new establishment the Military Road which ran from the foot of the Shoals in Tennessee crossed the Tombigbee River.[53] Kingsbury named the new station Mayhew in honor of Thomas Mayhew who, like John Eliot, was a 17th century missionary to the Indians of eastern Massachusetts. For more than ten years it was the "missionary capital of the Southwest."[54]

In the very beginning, however, great difficulties had to be overcome. Recalling the first few weeks, Kingsbury wrote in his autobiography that

> the place was entirely new, not a tree had been cut and the weather was extremely unfavorable for business operations. Sleet snow & rain were falling almost daily & it was four weeks before we could get a cabin to shelter us from the storms. Up to that time, our lodging had been in a smoky camp surrounded by mud & water.[55]

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[52] Conversations on the Choctaw Mission, Vol. I, pp. 43-45.

[53] Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, February 26, 1820, #52, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 10.

[54] Dawson A. Phelps, "The Choctaw Mission: An Experiment in Civilization," The Journal of Mississippi History, XIV (January, 1952), p. 46.

[55] Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 10.

Despite the wet and smoky camp, Kingsbury collected all the Indians and black people he could find and preached to them on Sundays. He reported that the health and spirits of the workers remained good with the exception of one man, whom Kingsbury had hired at $20 per month. He related that this man lost courage and rode his horse off vowing to never return. But when he came to a creek that he would be obliged to swim, his conscience smote him for leaving Kingsbury in such a situation, and he was afraid if he attempted to cross the creek, he would be doomed. He returned the same day and "resolved rain or shine to labour till he got up a house."[56] Consequently, work on a log building, 20 feet by 22, progressed until it was habitable. Kingsbury remained only long enough to plant the garden and one cornfield before returning to Elliot, 100 miles away, on March 29--thirty-nine days after he had left. Even so, official consent from the American Board for the operation of the second mission did not arrive until late April.[57]

Within six months after the Lower District, or Mush-ul-la-tub-bee district, voted their appropriation for a school, the other two districts pledged portions of their annuities to support schools. In a council held in Pushmataha's district in the southeastern part of the nation, one thousand dollars annually was appropriated for the support of a

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[56]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, March 11, 1820, #55, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Conversations on the Choctaw Mission, Vol. I, pp. 46-48.

[57]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, April 29, 1820, #57, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 10; Conversations on the Choctaw Mission, Vol. I, p. 49.

school and one thousand for a blacksmith's shop.[58] In the same year, the school at Elliot received an annual appropriation of $2,000 for its support. These large appropriations devolved a responsibility on the missionaries, especially Kingsbury who was expected to superintend and manage all the schools in the nation.[59]

In June, 1820, Chiefs Puck-sha-nub-bee and Mush-ul-la-tub-bee visited Elliot for the first time. Puck-sha-nub-bee brought his nephew to attend the school.[60] The chiefs attended worship at Elliot and gave great attention. That evening they exhorted the children for an hour telling them how happy they would be if some of the children would "follow the instruction of the good book that they had been hearing about."[61]

At the request of Kingsbury, the chiefs wrote their observations of the school at Elliot to Dr. Samuel A. Worcester, Corresponding Secretary of the American Board. They wrote:

> Brother, our hearts are made glad to see our children improving so fast. We are pleased to see our boys go into the woods with their axes and into the field with their hoes, under the care of their teacher, to learn to work, that they may know how to clear and cultivate our land; for we cannot expect to live any longer by hunting--Our game is gone;--and the missionaries tell us, the Good Spirit points out to us now this new and better way to get our meat,

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[58]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 9; Missionary Herald, XVI (1820), pp. 297-298.

[59]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 9; Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, June 3, 1820, #62, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[60]Conversations on the Choctaw Mission, Vol. I, pp. 52-53.

[61]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, June 4, 1820, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

and provide bread and clothes for ourselves, women, and children. And we are very glad to see our daughters learning to cook, and to make and mend clothes, and do all such things as the white women do. . . .

Now we see and believe, that all the missionary brothers and sisters at Elliot, are our friends, and wish to teach us and our children good things, which we have not known before.

Brother, we wish to express to all our good white brothers at the north, who have sent good missionaries and teachers here, our sincere and hearty thanks for their great kindness in so doing. We are well pleased in every respect with the school, and with our good white brothers and sisters of the mission family; and we are satisfied and well pleased with the manner, in which our children and treated by them. . . .

We have one good school in which 70 of our children, are, by your great kindness, placed and now receiving instruction. But brother, we would with boldness tell you our wants. We have more than 1,000 children in our nation, who are now waiting and looking up to our white brothers for the means of instruction. Our nation is open for more missionaries, and our hearts are ready to receive them.[62]

The American Board continued to meet the challenge of the Choctaw chiefs and to accept the responsibility for instructing their youth. In achieving these goals, the organization of the Choctaw Missions and the delegated duties of its members was of the utmost importance. Worcester, Secretary of the American Board, visited the mission at Elliot and addressed the group "with important suggestions on organization." He said:

The mission among the Choctaws is one. It is designed to occupy different stations, and to be in different divisions;--all to be under a great superintendency. Each primary establishment is to have a head, or rector, who is to be also an ordained minister. The work, besides, is to be divided into several parts, and to be assigned to different persons, according to their respective qualifications. You are all indeed brethren, and are always to regard yourselves as such. Nevertheless there are, and must be, distinctions of a very important kind. So it is in the church. It has its distinctions of office--of labor and service--order and subordination--distinctions according to the will of God. . . .

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[62] Missionary Herald, XVI (1820), pp. 298-299.

> In the several departments of the work, that of a steward is a very important one. . . . The Steward will be Treasurer, and have the management of the money. This is an important office.
>
> The department of husbandry is an important one, as a means of supporting the mission. . . . The missions must depend much upon it. The children are to be educated in reading and writing, and all the arts of civilized life, on missionary ground. They are not taught at home. Every thing is to be learned here. They are both to be instructed and inured to labor. They must be made acquainted with husbandry and the labors of the field. This is a leading object.
>
> You are ever to teach the children in the house--in the field--and by the way. . . . It must be here. . . . where every thing assumes at once a Christian character.[63]

A typical day at the mission school at Elliot exemplified Worcester's suggestions on organization and procedure. An article written by Adam Hodgson, a merchant of Liverpool, who visited Elliot while traveling from Natchez to Virginia in 1820, describes such a day:

> In the morning, at day-light, the boys were at their agriculture, and the girls at their domestic employment. About 7 o'clock, we assembled for reading, singing, and prayer; and soon afterward for breakfast. After a interval for play, the school opened with prayer and singing, a chapter in the Bible, and examination of the subject of the chapter of the preceding day. The children then proceeded to reading, writing, accounts, and English grammar, on a modification of the British system. The instructors say they never knew white children learn with so much facility.
>
> As soon as the school was over, the boys repaired to their agricultural labors; their instructor working with them, and communicating information in the most affectionate manner, the girls proceeded to their sewing and domestic wards at liberty till the supper bell rang. . . . After supper a chapter in the Bible was read, with Scott's practical observations. This was followed by singing and prayer; and then all retired to their little rooms in their log cabins.
>
> I could not help imagining, that before me might be . . . the future founder of institutions which were to enlighten and civilize his country. . . . The present system of combining the two objects of civilizing and Christianizing the Indian tribes, is already "in the full tide of successful experiment.[64]

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[63] Jedidiah Morse, A Report to the Secretary of War of the United States on Indian Affairs (New Haven, 1822), Appendix, pp. 164-175.

[64] Adam Hodgson, "Letters from North America," Niles Register, XXII (1820, Supplement), p. 63.

Hodgson was so impressed with the school that he donated three "half Eagles," one of which was used for the children's library.[65]

At the time of Hodgson's visit, Loring S. Williams was the regular teacher and superintended the labor of the boys when out of school. Dr. Pride was steward as well as physician. Referring to the mission staff, Hodgson remarked: "I was particularly struck with their apparent humility, with their kindness of manner towards one another, . . ."[66]

Other accounts of the school were equally favorable. The students were described as being

> remarkable for their amiable and gentle dispositions. The youth connected with the school constantly ate, slept, studied, labored, and played together, without manifesting any desire to contend or quarrel among themselves. . . . They were so contented at school that the first year, there was not an instance of a child's leaving school, except at a regular vacation. . . .
>
> They learned fast. In three days, several lads who had never seen the alphabet before were able to read and pronounce syllables on the fourth.[67]

The winter of 1820 was hard on the mission school, but the work advanced. Choctaw boys cleared several acres of land for cultivation under the direction of Williams. The harvest was rich, yielding several hundred bushels of corn and potatoes, peas and white beans. After two years of operation, Elliot listed eight dwelling houses, a school house, a mill-house, blacksmith's shop and joiner's shop, a lumber house and granary, a stable and three or four out houses. The mission owned over

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[65]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, June 26, 1820, #64, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[66]Conversations on the Choctaw Mission, Vol. I, p. 57.

[67]Ibid., pp. 36-37.

two hundred cattle and teams of oxen and horses, wagons, ploughs, and other implements, mechanical tools and apparatus for a family consisting of a hundred persons. There were about thirteen men and nine women belonging to the mission staff and about eighty children, male and female, in the school.[68]

Supplies for the Choctaw Mission were scarce since they had to be brought from great distances through forests without roads or by creeks navigable only for flat boats when swollen by rains. Consequently, the missionaries labored many days on laying out a wagon road to Pigeon Roost, a distance of sixty miles. When the work was finished in June, 1820, the first four-horse wagon ever seen in that part of the country arrived at Elliot with 2,000 yards of homespun cotton cloth for sale to the natives.[69]

On July 1, 1820, the mission was encouraged by the arrival of Anson Dyer, Zechariah Howes and Joel Wood, agriculturists and schoolmasters. Wood's wife, sister of the late A. V. Williams and L. S. Williams, accompanied them. She was from Salisbury, New York. Mr. and Mrs. Wood were left behind at a distance of about 120 miles due to their severe illness, and although Williams and subsequently Dr. Pride went to aid them and bring them home by wagon, they were unable to travel on to Elliot until September 22. In the meantime, bilious fever and ague struck other workers of the mission school and took the lives of Isaac Fisk and George Beckwith, a visitor from Connecticut who had come to offer his services to the mission. Students were home for their August

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[68] First Ten Annual Reports, 1820, pp. 294-295.

[69] History of American Missions to the Heathen, p. 79.

vacation and therefore spared. Kingsbury, believing "that all things work together for good to them that love God,"[70] spoke of the blessings of God mingled with the sorrows, saying that "missionaries, more than almost any other class of Christians, need to be purified from their remaining corruptions, and we can expect this only to be accomplished by their passing through the furnace of affliction."[71]

In early October, Kingsbury left Elliot for Doak's Stand where United States Commissioners, Choctaw chiefs and warriors were gathered for the purpose of signing a treaty ceding a large portion of Choctaw land to the United States. In the Treaty of Doak's Stand, the Choctaws exchanged the southwestern portion of their territory for a strip of land between the Red River on the south and the Arkansas and Canadian Rivers on the north covering what is now southern Oklahoma and southwestern Arkansas. As incentive to emigrate to the new land, the United States government offered the Choctaws supplies for the first year and an agent and blacksmith.[72]

Kingsbury, who was present at the treaty ground, was pleased to report to the home mission office that an important feature of the treaty was the provision for the education of Choctaw children. Major General Andrew Jackson and General Thomas Hinds, commissioners, asked Kingsbury to submit a plan to carry into effect the "benevolent wishes of the President, relative to the civilization & general improvement of the

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[70] Romans 8:28.

[71] Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, October 1, 1820, #68, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[72] Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 49; Kappler, Laws and Treaties, II, pp. 191-195.

Choctaws, . . ."[73] Kingsbury recommended that four large schools and thirty-two small ones should be established so "that the advantages of education may be furnished as extensively and speedily as possible to the rising generation."[74] General Jackson promised to send the proposal to the President and to use his influence to have it carried into effect. Kingsbury immediately wrote the Board of the urgent need for an adequate supply of teachers and workers to be on hand in the mission field.[75]

After signing the Treaty of Doak's Stand, the Choctaws discovered that the eastern portion of the Western land was already occupied by white settlers. The United States government therefore in 1824, invited a delegation of Choctaw leaders to Washington to negotiate another treaty to correct the "blunder." Making the trip were Mushulatubbee, Apukshunnubbee, Pushmataha, Daniel McCurtain, David Folsom and John Pitchlynn. Two of the three great district chiefs died on the trip: Apukshunnubbee at Maysville, Kentucky, by accident; and Pushmataha, in Washington. There was strong evidence and conviction of many present that federal officials intoxicated the leaders as an economical and speedy way of securing land. The itemized expense account for entertaining the delegation bears out this

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[73]Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, Treaty Ground, Choctaw Nation, October 18, 1820, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II. Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[74]*Ibid*.

[75]*Ibid*.

theory.[76] By the treaty in 1825, the present boundary between Oklahoma and Arkansas was established and the Choctaws ceded back the land east of the line to the United States. They received $6,000 a year for sixteen years and a permanent annuity of $6,320.[77]

In response to Kingsbury's request for a large increase in teachers and workers for the proposed new schools, a "noble company of helpers arrived from Massachusetts," in the early spring of 1821, by whom Kingsbury was "greatly relieved of secular cares both at Elliot & Mayhew."[78] The new arrivals included Calvin Cushman, John Smith, Elijah Bardwell and their families from Goshen, Massachusetts; William Hooper from Maine; Miss Judith Frisell from Peru, Massachusetts; Miss Hannah Thatcher from Pennsylvania and Cyrus Byington, a licensed preacher from Andover.

The trip to Elliot was long and arduous and proved disastrous to part of the group. Due to low water, the missionaries traveled three months by the Ark, a flat boat, from Pittsburg to the mouth of the Yazoo.[79]

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[76]Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, pp. 49-50; Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 336; Grant Foreman, Indians and Pioneers (New Haven, 1930), p. 184.

[77]Kappler, Laws and Treaties, II, pp. 211-214; Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 50.

[78]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 10.

[79]History of American Missions to the Heathen, p. 101.

At the mouth of the Yazoo, some of the group continued to Elliot by land. But John Smith, his wife, two sons and a daughter and Miss Thatcher (who later married Dr. Pride)[80] ascended the Yazoo in a batteau thirty feet long containing articles and supplies for the whole group. After toiling three weeks at the oars against a strong counter current, Smith's oldest son, Russell, a boy about fifteen years old, became sick with the "black tongue" and died. The stricken family was forced to bury him in the river, since no place could be dug on the top of the highest hill without striking water. The rations of the little group were reduced to baked beans, sassafras tea and river water before they reached Elliot three weeks later.[81]

Arriving the same year was Dr. Alfred Wright, who became the "beloved physician" and faithful preacher and translator of the Choctaw Mission. He was a native of Connecticut and was graduated from Williams College in 1812. But due to bad health, he left the East and moved to North Carolina where he worked for several years. He was ordained as a missionary at Charleston, South Carolina, and was sent by the American Board to the Choctaw Nation.[82]

Although the spring of 1821 brought new laborers to the field, the mission family was in dire need of funds and they were over $5,000

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[80] Conversations on the Choctaw Mission, Vol. I, p. 79.

[81] Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 10a; Conversations on the Choctaw Mission, Vol. I, p. 71.

[82] Morrison, "The Choctaw Mission," p. 175.

in debt. Despite the promise of appropriations which would more than cover this indebtedness, cash was available at the time. The plan which Kingsbury had submitted to Washington by Andrew Jackson had been rejected by the Secretary of War. Admitting it was a good plan, he regretted that it would involve a greater expense than the appropriation for Indian civilization would permit. A new plan had to be drawn up and approval did not come until October of that year.[83] Furthermore, the American Board reported that its treasury had no cash on hand. Kingsbury theorized:

> One disappointment follows hard upon another, whether the Lord designs to overwhelm us or divide the sea before us we know not. Burdened with a heavy debt, destitute of the most necessary articles for procuring our work--without funds & without any certain prospect of adequate reliefe, cast ourselves upon him who careth for his people . . .[84]

Many were sympathetic to their needs. Local men who had been hired by the mission donated a sum of $73.75.[85] Major Pitchlynn, the public interpreter, "of his own accord" immediately proposed to loan Kingsbury $200 in specie, and to put ten shares of stock worth $1,000 in the Mississippi Bank with instructions for him to either sell or make

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[83]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, January 22, 1821, Mayhew, #73, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1; Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, Mayhew, Choctaw Nation, May 14, 1821, #78, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[84]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, May 14, 1821, Mayhew, #78, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[85]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, March 2, 1821, Mayhew, #75, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University. Cyrus Kingsbury went to Natchez, Mississippi, at this time to solicit funds for the missions. Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, July 16, 1821, Mayhew, #81, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard, University.

use of the money. He expected some interest (4½ percent) but no refund until the mission was well able to do so. With such aid, Kingsbury was encouraged that nothing could stop the missions. "The people here will not hear a word of it," he proclaimed.[86]

Pertaining to spiritual matters, the year bore some fruit. As early as March, a "general seriousness" had been observed among the students at Elliot and continued to increase. By fall, three adult candidates were examined for church membership: two black women and Mrs. Perry, wife of the chief who had guided the Williamses and Kingsbury on their first journey to Elliot. Also, hired laborers expressed a "serious spirit of inquiry."[87]

The same year, Mayhew was visited by Dr. Worcester, Corresponding Secretary of the American Board. He assisted in organizing the mission church at Mayhew and addressed the mission family.[88] This was his last public service. He died a few weeks later at Brainerd--"a devoted friend of missions who had worn himself out in labors."[89]

Throughout another summer at Elliot, fever and ague took its toll although at Mayhew, workers preparing the school experienced

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[86]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, May 14, 1821, Mayhew, #78, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[87]History of the American Missions to the Heathen, p. 101; Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, September 2, 1821, Elliot, #85, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[88]See supra, pp. 65-66. Morse, A Report to the Secretary of War.

[89]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, pp. 12-13.

good health. It was generally concluded that Elliot was an unusually unhealthy location, especially in the summer. In desperation, Kingsbury suggested moving the mission--by now a $19,000 investment--or building a summer residence. At Elliot, death took the oldest and youngest sons of the Cushmans, the youngest child of Mr. and Mrs. L. S. Williams, Mrs. A. V. Williams (the former Judith Chase) and John Long, a fourteen-year-old student. The missionaries described John as a "boy of uncommon promise, one of the best scholars in the school, and one of the first and most anxious inquirers after the way of life."[90] Of Judith Williams, Kingsbury said: "She was an instance of uncommon devotedness to the cause, & of indefatigable labours. She literally wore herself out, in the discharge of the most fatigueing duties . . ."[91] After these tragic deaths, Kingsbury sent a request to the Board for additional help, medicine and medical books.[92]

Loss of man hours through sickness and death, lack of adequate funds and slow delivery of goods and articles delayed the opening of new schools. This delay caused some of the natives to accuse the missionaries of not fulfilling their promises. Others issued threats to the missionaries to "quit the country" if the schools did not operate by a

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[90] History of American Missions to the Heathen, p. 101; Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, July 16, 1821, Mayhew, C. N., #81; Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, October 16, 1821, Mayhew, #90; Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, October 25, 1821, Mayhew, #91, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[91] Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, October 25, 1821, Mayhew, #91, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[92] Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, "Supplies for Mayhew and Elliot," #88, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

given time. This dissatisfaction was not general, however; and Captain Folsom and Major Pitchlynn who understood the situation silenced the criticism.[93]

In spite of the many problems, the mission work continued. Kingsbury spent more and more of his time at the new station at Mayhew. Since it was in "its infancy" and much work was needed to erect the buildings and make other preparations for the school, Kingsbury moved to that station early in the autumn of 1821 with his wife and two small sons. He expressed grief that "he could be no more with the dear family at Elliot," but felt "great satisfaction" in committing the spiritual interests of that mission to the care of his "beloved Brother Byington and Captain John Smith and his excellent lady."[94]

In the meantime, other schools and churches were needed elsewhere and Loring S. Williams set out in search for the new sites. Advised to travel on horseback for a few months in an attempt to recover his health after a severe illness in 1821, he used this time to travel over the Choctaw Nation. Everywhere he went, he was met with enthusiasm and encouragement from the Choctaw people. One of the sites he visited was a stand on the Natchez Trace called French Camp, where the inhabitants seemed to be of Indian and French descent. There Le Fleur,[95] of

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[93]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, July 16 to August 14, 1821, #81, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[94]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 10.

[95]Louis Le Fleur set up a trading post at LeFleur's Bluff on the Pearl River, on the site of the later capitol of Mississippi--Jackson. After the construction of Robinson Road in 1825, LeFleur moved his stand from the Natchez Trace to the new road. Phelps, "The Choctaw Mission," p. 53.

French-Canadian descent, and owner of the trading post, expressed a need and desire for a school at that settlement. Williams explained to him that the Board was unable to meet the total expense, but could provide a teacher and family with clothing, furniture, books and stationery. On learning this, the people at French Camp offered to supply the necessary land, clear it for gardens, fields and buildings, erect the buildings and supply the food for the teacher and Indian children who could not eat at home. The Board was impressed with this proposal and authorized Williams to begin teaching a school there in a temporary house belonging to Le Fleur. If the school became a success, he was instructed to establish a regular station there.[96] Kingsbury ordered a list of books, tools and furniture for Williams to use at the new school.[97]

The financial strain of the mission was alleviated in October 1821 when at last the long-awaited letter arrived from the Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun, specifying the amount of appropriations for the schools. Enclosed was an extract of a correspondence to William Ward, Agent to the Choctaws, authorizing him to pay Kingsbury the specified annuities immediately upon receipt of his letter.[98] Shortly after, Major

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[96]History of American Missions to the Heathen, p. 100. Phelps, "The Choctaw Mission," pp. 48-49; Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 82; Conversations on the Choctaw Mission, Vol. I, pp. 84-85; Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 13.

[97]Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, October 15, 1821, Mayhew, #89, ABC. 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[98]Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, October 1821, #92, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Pitchlynn donated $1,000 to Mayhew.[99] The Choctaw Missions began the new year in good financial standing.

The school at Mayhew was opened officially on the last day of April, 1822, with twelve students. The number rapidly increased as provision was made for fifty. Joining Kingsbury on the staff were Dr. Alfred Wright, Dr. Pride and William Hooper from Berwick, Maine--a "man of an excellent spirit, & deep piety," who taught the girls.[100] Mayhew was situated on a much-traveled road and thereby received a great deal of company although not at the mission expense. The itinerants' generous donations more than covered their expenses. The missionaries distributed numerous tracts and other pieces of religious literature to their guests.[101]

At Bethel, the small school Loring S. Williams established at French Camp, the students reflected a deeper interest on the subject of religion than the other missions. A few instances of "hopeful conversion" had occurred at Elliot and Mayhew, whereas ten were numbered at a revival at Bethel. Four of them were white men, five were blacks (slaves) and one a free mulatto.[102] On November 17, a church was organized at this station.[103]

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[99]Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Hubbard, Esq., Russellville, Alabama, April 26, 1822, #97, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[100]Missionary Herald, XVIII (1822), p. 109.

[101]Conversations on the Choctaw Mission, Vol. II, pp. 7-8.

[102]Missionary Herald, XVIII (1822), pp. 109-110.

[103]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 13.

Revival was late in coming to the Indians, however. Their immediate concern was for education and the delay in beginning the promised schools caused more and more criticism by some. Others found fault with the schools already in operation--the main complaint being that the boys were made to work and were punished for misconduct. Robert Cole, district chief and "chief" critic, went to Elliot to hold a "big talk" with the missionaries about this complaint. His visit and criticism hindered rather than strengthened the operation of the school because it weakened the teachers' government over the children.[104]

In defense of their policy, the missionaries issued a statement to the Board:

> The Missionaries have held but one language in relation to the subjects of these complaints. They have uniformly declared that children committed to their care must be subject to their authority, must be obedient in school and trained to habits of industry, when not engaged in study; if they do not come on these terms, they cannot be received.[105]

In answer to the criticisms of the delay in beginning other schools, Kingsbury explained to the Board that when Dr. Worcester had visited the stations years earlier, he had asked Kingsbury to assure the chiefs in the Six Towns that the Board would send out a good teacher and blacksmith to them soon after. Since Kingsbury was unable to keep this pledge for lack of workers sent out from the Board, some said that the missionaries "have got their money, but are doing them no good."[106] As

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[104]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, June 8, 1822, Mayhew, #99, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[105]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, pp. 14a-15.

[106]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, At Mingo Mushulatubbee's,

a result of these growing criticisms and another summer of severe illnesses, enrollment declined for awhile at Elliot.

Kingsbury attributed much of their troubles to the influence of itinerant boatmen and traders passing through the country. The people of the western states took their produce to market in flat boats down the Mississippi River and returned home by land through the Choctaw country.[107] Referring to them, Kingsbury said that they were "grossly ignorant on the subject of missions and there were not wanting among them men of shrewdness & influence who endeavored to persuade the Choctaws that the object of missionaries was speculation."[108] Others made similar observations: "Among the Choctaws, the missionaries, . . . were doomed to incessant annoyances and hindrances, chiefly from the slanderous reports and vile influences of renegade whites, who fled from the restraints of civilized life, and were the sworn enemies of the missionaries."[109]

At the end of the summer of 1822, tragedy struck the mission family again with the death of Mrs. Kingsbury. She and the other missionaries at Mayhew had been taking care of several strangers who had stopped by for aid for their illnesses and rest from the fatigue of traveling. Kingsbury related the circumstances: "All the invalids

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Choctaw Nation, #108, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[107]See supra, Chapter II, p. 42.

[108]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 14a.

[109]Bartlett, Sketches of the Missions of the American Board, p. 181.

seemed in a fair way to recover when Mrs. Kingsbury was taken suddenly ill. She had previously enjoyed better health than any other female in the family." But within a few days' time she was in the "immediate prospect of death." He asked her if she felt any regret at having "left her father's house & all her beloved friends that she might labor for the salvation of the Choctaws. She replied with emphasis, 'o no, I only regret that I have done no more.'"[110] She died on Sunday morning, September 15. She left two little sons; the youngest not a year old.[111]

Her colleagues and Choctaw friends joined in tribute to her, recalling "that she was naturally cheerful, humorous, witty, sensible, resolute, and independent."[112] David Folsom wrote Kingsbury from Pigeon Roost: "The Choctaws have lost a great friend who did promote their best good, the school children are left motherless. . . . She is gone and gone never to return to teach the poor Choctaws, . . . indeed she was our Mother and Mother of our children, . . ."[113]

Although shocked and "overwhelmed with grief," Kingsbury left within two weeks for a long journey in the southeastern part of the nation to select suitable places for small schools. He stopped at Mingo Mush-uh-la-tub-bee's on Sunday to rest and preach. There he was joined

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[110]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 14.

[111]Ibid.; Journal of the Mission at Mayhew, September 1822, #87, ABC 18.3.4, Choctaw Missions, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[112]Conversations on the Choctaw Mission, Vol. II, p. 19.

[113]David Folsom to Cyrus Kingsbury, September 23, 1822, Pigeon Roost, #240, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Box 2, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

by Mr. Jewell from the mission family. Two years earlier, this district had made an appropriation of $2,000 annually for sixteen years for the support of a school which for various reasons had not been established yet.[114]

Kingsbury and Jewell traveled over the area in search of a place for a small boarding school. When they arrived at the Long Prairies, a place near the line separating Mississippi and Alabama, they met H. Nail, an aged white man or "Indian Countryman" as he was called, and his Choctaw wife by whom he had fifteen children. Joe Nail, his twenty-five year old son--an industrious, intelligent man--was settled near his father with his family of small children. Joe was captain of the lighthorse or regulating company in the district and had much influence with the principal captains. He and his father were "very friendly to the object of the Missionaries." After prayerful deliberation, Kingsbury and Jewell selected the site for the new school about half a mile from the residence of the Nails. It was named Emmaus and was placed under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Jewell.[115]

En route to Six Towns, Kingsbury and Jewell had unexpectedly come upon a group of Choctaws assembled for a ball play. When the Indians recognized Limping Wolf, a name given to Kingsbury by the Choctaws because one foot was badly deformed by a cut of a scythe when he was

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[114]See <u>supra</u>, p. 58.

[115]Journal of the Mission at Mayhew, October 1822, #89, ABC 18.3.4, Choctaw Missions, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 15.

a boy,[116] they postponed their ball game and the chiefs and warriors gathered around him to hear "a talk" about schools.[117] The captain of the Six Towns was Hwoo-la-ta-hoo-nah (Red Fort) and was a "sensible man & very active & energetic in the improvement of his people." He was happy for the school to begin but wished for another one in his own neighborhood. Kingsbury promised to write the American Board for a teacher for the neighborhood school and the chief submitted a letter of request:

> The number of men, women and children in the Six Towns, is 2164.
>
> I want the good people to send men and women to set up a school in my district. I want them to do it quick. I am growing old. I know not how long I shall live, I want to see the good work before I die. We have always been passed by, and have had no one to advise and assist us. Other parts of the nations have schools; we have none. We have made . . . laws, because we wish to follow the ways of the white people. We hope they will assist us in getting our children educated.
>
> This is the first time I write a letter. Last fall the first time we make laws. I say no more. I have told my wants. I hope you will not forget me.[118]

Red Fort referred to the laws recently passed by the Council against theft, murder, polygamy, infanticide, witchcraft and intemperance; these being the first such laws passed by the nation. Elaborating on each law in his letter to the Board, he said that the first law was against whiskey because the white people "bring it into the nation to buy up the blankets, and guns, and horses of the red people, and get

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[116] See supra, Chapter I, p. 2; Cushman, History of the Indians, pp. 86-87.

[117] Cushman, History of the Indians, pp. 86-87.

[118] Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, October 18, 1822, #241, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Box 2, Six Towns, Choctaw Nation, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Missionary Herald, XVIII (1822), pp. 108-109.

them drunk; the whiskey is to be destroyed. The whiskey drinking is wholly stopt among my warriors." He explained to the Board that the Choctaws had "formerly stole hogs, and cattle, and killed them," but that he had appointed a company of faithful warriors to "take every man who steals, and tie him to a tree, and give him thirty-nine lashes."[119]

A milestone in Choctaw progress was the arrival of Israel Folsom and McKee Folsom, younger brothers of David Folsom, from Cornwall, Connecticut, where they had attended the Foreign Mission School for four years. Kingsbury had looked forward to their return with much interest as they would contribute significantly to the Choctaw Missions. The school at Cornwall was instituted for the purpose of educating youths of "heathen nations, with a view of their being useful in their respective countries." The school began in May, 1817, and within two years enrolled thirty students, fifteen of whom were Indian youths of principal families belonging to five or six different Indian tribes. Several of the latter received an allowance from the government. In an official report from the Secretary of the American Board to the Secretary of War, the students were commended to the favor of the President

> as very promising youths, in a course of education, which will qualify them for extending influence, and for important usefulness, in their respective nations. They, as well as the pupils in the school in the nations, are exercised in various labors, and inured to industry; and the school comprises most of the

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[119] *Ibid.*

> branches of academical education, and is under excellent instuction and government.[120]

The following year a youth from Elliot and two from Mayhew were selected and sent to the Foreign Mission School at Cornwall. They were to be educated at the expense of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.[121]

In compliance with the requests of the chiefs and some of the people; four small schools were opened through the nation in spring and summer of 1823. These were for the accommodation of neighborhood children where English was spoken primarily. A second boarding school in the Six Towns District of the southeast was begun under the supervision of Dr. Alfred Wright. The station was named Goshen. Elijah Bardwell who had resided at Elliot, took charge of the secular affairs and the boarding establishment. Samuel Moulton was appointed teacher of the school and McKee Folsom served as interpreter.[122] In this same year, the Choctaw Missions were greatly strengthened by the arrival of new missionaries, one of whom was Miss Electa May of Goshen, Massachusetts, who was destined to become the second wife of Cyrus Kingsbury

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[120]Morse, A Report to the Secretary of War, (Appendix), pp. 163-164; Journal of the Mission at Mayhew, 1822, ABC 18.3.4, Choctaw Missions, Houghton Library, Harvard University. Israel Folsom became known as "The Wesley of the Choctaws." Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 235.

[121]Cyrus Kingsbury, Superintendent of Mission Schools, Choctaw Nation to Honorable J. C. Calhoun, Secretary of War, October, 1823, #122, ABC 18.3.4, Choctaw Missions, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[122]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 16.

and co-laborer with him in the mission field for over forty years.[123]

In spite of the addition of missionaries and the increasing number of schools, the Choctaw Missions did not progress as well as could be expected considering the cost paid in loss of lives, labor and funds. In a report to the Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun, Kingsbury listed four "circumstances" which had in some degree hindered the progress of the schools:

> (1) The great ignorance of the parents as to the regulations necessary in a school, & unwillingness of some to submit their children to wholesome discipline.
>
> (2) Ignorance on the part of the teachers, of the language of the natives, & consequently of their peculiar prejudices & customs.
>
> (3) The appearance of considerable wealth in buildings, improvements, stock, & other property together with the several branches of mechanical business & particularly the trading department, have all had their influence in leading some of the natives to suspect that our object was speculation. In each branch of business we have labored solely to promote the benefit of the schools. But the plan has evidently been too extended for the comprehension of these people. Small establishments, which make but little & noise, [sic] are better calculated to meet the views of the natives & will be least expensive.
>
> (4) The misrepresentations of ignorant & evil minded white people, have greatly increased the prejudices of the natives, & kept many from sending to the schools.[124]

In less than five years from the date of this report (October, 1823) the four "circumstances" were removed and progress was made.

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[123] Ibid.

[124] Cyrus Kingsbury, Superintendent of Mission Schools, Choctaw Nation to the Secretary of War, Honorable J. C. Calhoun, October, 1823, #122, ABC 18.3.4, Choctaw Missions, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Meanwhile, these "circumstances" had to be overcome little by little. Reports against the mission schools increased throughout the year 1823. On hearing these reports, Mingo Moo-shu-la-tub-bee and three or four of his warriors visited the schools in his district and observed the boys at work at their trades. He expressed himself highly gratified with what he saw and said it made him "very sorry to hear the bad talk of some of his warriors." Recounting this instance to the Board, Kingsbury explained that some of his warriors were much displeased with the chief, with Captain Folsom and with the missionaries. Some of them had threatened to kill Captain Folsom. They said he had been selling land to the missionaries and that they would ruin the nation. Kingsbury said these stories had been "put in their mouths by some evilminded white men, whose gains from the sale of whiskey" had been lessened through the influence of Captain Folsom and the missionaries. They were displeased with the chief because he sanctioned the measures for suppressing it. He concluded that whiskey drinkers were very eager to credit any evil reports respecting the missionaries and their friends since they no longer had "so free access to their beloved ook-ah-hoo-mayh [whiskey] as formerly."[125] Shortly after the chief visited the schools, Kingsbury met with the council and gave a full explanation of the situation which seemed to satisfy all parties.[126]

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[125]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, "Extracts from the Journal," Council Ground, Mingo Moo-shu-la-tub-bee's, May 10, 1823, #93, ABC 18.3.4, Choctaw Missions, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Journal for Mayhew, 1823, #99, Ibid.

[126]Missionary Herald, XIX (1823), p. 119.

In Chief Robert Cole's district, where delays were unavoidable in completing a school, the natives warned the missionaries to leave the premises. Informed of the threat, the Secretary of War sent a letter to the Choctaw delegation then at Washington[127] stating that "the government would not permit them to interfere with schools established at their request by the missionaries, under the patronage of the President of the United States."[128]

David Folsom, who had unceasingly supported the missions with his time, influence and personal funds[129] wrote a letter to Jeremiah Evarts, Secretary of the American Board, in which he expressed his views on the value of the missions and the future of his nation. He noted that there were many "evel doers" in the nation, ready at all times to prejudice the mind of the "poor ignorant men against the missionaries and the school" and praised the "great thing for the Choctaw people" that God had done. Referring to the scarcity of wild game, he stated that in order for the Choctaws to be saved from destruction, they should be encouraged

> to educate their children, for I have reason to believe education and Christianization goes together, hand in hand with civilization in aggriculture and manufacture, . . . I hope some of the Chocs know the education is the right path that leads to these habits, and Christianity produces and brings happiness, and harmony among all nation of people. . . . My Nation. . . . . must be civilized as

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[127] See <u>supra</u>, p. 71.

[128] Copy of Letter of J. C. Calhoun to Choctaw Delegation, December 3, 1824, #252, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 4, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[129] David Folsom contributed a large number of books at his own expense for the Missionary Rooms for a library. See list in <u>Missionary Herald</u>, XCIII (1822), p. 108.

> or esterminated no other alternative exists. . . . It requires but little research to convince every candid mind who well deeply examin the school among these people, and I am induse to think and do believe, never were prospect so promising as at this time, to impart knowledge and light to the Choc. people. I must conclude, by thanking your government for their humain benovolance toward my Nation. You Christian Brethren have done much for my Nation.[130]

Since a source of misunderstanding concerned the large size of some of the schools, the chiefs in council urged the establishment of a greater number of small schools throughout the different parts of the nation. The American Board responded to this suggestion as "one out of many indications of Providence that the plan of the missions must be so far changed, that the number of small schools must be increased, and the expense of the larger station diminished."[131]

Kingsbury expressed "great relief" at the idea of small schools so that the burden of boarding could fall on the parents.

> I have trembled in view of this accumulation of property, and worldly business, and worldly cares. I have felt the sad effects of it on my own soul, and have seen it in others. I hope we are beginning to see the way out.

He added that the natives, by finding fault with them and wishing to have their children nearer home, would induce a system of operations that would eventually be the least expensive and the least trouble and the progress would be more sure and the effect more extensive.[132] He explained, however, that it would be a great mistake to suppose that his

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[130] David Folsom to Jeremiah Evarts, Choctaw Nation, Pigeon Roost, May 9, 1824, #237, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. II, Box 2, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[131] Missionary Herald, XIX (1823), p. 119.

[132] Ibid.

change of mind had sprung from indolence and embarrassed finances. On the contrary, he noted that the management of Elliot and Mayhew had been so successful that Kingsbury had requested the Corresponding Secretary and Secretary of War to reserve the appropriations when due for some future exigency.[133]

Perhaps the greatest hindrance to the progress of the mission schools was the lack of mastery of the native language by the mission family. This problem was recognized by Kingsbury as early as 1821 and steps were taken to find a solution. Expressing his views on this important subject, Kingsbury wrote in his autobiography that the mission "was commenced with the mistaken idea (too prevalent at that time) that the great object should be to instruct the children in the English language." It was supposed that the adults and their native language would soon pass away, leaving a generation educated by Christian schools. This would supersede the labor and expense of translations. "The plan was inviting in theory, but in the practical working of it, there was perplexity & disappointment," he stated.

But Kingsbury believed that children

> were still but children. The parents had the controling influence. The partial improvement which had been made in the schools, soon yielded to the example and ridicule of those who thought their children were becoming too much like white people. It soon became manifest that to make a permanent impression on the rising generation, we must have a better hold on the minds and hearts of the adult population. This could be done only through the medium of their own language. In this language there was, as yet, no alphabet, no books and no facilities for communicating important truth to the native mind.

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[133] *Ibid.*

> It was necessary that some of the missionaries should devote themselves to the study of the language that the Gospel might be preached more intelligible, the Scriptures translated, and elementary & other books be prepared for the instruction of the adult population.[134]

Although the initial work of reducing the Choctaw language to a written alphabet was done by Cyrus Byington and Dr. Wright, other missionaries devoted much time and study to acquiring the language. Especially committed to this was Loring S. Williams and Anson Dyer. All agreed that the easiest and quickest way to teach the Choctaw child the English language was to make him able to read and write his own first. In that way he would see that learning was not a mere burden imposed upon the memory but each step had a meaning. The adult, too, would see the benefits of alphabetical writing when he visited a school and observed the pupils read words and phrases which he had known from childhood. Then the idea of his people becoming enlightened would become practicable and acceptable and he would be willing to cooperate in the work. Experience in the Choctaw mission field was "forcing this conviction upon the minds of many who had been formerly accustomed to think that the languages of the aborigines must be, in every case, neglected by the missionary, and, as soon as possible, abandoned by the natives."[135] This plan met with some resistance, however, from the War Department. Thomas L. McKenney wrote Kingsbury, April 10, 1826: "The plan of teaching Indians to read in their own language, is not the best way to proceed with them. Give them our language at first, . . . I care

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[134] Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, pp. 10-11.

[135] Missionary Herald, XXII (1826), pp. 63-64.

not how soon they forget altogether their own language altho' this is not necessary--they may retain both."[136]

Preaching through an interpreter had proved to be less than satisfactory even when a skilled interpreter could be found, which was seldom. This fact contributed greatly to the lack of response of the Choctaw people to the gospel. The missionaries were convinced that mastery over the Choctaw language would be a necessary tool in reaching the adult Choctaw population. They believed that if a strong native church were ever to be acquired the Bible had to be made available in the Choctaw language.[137]

With these goals ever before them, Byington and Wright applied themselves diligently to the task of learning the Choctaw language. They, as well as some of the other missionaries, spent a great deal of time among the villages where only Choctaw was spoken and with the aid of the Folsoms, made much progress. Byington immediately began work on a Choctaw grammar and a dictionary. He labored assiduously on the grammar, and at the time of his death at Belpre, Ohio, December 31, 1868, nearly fifty years later, he was making the seventh revision. The dictionary was a work of magnitude, also, containing over 3,000 words and an English-Choctaw index. Byington and Wright translated numerous books of the Old and New Testaments, a Choctaw speller and hymns. Israel and McKee Folsom, schooled in Cornwall, Connecticut, for four

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[136]Thomas L. McKenney to Reverend Cyrus Kingsbury, April 10, 1826, #258, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 4, Houghton Library, Harvard University. See supra, Chapter I, p. 10.

[137]Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society.

years in the Foreign Mission School, were especially helpful with the translations. Israel Folsom was the first to translate the Lord's Prayer in Choctaw.[138]

In the spring of 1824, Cyrus Byington preached the first sermon in the Choctaw language and the first Choctaw hymn was composed and sung. Although the first sermon was prepared and written with the aid of an interpreter, within six months, Byington was able to write sermons unaided "which were intelligible to the people and well received." During his first year of preaching in the native language, he delivered 176 sermons from thirty written ones he had prepared and ten hymns were in use.[139] On account of his eloquence and demonstrative style of preaching, the Indians called him "Sounding Horn."[140]

It is said that the language contains no curse words.[141] However, many Choctaws learned the art of swearing fluently in English. The Choctaw language abounds in the use of the letter "k" and most sentences end in "shke" or "oke." It is a difficult language to express in writing or printing.[142] Nevertheless, the first spelling book was printed in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1825.[143] While waiting for the printing

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[138]Byington Letters, Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Morrison, "The Choctaw Mission," p. 173; Conlan, "David Folsom," p. 344; Missionary Herald, XXIII (1827), p. 213.

[139]Missionary Herald, XXI (1825), p. 62.

[140]Morrison, "Choctaw Missions," p. 175.

[141]G. A. Crossett, "A Vanishing Race," Chronicles of Oklahoma, IV (June, 1926), p. 112.

[142]Ibid.

[143]Missionary Herald, XXII (1826), p. 59.

of other books, lessons were prepared on sheets of paper and printed in Greensborough, Alabama, under the supervision of Loring S. Williams.[144]

Another "first" in the Choctaw Missions during 1824, was the admission of the first two Choctaw students to the church. It was another four years before an adult Choctaw made the commitment.[145] During this interval there was no significant change in the program of the schools and stations, although there was some progress noted in every area.

Three of the most outstanding missionaries of the Choctaw Mission were married during this period. Cyrus Kingsbury and Miss Electa May were married on May 10, 1824, at Mayhew by the Reverend Cephas Washburn. Kingsbury wrote the following tribute to her in his autobiography: "It has often occurred to me that if I had gone through the whole United States I could not have found a more suitable companion."[146]

In February of 1825, Dr. Alfred Wright returned to South Carolina where he had formerly worked as a missionary and married Miss Harriet Bunce. Cyrus Byington married Miss Sophia Nye, of Marietta, Ohio, while in Ohio supervising the printing of several books in Choctaw.

Before submitting the books for printing, Byington spent most of the winter at Mayhew with Dr. Wright, revising, correcting and

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[144] Missionary Herald, XXIII (1827), p. 213.

[145] See infra, p. 100.

[146] Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 17; Cyrus Byington MS, notes on speech to be delivered honoring Cyrus Kingsbury and Mrs Cyrus Kingsbury after her funeral, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society.

enlarging them. Many parts were read to five or six interpreters separately to assure their correctness. The printed books included a small book containing about one thousand easy words and a few easy reading lessons for adults and children who could not attend the school, a larger book listing all the known words in the language with an English translation, and a third book of selections from the Scriptures, catechism and "other moral and religious pieces" in the Choctaw language.

While in Ohio, Byington was ordained to the ministry at Oxford by the Presbytery of Cincinnati. He had been a licensed preacher since the completion of his theological work at Andover. Before coming to the mission field, he had been admitted to the bar and had practiced law several years.[147]

A significant development in the advancement of education among the Choctaws was the organization of the Choctaw Academy in Kentucky in 1825. The school was begun by Colonel Richard Mentor Johnson, a hero of the Battle of the Thames,[148] on his farm near Georgetown, Kentucky. Johnson was a member of Congress at the time he founded the school and continued it after becoming Vice-President of the United States in 1837. The Academy was begun at the request of the Choctaw chiefs through William Ward, their agent. The Secretary of War authorized the annual

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[147] Missionary Herald, XXI (1825), p. 58; Missionary Herald, XXIV (1828), p. 82; Missionary Herald, XXIII (1827), pp. 118-119; Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 18.

[148] "Colonel Johnson, a conspicuous figure in the battle, rode at the great Shawnee chief and shot him down with his pistol. 'Rumpsey, Dumpsey, Hickory Crumpsey, Colonel Johnson killed Tecumseh' ran the doggerel of the day," Julian Hawthorn, United States (New York, 1899), Vol. II, p. 723.

expenditure of a portion of the annuities of the Choctaw Indians for the School.

Under the supervision of the Baptist Foreign Missions, the Academy opened October 15, 1825, with twenty-one Choctaw youth carefully chosen from the mission schools in Mississippi for the furtherance of their education. Later, representatives from other tribes attended the school. The Baptists had been pioneers of religion in Kentucky; therefore, it "was deemed good policy to put this popular denomination in charge of the new venture."[149] Thomas Henderson was master of the school which specialized in advanced studies and Bible lessons. Blacksmithing, shoemaking, wagonmaking and tailoring were added to the curriculum since it became apparent that not all the students would become professional men.

During the twenty years of its life, Academy graduates became lawyers, physicians, teachers, ministers, translators and artisans and returned to their people for positions of leadership and service.[150]

In May, 1826, American Board missionaries to the Choctaws and missionaries among the Chickasaws from the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia met and formed the Association of Missionaries in the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations. They agreed to meet annually to promote "mutual edification, for strengthening each other by counsel and prayer, and to concert measures for the advancement of the cause" in which they were

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[149]Ethel McMilan, "First National Indian School: The Choctaw Academy," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVIII (1950-1951), p. 56.

[150]Ibid., pp. 52-61; Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "The Choctaw Academy," Chronicles of Oklahoma, VI (December, 1929), pp. 453-480. Names of students are given in Carolyn T. Foreman, "The Choctaw Academy," Chronicles of Oklahoma, IX (December, 1931), pp. 407-410.

engaged. Resolutions adopted by the association included a statement acknowledging that the support and instruction of the schools were sufficiently important to induce persons to devote their services gratuitously to the business. Other questions receiving attention at the meeting concerned the place of importance attached to learning the native languages and the best course of action in promoting unity of feeling and action.[151]

The state of the mission schools in the Choctaw Nation steadily improved after 1827. The Choctaw Spelling Book and other elementary books printed in Choctaw proved to be excellent tools for learning skills among the students. Mr. Anson Dyer commenced two schools near David Folsom's to teach adults and children to read their own language. Within a short time, about fifty attended and were taught three times a week by a young Choctaw. "No attempt for their improvement has taken so deeply hold of their feelings as this," wrote Kingsbury in a report to the American Board.[152] In a year's time, similar schools for adult education were taught by former mission school students throughout the nation.

The school at Elliot rose much in the estimation of the natives. Jealousies diminished and Greenwood Le Flore replaced Robert Cole as district chief. The principal chiefs favored education.[153] Important changes took place in the civil polity of the Choctaws. During the 1827 council some principles were adopted as a "written constitution." It

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[151] Missionary Herald, XXII (1826), pp. 234-235.

[152] Missionary Herald, XXIII (1827), p. 120; Missionary Herald, XXV (1829), p. 72.

[153] Missionary Herald, XXIV (1828), pp. 83-84. Cyrus Kingsbury Miscellaneous Correspondence, July 24, 1826, Mayhew, Choctaw Nation, #16, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 3, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

provided for a general council twice a year of the three chiefs and captains of each village with accompanying warriors; that no law would be valid, unless enacted by the votes of a majority of the council with the approbation of two of the chiefs; that the soil on which they lived was common property of the whole nation and there was to be a standing committee of men in each district to watch over the general welfare of the nation and to see that the laws were executed. The agreement was signed by "Tapahahuma, David Folsom, Greenwood Le Flore, The Three High Chiefs of the Nation, August 5th, 1826."[154]

The year 1828 was a memorable time in the history of the Choctaw Missions. The seeds that the missionaries had sowed in education and religion came to fruition. "There was never more encouragement, than at the present time, to press forward in the work of educating the young," wrote Kingsbury from Mayhew in his report ending September 1828. "The prejudices of the adult population have given way; and more children are offered to all the boarding schools, than can be accommodated . . ." Twenty captains of clans in one district solicited teachers to instruct the clans to read Choctaw. Hebron, a newly established school under the direction of Calvin Cushman, reported a great change among the people of the neighborhood. "Most of them are furnished with implements of husbandry, and are making improvements in their buildings, and in agriculture. . . . There is a universal desire to learn to read the native tongue."[155]

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[154] Missionary Herald, XXIII (1827), p. 122.

[155] Missionary Herald, XXV (1829), p. 74.

But "by far the most remarkable thing in the present condition of the Choctaws," Kingsbury reported, "is the attention to religion, which has prevailed for several months past, and which is altogether unlike any thing, that was ever experienced by this people before."[156] The first indication of interest began at a camp meeting under the ministry of a Methodist missionary in the western district in July and August. Six or seven Choctaw men became impressed after hearing a simple narration of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Kingsbury wrote:

> One of these was affected with bodily exercises, similar to what was experienced a few years ago in the western and southern states. A large meeting was held in October, at which there was a very great and general excitement, and the effects produced on many were truly remarkable and happy. Some who before were violent opposers of the gospel became its zealous friends. At these two meetings and subsequently, several hundreds have manifested a desire to be instructed in the gospel . . . and it is peculiarly gratifying, that among them are several of our former scholars.
>
> It is worthy of notice, that, at the commencement of the above work, the old men, whom once it was supposed nothing could move, were the first affected; and all, with one exception, were captains of clans. . . .
>
> Some very unusual and remarkable means seemed to be required in the case of the Choctaws, to overcome their prejudices, and to arouse them to an attention to the gospel.[157]

The first "old man" to be affected and the first full-blood adult who embraced the gospel was Tun-na-pin-chuf-fa, an old chief who was converted at Ai-ik-huh-nuh mission. Tun-na-pin-chu-fa ("our one weaver") began to speak publicly in religious meetings. When he was received into the church, he was baptized and at his own request, given the name of one of the missionaries--William Hooper.[158]

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[156] Ibid., pp. 74-75.

[157] Missionary Herald, XXIV (1828), p. 181.

[158] Cushman, History of the Indians, p. 102.

The long awaited revival and religious awakening began shortly afterwards. David Folsom, Chief of a district, and ten other men soon followed Tunnapinchuffa's example. Kingsbury described the occasion in his autobiography:

> On the first Sabbath of December by previous appointment of some members of our mission a small camp meeting was held in the woods 10 or 12 miles from Mayhew. The weather was unfavorable, snow was falling a part of the time and we had no shelter. At the commencement of the meeting our prospects were discouraging. . . . The sacrement of the Lord's Supper was administered after which Col. David Folsom, the Chief of the District and about ten other men came out decidedly on the Lord's side. The chief spoke with much feeling and effect to his people on the great truths of the gospel. Affectionately recommending to them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Savior of sinners and to obey his commands. At that meeting with no other seats than round logs and exposed to the inclemency of the weather, the work of the Holy Spirit was manifest in the hearts of those present & an impulse was given to the good work, the fruits of which remain to the present day.[159]

The year 1828 was a milestone in the history of the Choctaw Missions. Reports to the American Board for the year 1828 gave glowing accounts of progress. They reported that the Choctaws cultivated more land and in a better manner than formerly; they acquired more agricultural implements, household furniture and apparel and several families had a substantial increase in stock of hogs, cattle and horses. The missionary stations furnished a market for their surplus products and excited a "spirit of industry."[160]

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[159] Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 19.

[160] Missionary Herald, XXV (1829), p. 346.

CHAPTER IV

CHOCTAW REMOVAL

Andrew Jackson's election to the presidency marked a new era in Indian policy. Moderation and friendly persuasion in Indian removal was replaced by militant coercion. Choctaw chiefs and warriors who had fought under General Jackson found themselves forced to leave the land of their forefathers.

On September 27, 1830, the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek was signed by the leaders of the Choctaw Nation and the Commissioners of the United States. By its terms, the Choctaws relinquished to the United States the last of their holdings east of the Mississippi River, amounting to 10,421,139 acres of land in exchange for the land west of the Arkansas Territory between the Arkansas and Canadian rivers on the north and the Red River on the south--land which had been previously ceded to the tribe in the Treaty of Doak's Stand in 1820.[1] The nation voted almost unanimously against the treaty after which they were threatened into submission by Major John H. Eaton, Commissioner and Secretary of War. The instructions from the President had been simply stated:--"fail not to make a treaty."

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[1]Muriel H. Wright, "The Removal of the Choctaws to the Indian Territory, 1830-1833," Chronicles of Oklahoma, VI (June, 1929), p. 104.

The nation "was literally in mourning" after the treaty signing and all improvements were stopped as multitudes sat down "in a kind of sullen despair." Their only hope was that the Senate would not ratify the treaty. Seeking outside help, Tunnapinchuffa requested Kingsbury to write a letter for him to Jeremiah Evarts, Corresponding Secretary of the American Board:

> Do help me. The Sec. of War came & took my country. I am in great distress. . . . Brother White man, I never injured anything of yours. My ancestors never took up arms against you; but were always your friend. . . . True, other nations have fought you; but I a Choctaw have not."[2]

There was some talk of attempting to have the treaty altered or annulled. However, on February 25, 1831, by a vote of thirty-five to twelve, the Senate ratified it. A Choctaw chief expressed the feeling of the nation in an address to the missionaries when he said: "We have just heard of the ratification of the Choctaw Treaty. Our doom is sealed. There is no other course for us but to turn our faces to our new homes toward the setting sun."[3] The treaty specified that the removal was to be completed within three years. The migration of the Choctaws was a western trek of indescribable suffering, hardship, sickness and death.

The missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Mississippi were distraught. The two years preceding

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[2]Cyrus Kingsbury to Jeremiah Evarts, Aiikhuna, Choctaw Nation, October 16, 1830, #88, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[3]Cyrus Kingsbury to American Board, Choctaw Nation, March 19, 1831, "Copy" #9, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Missionary Herald, XXVII (1831), p. 285.

the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek had been the most promising for the Choctaw Mission.

Kingsbury wrote to the American Board citing specific achievements "in proof of" progress in improvement among the Choctaws. He pointed out that habitual intemperance which had resulted in several deaths had prevailed until a law had been passed prohibiting whiskey in the nation. In addition, twenty-two other laws had been adopted by the Choctaws against such crimes as murder, theft, infanticide, polygamy and trespass. Another "proof of the advancement of the Choctaws" was their great desire for education and schools, he noted, adding that "the only complaint now against the missionaries is, that they do not preach & visit enough."[4] Parents used their influence to encourage and sustain the principles and habits taught the children while in school.

> There never has been a time, since we came to this nation, when instruction of every kind was so much sought for, and attended with such encouraging fruits as at the present. We have not a fair prospect of being able to lay out our strength to advantage. The schools are becoming important in the estimation of many of the natives. Applications for admission at this place, have become so numerous, that we have an opportunity of selecting the most promising.[5]

Owing to a powerful impulse to industry, hundreds of Choctaws could be hired to do many kinds of farming and other work on reasonable terms. Kingsbury used statistics to illustrate some of his claims: "last year in the northeast district . . . population, 5,627; neat

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[4]Cyrus Kingsbury to American Board, Mayhew, January 7, 1829, #35, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 3, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Missionary Herald, XXV (1829), pp. 152-154.

[5]Cyrus Kingsbury to American Board, Mayhew, March 24, 1829, #36, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 3, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Missionary Herald, XXV (1829), p. 280.

cattle, 11,661; horses, 3,974; oxen, 112; hogs, 22,047; sheep, 136; blacksmith's shops, 7; cooper's shops, 2; carpenter's shops, 2; schools, 5." Describing a clan of 313, "who a year ago were almost entirely destitute of property, grossly intemperate, and roaming from place to place," Kingsbury listed their holdings: "188 horses, 511 cattle, 853 hogs, 7 looms, 68 spinning wheels, 35 ploughs, 6 oxen, 1 school, 20 or 25 scholars."[6]

Aware of the rapid movement toward removal as early as October 1829, Kingsbury's annual report stated that the system of improvement of the Choctaws could not fail to produce "important and happy results" if uninterrupted. But, he warned, should the "present order of things be broken up" he feared the nation would sink to rise no more. He added regret that necessity caused him to differ "from the government in any of their views relative to the Indians."[7]

The missionaries' greatest work had been in education and conversion of the Choctaw language to written form. The first books printed in the Choctaw langauge were an introductory spelling book of fifteen pages, another spelling book of 160 pages and a reading book of 144 pages consisting of Scripture extracts and other "useful matter" designed mainly for the adult Choctaws. Also, two thousand copies of a book of fifty-nine hymns were printed.[8] Three other books were prepared

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[6]Missionary Herald, XXV (1829), pp. 152-154.

[7]Cyrus Kingsbury, Annual Report, Mayhew Choctaw Nation, October, 1829, #41, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 3, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Missionary Herald, XXVI (1830), p. 21.

[8]Missionary Herald, XXVI (1830), p. 12.

and translated by Wright and Williams and printed under their superintendence at the press of William Williams, in Utica, New York, in 1831. The first was Chahta Ikhananchi (Choctaw Instructor) containing a summary of Old Testament history and biography, with "practical reflections." The book contains 157 pages with twenty-seven cuts "designed to illustrate the most important scenes." The second was Holisso Holitopa consisting of selections from the Gospels of Luke and John. It contained 152 pages, besides seventeen cuts illustrating New Testament history. The third was a translation of the History of Joseph, with forty-eight pages and three cuts. Over one thousand copies were printed of each, totaling 3,500 copies and 398,000 pages.[9]

It was often said that very few of the full-blooded Indians would submit to the confinement and labor of learning to read and such change of habits necessary to being a member of the schools. But statistics revealed that nearly two-thirds of all the students in the schools were full-blooded Choctaws and they showed no aversion to learning when they saw that their welfare was promoted by it. As reported in November, 1830, "the effects of the schools in qualifying the young to be good mechanics, good teachers, and intelligent members of Christian churches, are already witnessed."[10]

During the fourteen years which the Choctaw Missions operated in Mississippi, thirteen stations and thirty-three schools were established although no more than eleven were in operation at one time.[11]

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[9] Missionary Herald, XXVIII (1832), p. 28.

[10] Missionary Herald, XXVI (1830), p. 347.

[11] Monthly Paper, III (June, 1832), p. 11.

Thirty-three men and thirty-three women were employed for an average of more than six years. Of the men, five were preachers, twelve were schoolteachers, eight farmers, seven were mechanics and one was a physician. From the beginning of the mission until August, 1831, about $140,000 was expended; $60,000 from the Choctaw annuity and about $20,000 from the fund appropriated by Congress for the civilization of the Indians. The mission furnished partial board, tuition and clothing to students, averaging about $1,500 a year and furnished tuition and books to students not boarded to approximately $1,000 per year. Probably about half of the whole number acquired an education that would enable them to read intelligently in the Choctaw and English languages and to transact the common business of life.[12]

The missions prospered until the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek of 1830 was ratified February 24, 1831. The majority of the nation was opposed to the removal west, but the missionaries of the Methodist and Baptist denominations favored the removal. They felt the Indian would be saved from the contaminating influences of the frontier. The American Board missionaries (Presbyterians and Congregationalists) who had started their work in the Choctaw Nation before the Methodists and Baptists, were opposed to the removal on the grounds that the progress and interest of the Indians in their own improvement would be retarded.[13]

The Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek pledged perpetual peace and friendship. The United States promised:

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[12]American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Annual Report, 1832, p. 104; Phelps, "The Choctaw Mission," p. 54.

[13]Wright, "The Removal of the Choctaws to the Indian Territory," p. 107.

> that no Territory or State shall ever have a right to pass laws for the government of the Choctaw Nation. . . . and their descendants; and that no part of the land granted them shall ever be embraced in any Territory or State; but the United States shall forever secure said Choctaw Nation from, and against all laws except such as from time to time may be enacted in their own National Councils, not inconsistent with the Constitution, Treaties, and Laws of the United States . . .[14]

This new homeland in the West began near Fort Smith, where the Arkansas boundary crossed the Arkansas River; then to the source of the Canadian fork; South to the Red River and down it to the western boundary of Arkansas Territory; north again to the beginning.[15] Choctaw leaders agreed to move as soon as practicable with one-third approximately to remove each fall from 1831 to 1833. The Indians were to be moved to their new homes at the expense of the United States government and would be furnished with ample corn and beef or pork for twelve months after reaching the West. The government guaranteed protection in their new home from foreign invasions. No white person would be allowed in the country without the consent of the Choctaws, except the Indian agent, appointed by the president. All alcoholic beverages were banned from the nation.

The United States promised to provide teachers, annuities and schools for the education of the Choctaws. Land gifts were given to chiefs and those who wished to remain in the United States after removal, provided that they registered their claim within six months after the treaty was ratified. The fourteenth article of the treaty, which

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[14]George Dewey Harmon, Sixty Years of Indian Affairs: Political, Economic, and Diplomatic, 1789-1850 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1941), p. 227.

[15]Royce, "Indian Land Cessions in the United States," p. 726.

signified the condition of the land grants in Mississippi, caused much fraud and corruption known as the "Choctaw Land Fraud." Each adult of a family who remained under the treaty conditions, would receive a reservation of one section of 640 acres of land; each child over ten years of age would receive 320 acres and each one under ten years would receive 160 acres. If one failed to register within six months, left the country and returned, he was no longer eligible.[16]

Colonel William Ward was the United States agent appointed to receive and register the Indians' claims for remaining in Mississippi. It was said that he was "a man of intemperate and carless habits," who "in some cases refused to receive the application and in other cases to record it."[17] Ward was eventually denounced as a "drunkard, a cheat, and the lowest type of representative that the United States could employ."[18] Speculators moved in and bought the Indians' claims at half price and a three-cornered battle began among representatives of the Indians, speculators and settlers.[19] Accounts were told of "quarreling, murdering, violation of contracts and the whole catalog of crimen falsi." The courts were a mass of confusion: "They moved to quash everything. In one court, bonds totaling thousands of dollars were quashed because

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[16]Harmon, Sixty Years of Indian Affairs, p. 231.

[17]Franklin L. Riley, "Choctaw Land Claims," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, VIII (1904), p. 346.

[18]Arthur H. DeRosier, Jr., The Removal of the Choctaw Indians (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1970), p. 24.

[19]Mary Elizabeth Young, Redskins, Ruffleshirts and Rednecks: Indian Allotments in Alabama and Mississippi, 1830-1860 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), p. 58; Riley, "Choctaw Land Claims," p. 354.

of the writing of 'State of Mississippi' instead of 'The State of Mississippi.'"[20] Finally, in the early part of 1836, seventy-six citizens of Mississippi sent a remonstrance to the United States Senate against the manner in which the fourteenth article of the treaty had been executed and a state and national commission began investigations.

Most of the Indians, however, prepared to remove. Small parties left for the West as early as November 1830--three months before the treaty was ratified--in order to secure choice land sites. Dr. Alexander Talley, the leading Methodist missionary of the tribe, hurried ahead to obtain some corn from the settlers in the Arkansas Territory near the line of the new Choctaw country at the mouth of the Kiamichi River and to await the arrival of the first emigrants from Mississippi. After extreme suffering from hunger and exposure, ninety-two Choctaws arrived there in an "emaciated condition" in February. They slept in log cabins at Fort Towson and lived on the scanty supply of corn that Talley had brought on packhorses from a nearby settlement. When officials in Washington heard that many Choctaws were already moving west, General George A. Gibson, Commissary General of Subsistence, made plans for their provisions in compliance with the terms of the recent treaty. He immediately dispatched Lieutenant J. F. Stephenson of the Seventh Infantry, to go to Fort Towson and relieve Talley of the responsibility. Lieutenant Stephenson remained in the region until the last year of removal of the Choctaws[21]

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[20]Robert M. Coates, The Outlaw Years. The History of the Land Pirates of the Natchez Trace (New York: Literary Guild of America, 1930), p. 200.

[21]Wright, "The Removal of the Choctaws to the Indian Territory," pp. 108-109.

in 1833. Those Indians who moved independently under the commutation plan received $10.00 each on expenses for their trip.

Soon after the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek was ratified, the Choctaws presented a petition to the American Board requesting some of the missionaries to accompany them to their new land in the West. At a three-day meeting at Mayhew at the end of March, the petition was given in the form of an address to the missionaries on behalf of the members of the church and signed by the leading members present. Recalling the years past when the missionaries first came to the Choctaws they said: "Our people rejoiced to have you teach their children, and were glad to embrace the opportunity. . . . there has been much done for us to have books put in our hand, that many of our people can learn to read in their own language."[22] They spoke of the condition they were in at the time of the arrival of the missionaries: "when you came among us, good many years ago, you found us no school--no gospel--no songs of praise to Chihowa (Jehovah) was heard."[23] Then they formally petitioned the missionaries to remove west with them saying that "unless you do something for us more beyond the great river Mississippi, we shall be in a distressed situation."[24] Kingsbury replied by assuring them that their request would be granted.[25]

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[22]Cyrus Kingsbury to American Board, Choctaw Nation, March 19, 1831, "Copy," #9, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Missionary Herald, XXVII (1831), p. 285.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid. Petition was signed: "Robert Folsom, Taho ha ya, Tuskla tubbee, Benjaman Wright, George Hudson, Nantonna, John Folsom, Deerbone, Noah Wall, Samuel Folsom, Yemanta, Ahliluystubi, Ahitubi, Amzi Robinson, Israel Folsom."

[25]Ibid.

Cyrus Byington, in a speech years later, recalled the attitude of the missionaries at the time:

> In the treaty there was no provision for our many improvements or for our removal & renewing the mission here. (We were situated somewhat like a boat on a large sand bar after the waters had passed away. Our people were gone--or going). This was trial. The best remedy we could think of was to offer our service again, ask our friends to help us & follow our people & begin again in their new lands. This we did & it had the good effect to remove from some people their suspicions about our selfish motive in our great work (Men influenced by worldly motives would hardly have left one set of buildings).[26]

Soon the words cunni at a hah!--They are going away! became familiar sounds as the Choctaws began the long and wearisome trek west in the fall of 1831.[27] Approximately four thousand Choctaws--in wagons, on horseback or on foot--set out for the 550-mile journey to the west. About six or seven hundred of Folsom's people left for the Red River country by way of Vicksburg; and about the same number of Mushlatubbee's people left for the Arkansas by way of Memphis.[28] Before the Choctaws left Mississippi, they had agreed that the Lower Towns people would settle in the northern part of the country along the Arkansas, the Six Town people west of the Kiamichi and the Upper Towns to the east of the river.[29] Soon after their arrival, the Red River district became the Apukshunnubbee

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[26]Cyrus Byington, Speech at Mrs. Cyrus Kingsbury's Funeral, June 21, 1864, Indian Territory, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society.

[27]Riley, "Choctaw Land Claims," p. 392.

[28]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Green, American Board, Mayhew, Choctaw Nation, September 26, 1831, #20, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[29]Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 58.

in the southeast; the northern, the Mushulatubbee and west of the Kiamichi, the Pushmataha.[30]

On either side of the Mississippi River, there were dangerous swamps, averaging fifty miles in width, thick forests and dense canebrakes that were almost impenetrable. Due to heavy rains, overland travel in wagons through the swamps proved impracticable, so that it was necessary to secure four steamboats--Walter Scott, Reindeer, Talma and Cleopatra--to meet the emigrants at Vicksburg.[31]

Shortly after beginning their voyage on the Mississippi, they experienced the worst blizzard ever remembered in that area. The Arkansas River was blocked with ice. Upon disembarking at the Arkansas Post, about 2,500 Choctaws huddled in open camps during the storm. There were very few blankets or moccasins among them; most of the women were barefooted and the young children naked. Captain Jacob Brown, superintendent of the removal in the west at that time, was unprepared to feed and care for the numbers of people in the emergency; therefore rations were short. The subsequent lack of proper food and exposure in zero weather brought sickness and death to many. Only forty wagons were available and the roads needed heavy repairs after the storm. Furthermore, Captain Brown was short of funds to hire help, wagons and teams from the people of Arkansas. After the blizzard, heavy rains turned the much traveled roads into a quagmire.[32] Due to the unpreparedness of the

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Wright, "The Removal of the Choctaws to the Indian Territory," p. 115.

[32] Ibid., pp. 115-117.

government officials to meet the needs of the critical situation, prices for corn and teams and wagons became exorbitant.

A small commutation group suffered similar hardships. It was reported that "not one in ten had even a moccasin on their feet & a great majority of these were walking."[33] Many were detained on the way by the loss of horses and other casualties. One observer reported that the storm began with hail and sleet, followed by a heavy snow, and that "for more than two weeks . . . those suffering people were lying in their camps without any shelter and with very little provision. . . . more than 100 ponies belonging to one company were frozen to death standing in the mud of the Mississippi swamp."[34]

Although the officials seemed to do everything in their power to alleviate the suffering, they were helpless before the fierce winter storm and the needs of so large a number of people. By March of 1832, the last of the first emigrating parties of 1831 arrived in the west in the Red River area. The superintendent reported "3,749 Choctaws being rationed at four stations: Horse Prairie, Fort Towson, Miller Court House and Mountain Fork."[35]

Meanwhile, the missions in Mississippi began to break up. All of the personnel of the stations except the ordained ministers were dismissed when the missions were closed. Since they worked without salary,

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[33]Cyrus Kingsbury Autobiography, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 20; Missionary Herald, XXVIII (1832), p. 117.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Wright, "The Removal of the Choctaws to the Indian Territory," p. 119.

they were given the livestock, agricultural implements and other movable properties of the mission. The Board memorialized Congress for a refund on the value of the buildings and the improvements of the stations.[36]

Although the Board had been reluctant to undertake a similar work among the Choctaws in the West, the appeal by the Choctaws themselves and the recommendation of Kingsbury not to "abandon this people in their present perilous and distressing situation," influenced them to reconsider. However, the plan adopted for the new missions in the West was far less expensive and elaborate. Each station would have only one missionary and the schools would be staffed largely by educated natives who had been trained in the missions in Mississippi and the Choctaw Academy in Kentucky and Foreign Mission School in Cornwall, Connecticut.[37] The Board released to the nation the annuity which was due annually until 1836.[38] All the money that was received from the United States for the mission stations that were abandoned in the old nation and all that was received from the sale of the mission property was expended in the support of the missions and schools which were established by the American Board among the Choctaws west of the Mississippi.

The Board asked Kingsbury to remain in Mississippi to supervise the closing of the missions and the disposal of the properties. Byington was requested to remain in order to complete the preparation of books in

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[36]Phelps, "The Choctaw Mission," p. 47. See <u>infra</u>, pp. 124-128.

[37]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 56.

[38]<u>History of the American Board</u>, p. 227.

the Choctaw language.[39] Mr. and Mrs. Loring S. Williams and Dr. and Mrs. Alfred Wright were selected to be the first American Board missionaries to establish a mission among the Choctaws in the west. Before moving to the new territory, Williams and Wright went to Utica, New York, to supervise the printing of books and other literature in the Choctaw language at the press of William Williams. They spent the summer and fall of 1831 there. The books included one entitled Chahta Ikhananchi (Choctaw Instructor), containing a summary of Old Testament history and biography, with 157 pages and twenty-seven illustrations. Another, Holisso Holitopa, included selections from the Gospels of Luke and John with 152 pages and seventeen illustrations. Also, several other books and translations by Williams were included. More than 1,000 copies were made of each printing.[40]

Williams, who had been ordained an evangelist in the old nation in 1830, left on January 16, 1832, for the new country accompanied by his wife and Miss Eunice Clough, teacher.[41] In the meantime, Dr. and Mrs. Wright embarked at New York for New Orleans on December 1, and on February 6, 1832, met Mr. and Mrs. Williams and Miss Clough at Vicksburg on the Mississippi River. They proceeded to Little Rock, on the Arkansas River by steamboat. Dr. and Mrs. Wright had to remain in Little Rock until Dr. Wright's health improved, but Mr. and Mrs. Williams and Miss Clough continued to the new land. The distance they had traveled

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[39]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 21.

[40]Missionary Herald, XXVIII (1832), p. 28.

[41]Cyrus Kingsbury to Greene, Mayhew, January 16, 1832, #26, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Box 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

from the old Choctaw Nation, following the rivers, had been about 800 miles.

Describing the trip, Williams wrote:

> We set out on the 2d of March, with a common road wagon drawn by two yoke of oxen, which I drove, while my family rode on horseback, having three horses with us. . . . The road being mostly new was rendered literally almost impassable by the heavy loaded and numerous wagons . . . we could advance only about eight or ten miles a day, and some days not more than five or six. The fatigue was too much both for man and beast; and it finally became necessary to leave our wagons, baggage, and team. . . . and set out once more with three horses, one of which we packed with some necessaries, including our tent, and axe, and some clothing, blankets, provisions, &c. On the other two horses, five persons, including three children, rode while the other two of our number walked. In this way we got along fifteen or twenty miles a day, and with but little expense. We generally pitched our tent wherever night overtook us, and slept sweetly in the woods on our blankets, with our feet to a large fire at the tent door.[42]

Williams described his reception among the Choctaws as one of "unfeigned joy." He said he met no one who manifested a feeling unfriendly to the objects of the new missions and that this feeling was not confined to the professors of religion. He and Mrs. Williams found a place to stay for a season about five miles east of the boundary line in a pioneer settlement. His journal stated that their cabin was one of the poorest but kept the rain out and they were allowed the use of four or five cows and two or three acres of land. They bought corn, meat and salt--which was literally all they had at the time. He added: "We are not at all troubled with furniture, as ours has not yet come on."[43]

After a delay of about four months, Williams chose the site for the new mission on the Mountain Fork, called Nunnih Hacha by the Choctaws.

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[42] Missionary Herald, XXVII (1832), pp. 223-224.

[43] Ibid., pp. 224-225.

It was ten miles west of the territorial line with about 1,400 Choctaws located within five miles and at least 3,000 within twenty-five miles. He bought "an old improvement formerly occupied by a white man" and had "an unfailing spring of good water" near their door. He named the new mission station Bethabara and moved his family there on the 12th of July. Twelve days later, Mrs. Williams began a school in their house. Miss Clough continued teaching in the white settlement for the time being. The Choctaws agreed to pay four dollars a quarter for each student taught the English language, and three dollars for each one taught the Choctaw only. They were to pay in such goods as they could spare and that were needed by the teacher. There were about twenty-five students, one half of whom were studying English.[44] But, Mrs. Williams' health failed soon after the beginning of the school and the school was discontinued for three months.

On October 19, 1832, Mr. Williams, weak from fever himself, organized a church at Bethabara with fifty-eight members including Mrs. Williams. All except one were formerly members of churches in the old nation. In November, eighteen others were added.[45] By the close of 1833, membership had increased to 143. Williams had opened schools in three settlements where students were taught to read and write in English and Choctaw languages by native teachers under his supervision. The parents boarded and clothed the students and furnished the books. The teachers were paid by the Board. There were about ninety students at

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[44] Missionary Herald, XXVIII (1832), p. 402.

[45] History of the American Mission, p. 228.

the close of the year. More books were printed in the Choctaw language and sent to the mission, including 3,000 copies of a second edition of the Choctaw Hymns. This was revised to 162 pages and 123 hymns. Up to this time 13,000 copies of books, containing 1,666,000 pages had been printed in the Choctaw language.[46]

Bethabara continued to grow under the leadership of Mr. and Mrs. Williams until they left the station in 1837 due to severe and repeated illness which caused them to end their work among the Choctaws. Bethabara was operated another year under the direction of Miss Nancy W. Barnes, teacher, before closing.[47]

Loring S. Williams was the first missionary teacher to establish a mission school for the Choctaws east of the Mississippi River at Elliot and the first to establish a mission school for the Choctaws west of the Mississippi River at Bethabara.[48] Bethabara, a Hebrew name meaning "a crossing," was located at the crossroads of the "Trail of Tears" and the Mountain Fork River near the present town of Eagletown, Oklahoma, in the southeastern section of the state in McCurtain County.[49] During the removal of the Choctaws west, thousands

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[46] Missionary Herald, XXIX (1833), p. 465.

[47] Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1837, pp. 109, 123.

[48] Also a place in Judea where John the Baptist preached and baptized.

[49] "Recollections of Peter Hudson," Chronicles of Oklahoma, X (December, 1932), p. 508. Today, still marking the site of Bethabara, "the crossing," is a 2,000 year old cypress tree--"oklahoma's oldest living legend called the largest tree east of the Rockies," Phil Frey, "Patriarch of Trees," Oklahoma's Orbit (August 9, 1970), p. 2. The

stopped to rest and take advantage of the good water and abundant fresh game there.[50] Consequently, Eagle Town (so named, or spelled, until 1892) became the first permanent Choctaw settlement in the West.[51] It was established on July 1, 1834, and Williams was appointed the first postmaster.[52] The Choctaws named their town Osi Tamaha (Eagle Town) from the many eagles that inhabited the swamps along the Mountain Fork River.[53]

Meanwhile, in the fall of 1832, the second large emigrating group of Choctaws set out for the land in the west. The high cost of the first removal and the confused planning caused the Secretary of War to change the regulations and give all authority to the military agents of the United States Army. Major Francis W. Armstrong, Choctaw Agent, was appointed special agent for the removal of the Choctaws west of the Mississippi, and his brother, Captain William Armstrong, was appointed superintendent of the Choctaw removal east of the Mississippi. Memphis

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tree is about ninety feet tall and forty-two feet around its base and is said that Choctaw descendants in the area regard the old tree as "holy." Nothing remains of the mission today but thousands of tourists go each year to see "Big Cypress," "Big Cypress," Notes and Documents, Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXX (Winter, 1952-53), p. 474.

[50] Muriel H. Wright, "Organization of Choctaw and Chicasaw Nations," Chronicles of Oklahoma, VIII (September, 1930), p. 322.

[51] George H. Shirk, "First Post Offices Within the Boundaries of Oklahoma," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVI (Summer, 1948), p. 199. See Notes and Documents, Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXX (Summer, 1952), p. 243 and J. Y. Bryce, "First Post Offices in What is Now State of Oklahoma," Chronicles of Oklahoma, IV (June, 1926), pp. 202-204.

[52] Ibid.

[53] "Recollections of Peter Hudson," p. 510.

and Vicksburg were designated as the embarkation points. No transportation overland was to be provided and no feed allowed for those with horses.[54] Consequently most of the Indians walked and wagons were provided only for the old people and children and the allowance of 1,500 pounds of baggage to every fifty persons.[55]

The Indians began their trek in October in good spirits with plenty of food and supplies and hundreds of cattle. But soon after departure, an epidemic of cholera swept down the Mississippi River taking its toll at every port. Kingsbury wrote the American Board that "the Choctaws that left last fall have suffered much. The cholera cut off about 200 of them, some accounts say more."[56] Many of the women and children became panic stricken and refused to board the steamboats. Consequently, they were ferried across the Mississippi and allowed to continue on land to Little Rock instead of by boat. But incessant fall rains had swelled the rivers and the road was "knee to waist deep in water for more than thirty miles."[57] Although the army agents made every effort to assist them, the unforeseen disaster caused many to die from exposure and sickness. By December, the last groups were straggling past Little Rock. Major Armstrong secured extra wagons for the sick at the rate of five wagons to every 1,000 persons. "Fortunately they are a

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[54]Wright, "The Removal of the Choctaws to the Indian Territory," p. 120.

[55]Ibid.

[56]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, January 21, 1833, #35, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Box 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[57]Ibid.

people that will walk to the last," he said.[58] Including the small self-emigrating parties, the second emigration from Mississippi totaled more than 6,000 persons.[59]

In the fall of 1833, the third and final group of Choctaws began their trek west. Although there was much suffering again and many problems, the group reached Indian Territory by December 20th. The number of Choctaws in their new country in the west totaled about 12,500 at this time; leaving more than 5,000 in Mississippi. Of these, all but 1,200 eventually migrated to the west.[60] According to one study, two thousand Choctaws died during their removal.[61]

The total cost of the removal including all expenses incurred under the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek was $5,097,367.50. This included the salaries and expenses of those United States officials appointed to settle the alleged land frauds in Mississippi between 1837 and 1845. Since the sale of the Choctaw lands in Mississippi after the treaty of 1830 amounted to $8,095,614.89, the difference between this sum and the total expense ($2,981,247.39) was due the Choctaws and became the well-known "Net Proceeds" claim against the government.[62] In summarizing the Choctaw Removal, Muriel Wright has written:

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[58]Wright, "The Removal of the Choctaws to the Indian Territory," pp. 120-122.

[59]Ibid., p. 123.

[60]Ibid.

[61]James Culbertson, "Two Thousand Choctaws Died During Their Removal," The American Indian, III (December, 1928), pp. 10-11.

[62]See Baird, Peter Pitchlynn, for excellent account of this.

> Thus the Choctaws not only endured every suffering from hunger and cold to sickness and death in the removal to their new home in the Indian Territory, but also paid every dollar of the expenses incurred under the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek. And this in spite of the positive assurances made them by the government that they would receive every advantage for welfare and progress if they would yield the tribal lands in Mississippi.[63]

The mortality rate was alarmingly high the first years of settlement in the "wild woods" of the Indian Territory. Unusual rains and subsequent rise of the Arkansas and Red Rivers left tracts of land filled with stagnant water and decaying vegetable matter. Fevers developed in every member of the mission families and among the Choctaws. It was believed that as many as one in fifteen died.[64] Williams wrote that the "wretchedness of the people, without suitable food, or medicine, or nursing, was heart-rending, and altogether beyond description."[65] He added that "Myself and family suffered more than for fifteen years previous, so that we were unable to render much assistance to our sick neighbors." They were destitute for medicine for themselves and others since their supply from Boston did not reach them in season. Their meetings were suspended and their schools closed for a time. "Almost all business was completely stagnated."[66]

Dr. and Mrs. Wright, Ebenezer Hotchkin and Samuel Molton, who had emigrated with the Choctaws by the close of 1832, had similar experiences. Dr. Wright had located about 16 miles east of Fort Towson and

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[63]Wright, "The Removal of the Choctaws to the Indian Territory," p. 124.

[64]History of the American Missions, p. 240.

[65]Missionary Herald, XXX (1834), p. 21.

[66]Ibid., p. 142.

organized a church on December 9, 1832, which he named Wheelock in memory of the first President of Dartmouth College who had established a school for the education of the Indian youth.[67] Mrs. Wright began teaching a school there. She wrote that from June to the first of August in 1833, Dr. Wright attended 332 cases of illness at Wheelock and the following year, there was an average of one death to a family.[68] Hotchkin, who had established a mission station with Miss Sarah Burnham as teacher, reported that in his area of about five hundred people, every baby under one year of age died during the year 1833.[69]

Not only did the new settlers suffer from sickness and death from the floods, but their crops of corn and nearly all the improvements which they had made were swept away by the floods. Their springs were covered, and they were forced to drink pond or river water which no doubt greatly increased the severity and mortality of their diseases.[70] Among the members of the church who died during this time was Tunnapinchuffa, the first adult full-blood Choctaw convert.[71]

Meanwhile back in Mississippi after the last emigration party left, Kingsbury was busy supervising the sales of the mission property in the old Choctaw nation. The Secretary of War sent William Armstrong,

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[67]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 23.

[68]Missionary Herald, XXX (1834), pp. 21-22. See Althea Bass, "Oklahoma Had Its Heroines Century Ago," Tulsa World, 1936, a story on Harriet Wright.

[69]Ibid.

[70]Ibid.; Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 25.

[71]See supra, Chapter III, p. 100.

Agent for removing the Indians (accompanied by Kingsbury), to value the mission buildings and improvements.[72] According to the valuation made by the agent in compliance with the law passed by Congress regarding the transaction, the American Board would have received less than $500 (about $450)--a mere fraction of the amount due. On February 3, 1835, Kingsbury wrote a letter to Elbert Herring, Head of the Office of the Indian Affairs, in which he described the problems and offered some suggestions. He stated that the school establishments in the Choctaw Nation had been a joint concern funded by the American Board and the Treasury of the United States for the "sole purpose of educating & improving the Choctaws." The object was one of common interest to the American Board and to the government--the civilization of the Indians--and for this reason, as a matter of convenience and choice, the funds were expended in connection with the operations of different missionary boards. The American Board in conjunction with the government, spent a large amount of funds for the establishment of boarding schools for the Choctaws and "these were approved and highly recommended by the War Department and President Monroe (who personally visited a similar school in the Cherokee nation) as the means of instruction best calculated to benefit the Indians."[73]

Kingsbury estimated the total cost of the buildings and improvements at Elliot, Mayhew, Bethel, Emmaus, Goshen, Hebron and

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[72]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Mayhew, September 27, 1833, #45, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[73]"Copy" Letter from Cyrus Kingsbury to Honorable Elbert Herring, Office of Indian Affairs, Washington City, #69, Columbus, February 3, 1835, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Yoknokchaya as $18,485. Of this sum, the American Board paid $10,935 and the United States paid $7,750. Yet the evaluation was set at $8,000--an amount which left a mere fraction to be refunded to the Board. Kingsbury added that even if the Board should receive the whole amount of the valuation, it would be but "a very inadequate remuneration for the loss sustained by the breaking up of the establishments in the old nation, & the removal & reestablishment of the teachers & schools in the new country." The Board had already spent more than $9,000 on these objects with only a part of the families removed and the buildings inconsiderable as compared with those abandoned in the old nation.[74]

Kingsbury listed reasons why the valuation fell so far short of the original cost:

> 1st. They were made in the interior of the Indian country under all the disadvantages of such a location & at a time when labor, & almost all the articles to be purchased for building & living were double what they were when the valuation was made.
> 2. They were made for a specific object; the accommodation of boarding schools, & much expense was incurred to render them convenient for that object. When they came to be estimated with reference to the wants of an ordinary family & for plantation purposes, their value would be greatly diminished.
> 3. Buildings & improvements on public lands in the South, are estimated, by the purchasers of the soil, far below their real value; to which estimate it was proper that a reference should be had in the valuation.[75]

In summary, Kingsbury stated that the Board could not receive a fair compensation if the letter of the law as such was carried out. He suggested that "on every principle of justice & equity the Government ought to be a joint loser, in proportion to the amount respectively paid

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[74] Ibid

[75] Ibid.

by the government & by the Board." If, however, the business should be closed with the Board according to the letter of the law, Kingsbury suggested that the "liquidation should be made with each station separately, & not with them all in the aggregate. . . . it will not be expected that the deficiency should be made up from the property of the Board at another station." Kingsbury enclosed a table of costs and funds expended on each station.[76] The buildings and improvements at Hebron and Yaknokchaya were wholly made at the expense of the American Board and it was hoped the Board would receive the estimated value of them.[77]

A few months later, Kingsbury received a letter stating that an amended settlement "that was more equitable was being made in which the remuneration to the Board and the United States government would be pro rated in proportion to their respective advancements for the Choctaw buildings & improvements."[78] Finally, on October 30, 1835, Kingsbury wrote from Washington that he was "enabled to close the business, relative to a compensation for the missionary improvements in the Old Choctaw

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[76]*Ibid.*

	Original Cost	Paid by United States	
Elliot	$6,000	$3,275	$2,725
Mayhew	7,200	2,275	4,925
Bethel	1,300	666.66 2/3	633.33 1/3
Emmaus	1,230	666.66 2/3	563.33 1/3
Goshen	1,185	666.66 2/3	670.00
Hebron	670		700.00
Yaknokchaya	700		
	$18,485	$7,550.00	$10,935.00

[77]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, February, 1835, #70, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[78]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Columbus, April 27, 1835, #72, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Nation" and forwarded a Treasury warrant payable at the Commonwealth Bank, Boston, for $4,611.31--the total the department could allow according to the law of Congress.[79]

During this period of settlement of the mission property with the government, Kingsbury spent much of his time in traveling. Accompanied by Byington in the fall of 1833, he visited the American Board missions in the West at the request of the commissioners of the American Board for two principal objects: (1) "To inspect the several stations of the Board, West of the River, to advise the missionaries there, & decide in behalf of the Committee in relation to matters requiring immediate decision;" and (2) "To visit those tribes where as yet the Board have no stations & ascertain the practicability & expediency of establishing missions among them."[80]

They visited stations of the Board among the Osages, Creeks and Cherokees west of the Mississippi and proceeded as far south as the Choctaw country. The first station among the Choctaws Kingsbury visited was ten miles from Fort Towson, under the supervision of Ebenezer Hotchkin. There he found "Mr. & Mrs. H. in feeble health, & much depressed in their feelings. They had been sick between five & six months." Miss Anna Burnham, teacher, lived with them. Twelve miles from there, he stopped at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Wright whose station was a "very comfortable establishment, . . . in one of the most healthy & favorable situations in that part of the country." However, Mrs. Wright was

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[79]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, October 30, 1835, Washington City, #77, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[80]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Dwight, November 15, 1833, #48, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Box 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

"quite feeble" with the fever and ague every other day while he was there. Dr. Wright was busily employed in making translations of various kinds, including a catechism and an elementary arithmetic. He had engaged a native assistant, Pliny Fiske. Next, he visited Mr. and Mrs. Williams and Miss Clough located at Mountain Fork, thirty miles away. Williams was experiencing prejudice from some of the natives although in most instances Kingsbury found that "the disposition of the Choctaws toward the missionaries is more favorable than I have ever before seen it."[81] Other stations on the itinerary were Henry R. Wilson's on the opposite side of Little River where a part of the Mayhew church resided and Samuel Moulton's located on the south side of Little River about seven miles from Wright's and five from Hotchkin's.[82] In January, Kingsbury returned to the old Choctaw country and Byington remained west of the Mississippi.

In the summer of 1834 Kingsbury set out for St. Louis where he met Byington who had been laboring in the west. The two then began a tour up the Missouri River to visit Indian tribes to ascertain the "practicability and expediency" of sending missionaries to them. They proceeded up the Mississippi River to the country of the Sac and Fox Indians and found their response was still negative to the object of the missions. Obstacles in the way of successful missionary efforts among them were listed by Kingsbury in his report to the Board; namely;

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[81] Missionary Herald, XXXI (1835), p. 156.

[82] Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Dwight, January 3, 1834, #61, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Missionary Herald, XXXI (1835), p. 189.

1) Their game is plenty; they feel no necessity to change their mode of life.

2) They have a large annuity ($28,000) which with their peltry, will furnish them with such necessaries as they need for their subsistance.

3) The greater part of the nation are under the influence of a trader & interpreter, who it is said are not favorable to efforts for their improvement.

4) They are proud & haughty & despise those measures by which other Indians have been induced to change their mode of life.

5) In common with other tribes of the West they have no fixed habitations. No domestic animals except horses & dogs. They wish to live as their fathers have done. They do not think education would make their young men better hunters, or their young women better to work & paddle the canoe, &c."[83]

Kingsbury did suggest that someone should be adapting their language to written form in order to help them as soon as possible.

They continued their tour up the Platte and Kansas rivers visiting most of the small bands of Indians which had been removed from east of the Mississippi to that country. As to the Sioux, Kingsbury noted the importance of "commencing among a people in the situation of the Sioux, on a small scale, & with as little show as possible." They concluded their tour by meeting with Messrs. Dunbar and Allis who were beginning a mission among the Pawnees.[84]

On returning to the Old Choctaw Nation, Byington made plans to move to the new land in the West while Kingsbury awaited his new assignment from the Board and the completion of the sale of the mission property in Mississippi.[85] The Board suggested an agency for Kingsbury under the government to which he responded quite negatively:

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[83]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, St. Louis, July 23, 1834, #61, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University: Missionary Herald, XXXI (1835), p. 24.

[84]Ibid.

[85]See supra, pp. 127-128.

> A minister has no business with any important civil station under the government. No matter what a man's talents or qualifications for office may be, the cry is immediately raised by all in office, and all who wish to be in office, "that he ought to stick to his preaching." The Indians will extensively imbibe the sentiment, & will feel very little confidence in, or respect for such an agent. Under such circumstances a minister cannot aid, but would prejudice the missionary cause, by obtaining a government agency. While on the other hand, a good man in the agency who is not a minister may greatly aid the missionary work.[86]

It was decided that Kingsbury would continue his mission work and superintendency in the Choctaw Nation in the West. Although he and Mrs. Kingsbury were "willing to go where God in his Providence may seem to call" them, he repeatedly proclaimed his incompetency. No one else shared his views on his capabilities. As one Indian expressed his feelings after several inexperienced young teachers were sent out: "They must think the Indian can put up with any sort of one. No. We want men like Kingsbury, Wright and Byington."[87]

Kingsbury made plans to take his sons to Marrietta College in Ohio for a season before removing west. This was made possible by gifts such as were made by a young man in Mississippi who had promised to pay fifty dollars a year for five or six years toward the education of his sons--an "unlooked for favor." While in Ohio Kingsbury thought it expedient to travel on to Washington to expedite the closing of the mission property (at the suggestion of the Board) and to confer with the Secretary of War concerning teachers for the Choctaw schools. Before leaving Mississippi for that trip, Kingsbury promoted the cause of

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[86] Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, October 30, 1835, Washington City, #77, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[87] Mrs. A. E. Perry, "Forbis LeFlore was one of Choctaw's Ablest Educators," The American Indian, II (March, 1928), p. 7.

African Colonization and exerted his influence in collecting funds for that object.[88]

Mrs. Kingsbury accompanied the Byingtons west in November 1835. Byington, on a previous visit, had selected a site for his station on the east side of Mountain Fork. The people voluntarily erected a dwelling house and school house for him which needed very little additional labor and expense to be made comfortable.[89] His home, made of logs a story and a half high, stood on a knoll.[90]

Kingsbury and his wife received "urgent solicitations" to settle in different parts of the nation. William Armstrong, who replaced his brother as agent after his death in 1835 and who was "very friendly to the missionaries" wrote Kingsbury that he and Mrs. Armstrong (both Presbyterians) would be happy for him and Mrs. Kingsbury to be located near them. "The Indians have confidence in you & I really think you could do good," they said.[91] Kingsbury wrote the Board, "I believe I should be welcome to settle in almost any part of the Choctaw or Cherokee countries. . . ."[92]

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[88]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Marrietta, October 10, 1835, #76, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[89]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 14.

[90]"Recollections of Peter Hudson," p. 503.

[91]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Marrietta, October 10, 1835, #76, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Choctaw Nation, April 26, 1835, #81, Ibid.

[92]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, March 3, 1836, #80, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Box 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

The site finally selected by the Kingsburys was Pine Ridge, about two miles northwest from Fort Towson. Early in January, before Kingsbury's arrival, the station was begun by Joel Wood. On the second sabbath in January, Wood organized the church with two white persons, one Choctaw and two "Africans."[93]

On February 25, 1836, Kingsbury joined his family in the Choctaw country. Temporarily, he occupied the station vacated by Henry Wilson at Lukfata before going to Pine Ridge. Wood exchanged stations with him and west to Lukfata.[94] Nevertheless, Kingsbury's position was uncertain for a while. He wrote on May 18th that "How long it will be my duty to remain here seems uncertain-- . . . I expect the Agent here in a day or two; he may urge my removal to Arkansas."[95] Kingsbury did not remove, however, and Pine Ridge became his home.

Six months after his arrival in the Choctaw country in the West, Kingsbury's annual report listed thirteen schools in operation--six of them by former Choctaw scholars in the native language--and four churches with 221 members. Kingsbury had three preaching places among the Choctaws in his immediate area, although the congregations were small.[96]

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[93]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, pp. 14-15; Missionary Herald, XXXI (1835), p. 340.

[94]Ibid.

[95]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, near Fort Towson, May 18, 1836, #82, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Pt. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[96]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, May 4, 1837, #85, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

The missionaries had access to the nearby Fort Towson garrison. Kingsbury spent about half of his Sabbaths there during the first year and wrote that from the first there was good attention to the preaching. Weekly prayer meetings were held and the sacrament of the Lord's supper was administered at Fort Towson for the first time. A "spirit of interesting religious inquiry" was continuous. A temperance society at the post involved about one-half of the command and "no ardent spirits or wine" were allowed at the post as a beverage. "For some time the command has been perfectly sober and orderly," he reported. Officers taught Sabbath schools and Bible classes and monthly concerts for prayer were regularly attended. Collections, totaling $138.69, were taken for the missions during the first five months of 1837.[97] Fort Towson became known as an "oddity--the raw, frontier outpost celebrated for the sobriety and generally admirable behavior of its personnel."[98]

Settled in their new country at last, the Choctaws and the missionaries slowly began to rebuild their schools and churches and plant their fields. They exhibited a remarkable strength and courage as they renewed their hope.

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[97] Ibid.

[98] Kent Ruth, "Fort Towson Famous for Piety," Daily Oklahoman, May 9, 1971.

CHAPTER V

PRE-CIVIL WAR DAYS

After a period of adjustment and adaptation to their new environment, the Choctaws, missionaries and teachers enjoyed a decade of relative quietude and peace. They began to prosper in the new land as they adapted their agricultural skills to the environment, developing cotton plantations, orchards, cornfields and herds of livestock. By 1838--ten years after the year of revival in the old nation--they had transformed the "wilderness" in the West into prosperous farms and towns. In addition, schools and churches sprang up demonstrating a renewed interest in learning and religion.

However, when the Choctaws first arrived in their new land, they manifested very little interest in either. Requests for books in the Choctaw language had diminished considerably. Unlike the period ten years before, there were few calls for Choctaw books and Kingsbury reported that "most of those who are seeking an education wish for a knowledge of the English as the first thing. If they cannot get <u>that</u>, they do not care for any."[1] Although the missionaries produced several additional books in the Choctaw language, the Choctaws desire to learn

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[1]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Report ending July 1837, 31st, #86, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

to read their own language seemed to decrease.[2] This lack of interest was due in part to the time and energy required to survive and adjust.

Soon after removal in June, 1834, most of present-day Oklahoma by an act of Congress became Indian Territory.[3] Within the same month, the Choctaws adopted their first written constitution. All legislative power was given to a General Council composed of twenty-seven elected members. The three elective District Chiefs were ex-officio members of the Council. Any two of them could veto legislative measures which could be enacted by a two-thirds majority vote by the Council.[4] The first capital building was constructed of logs. Situated near Tuskahoma, the Choctaws named their capital Nanih Waiya in memory of their sacred mound in Mississippi. The Council first met there in 1838. During the subsequent twenty years the Choctaws changed their constitution and capital site several times. Besides Nanih Waiya, Doaksville, Skullyville, Fort Towson and Boggy Depot served as the center of tribal government. In 1862, a constitutional amendment provided for the capital to be located at Armstrong Academy with the name of Chahta Tamaha. The last Council House was built in 1884 at Tuskahoma, two miles northeast of the original site at Nanih Waiya.[5]

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[2]DeRosier, The Removal of the Choctaw Indians, p. 166; Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 60.

[3]Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1836, p. 391.

[4]Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 74; Wright, A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma, p. 105.

[5]Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 76; Wright, A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma, p. 105.

In the meantime, many Choctaws who had remained in Mississippi continued to move to the new country under the prodding of federal officials. Chief Cobb, leader of the Mississippi Choctaws, admitted the necessity of joining the Western Choctaws during a meeting with Captain J. J. McRea in 1843:

> Brother: When you were young we were strong; we fought by your side; but our arms are now broken. You have grown large. My people have become small.
>
> Brother: My voice is weak; you can scarcely hear me; it is not the shout of a warrior but the wail of an infant. I have lost it in mourning over the misfortunes of my people. These are their graves, and in those aged pines you hear the ghosts of the departed.--Their ashes are here, and we have been left to protect them. Our warriors are nearly all gone to the far country west; but here are our dead. Shall we go too, and give their bones to the wolves? . . .
>
> The white man's plough turns up the bones of our fathers. We dare not kindle our fires; and yet you said we might remain and you would give us land.[6]

Significant numbers of Mississippi Choctaws eventually emigrated to the west, especially during the middle 1840's.

The Western Choctaws permitted the Chickasaws to settle in their country. Having signed a treaty with the United States to sell their lands in Mississippi on October 20, 1832, at Pontotoc, the Chickasaws began negotiations with government officials for land in the West among their "old allies and neighbors, the Choctaws."[7] Negotiations proceeded under the authority of the Chickasaw Chief Ish-te-aho-to-pa and his head men and the captains and chiefs of the Choctaw Nation until the final meeting of representatives at Doaksville near Fort Towson from January 11,

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[6] Niles' Weekly Register, LXIV (1843), pp. 131-132.

[7] Gaston L. Litton, ed., "The Negotiations Leading to the Chickasaw-Choctaw Agreement, January 17, 1837," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XVII (December, 1939), p. 417.

1837, to January 17th at which time the Chickasaw-Choctaw agreement was signed. By the terms of the Treaty of Doaksville, the Chickasaws became a "Chickasaw District of the Choctaw Nation."[8] The Chickasaws were to be equally represented in the Choctaw general council with other districts and were subject to the Choctaw laws. However, the finances of the two tribes were to be separate. For this privilege, the Chickasaws agreed to pay the sum of $530,000 to the Choctaws.[9] In a memorial to the President of the United States, the Chickasaws stated that they were "pleased with the prospect of obtaining among their old friends and allies the Choctaws a new, and as they hope, a permanent home for their people, now almost destitute and houseless."[10]

When the fourth district (Chickasaw) was created west of the older Choctaw districts in 1838, a new constitution was adopted. Four District Chiefs were elected for four year terms. In 1843, the constitution was changed again to provide a bi-cameral Council with a Senate and House of Representatives. Still dissatisfied with their constitution, the Choctaws continued to revise their laws until a new constitution was written in January, 1857, at Skullyville, which created a Governor for the Nation instead of District Chiefs. This constitution became necessary as the result of the separation of the Choctaws and Chickasaws by

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[8]Kappler, Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties, II, pp. 486-488; Ibid., p. 426.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Litton, "The Negotiations Leading to the Chickasaw-Choctaw Agreement, January 17, 1837," p. 427.

the Treaty of 1855 signed in Washington. The union had never been satisfactory. The Chickasaws were a minority who were treated as intruders and outvoted by their old neighbors. Furthermore, the Chickasaws did not want to part with their name and become absorbed by the Choctaw Nation. The Treaty of Doaksville had been a mistake they believed since they had "thought they were procuring a country for themselves."[11] Supposed wealth of the Chickasaws exposed their women to marriage with the Choctaws and this the Chickasaw men did not like.[12]

According to the missionaries, the Choctaws were unfavorably influenced by the 3,000 Chickasaws who had become "debased by their late exposures and temptations," from their white brothers during the removal period.[13] Kingsbury commented at the time of the Chickasaw-Choctaw Agreement that "The Treaty made with the Chickasaws by which more than half a million of dollars are to come into the hands of the Choctaws, has had an unhappy influence upon the morals of the nation."[14]

The Chickasaw Nation embraced the area west of Island Bayou between the Red and the Canadian rivers to the ninety-eighth meridian. The Chickasaws made their own laws and organized their own government by the autumn of 1856. The land west of ninety-eight degrees became

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[11]Gibson, The Chickasaws, p. 210.

[12]Grant Foreman, ed., A Traveler in Indian Territory: The Journal of Ethan Allen Hitchcock, Late Major-General in the United States Army (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Torch Press, 1930), p. 183.

[13]Missionary Herald, XXX (1837), p. 109.

[14]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Annual Report to the Board, July 1837, #86, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

known as the Leased District, a fourth district of the Choctaw Nation although no Choctaws or Chickasaws settled there permanently.[15]

The Treaty of 1855 which separated the Choctaws and the Chickasaws was also signed by the United States and provided for the settlement of some of the previously unsolved disputes between the United States and the Choctaws. The western boundary was defined, and the Choctaws and Chickasaws received $800,000 in the ratio of three to one respectively for the Leased District. The other problems concerned obligations unfulfilled by the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek. Many who had paid their own expenses of removal and those who had abandoned cattle and other property had not been reimbursed by the federal government.[16] As early as 1853, the Choctaw Council had appointed Peter P. Pitchlynn, Dickson W. Lewis, Israel Folsom and Samuel Garland as delegates to the United States to settle "all and every claim and interest of the Choctaw people against the United States."[17] Negotiations began in 1854 for the reimbursement to the Choctaws of the "Net Proceeds,"--the amount realized from the sale of the land after subtracting the costs of removal. The Treaty of 1855 referred the matter to the decision of the United States Senate.[18] The Senate made the award of $2,981,247.30 in 1859 and Congress began the payment on March 2, 1861. Nonetheless, most

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[15]Wright, A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma, pp. 107-108.

[16]Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, pp. 71-73.

[17]W. David Baird, Peter Pitchlynn: Chief of the Choctaws (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), p. 97.

[18]Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 73; Baird, Peter Pitchlynn, pp. 103-104.

of the money was lost or dissipated in the confusion of the Civil War shortly thereafter.[19]

The Skullyville Constitution, adopted in January 1857, designated Boggy Depot as the capital of the nation and Alfred Wade was elected Governor.[20] Boggy Depot received its name from Boggy River which was a translation of the word vaseux, a word used by early French traders meaning "miry or boggy." The first building erected there was a log cabin built by the Chickasaws in 1837, soon after the Chickasaws came to the Choctaw country. It was often referred to as the Chickasaw Depot, being located in their district until the Treaty of 1855 changed the boundary between the Chickasaw and Choctaw districts and Boggy Depot became a part of the Pushmataha District of the Choctaw Nation. Boggy Depot served as an important stagecoach stop and trade center until railroads were constructed. A Presbyterian church and school building were used as a hospital during the Civil War and Confederate troops were stationed at Boggy Depot.[21]

Although Governor Wade resigned in 1858 and the Skullyville Constitution was replaced by a new constitution in May 1858, some of the

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[19] Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, pp. 73-74.

[20] Skullyville was established in 1832 when the Choctaws removed from Mississippi and became the capital of Mushulatubbee district. It was the "agency town" where the federal annuities were distributed. The Choctaw word iskuli means a piece of money. Major William Armstrong built a three room log house for the agency in 1832. In 1858, it was used as a station for the Butterfield Overland stagecoaches. It was a thriving trade center until after the Civil War when the railroad bypassed it. See Kent Ruth, "Old Choctaw Capital Revered," The Sunday Oklahoman, Showcase (May 30, 1971), p. 11.

[21] Muriel H. Wright, "Old Boggy Depot," Chronicles of Oklahoma, V (March, 1927), pp. 4-8. See infra, Chapter Six, p.253 for accounts of Civil War.

people. The legislature acted as the General Council of the Choctaw Nation and consisted of a senate and house of representatives. The three districts were Mushulatubbee, Apukshunubbee and Pushmataha.[25] The judicial system consisted of a Supreme Court and Circuit courts both of which had appellate jurisdiction. The lighthorsemen had lost their judicial functions by this time although they continued to make arrests and carry out the sentences of the courts.[26] Punishments for crimes consisted of fines, whippings and death. Laws of the Choctaw Nation were printed in both the Choctaw language and in English. They printed more laws and documents in their own language than any of the other nations of the Five Civilized Tribes.[27]

By this time, the Choctaws had modified and changed many of their social customs. In 1834, they were the first of any of the tribes in Indian Territory to pass a law prohibiting the introduction of liquor into their country. They passed acts to eliminate needless waste of timber and to maintain public roads.[28] Marriage within a clan or iksa was allowed and marriage ceremonies were required. Polygamy was eventually made illegal in 1849. Wives were given complete equality with their husbands in matters of property and marriage. Laws were passed regulating the intermarriage of whites within the tribe. Leaders of the government

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[25]Joseph B. Thoburn and Muriel H. Wright, Oklahoma: A History of the State and Its People, Vol. I (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1929), pp. 233-234.

[26]Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 76.

[27]Spalding, "Natchez Trace to Oklahoma," p. 18.

[28]Thoburn and Wright, Oklahoma, pp. 225-226.

were almost entirely full bloods. Mixed bloods usually served in appointive positions such as school boards.[29]

To accomplish tribal goals of self-improvement, the Choctaw General Council on November 29, 1842, passed "An Act Providing for a System of Public Instruction in the Choctaw Nation," by which the Choctaws established boarding schools.[30] The Council appropriated $18,000 annually for three boarding academies for boys and $7,800 annually for four boarding schools for girls. The girls' schools were to be placed under the management of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions on the condition that the Board furnish teachers and laborers and pay one-seventh of the expense.[31] Cyrus Kingsbury's report to the Board stated that "There was a good proportion of religious and educated men in the Council that passed the Act; and they were generally united . . ."[32] The opposition manifested afterwards was by a portion of the nation not favorable to education, he added. None of the missionaries of the Board were present at the Council, and the funds were placed at the disposal of the Board without their solicitation. In concluding the report, Kingsbury wrote that "We are deeply sensible of the great

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[29]Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, pp. 77-78.

[30]Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, Copy of Act, November 29, 1842, #38, ABC 18.5.1, Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[31]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, pp. 28-29.

[32]Cyrus Kingsbury, Alfred Wright, Cyrus Byington, Jared Olmsted to Rev. David Greene, Wheelock, December 13, 1842, #60, ABC 18.5.1, Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

responsibility which will devolve on your missionaries & on the Board, should the Committee accept the appropriations."[33]

William Armstrong reported from the Choctaw Agency West in 1843 that it was without precedent that an Indian tribe should become so far advanced in civilization as to make radical changes in their customs, form of government, constitutions and laws and education in less than 10 years from their removal. "These evidences clearly show that the Choctaws are improving, and . . . will be able to educate the great mass of the nation," he wrote. Referring to the reports from the missionaries, which he included, he wrote that they "clearly and satisfactorily exhibit that the Choctaws became increasingly noted for their children."[34] In fact, as the Choctaws became increasingly noted for their educational system, their schools became the pattern for similar institutions in the Creek and Seminole nations.

The missionaries were pleased with the progress of the Choctaws in passing the school laws of 1842. Wright remarked that "a mere statistical report of our schools does not show the progress that knowledge & improvement is extending, and many, in places remote from any school have learned to read."[35] Cyrus Kingsbury added, "A knowledge of the

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[33] Ibid.

[34] "About Some of Our First Schools in the Choctaw Nation," Chronicles of Oklahoma, VI (September, 1928), pp. 354-355.

[35] Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, pp. 26-27.

scripture & piety, education, general intelligence, temperance and good words are obviously on the advance."[36]

By 1844, the four girls' schools under the management of the American Board were operating under the supervision of the Choctaw Council. These were: Chuahla Female Seminary at Pine Ridge under Cyrus Kingsbury as superintendent; Iyahnobi Female Seminary at Stockbridge with Cyrus Byington as superintendent; Kunsha Female Seminary at Good Water with Ebenezer Hotchkin as superintendent and Wheelock Female Seminary with Alfred Wright as superintendent. During the same year, a small boarding school for boys was begun at Norwalk, five miles northwest of Wheelock with Jared Olmstead as superintendent.[37] Three years prior to the school law of 1842, Kingsbury had written to the Board expressing the great need for more boarding schools for girls and boys since the "enlightened portion of the Choctaws" greatly desired them. He expressed regret over the lack of means and helpers to build them at that time.[38] Two years later he wrote on the same subject:

> In regard to schools, there is manifestly this feeling among the Choctaws, that the schools they had in the Old Nation, were better than any they have had since, except in a few instances, & they much wish they could have such schools (meaning boarding schools) again. Their confidence in the Old Missionaries who have remained with them so long, & through all their reverses, & trials, has strengthened with the lapse of time. . . . If you send helpers,

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[36] Ibid., p. 29.

[37] Cyrus Kingsbury, Alfred Wright, Cyrus Byington and Jared Olmsted to David Greene, Wheelock, December 13, 1842, #60, ABC 18.5.1, Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[38] Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, November 22, 1839, #53, ABC 18.5.1, Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

please send those who will be efficient, & willing to do good as they may be able.[39]

After the school law was passed, committees were appointed to select the sites for the schools. Those under the auspices of the American Board naturally expected them to be located at the same site and in conjunction with schools already in operation. This was finally done, although there was some controversy at the outset about the locations. Kingsbury expected the Chuwalla School to be located at Pine Ridge or within a few miles of it. But a clan of Choctaws living in the valleys between the mountains, twenty-five or thirty miles from there, expected the school to be located among them. The creek on which they lived was named Chuwalla and something was said at the time the law was passed about having the school on that creek. A committee including Kingsbury spent days seeking a location in that area, but reported that supplies would have to be hauled twenty-five miles with eight miles of it over a rocky mountain. Corn would have to be bought at $1.00 per bushel there in comparison to $0.37½ at Pine Ridge. Furthermore, Kingsbury felt it was unwise for him to leave Pine Ridge since there were comfortable improvements there, "a healthy situation, & a school of upwards of twenty scholars. To break up this station and go to a new one, would not add much to the means of education" then "enjoyed."[40] As the controversy dragged on for several months, urging the members to proceed immediately

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[39]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, February 9, 1841, #53, ABC 18.5.1., Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[40]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, June 29, 1843, #68, ABC 18.5.1, Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, May 12, 1843, #65, ABC 18.5.1, Vol. 1, Ibid.

to locate the Chuwalla female seminary. He wrote,

> At Mr. Kingsbury's place, you have a portion of the buildings now erected--you are convenient to mills where lumber can be obtained--these considerations are entitled to great weight, & should not be given up unless you can find a good spring & location.[41]

The committee appointed by the General Council of the Choctaw Nation to locate the Koonsha Female Seminary "agreed to divide equally the funds appropriated for the support of the Koonsha Female Seminary; & to have the said Seminary established at two places; one on the East, and other on the West side of the Boggy. . . . that the Koonsha Female Seminary on the East of the Boggy, be located at Good Water, at the station occupied by Mr. Hotchkin." The locating committee was composed of Cyrus Kingsbury, John Folsom and David McCoy and approved by Isaac Folsom, Chief of Pushmataha District and Norman Shields, Speaker.[42] In sending a copy of the report of the committee to the American Board, Kingsbury listed the several considerations which induced them to place it at Good Water. He wrote that it could be put in operation much sooner there and at much less expense, than at a new place. At Good Water there were persons on the ground who had been long acquainted with the Choctaws and with Choctaw schools and who had the confidence of the people. Their management was more likely to give satisfaction than that of inexperienced persons, even if they were available. By placing the first branch of the

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[41]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, November 23, 1843, #73, ABC 18.5.1, Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[42]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, May 17, 1843, #67, ABC 18.5.1, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Copy of Committee Report, Long Creek, Rocky Hill, Pushmatahaw District, May 15, 1843, #66, Ibid.

school at Mr. Hotchkin's it would give the committee opportunity to find a man for the other branch--hopefully by the time it was ready to open.[43] A copy of the report of the committee was sent to the agent for his approval. Later, Kingsbury wrote Armstrong urging him to determine the location of the schools so that they could begin preparations.[44] In the meantime, Kingsbury began making the necessary improvements at Pine Ridge for the accommodation of a small boarding school. He erected a "good and convenient dining room, 16 by 22 feet--one story & a half high with a good cellar under it." The chimney, which was of stone, had two fireplaces.[45] Finally, Kingsbury reported that the committee (agent and chiefs) voted unanimously on January 23, 1844, to locate the Chuwalla Female Seminary at Pine Ridge and the Kunsha Female Seminary at Mr. Hotchkin's.[46]

With Chuwalla to begin on March 1, 1844, Kingsbury was faced with the difficult problems of discharging his duties as a joint pastor over three churches, scattered over a region of more than one hundred miles and at the same time providing for a large boarding school and erection of buildings. Sometimes he was away two weeks at a time on the circuit preaching, subsequently neglecting the business of the station.

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[43]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, May 17, 1843, #67, ABC 18.5.1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[44]Cyrus Kingsbury to Capt. Wm. Armstrong, Pine Ridge, June 27, 1843, #69, ABC 18.5.1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[45]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, November 23, 1843, #73, ABC 18.5.1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[46]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, January 23, 1844, Pine Ridge, #74, ABC 18.5.1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

As always since first coming to the Choctaws, he was torn between his duties of preaching and attending secular concerns. But he fulfilled both offices well.[47] Armstrong's report at this time said Kingsbury's "genuine piety and labors have won for him the universal esteem of all who know him."[48]

The first female school to open under the new Choctaw law was Wheelock under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Wright. There were five preaching places connected with this station. It was advantageous to open this school first since a boarding school had been in operation there for two years previously and expansion was all that was needed. Several of the buildings necessary for the school had already been built with the funds of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and some of the livestock belonged to the Board. The remaining buildings and livestock required by the school were purchased by the Board so as to become their sole property. The American Board also contributed to the operation of the school.[49]

Twenty-four children were selected from a list of fifty applicants for the school. Mrs. Wright, the teacher, was highly qualified and competent. In addition to literary subjects, instruction was given in housekeeping and all other household affairs; needle-work, knitting, cutting out and making clothes; management of the dairy and everything that pertained to "prudent management and thrifty housekeeping."

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[47]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, February 21, 1844, Pine Ridge, #75, ABC 18.5.1, Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[48]"About Some of Our First Schools," p. 357.

[49]*Ibid.*, pp. 367-368.

Numerous applications were made for admittance to the school.[50]

Byington reported from Stockbridge (near Eagletown) that although he had been requested to direct the Iyanubbe Female school, he had to decline it on account of his many "pressing cares, as well as the feeble state of health" of himself at the time. In the same report, he enumerated his many duties. In the previous year he had preached regularly in four different places in the nation and frequently at Ultima Thule, in Arkansas. He had prepared an almanac in Choctaw and English for the same year and translated a part of the Old Testament. Since there was no physician nearer than Fort Towson, he spent a large part of the time caring for the sick. Five students were boarded in his family--most of them, gratuitously. He wrote, "I have a full share of labor for my strength and health. To provide for a family, and to act the part of a good neighbor, preacher and physician, in this sickly land, is as much as I am able to do."[51]

After removal west, the Choctaws continued to send their sons to the Choctaw Academy in Scott County, Kentucky. But they soon began to seek a national academy in their own land and the General Council passed a law late in 1841 providing for buildings to be erected on a site about ten miles northwest of Doaksville, the largest town in the Choctaw Nation. Annual grants of $2,000 were received from the United States Indian Civilization Fund and a salary of $833 was paid to the principle

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[50] *Ibid.*, p. 356.

[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 365-366.

teacher by the federal government. The academy was named Spencer Academy in honor of Secretary of War, John C. Spencer, who had expressed much interest in the school. The school was to be governed by a Board of Trustees[52] selected by the Choctaw General Council, and supervised by a minister under the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. It was to serve sixty to seventy students and was to be conducted on the manual labor system. The large farm attached to the school was to produce a great portion of the institution's food. As the school progressed, workshops were to be erected, the income to be added to the funds of the school, thus enabling the number of students to be increased.[53] Plans were made for the academy to begin operation early in 1844 with Edmund McKinney as superintendent.

After two years of conflict between the Choctaw trustees and the Presbyterian superintendent, the Choctaws turned to the Presbyterian Board for supervision. James B. Ramsey served as director of the academy until 1849 when Alexander Reid, a native of Scotland and graduate of Princeton, was appointed leader and guided Spencer Academy throughout twelve successful years until the Civil War closed most of the schools in the Indian Territory in 1861. During the war, the dormitories were used as a Confederate hospital. After the war, the Presbyterian Church divided into southern and northern groups and the academy was placed under the mission board of the southern church.[54]

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[52]W. David Baird, "Spencer Academy, Choctaw Nation, 1842-1900," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XLV (Spring, 1967), p. 27.

[53]"About Some of Our First Schools," pp. 357-358.

[54]Baird, "Spencer Academy," pp. 25-43; Baird, Peter Pitchlynn,

The General Council passed an act whereby male students finishing the Spencer Academy could complete their education in colleges of the United States. The "Forty Youth Fund" arising from the treaty of 1830 would be divided so as to educate ten each at Dartmouth, Union, and Yale and other colleges. The forty were to be selected with a view of preparing them for teaching and for places of leadership among their own people.[55]

The third largest male boarding school, provided for by the Choctaw Laws of 1842, was Armstrong Academy established in 1844 in the southwestern part of the Choctaw Nation under the supervision of the Baptist Foreign Missions Board. The first superintendent, Ramsey D. Potts, directed the school for ten years. In 1854 he was replaced by A. G. Moffett. The following year Armstrong Academy was transferred to the Cumberland Presbyterian Board of Foreign and Domestic Missions until the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861.[56]

Another type of school which contributed greatly to the progress of the Choctaws was the "Saturday and Sabbath" school. These were usually taught by native teachers in both Choctaw and English languages. Mostly full-blooded students, whose ages ranged from children to grown men and women, camped around the local church or schoolhouse on weekends for

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pp. 64-66; Thoburn and Wright, Oklahoma, Vol. 1, pp. 223-224; Robert Elliott Flickinger, The Choctaw Freedmen and the Story of Oak Hill Industrial Academy (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Board of Missions for Freedmen, 1914), pp. 23-25; "About Some of Our First Schools in Choctaw Nation," pp. 357-358; "Peter P. Pitchlynn, Chief of the Choctaws," The Atlantic Monthly, XXV (April, 1870), pp. 491-492.

[55]Thoburn and Wright, Oklahoma, Vol. 1, p. 224; "Our First Schools," p. 359.

[56]Thoburn and Wright, Oklahoma, Vol. 1, p. 214.

instruction in reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic and Bible. Approximately 600 to 700 children and adults received instruction through this means.[57] Ten of the schools were given a grant of five hundred dollars by the Choctaw Council to aid in the purchase of books.[58] Kingsbury wrote in his autobiography that

> the people are becoming more & more sensible of the benefit conferred on them by learning to read; hence there are frequent calls for new schools. . . . The man thirty or forty years, is here seen by the side of the little boy of six or seven learning to read his own language.[59]

Ten years after removal, Wheelock alone had seven Sabbath Schools which were taught on Saturday and Sunday. Some of these were placed in several "unenlightened and neglected" neighborhoods where about one hundred and twenty were added. In the seven schools at Wheelock there were from three to four hundred students. Usually on Saturdays, reading, writing and arithmetic were taught and on Sundays, reading of the Scriptures and religious tracts. In one instance, six to eight young Choctaw females came to Wheelock every Thursday, the prayer-meeting day, to learn to read.[60] Wright related that "The number who can read and write their own language is constantly and rapidly increasing. If no untoward event shall happen to retard the progress of

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[57]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 31; Missionary Herald, XLII (1846), p. 14.

[58]Missionary Herald, XLII (1846), p. 14.

[59]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 40.

[60]Missionary Herald, XXXVIII (1842), p. 368.

improvement, the Choctaws as a nation will, at no distant day, become a reading people."[61]

Byington reported a "regular and flourishing" Sabbath school aided by several native teachers who instructed in English and Choctaw. The schoolhouse was often full on Sunday morning with classes conducted by two Choctaw elders of the church.[62]

Schools were not entirely confined to the Choctaws. Kingsbury reported a Sabbath school in operation for the troops at Fort Towson with the commandant as superintendent.

As a result of these schools, within a few years practically all of the full-blood Choctaws could read their tribal laws, columns in the newspapers (which were printed in the Choctaw language), religious literature and the Bible. Many could write letters in their own language. Most of them were noted for their artistic handwriting.[63]

Two outstanding young native teachers were Pliny Fisk and Jonathan Dwight who acquired their preparatory education in Ohio and New England in view of becoming preachers among their people. Pliny Fisk resided with the Wrights and studied under the direction of the presbytery. He received aid from a women's benevolent society in Charlestown, South Carolina. In the spring of 1835, he went to Marietta, Ohio, for further study and training. Wright wrote of him: "He appears truly

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[61]Missionary Herald, XL (1844), p. 388.

[62]Missionary Herald, XXXVIII (1842), pp. 397-398. Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 24.

[63]Thoburn and Wright, Oklahoma, Vol. 1, p. 225.

pious, is an excellent speaker in his own language, and is very acceptable to his people."[64] "He is, I think 'apt to teach,'" he added.[65] Fisk was ordained in April, 1851.[66]

Jonathan Dwight was educated in New Hampshire and usually accompanied Cyrus Kingsbury on his preaching tours as interpreter. He also took a part in other exercises, especially in his own language and "his performances were very acceptable to the people." He excelled as a leader in singing. He spent several weeks with Wright aiding him in translating a portion of the New Testament.[67]

Throughout the history of the early missions to the Choctaws, women teachers played a significant role in the education of the Indians. They left the comfort of their homes in the East in order to aid the Indians in their quest for enlightment. They worked with the Indians, taught them and ministered to their sick. They gave all of their talents and their time for the cause. Yet, the highest salary paid a woman teacher during that time was $120 a year plus her board. She usually lived in one of the boarding schools at the home of a resident missionary family or in the home of some Christian

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[64]Alfred Wright at Wheelock to American Board, Missionary Herald, XXXVII (1841), p. 475.

[65]Missionary Herald, XXXVIII (1842), p. 367.

[66]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, pp. 24, 46. Fisk was ordained as minister in April, 1851.

[67]Missionary Herald, XXXVIII (1842), p. 474, taken from a letter from Cyrus Kingsbury, August, 1841.

Indian.[68] Her greatest recompence was the service performed to the young people whom she taught.[69]

In order to fulfill all the duties required of them, the women teachers needed particular qualities. Some of these as listed by Ethel McMilan were:

> Certainly strong minds, stable emotions and stout bodies with the implication of educations as liberal as the time afforded. Also that combination of abilities, traits, and appearance as would assure immediate personal acceptance, was especially important when relations had to be established without a common language. And surely a professional preparation adequate to meet the challenge of an unknown teaching situation.
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> Also highly necessary were those characteristics which make for patience under trial, judgment under stress, industry under fatigue, and cheerful outlook under discouragement--all in such balance as to exemplify attainment which a people eager for a better life would desire, and so blended as to accomplish the great purpose of Christian missions, the acceptance of the teaching of the Master Teacher.[70]

Some of the outstanding women teachers during this period were Mrs. Cyrus Kingsbury, Mrs. Ebenezer Hotchkin, Mrs. Alfred Wright, Miss Harriet Arms and Miss Anna Burnham. Miss Burnham was the oldest woman teacher still in service in the American Board missions in the Choctaw Nation when she retired at sixty-six and returned to the East in 1846. She joined the mission in 1822 and was a "devoted & successful teacher" of the female school at Mayhew for nine years. She accompanied

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[68] Mrs. Bella McCallum Gibbons, "Work Among the Indians" Presbyterian Missions--in the South and Southwest (Richmond, Va.; Texarkana, Ark-Tec: Published by the Presbyterian Committee of Publication, no date), pp. 10-11.

[69] Ethel McMilan, "Women Teachers in Oklahoma, 1820-1860," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVII (1949), p. 11.

[70] Ibid., p. 9.

the Choctaws on horseback from the old nation with one of her former pupils who, with her husband, was removing to the new country. Her great desire was "to teach Choctaw children & youth, that they might be able to read the word of God."[71] During the last years of her labors Miss Burnham resided on the Red River about eight miles from Wheelock where she taught school during the week and superintended a Sabbath school and a Bible class on Sunday. From October to May each year she lived in a little cabin near the schoolhouse with an Indian girl for company. Due to the unhealthy summer climate, however, she lived at Wheelock while continuing her Sabbath school on the Red River. Between thirty and forty young men and women usually attended her Sabbath school as readers.[72]

Harriet Bunce Wright, wife of the Reverend Alfred Wright, spent twenty-two years in the nation teaching the Choctaws at Wheelock and assisting her husband with his many duties as doctor, minister and translator. After the station at Wheelock became a girls' boarding school, Major William Armstrong, acting commissioner of Indian affairs, wrote of her: "I cannot forbear mentioning the high qualifications of Mrs. Wright as a competent teacher, and as a lady eminently suited to improve the female pupils of this school."[73]

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[71]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, pp. 25, 30.

[72]Ibid., p. 24; Missionary Herald, XXXVIII (1842), p. 367; Missionary Herald, XLII (1846), p. 14; "About Some of Our First Schools in Choctaw Nation," p. 362.

[73]Bass, "Oklahoma Had Its Heroines Century Ago."

Women teachers were not only required to teach the fundamentals of a literary education and to nurse the sick, but they were expected to guide the girls in sewing, knitting, needlework and principles of housekeeping, not to mention the responsibilities which fell upon them in the absence of ministers in charge of the schools. A visitor at Good Water in December, 1844, observed that in the absence of the superintendent, the Reverend Ebenezer Hotchkin, his wife had "for an extended period and, in most cheerful spirit, conducted all its affairs with a high level of efficiency."[74] Hotchkin also added praises for the teachers in his mission station: "I feel under obligation to say that the zeal and fidelity of the teachers both in and out of school is above any commendation I could bestow."[75]

Women teachers and wives of superintendents of the stations were also responsible for the preparation and serving of food, dishwashing and laundry for a large mission family which often included several Indian youths. In most stations additional kitchen help was available as well as student aid, but at Pine Ridge, Mrs. Kingsbury labored until old age in the kitchen and dining room with only student help most of the time. Kingsbury often expressed concern at the lack of adequate help for her. In writing the Board on this matter he said:

> At Wheelock & Good Water they have excellent black help in the kitchen. We have none. Mrs. Kingsbury rises at five in the morning to get breakfast with the assistance of some of the

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[74] McMilan, "Women Teachers in Oklahoma, 1820-1860," p. 10.

[75] Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1853, p. 180.

girls for between 40 & 50, & is usually engaged in the labor of the dining room & kitchen till late at night.[76]

At one time Mrs. Kingsbury scalded her foot but continued her supervision of the kitchen and dining room from a couch placed in the dining room.[77]

All women teachers who came to the mission field were not highly qualified or well-prepared. Not expecting to teach when they came, they found themselves serving in this capacity out of the necessity. Citing a particular incident, Kingsbury expressed embarrassments suffered for a "full year, for the want of a teacher." Miss Dickinson, who had not expected to teach when she came out and who had had little experience, was required to teach. Describing her efforts, Kingsbury wrote:

> When hearing a class, she has had so little experience in teaching, that she is obliged when hearing a class to look constantly on her book, & her sight is deficient, so that she needs to use glasses to see well. She does the best she can. But if I should say, the scholars had lost half a year, for want of a teacher, I should not much exaggerate.[78]

Kingsbury suggested that the Board's method of hiring teachers and assistants should be modified in order to avoid some problems. He had always been in favor of sending out teachers and assistants for a limited time and with a moderate compensation. Then if they did not prove useful, they could be discharged without difficulty. Hired persons were generally more willing to labor and to take direction from others,

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[76]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, December 4, 1844, #5, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[77]Cyrus Kingsbury to American Board, Pine Ridge, December 12, 1844, #16, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[78]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, July 2, 1845, #16, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

than those who "come out as missionaries for life & who expect to be their own masters." He added, however, that his remarks were more applicable to men.[79]

The most devastating enemy of women and men teachers alike was sickness and death. Some illnesses were long in duration. The missionaries referred to the initial period of "feeble health" as a "seasoning." If a person did not experience this early "seasoning" of initial illness, he was likely to linger in poor health for a whole season before adapting to the environment.[80]

Some missionaries and teachers experienced sudden acute illnesses which resulted in death in a very short time. For instance, Mrs. Bissell was ill only about twenty hours before her death. Kingsbury reported:

> Mrs. Bissell appeared in usual health the evening previous to her decease, & unusually cheerful. Miss Fay who slept with her was awaked about 2 o'clock in the morning, & found Mrs. Bissell in a fit, strongly convulsed. From that time until nine o'clock at night she had upwards of 30 fits. She hardly spoke during the whole time of her illness, & for the most part appeared insensible.[81]

Some of the most prevalent diseases in the Indian Territory during this period were bilious fever, intermittent fever, pleurisy, consumption, dysentery, whooping cough, scrofula, scurvy, and liver "affections." Byington kept a record of the deaths of people living within twelve or fifteen miles of his residence from 1836 to 1842. He concluded

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[79] Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, March 5, 1845, #10, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[80] Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, February 21, 1844, #75, ABC 18.5.1, Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[81] Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, December 18, 1845, #24, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

that the cool months of the year were "the most sickly and fatal."[82] His report did not include smallpox which had killed from 500 to 1,000 in the western portion of the nation in 1839,[83] and cholera which had devastated the emigrants during removal ten years earlier.[84]

The Surgeon General's Office of the United States Army made a statistical report of the sickness and mortality in the Army of the United States from January, 1839 to January, 1855. In the report of the medical topography and diseases of Fort Gibson, the majority of the diseases were of malarial origin--intermittent or remittent fever. The most fatal disease occurring in that vicinity was called "winter fever." The principal mortality was among the Indians, especially those who were poorly clothed and intemperate. "Winter fever" was pneumonia.[85] Bilious fever or "remitting fever" was probably typhoid fever.[86]

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[82] Missionary Herald, XXXVIII (1842), p.398.

[83] Missionary Herald, XXXV (1839), p. 13.

[84] Missionary Herald, XXXVIII (1842), p. 398.

[85] Philip A. and Beatrice J. Kalish in "Indian Territory Forts: Charnel Houses of the Frontier, 1839-1865," Chronicles of Oklahoma, L (Spring, 1972) pp. 65-81, has an excellent discussion of diseases and deaths in forts in Indian Territory, as well as stastical tables. U.S., Congress, Senate, Statistical Report on the Sickness and Mortality in the Army of the United States, Compiled from the Records of the Surgeon General's Office; Embracing a Period of Sixteen Years, From January, 1839, to January, 1855, S. Doc. 96, 34th Cong., 1st sess., 1856.

[86] R. Palmer Howard, M.D., "Cherokee History to 1840: A Medical View," The Journal of the Oklahoma State Medical Association (February, 1970), p. 74. Also, see James W. Mahoney, The Cherokee Physician: Indian Guide to Health, as Given by Richard Foreman, a Cherokee Doctor; Comprising a Brief View of Anatomy, With General Rules for Preserving Health Without the Use of Medicines. The Diseases of the United States, With Their Symptons, Causes, and Means of Prevention,

Alfred Wright, who was in charge of the Wheelock school and church, was often referred to as "Dr." Wright although he did not have a medical degree. However, much of his time was spent in aiding the sick. He remarked once that

> the never-ceasing calls for medicine and medical advice make such encroachments upon my time, that but little is left at my own command. In regard to administering medicine, I have much to do. And although I do not undertake to see one tenth of those who apply to me, yet the necessary inquiries and the preparing of appropriate medicines, occupy no inconsiderable portion of my time, especially during the sickly season. This is a burden from which I would gladly be relieved, if I knew how it could be done. But when the people are sick, they are afflicted, and in their affliction they come for relief, from ten to twenty, or even sometimes fifty miles; and the spirit of that gospel which we come here to preach, requires us to administer relief as far as in our power.[87]

These medical duties were in addition to his work in translating the New Testament which was completed in 1848.

All the missionaries ministered to the sick and dispensed medicines since there were very few physicians in Indian Territory. At times mission stations and schools appeared to be hospitals. Women teachers were constantly called upon for nursing services and the missionaries carried their medicine cases in their saddle bags with their Bible and Hymn Book. Often the simple remedies not only alleviated pain, but saved lives.[88]

Although beverages with alcohol occasionally were used medicinally, social drinking was discouraged. The Choctaws were the

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Are Explained in Simple Terms. Third Edition (New York: Published by James M. Edney, 1857), pp. 70-75.

[87]Missionary Herald, XXXVIII (1842), pp. 367-368.

[88]Gibbons, "Work Among the Indians," p. 10.

first tribe in the Indian Territory to ban whiskey and temperance societies were popular throughout the nation.[89] C. C. Copeland, missionary to the Choctaws at Norwalk station, described a temperance meeting in his neighborhood on August 16, 1844: "Speeches were made on the subjects of temperance, industry, education, and religion. A dinner was prepared for all who were present, whether white, red, or black. Some five or six hundred attended the meeting; sixty-seven were added to the total abstinence pledge."[90] Byington, superintendent of Stockridge, observed that the leading men of the Choctaw Nation eighteen or twenty years previously had taken a "good stand on the subject of temperance," and that there was no estimate of the advantage temperance had been to them. However, he added that "some yet love whiskey, and are drunkards indeed, and some lose their lives." He noted that fifty-six persons had died from over-indulgence on Red River since the time of removal less than a decade before.[91] A temperance society was formed at Fort Towson with sixty members in 1843.[92]

The Choctaws continued to advance and flourish in their new country until the Civil War disrupted their schools and government. Towns and trading centers grew and expanded as the Indian Territory became a gateway to the West, particularly to Texas and the California gold fields. Well-known centers of commerce and trade before 1850 were Eagletown,

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[89] Missionary Herald, XXXV (1839), p. 269.

[90] Missionary Herald, XL (1844), p. 394.

[91] Missionary Herald, XXXVIII (1842), p. 398.

[92] Missionary Herald, XXXIX (1843), p. 226.

Doaksville, Skullyville, Boggy Depot, Tamaha, Perryville and Mayhew. The federal government established postoffices in many of the towns. Hotels, blacksmith shops and stores thrived in these communities.[93]

Some members of prominent mixed-blood families--Folsom, Perry, McKinney, Walker, McCurtain, Jones and Turnbull--were leaders in business, usually in partnership with licensed white traders from the United States. Others operated large farms and plantations with Negro slave labor. The wealthiest trader and planter before the Civil War was Robert M. Jones, who had attended the Choctaw Academy in Kentucky. He owned nearly 500 slaves, five plantations and steamboats running from the Red River to New Orleans.[94]

In the middle and late 1840's missionaries were enthusiastic in their reports of progress. The year 1843, ten years after removal, was a "Year of Jubilee" and "distinguished mercies to the mission among the Choctaw."[95] Kingsbury reported a "greater prevalence of temperance, industry, good morals, and a desire for education." The missionaries said that they had never "enjoyed more of the confidence of the Choctaws, and that their labors have never been more valued." They believed the prospects of the mission were "highly encouraging." In this year before the boarding schools were opened in 1844 there were fourteen preaching

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[93] Wright, A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma, p. 107; Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 59; Shirk, "First Post Offices Within the Boundaries of Oklahoma," pp. 199-244.

[94] Wright, A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma, p. 107.

[95] Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 30.

places and seven schools.[96] Among the converts were some of the best educated men in the nation.[97]

Hotchkin reported from Good Water that the chief of his district and sixteen of his principal captains had signed the temperance pledge. He also noted progress in other areas: "Their crops were never better. There never was more peace and friendship. There never was less sickness. Drunkenness has decreased at least an hundred per cent. The call for books and teachers was never louder."[98]

Many Choctaws shared with the missionaries appreciation for the strides the tribesmen had made in education and other improvements. The desire of Indian parents to secure an education for their children became "stronger and stronger among all classes." Even in the most unenlightened portions of the nation, there was a great change in this respect.[99] Petitions were often made to the missionaries for more teachers to relieve the "distress" in the minds of the chiefs for not being supplied with teachers in their neighborhoods.[100]

There was not only an educational re-awakening, but also some spiritual interest. Israel Folsom wrote to David Greene, Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, from Blue, Choctaw Nation, March 18, 1846, commending the missionaries for coming

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[96] Missionary Herald, XXXIX (1843), p. 14.

[97] Missionary Herald, XL (1844), p. 359.

[98] Missionary Herald, XXXVIII (1842), p. 413.

[99] Missionary Herald, XL (1844), p. 387.

[100] Cyrus Kingsbury letters to the American Board, July 1851, #44, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

to the Choctaws:

> We see with great pleasure the advancements in civilization and refinement are making among our people & my dear sir, your Board have done much for us. We will never forget the help & kindness which we have received from the Christians in your country. We can never repay them. . . . We are still dependent on you as much as ever for help. . . . I was fed, clothed & educated by your Board.[101]

Certainly the influence of Kingsbury and other missionaries was manifested when in 1842, leaders of the Choctaw Nation passed the landmark school laws. This act demonstrated esteem with which education was held among the leading men of the Choctaws. Nevertheless, there were some who opposed the gospel and education.[102] Kingsbury rejoiced that the people were generally rising, "in the scale of social, intellectual, & moral improvement," but he lamented that there was a large class both of

> Choctaws & Chickasaws, principally of the full-bloods, who were stationary as to improvement. These were strongly attached to their ancient habits; were whiskey-drinkers & ball players; seldom if ever attended the preaching of the Gospel; and manifested no interest in the cause of education.[103]

The demand for books and printed material in both Choctaw and English was another indicator of the continuing Choctaw interest in education, Byington and Wright worked constantly on translations with the help of the other missionaries and native teachers.[104] Byington concentrated on translations of books of the Old Testament while Wright worked on the

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[101]Signed Israel Folsom, Cyrus Kingsbury letters to the American Board, #136, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[102]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 31.

[103]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, August, 1841, #57, ABC 18.5.1., Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[104]Missionary Herald, XXVIII (1842), p. 368.

New Testament. In the annual reports, the missionaries commented on the increase in the numbers of Choctaws reading and the contrast between the ones who read and those who did not. "There is a very perceptible difference in intelligence, and precision of thought and expression, between those who read and those who do not," they observed.[105] Even though the reading material was limited, it "enlarged the range" of the Indians' thoughts, awakened the dormant energies of his mind, inspired a thirst for knowledge, and made him much more of an intellectual being."[106]

By 1841, 3,048,150 pages had been printed for the Choctaws.[107] In 1848, Wright sent the translation of the New Testament to the American Bible Society press. Many of the tracts were printed by the American Tract Society and others at the expense of the Board, usually at a press that had been set up in the Cherokee Nation soon after that tribe's arrival in the West.[108] Bying revised the Choctaw Hymn Book and added twenty-seven new humns in 1850, translated numerous books of the Old Testament and revised the Choctaw grammar.[109] Other books and works in the Choctaw language included almanacs, biographies, spellers, arithmetics, Bible stories for children, well-known sermons, lectures and a

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[105] Missionary Herald, XXXVI (1840), p. 398.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Missionary Herald, XXXVII (1841), p. 14.

[108] Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, pp. 38, 49; Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 62; Report Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1837, p. 561; Report, 1843, pp. 340, 350; Report, 1844, p. 399; Report, 1845, p. 594; Report, 1846, p. 361; Report, 1851, pp. 374, 376.

[109] Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Annual Report, 1850, August 17, 1850, #11, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Choctaw definer. A list of translations from 1845 to 1852 include such works as: Scripture Biography, 2 volumes; Choctaw Definer; Spelling Book; Hymn Book, 4th edition; Child's Book on Creation; Character and Works of God and "Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God."[110]

Perhaps one of the most interesting and significant printed materials to appear in the Choctaw Nation during this time was the first newspaper, the Choctaw Telegraph, established in Doaksville by Daniel Folsom, great-grandson of Nathaniel Folsom and publisher, D. G. Ball. The first issue was printed on November 2, 1848. The Prospectus for the Choctaw Telegraph, a weekly journal, stated that the newspaper was to be "devoted to the advocacy and dissemination of Morality, Education, Agriculture and general Intelligence--one half in the Choctaw and the other in the English language." The sheet was to be a "Family Newspaper (neutral in religion and politics)."[111] The newspaper consisted of four pages of five columns each and was printed almost entirely in English. The editorial page was usually printed in Choctaw; all important announcements in both English and Choctaw and advertisements in English.[112] Public service announcements such as weather reports and river conditions were included as were accounts of crimes committed and activities of the Lighthorsemen enforcing the liquor law of 1834. Letters and articles on religion, temperance and Choctaw educational matters were popular.

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[110] Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, pp. 32, 49.

[111] James D. Morrison, "News for the Choctaws," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVII (1949-1950), pp. 207-209.

[112] Ibid., pp. 208-209.

Examinations at the different Choctaw boarding schools were announced and reports of the trustees were published. Advertisements, other announcements and fill-in anecdotes completed the paper. But due to financial difficulties, the Choctaw Telegraph was short-lived and the last issue, the fifty-second number, was published on December 20, 1849. In 1850, the paper was sold to new owners who changed the name to the Choctaw Intelligencer. The new editors were John P, Kingsbury (Cyrus Kingsbury's son) and Jonathan E. Dwight (native preacher). The publisher was L. D. Alsobrook.[113]

The year 1848 was a "time of building up," as the Choctaw Nation marked another milestone in the advancement with the publication of a newspaper, a renewed demand for books and other literature in the Choctaw and English languages, petitions for more teachers and missionaries, and the printing of the translation of the New Testament. But there was also "a time of breaking down" when on March 19, 1848, a tornade struck a mission school.[114]

One month later the Presbytery met and at Kingsbury's request resolved that the "care and responsibility of the secular concerns of Pine Ridge Station, including the repair and erection of the necessary buildings, he committed to Mr. D. Breed and J. P. Kingsbury, under the Superintendent."[115] Relinquishing this responsibility in order to

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[113] Ibid., pp. 212-221.

[114] Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, pp. 38-39.

[115] Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, letters to the American Board, Fort Towson, Doaksville P. O., April 19, 1848, #48, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

fulfill his preaching commitments, Kingsbury and his wife moved temporarily to Fort Towson where the commandant offered them a suite of unoccupied rooms.[116]

The Choctaw Council granted nine hundred dollars toward rebuilding the house for the girls and teachers at Pine Ridge. The American Board contributed liberally, also. Different individuals gave valuable assistance so that on the last day of November, 1848,--eight months after the tornado--the school was re-opened.[117] Even so, some of the buildings were not completed at the appointed time and Miss Goulding and Miss Bennett, teachers, suffered much from the unfinished and open state of the house that they occupied. For a time their health was seriously affected.[118]

When Kingsbury left Pine Ridge after the storm, he entrusted the secular affairs and repairs of the station to Mr. and Mrs. David Breed and John while retaining their superintendency, as agreed upon by the presbytery at Norwalk. This arrangement, however, proved less than satisfactory. His son John "found it expedient to leave the station about the first of May." It seemed that there was some misunderstanding as to the duties and requirements of Mr. Breed. He spent much of

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[116] *Ibid.*

[117] Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 42.

[118] Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, June 30, 1849, Annual Report, #66, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

his days in his room writing and when asked by Kingsbury to write at night and help with the work in the days, he replied, "I did not come out here to be a slave, nor to work as a hired man. I came to work when I pleased." He then accused Kingsbury and his wife of being difficult to please.[119] Kingsbury, who was mainly occupied with preaching and attending the Synod at Little Rock during this time, interfered as little as possible and did not visit the station often, although he expected that in some of the more important matters, Mr. Breed would consult with him. Kingsbury complained that Breed refused to place buildings where the presbytery had designated, spent much more money on building than had been originally planned, failed to seek advice or follow any, and hired an excess of laborers. By the time the school was scheduled to be open, Breed's room was the only one at the station "carefully supplied with every comfort and convenience." In the school there were no chairs, tables or even benches for the accommodation of the children and the sisters in charge of them. Kingsbury requested a decision of the presbytery in December concerning Breed. Kingsbury told them Breed was deficient in the following particulars:

> (1) A want of industry. (2) A want of economy. (3) A want of proper vigilence in the oversight and management of business. (4) A want of proper attention to the health and comfort of those associated with him. (5) An unwillingness to be advised or directed by the superintendent.

The brethren were unanimous in the opinion that Breed should leave the station and Mr. and Mrs. Kingsbury should return to occupy it.

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[119]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Fort Towson, November 28, 1848, #62, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Breed left the station $1,400 in debt when he departed and once again, Kingsbury was unable to free himself from the secular cares of the station while sacrificing the spiritual duties of a preacher and missionary.[120]

In reporting this unfortunate development to the American Board, Kingsbury expressed a sincere concern for the Breeds and tempered his criticism with the following statements:

> We cannot make Mr. Breed over again; he was not at all calculated naturally nor has he had any training to fit him for his present station. . . . They seem to have had but little idea of what would be expected of missionaries. . . . Our difficulty is to know what to do with Mr. & Mrs. Breed. We wish to deal kindly & tenderly with them. They are just setting out in the world, and we hope they may find some situation in which they may be useful. It is a great calamity when such persons are sent to the mission ground.[121]

With this statement Kingsbury again cautioned the American Board in the process of appointing missionaries to the Indians. He observed that

> the old fashioned way of getting along by laborious & perserving [sic] industry seems to be to a great extent obsolete, and an easier way of getting along has I suppose been discovered. Mrs. Kingsbury and myself feel that we are falling far behind the age, and that soon we must give place to others, who will perhaps get along easier & better than we have done. It appears to me there is more difficulty in finding suitable laborers for the Indian Missions, than for those, where so much manual labor is not required.[122]

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[120] Ibid.

[121] Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, December 14, 1848, #63, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[122] Ibid.

Kingsbury never approved of the American Board's policy of using ordained ministers as superintendents over the secular affairs of the schools. Comparing this system to that of the Methodists he noted that the Methodists had taken possession of the most important vacant places, except in the immediate vicinity of the American Board churches because they had more men at command and fewer schools. Where they had established schools, they had brought others into the field instead of taking the missionaries on the ground from their work of preaching. Thus they increased rather than diminished the amount of religious instruction and the extent of the field occupied.[123]

Nevertheless, Kingsbury was able to fulfill all of his responsibilities and duties quite well. His church circuit covered over 200 miles by horseback in a twelve-day period and included churches at Pine Ridge, Mayhew, Chickasaw on the Boggy, Six Town, Mount Pleasant and until 1846 at Fort Towson. In that year the garrison force was reassigned for duty in the war against Mexico. Describing this unexpected event, Kingsbury wrote that at five o'clock in the evening on Saturday all was quiet at the post with everyone anticipating a pleasant sabbath. At half-past eight on Monday morning the buildings, hospital and all were cleared of their army occupants with the exception of three individuals.[124] A few years later, after the war, Kingsbury was offered the position of Chaplain at Fort Towson at a salary of "$720 cash, rations, Quarters,

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[123]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, March 3, 1847, #36, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[124]Cyrus Kingsbury to American Board, Pine Ridge, August 6, 1846, #28, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Cyrus Kingsbury to the American Board, May 9, 1846, Pine Ridge, #27, Ibid.

firewood &c to make it about equal to $1,000 per an." Although it would have been a "comfortable situation" for the Kingsburys in their "declining years," Kingsbury refused the offer saying that he considered it his duty to remain with the Choctaws.[125]

Cyrus Byington's ministry extended 1,800 square miles over the eastern part of the Choctaw Nation occupied by approximately 3,000 Choctaws. He preached at seven places within this area.[126] In the remote area without buildings, missionaries ingeniously provided makeshift pulpits and altars. Byington often took a movable seat from his missionary wagon and, with a buffalo skin spread over it, used it as a pulpit and communion table.[127]

Kingsbury's responsibilities ranged from the least particulars to the general oversight of the whole mission among the Choctaws under the American Board. He superintended the teachers, buildings and supplies at Pine Ridge and rode hundreds of miles on horseback each month--often in severe weather--preaching at numerous churches. An excerpt from his diary describes such a trip: "Yesterday I rode from Mr. Stewarts here through the prairie, 15 miles & no house, facing a severe North wind & snow. This morning the thermometer stood at 6 above zero."[128]

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[125]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, April 2, 1849, #6, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Box 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[126]Cyrus Kingsbury to the American Board, Annual Report, 1850, #11, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[127]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Mt. Pleasant, January 13, 1852, #80, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Box 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[128]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, February 9, 1841, #53, ABC 18.5.1, Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Furthermore, he sent detailed and regular reports of the churches and schools to the Secretary of the American Board. Often included in these reports were collections and observations of scientific interest. One such collection contained fossils or petrified shell fish, shells and minerals which had been found on the Boggy in the Choctaw country and a box of horned frogs, horned lizzards, centipedes and tarantulas--"preserved in spirits."[129]

Mr. and Mrs. Kingsbury worked hard at the station at Pine Ridge. When Kingsbury was not away preaching or on other business, he rose at five a.m. to make the fires in the kitchen and dining room. Although he had a hired black man to assist him, he did not require him to get up to make the fires "as is the practice with servants in all the South" since he was older than Kingsbury and "somewhat infirm." Mrs. Kingsbury rose at the same time and with the assistance of some of the girls, prepared the breakfast for forty to fifty persons.[130] Mrs. Kingsbury not only superintended the kitchen and dining room, but taught arithmetic in the afternoons, took charge of some of the girls when out of class and took care of the sick.[131]

After a few years' labor in the Choctaw Nation, Kingsbury requested the American Board to grant Mrs. Kingsbury a leave of absence in order for her to return to her home in New England to visit her only sister who had "declining health" and to recruit more teachers. She was

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[129] Ibid.

[130] Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, December 27, 1844, #8, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[131] Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, June 6, 1845, #14, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

not to go at the expense of the Board. On the way, she planned to visit their sons in Marietta, Ohio.[132] Although this request was initiated in 1839, Mrs. Kingsbury's trip East was delayed until 1843--after her sister had died.[133] When Mrs. Kingsbury returned to the Choctaw country on December 29th she was accompanied by Misses Susan Tracy, Mary J. Dickinson, Cornelia Ladd and Harriet Crosby. "Considerably diseased" when she left home, Miss Crosby died the day after she arrived in the Choctaw Nation.

When Mrs. Kingsbury stopped in Marietta, Ohio, on her way home, she found their son Cyrus in dire need of financial assistance as he had begun the study of medicine. The American Board granted $100 to aid him in attending medical lectures at Cincinnati in the fall of 1843.[134] The expenses of education for the two boys for the five previous years was "upwards of $1,400; 1,000 of which was left them by their grandfather Varnum." The balance was paid from Kingsbury's own funds. Kingsbury expressed "devout gratitude," that the prospects of their sons, "as respects their moral & religious character is so favorable."[135]

Kingsbury's second son, John Parker, returned from Marietta to assist his father in December, 1840, and was a great help to him in the

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[132]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Eagle Town, February 14, 1839, #47, ABC 18.5.1, Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[133]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, December 1, 1841, #54, ABC 18.5.1, Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[134]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, November 23, 1843, Pine Ridge, #73, ABC 18.5.1; Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, January 23, 1844, #74, Ibid.

[135]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, December 10, 1840, Pine Ridge, #52, ABC 18.5.1, Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

missions. He taught a school at Fort Towson in 1842; one on the Boggy in 1843.[136] Kingsbury wrote in 1846 that he could not get along at all, were it not for the assistance of his son. "He renders important aid in many respects. . . . He had made a great sacrifice in a pecuniary point of view by remaining with me. He might have had Mr. Bissell's place at Spencer, with more than double the salary that I can give him, and with much less labor."[137]

Kingsbury believed that the preaching of the gospel was the most important responsibility of the mission and that education was a necessary tool for achieving this goal. "Whoever has the education of the rising generation, will unquestionably, either directly or indirectly, have a large share in the religious, & literary & civil concerns of the nations," he wrote.[138] But "without habits of industry, and correct moral deportment--two of the most important things to be impressed on the minds of children, education would be of little value," he added. But most of all, he believed that "education without religion is a source of harm, rather than of benefit."[139]

In order to achieve these goals, Kingsbury suggested that the people among whom Christian missions were established, should be "aided

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[136]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, July 12, 1842, #58, ABC 18.5.1, Vol. 1; Houghton Library, Harvard University; Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, March 13, 1843, #64, Ibid.

[137]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, May 9, 1846, #27, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[138]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, June 15, 1842, #56, ABC 18.5.1, Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[139]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, June 30, 1849, #66, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

so far & in such a way, as may best enable & dispose them to help themselves." He cautioned that this was difficult to attain in all places and there was a great danger that it would be overlooked on the mission ground. "So long as we continue to carry the children in our arms, how will it learn to walk?" he asked.[140] However, a certain amount of assistance was necessary since the Choctaws would have been unable to give their children the most elementary education without the aid of the missionary Boards and the Choctaw public funds. "Without this they could not get along at all," Kingsbury observed.[141]

Kingsbury's philosophy that education should not be confined solely to literary objectives was repeatedly demonstrated throughout the mission school systems. He was acutely aware of the need for the Nation to concern itself with agriculture and manufacturers. Alarmed over the practice of boys leaving school with no definite objects in view or disposition to "engage with energy, & at once, in thos occupations, most necessary to the welfare of the community," Kingsbury compared the resources in the Choctaw country to the gold of California. He said:

> There is in the Choctaw country, a mine, as valuable, as the gold of Calafornia [sic]; but the soil must be worked before the precious mettal [sic] can be obtained. Agricultural & mechanical

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[140]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, May 4, 1837, #85, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 5, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[141]Cyrus Kingsbury to the American Board, Pine Ridge, May 9, 1846, #27, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University. "It is worthy of note, that through the instrumentality and leadership of the mission boards, the Choctaws appropriated at various time more than half a million dollars in the aggregate for the Christian education of their youth." Cyrus Kingsbury letters to the American Board, no date, no signature, #74, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University. #73 and #75, both dated April 14, 1849, "Copy of letter from the mission to the Prudential Committee prepared about the time of Mr. Treat's visit and departure, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

> education, do not keep pace with literary education. There is danger of a serious disappointment, as respects the final results. If a change does not speedily take place, the Choctaws will present the spectacle, of a nation with good schools; but with little industry; with a very scanty agriculture; and with still fewer manufactories. How are the advantages to be derived from education, to be developed under such circumstances?[142]

Some of the ways in which Kingsbury's theories of education were put into practice can be observed by a look at the daily routine of a boarding school at Stockbridge in July, 1848, as described by David W. Winship, one of the instructors. Thirty-nine individuals comprised the "Seminary family:" twenty-seven beneficiaries, two teachers, one carpenter, one assistant carpenter, two hired men, one hired girl, one Choctaw boy, Sinship, his wife and two children--besides transients who were laborers and visitors. The Winships' department was the supervision of the work on the farm which provided food for the boarding beneficiaries, teachers and hired help and the instruction of the pupils in the various kinds of domestic labors. The principal articles of food were meat, tafula (corn), sweet potatoes, bread, garden vegetables and milk.[143]

The labor of the beneficiaries in the dining room and kitchen was systematized as much as possible. Students were divided into four classes with large and small ones in each class. The classes came to work in the dining room alternately and remained a week at a time. They were taught to keep the rooms and tables in order, to prepare food, make

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[142]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, Annual Report, June 30, 1850, #72, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University. Byington gave the Choctaws "credit for not ever having had a distillery or a national debt," Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1855, p. 156.

[143]Cyrus Kingsbury letters to the American Board, David W. Winship, Iyanubbi Female Seminary, Choctaw Nation, July 13, 1848, #94, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

butter, soap, candles and other supplies such as cheese sometimes. During the summer of Winship's report, they prepared materials for a carpet. During the week that a class was in the dining room, the girls were under the control of the Winships except during study hours. Morning and evening prayers were attended in the dining room immediately after meals and all who were able to memorize portions of scripture repeated them at morning worship.[144]

Thirty-three years after the Christian Missions began, Kingsbury evaluated the results. He cited the presence of large churches where the institutions of religion were loved and cherished, education highly prized and liberally supported, a form of government well adapted to the people and the increasing availability of physical resources--all of which was accomplished in the "face of external hinderances of no ordinary magnitude."[145]

In summary, Kingsbury said that the history of the Choctaws proved undoubtedly that there "is no insuperable barrier to the introduction of Christian improvements among the aborigines of our country. All that is necessary is that they should be <u>let alone</u> long enough for this to be accomplished . . ." He predicted that if the Choctaws could be permitted to live within their present area and, "especially, if they can be shielded from outward adverse influences; we may look for an increase of the evidences of Christian improvement.[146]

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[144] <u>Ibid</u>.

[145] Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Archives, p. 45.

[146] <u>Ibid</u>.

This remarkable concept of education for the Choctaw Indians which Kingsbury held separated him from most of his colleagues and placed him one hundred years ahead of his times. He believed that the Choctaws should have "remained a distinct people and retained the use of their own language, without feeling the necessity of a change, . . ." If this had been the case, a "natural process of improvement would have been far preferable" to the one which was pursued. This was not possible, however, because "those by whom they were surrounded, could not wait for that. . . . hence many of the obstacles which prevent the proper development of mind & morals, among our Indian Tribes." He continued:

> Had the situation of the Choctaws been sufficiently isolated, I have no hesitation in saying, that it would have been better for the moral & religious interests, of the Choctaws, had instruction in the schools been wholly in their own language. With a few interesting exceptions, those who have acquired the most knowledge of the English, seem to be the farthest from embracing the gospel. The smallest number of those who have received an English Education are attendants on the means of grace. They seem much more inclined to follow the ways of the ungodly than of the Pious. They consider themselves elevated so far above their parents, & the mass of their people, that "they become vain in their imaginations, & their foolish heart is darkened." We have not done as much for the spiritual improvement of this people, as we ought. And there are means in operation, calculated to turn the minds of our pious young men towards the political & temporal interest of their people, more than to the necessities of the church.[147]

Although Kingsbury never returned to his native New England after going to the mission field, he did visit his son Cyrus (whom he had not seen in fifteen years), and his wife and two children in Iowa in the fall of 1850. En route, he attended a meeting of the Presbyterian Synod at Memphis, Tennessee. Kingsbury (then sixty-four years old) and Byington

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[147]Cyrus Kingsbury to Rev. Rufus Anderson, D.D., Pine Ridge, February 3, 1857, #124, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

(fifty-seven years old) rode 450 miles on horseback to the meeting to represent the Indian Presbytery at the request of the Synod. Their expenses were paid by the Presbytery and the "good people at Memphis" who gave them over $160, a horse and some articles for their families.[148]

After attending the meeting of the Synod, Kingsbury took a boat on the Mississippi to Keokuk, at the mouth of the Des Moines, and took a stage for the remaining forty-five miles to his son's. His trip from Memphis was 600 miles and was completed in four weeks. Upon arriving, he saw his son's wife and their children for the first time. This was the first day he had spent visiting a relative since February, 1819. During his stay, he preached at his son's home church at Keosangua, Iowa, and gave many speeches at various places describing the work of the missions among the Choctaws. Kingsbury took no portion of the mission funds from the Board for the expenses of his journey to his son's. Friends in Memphis paid the greater part and Kingsbury paid the rest from his own funds.[149]

Eight years later, in December, 1858, Cyrus and his wife and four children[150] rented out their farm in Iowa and came to Choctaw

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[148]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Near Keosangua, Iowa (on the Desmoins), November 13, 1850, #75, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[149]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Mount Pleasant, January 21, 1851, #75, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[150]Cyrus Kingsbury, Jr., married Lucy Ann Denning, October 22, 1846; Amelia Varnum Kingsbury was born December 3, 1847; Mary Frances Kingsbury was born February 15, 1849; John Butler Kingsbury was born August 22, 1851; Henry May Kingsbury was born November 8, 1857, at Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation. Diary of Cyrus Kingsbury, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

country. They traveled by land and camped out every night, except for the three weeks they were detained by high water. Kingsbury described Cyrus' wife as a "very superior woman" and their children "models of good behavior." They relieved Mrs. Kingsbury of the duties in the kitchen and dining room. Mrs. Kingsbury was "more than willing to give up all care of the household to Lucy," although she had never felt she could "cheerfully" do it before. Now her age and feeble health rendered it necessary.[151]

Repeatedly throughout the history of the Choctaws and the missions, death and destruction continued to take its toll. Fire destroyed several stores, burning approximately fifty-thousand dollars' worth of goods at Doaksville. One of these stores, the L. Garland and Company, had three equal partners, one of whom was Kingsbury's son John. Their loss was between thirty and thirty-five thousand dollars. Kingsbury's comment, however, was that "if it should be overruled for his [John] spiritual good he will be an unspeakable gained by it."[152]

Colonel David Folsom, one of the outstanding Choctaws in the history of the Choctaw Missions, died in 1847 at the age of fifty-six, after an illness of one week. The inscription on his grave read: "To the memory of David Folsom, the first Republican Chief of the Choctaw Nation. The promoter of industry, education, religion and morality . . .

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[151]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, December 14, 1858, #143, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1859, p. 200.

[152]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, #96, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, July 20, 1853, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

He being dead yet speaketh."[153] Another Choctaw, Elizabeth Dwight, a native full-blood woman teacher who was greatly revered, died at Pine Ridge in 1859. She was a former pupil in the school and a member of the Kingsbury family. One brother was J. E. Dwight, a preacher of the gospel; another brother was a ruling elder in the church and another brother and sister were "worthy members."[154]

Poor health and age caused many missionaries to return to the States, while death claimed others--usually prematurely. Harriet Goulding, who died at the home of her sister in Sterling, Massachusetts, in the late fifties, was memorialized by the Journal of Missions. The Choctaws regarded her as one of their best teachers.[155]

On March 31, 1853, death took the life of one of the "giants" of the Choctaw Missions under the American Board--the beloved "Dr." Alfred Wright. For thirty years a devoted and successful missionary among the Choctaws, he was described by his colleagues as "affectionate in disposition, kind & benevolent in feeling, he delighted in doing good. As a Christian he was uniform & consistent, humble & prayerful." A man of many talents,

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[153] James R. Ramsey to Walter Lowrie, Esq., Pine Ridge, September 28, 1847, Letters Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Presbyterian Historical Society, Tulsa University, Microcopy 9; Conlan, "David Folsom," p. 355.

[154] Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, March 21, 1859, #148, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 66.

[155] Copy of Journal of Missions, Cyrus Kingsbury Letters to the Board, 1857, #130, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 61.

> as a pastor, he watched for souls as one who must give an account. As a preacher, he was scriptural, earnest in preaching. As a translator, he was laborious & careful in all his investigations. Communion with God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and love for the souls of his fellow men, made all his labors sweet to his own soul, & a blessing to others; & such he had been to them, in affection, in counsel, & in unwearied efforts for their best good.[156]

Kingsbury preached a sermon at Doaksville, on June 10, 1853, commemorating the life and character of Alfred Wright. Among other things he said:

> We can go to no part of this land and not find something to remind us of what he did. . . . He spent his life not in seeking after his own advantage but for the good of others. . . for myself I had rather have Brother Wright's name than all the gold in California.[157]

Wright was buried near the old stone church at Wheelock. A marble slab covers the grave and on the slab is inscribed a brief sketch of his life and labors.

One of the last words Wright spoke was regret for not having finished his translation of the Old Testament. However, soon afterwards, his work was continued by the Reverend John Edwards, his successor and teacher at Spencer Academy. Joseph Dukes, a licensed preacher who had assisted Wright with his translations, aided him.[158] Edwards, a young man of twenty-five, was born in Bath, New York, and graduated from the College of New Jersey, at Princeton in 1848 and the Theological Seminary

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[156] Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 50.

[157] Cyrus Kingsbury sermon, Doaksville, June 10, 1853, in "labors of a missionary," from Edmond J. Gardner, The Missionary to the Choctaws, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina, Microcopy.

[158] Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 54.

there in 1851. Wright spoke of him on his "dying bed" and said "he knew of no one, who he thought would be so competent, after another years attention to the language, to carry forward the translations."[159] Mrs. Harriet B. Wright, by reason of continued ill health, asked to be released from the missionary work and returned to the East shortly thereafter.[160]

In 1854, only a year after the death of Wright, the controversial Choctaw school law, destruction by fire and other troubles which caused Kingsbury to consider resigning from the missions, he received his greatest honor--an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Brown University.[161]

Progress among the Choctaws in the fifties was seen on every hand--"improvement in houses, furniture, dress, manners, family government, treatment of women, cultivation of the soil and the successful introduction of wheat"--to mention a few. Yet, the fifties were marred with strife in the Choctaw Nation within the tribe over constitutions[162]

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[159]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, May 23, 1853, #93, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[160]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 56.

[161]Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society.

[162]Cyrus Kingsbury wrote in his Autobiography: "The Choctaws have arrived at the unsettled stage of their history. If they succeed in passing through it [constitution] in safety, their salvation as a nation is highly probable. But there is reason to fear a failure just here. There is still a great lack of industry on the part of many. . . . In reviewing the year closing July, 1858, we have to state that the capacity of the Choctaws for self-government has been severely tested. There has been great excitement among the people, respecting the constitution that was framed at Skullyville in January 1857. Without entering at all into

and territorial issues;[163] between the Choctaws and the Chickasaws; between some of the Choctaws and the missionaries; and the missionaries and the American Board. Underlying most of the troubles at this time was the same burning issue igniting the "fiery fifties" throughout the United States--slavery.[164]

During this decade, the Choctaws and Chickasaws separated; the churches divided; the missionaries and the American Board severed relations and when the first shots rang out at Fort Sumter, April 12, 1861, the United States was rent in two.

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the merits of the controversy, we can safely say that few communities, under similar circumstances would have shown so much self-control, or demeaned themselves with so much propriety as the Choctaws have done." Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 64.

[163]See Annie H. Abel, "Proposals for an Indian State, 1778-1878," Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year, 1907, Vol. 1 (Washington: GOP, 1908), Summary of efforts in 1840's and 1850's.

[164]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 63; Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1855, p. 161.

CHAPTER VI

THE CIVIL WAR AND CHOCTAW MISSIONS

On July 27, 1859, the Choctaw Mission received a letter from the Prudential Committee of the American Board. The letter stated:

> Resolved, That in view of the embarrassments connected with the missionary work among the Choctaws, which affect injuriously as well the labors of the brethren in the field, as the relations, sustained by the Board to its friends & patrons, it is incumbent on the Prudential Committee to discontinue the Choctaw Mission; & the same is hereby discontinued.[1]

It was inevitable that the American Board should be involved in the slavery issue since it supported missions in slaveholding states and territories. From the very beginning, Negro slaves were present in the settlements among the Cherokee and Choctaw missions. Some of the Indian slaveholders became members of the mission churches and occasionally, their slaves became members of the same church. At first, the Board expressed no sympathy or approbation toward slavery; nor did it openly condemn the institution. The goal of the American Board was to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creatures" and it could not be diverted from this commission to become an agitator on either side of the controversy. However, as the years passed and the issue became more bitter, the American Board became less confident and

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[1]Autobiography of Cyrus Kingsbury, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 68.

its noncommittal attitude less satisfactory. Debates at the annual meetings became more intense. In 1846, the American Missionary Association was organized as a protest to the "timid and compromising" attitude of the American Board.[2]

As early as 1840 during an annual meeting in New York, ministers presented a memorial against the Board's solicitation of gifts from slaveholders or slaveholding states. The following year, the ministers of New Hampshire sent a memorial declaring that although the Board had been "goaded in unchristian methods" it should not keep silent on the slavery issue but should speak out against the system.[3]

Eventually, the American Board hardened its position on the issue and began to express itself as distinctly opposed to slavery. Immediately thereafter a sharp correspondence followed between the officers of the Board and its missionaries among the Cherokees and Choctaws. Kingsbury, one of the founders of both missions, pleaded for a temporizing policy until the conditions of slavery were legally abolished throughout the states and territories. He insisted that although he and the other missionaries hated the whole system of slavery, they could not break with it as long as they were missionaries to the southern Indians. Kingsbury said it was not the missionaries' duty to change the system and cited as an example the apostle Paul, who preached the gospel to both bond and free without undertaking to change the system. He cautioned the

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[2]William E. Strong, The Story of the American Board: An Account of the First Hundred Years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Boston: Pilgrim Press, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1910), pp. 52-53.

[3]Ibid., p. 52.

Board not to involve itself in disputes it could not settle and in affairs outside of its jurisdiction.

Nevertheless, the Missionary Herald, the voice of the American Board, began to publish memorials against slavery and to become more outspoken against it. Influential and wealthy slaveholding Choctaws read the journals and accused the missionaries of being abolitionists. Consequently, the missionaries who accepted slaveholders and slaves both into their church on condition of their piety alone, and who used slave labor at the mission stations under certain circumstances[4] were placed in an embarrassing position. The slaveholding Choctaws accused the missionaries of being abolitionists because of the actions of the American Board; and the Board accused the missionaries of being soft on slavery for their acceptance of slaves and slaveholders into the church. The missionaries urged the Board not to disrupt missions with its uncompromising stand. The issue caused stress for the missionaries, the Choctaws and the American Board and eventually led to separation.

Most of the slavery controversy between the missionaries and the Board began a few years after removal and became more and more intense until the final separation in July 1859--two years before the United States divided, in part, over the same issue. Only a few of the Choctaws owned slaves, but these Choctaws played leading roles in the controversy. In October 1840, the Choctaw legislature passed an act "prohibiting free negores to reside in the nation, & also making the employer liable to punishment, & further, making it the duty of the lighthorsemen to take up

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[4]See infra, Chapter Six, pp. 202-206.

negroes suspected free."[5] The act required that by the first day of March 1841, all free Negroes in the nation "unconnected with the Choctaw and Chickasaw blood," were ordered to leave the nation and to "forever keep out of it," on threat of being taken up and sold to the highest bidder and made slaves for life.[6] Furthermore, all citizens of the nation were "debarred from hiring any free negro or negroes," and from concealing and protecting any. Violators would be fined or receive fifty lashes on the bare back.[7]

Kingsbury called the law "very wicked & oppressive" and said that although the professed object of the law was "to expell all the free people of color from the country," that the real intent was probably to bring a number of aged people who had been freed by their owners again into bondage." He added, "I sometime think I cannot longer live in this wretched slave country."[8]

In 1844, the General Council passed a law forbidding slaves to hold property. Since most of the church members in the Chickasaw church were slaves, Kingsbury was able to observe the effect of the law there. The majority of the slaves possessed horses and hogs, raised corn and provided for themselves very comfortably. Their horses enabled them to attend meetings more frequently than otherwise. This law was considered oppressive by the Chickasaws who owned slaves, especially the church

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[5]Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, April, 1860, Copy, #76, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, October 22, 1844, #3, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

members. Therefore, some of the slaves were given the privilege of using their horses after that.[9]

In addition to the laws expelling free Negroes from the Nation and denying slaves ownership of property, the General Council of the Choctaws in 1846 passed an act which stated that no Negro slave could be emancipated in the nation, except by application or petition of the owner to the General Council. Kingsbury and many of the Choctaws considered this law "very oppressive & unrighteous."[10]

In the meantime, before the passage of the latter act, other memorials on slavery were published in the Missionary Herald. One asked the Board to entreat all the missionaries and agents under its patronage to bear a decided testimony against the sin of oppression, wherever and in whatever form it existed. Missionaries were directed "in the name of the Board, of the churches represented by it, and of Jesus Christ whom they preach," to take the stance that American slavery was a sin against God and that its existence in a Christian land was incompatible with the Christian religion which they were commissioned to preach, but was "grossly at variance with all its holy doctrines and precepts." Furthermore, the memorial entreated the Board to take measures immediately to ascertain to what extent slavery or oppression existed in the churches under its patronage, and especially among the Choctaws and other Indian tribes. The signers of the memorial asked that the petition be communicated to

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[9]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, May 31, 1845, #13, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[10]Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, April, 1850, Copy, #76, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

all the missionaries, agents and general public through the Missionary Herald.[11]

In the same month, the Corresponding Secretary of the Board, David Greene, posed ten questions to the missionaries of the Choctaw and Cherokee Nations pertaining to slaveholding church members and called attention to the memorials in the Missionary Herald. The inquiry raised questions as a comparison of the general character and effects of slavery existing in the Choctaw Nation with that in the adjacent states. Further, it inquired of the time and circumstance of slaveholders' induction into the mission churches; the instructions, public or private, direct or indirect, which the missionaries had given to candidates for the church, or to church members, relative to slavery and the duties of masters and slaves. Greene wanted to know the feelings of the Indians generally and specifically those who were members of the church concerning the abolition of slavery, and the principles on which members had been received or excluded from the church. He asked the missionaries to report the time and circumstance of Negro slavery being introduced among the Indians before the arrival of the missionaries; the number of slaves and whether slavery was increasing and the influence, if any, which the introduction of Christianity had upon it and the extent to which slavery was regulated by laws, established usage or public sentiment.[12]

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[11] Missionary Herald, XL (1844), p. 346.

[12] Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, November 21, 1844, Copies sent to C. Kingsbury, E. Hotchkin, Alfred Wright, C. Byington (Choctaw Mission), and to S. A. Worcester, E. Butler, J. Hitchcock (Cherokee Mission), #60, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

In answer to the inquiry, Kingsbury sent a chart to the Board showing the "Statistics of Slavery in the Mission Churches in the Choctaw & Cherokee Nations, under the care of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1845." There were fifteen slaveowners in the Cherokee churches, twenty in the Choctaw churches, twenty-one slaves in the Cherokee churches, one hundred thirty-one slaves in the Choctaw churches (slaves were mostly in the Methodist and Baptist churches among the Cherokees, Kingsbury explained); four free colored in the Cherokee missions, and seven in the Choctaw.[13]

At this time and repeatedly thereafter throughout his years of missionary labors, Kingsbury said that as missionaries they could not interfere directly with the subject of slavery.

> Our influence must be exerted through that gospel, which Christ commanded his disciples to preach to every creature; whatever might be their relative situation. And it by no means appears clear to us that we ought to place ourselves in an attitude, which would effectually exclude us from such a privilege.[14]

Then he proceeded to answer each of the questions posed by the Board.

In conclusion, he wrote that "viewed in all its bearings it is a tremendous evil." He said its destructive influence was seen on the morals of both master and slave and that it swept away the "purity & chastity of the family relations." Furthermore, he stressed the "baneful effects on the rising generation," for the Indians who owned slaves neglected entirely to train their children to "habits of industry,

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[13]Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, 1845, #60, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[14]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, May 31, 1845, Pine Ridge, #13, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University

enterprise and economy; so necessary in forming the character of the parent and the citizen." In answer to the question as to what should be done, Kingsbury posed another:

> Shall we desert our churches & schools, & send back those who compose them to the shades of moral darkness and death, because some among them own slaves? Is not the Choctaw Nation a part of that world, to which Christ commanded his disciples to go & to preach the gospel to every creature? Can we expect the half enlightened, half civilized Choctaws, to proceed on this subject, in advance of the white people in the states around them? Or in advance of those churches in civilized & enlightened communities where slavery exists?[15]

Kingsbury answered his questions with the conclusion that the only hope of benefiting either slave or master was through the influence of the gospel--and the "gospel to be effectual must be conveyed in the spirit of meekness & of love."[16]

Nonetheless, the American Board drew up a set of resolutions against slavery as a guide for the missionaries in order to express the feelings of the "great body of ministers and private Christians, in New England, and elsewhere, who were most interested in the missionary work, most liberal in supporting it, and most assiduous in their zeal and endeavors."[17] Admonished to use their own "judgment and Christian feeling," the missionaries were told to give the Indians correct views on the subject and to induce them to "take measures as speedily as possible to bring the system of wrong and oppression to an end."[18] "Preachers of the

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] David Greene to Cyrus Kingsbury with copies sent to Byington, Worcester and J. Hitchcock, November 19, 1845, #23, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[18] Ibid.

gospel," the resolution stated, "should regard it as a point settled, that slavery and gospel institutions cannot permanently exist in friendly contact, side by side; that the gospel, . . . must . . . remove slavery, especially in this land."[19]

The year 1848 was significant--reminiscent of 1828--a year of progress and setbacks; achievements and destruction; attacks and rebuttals. Milestones in the Choctaw Nation and missions were the completion of the translation of the Old Testament in the Choctaw language by Cyrus Byington and the establishment of the Choctaw Telegraph by the Choctaws. In the same year, a devastating tornado struck the Pine Ridge mission. Yet throughout the trials and triumphs of the year, the slavery issue predominated. Accusations and denials, debates and remonstrances, attacks and defenses became more frequent, louder and stronger throughout the year. As agitation intensified throughout the states in general and New England in particular, the Board proportionately hardened its view and reflected the abolitionist movement in its demands upon the missionaries. As this stand became more manifest, the missionaries' position became less tenable.

Israel Folsom had addressed a letter to Kingsbury in December, 1847, suggesting that he and his wife "form a connection with some other church, where sentiments are one with us on slavery."[20] It seemed that earlier, Folsom had been sensitive to some of the questions on the inquiry from David Greene which Kingsbury had presented to him in response to the

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Israel Folsom to Cyrus Kingsbury, Mineral Bayou, December 20, 1847, #49, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Board's request that some of the most intelligent of the church members be interrogated. A few weeks following that inquiry Kingsbury had heard a report that Folsom had been endeavoring to persuade a Negro man, a slave of his, to leave his wife and take another woman. Kingsbury had taken his horse and made a journey of about two hundred miles round trip primarily to get the facts from Folsom himself. On receipt of Folsom's letter wishing to separate from the church, Kingsbury recalled the previous incident and the meeting in which the conversation on slavery had been satisfactory and agreeable without an unkind word on the part of either. Consequently, Kingsbury was surprised at Folsom's statement at this time saying: "Your repeated attacks on me (on the subject of slavery) have had a tendency to damp my feelings towards the missionaries, and to produce a desire in me to separate."[21] Then Kingsbury asked him to point out his fault wherein he had "acted contrary to the law of love," and that if Folsom had heard reports unfavorable to his Christian character, to please speak to him respecting them. In closing, he stated that it was of little consequence to what church one belonged, provided he was a humble and sincere follower of the Lord Jesus.[22]

Three months later, Kingsbury was a guest in Israel Folsom's home while visiting in that part of the nation and again Folsom approached the subject of abolitionism, suggesting that Kingsbury must have been an abolitionist to "come so far to see him on so little a matter as that about his negro," referring to the earlier visit. Folsom said, "Abolitionism

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[21]Cyrus Kingsbury to Israel Folsom, Pine Ridge, January 3, 1848, #49, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[22]*Ibid*.

has ruined everything."[23] Three days later, before Kingsbury could return home, a tornado demolished Pine Ridge.[24]

On May 1st, Folsom wrote Kingsbury accusing him of being a northern man:

> and intermeddle yourself too much about the abolition doctrine, which we condemn and abhor. With this doctrine you will divid [sic] us up among the Christians, stop the good work of God, by chilling the hearts of the Choctaw Christians, who were just beginning to improve in the Christian religion with joy. All most all the Choctaws do not approve the course you have taken on this question. They feel sorry for you. They want you to stop interfering with the civil relation which exists in this nation, which has been sanctioned by the word of God, as well as by our law. There are a great number of the Christians in our land who are against you on this question, and not only here, but elsewhere.[25]

He ended the letter with the statement that "You are a northern man, and supported by the North and cannot change."[26]

Kingsbury's answer was to restate his views as that which he believed to be "laid down in the Bible" and approved by a majority of the evangelical ministers and Christians in the Southern states. "And can you, my dear sir; sitting down and candidly examining them, shew wherein they are contrary to the word of God?" he asked. He quoted the apostles as speaking freely respecting the "duties of masters and servants," and admitted that occasionally he had endeavored to urge these duties. He had never in a single instance interfered with the civil relations which existed in the nation between master and slave, he

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[23]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Mount Pleasant, March 13, 1848, #46, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[24]See supra, Chapter Five, pp. 244-246.

[25]Israel Folsom to Cyrus Kingsbury, (Copy), Fort Washita, May 1, 1848, #54, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[26]Ibid.

asserted.[27] Kingsbury sent a copy of his and Folsom's letters to the American Board to furnish an index of the state of feeling among an important portion of the community who had heretofore been under their instruction, and who had been among their most devoted friends, he explained. Kingsbury wrote that due to a strong slavery interest in Folsom's part of the country, it was easy to get up an "excitement." Prophetically, he added that "this is a day of great changes, and it would not be surprising, if there should be changes in the Choctaw mission."[28] Israel Folsom united with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and became a preacher shortly afterwards.[29]

Paradoxically, the same month and year Kingsbury received another attack concerning the slavery issue, but this time, the attacker was an abolitionist who accused Kingsbury of being a slaveholder engaged in purchasing and possibly selling slaves. William Slocomb wrote Kingsbury from Marietta, Ohio, that a certain Presbyterian preacher itinerating that area representing the American Missionary Society seemed to take delight in finding fault with the American Board. Centering his attack on Kingsbury, he accused him of dealing in the slave trade and expressed concern that the Christian public would tolerate him in such a cause. Slocomb asked Kingsbury for the truth of the matter.[30]

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[27]Cyrus Kingsbury to Israel Folsom, Near Pine Ridge, June 12, 1848, #55, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[28]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Fort Towson, June 15, 1848, #53, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[29]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Mount Pleasant, July 19, 1848, #57, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Box 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[30]William Slocomb to Cyrus Kingsbury, Marietta, Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, July 14, 1848, #59, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

During his years of service in the Choctaw missions, Kingsbury purchased three slaves in order to free them. This had been done with the knowledge and consent of the American Board. In answer to the inquiry from the Presbyterian preacher, Kingsbury gave a history of the three incidents. Kingsbury began with the assumption that the man had been misinformed and would not knowingly misrepresent circumstances in order to injure the American Board or "defame the character of an old and worn out missionary." Then Kingsbury proceeded to "state all the facts which may have furnished even a pretext" for the above representations in a spirit of meekness and gentleness he hoped. Kingsbury gave the following account.

About twenty-five or twenty-six years before, when Kingsbury was in the Choctaw Nation in Mississippi, he had hired a black woman named Hannah as an assistant in the family at Mayhew. After being with them a year or two, she very earnestly and urgently requested Kingsbury to buy her lest she be in bondage to her owner the rest of her life. To avoid this, Kingsbury bought her from her master and then agreed with the woman to give her fair wages for her work until she had refunded what he paid for her freedom. When she had repaid him, she continued to labor in the family for wages for awhile, after which she went to live with her husband a little distance from the station. While living at the Kingsburys' she became a member of the church.[31]

In 1832, George Freeman, a "faithful blackman" who was hired by Kingsbury and who proved to be an industrious and trustworthy man became

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[31]Cyrus Kingsbury to William Slocomb, Fort Towson, August 8, 1848, #59, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Cyrus Kingsbury to Board, Pine Ridge, December 25, 1844, #7, Ibid.

very desirous of being bought and freed as Hannah had been. Kingsbury, therefore, for the same considerations that influenced him to procure her freedom, paid the claim of his master and opened a book account with George. He charged what he had paid for him and gave credit for his work at a liberal price which was agreed upon between George and Kingsbury. After he had repaid a part of what was due, Kingsbury gave him the opportunity to manage for himself and pay as he was able. Although the amount he cleared yearly above his expenses was much less, the experience gained was important in the new life which he was entering, Kingsbury thought. He paid his debt within four years and found steady employment at the Dwight Mission among the Cherokees. Years later, he returned to live with Kingsbury.[32]

The third case was that of Bartley, a black man nearly sixty years of age who came to Kingsbury in 1841 requesting that he buy his freedom. He stated that his situation was a hard one and that as he was getting old, he wished to be comfortably provided for where he could enjoy the advantages of religious instruction. Again, in compliance with his repeated and earnest solicitations, Kingsbury paid his master's claim for his freedom. His agreement with Bartley was that he should work for Kingsbury until he had refunded what Kingsbury had advanced for him. After that, if he chose to remain with him, Kingsbury was to take care of him in sickness and old age as long as he lived. After about four years, Kingsbury told him he was at liberty to continue with him or to go

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[32]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Mount Pleasant, January 21, 1851, #76, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Cyrus Kingsbury to William Slocomb, Fort Towson, August 8, 1848, #59, Ibid.; Cyrus Kingsbury to Board, Pine Ridge, December 25, 1844, #7, Ibid.

wherever he chose. Bartley had married while he was with Kingsbury and since his wife and her children by a former marriage lived at a distance from him, he moved away to be near them and found work. In a few months, however, he returned to Kingsbury saying that he found the situation with him better than where he had gone. Kingsbury let him have a horse at his own price and when he chose, he took his horse and visited friends and family and returned when it suited him. He became quite infirm and was often laid up from work. In cold weather he was not able to do any work except taking care of the horses and some chores at the house, so that Kingsbury paid him no wages in the winter, but kept him and his horse, furnished him with what he needed and took care of him in sickness. In the summer, he paid him liberal wages. All the time, however, Bartley understood that he was at liberty to go where he pleased.[33]

Kingsbury concluded his defense to the "Presbyterian preacher itinerating" in the region, by saying that the three slaves whose ransom he paid and who refunded to him the price paid for their freedom, were never his slaves. They were not with him for a "single hour in a state of involuntary servitude rendering unrequited toil. They labored for wages, by contract, freely and voluntarily entered into on their part; as well as on my own."[34] "I would further state that the transactions

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[33]Cyrus Kingsbury to William Slocomb, Fort Towson, August 8, 1848, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Cyrus Kingsbury to Board, Pine Ridge, December 25, 1844, #7, Ibid.; Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend J. Blanchard, President of Knox College, Illinois, Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, February 27, 1847, #34, Ibid.

[34]Ibid.

herein reported have been my own. Neither the Committee, nor the funds of the Board, have been made responsible."[35]

On several other occasions Kingsbury was called upon to explain his purchase of the three slaves, especially Bartley. Occasionally, ministers and other constituents of the Board would hear rumors and stories of Kingsbury's "ownership of slaves." One complaint in particular which caused Kingsbury much time and trouble in writing lengthy and detailed explanations was registered by the Reverend J. Blanchard, President of Knox College, Illinois, suggesting that Kingsbury not only owned a slave (Bartley) but that the slave had not been fairly dealt with. Kingsbury answered his accuser directly giving not only all the details on the history of the dealing, but elaborated. Blanchard, who had heard that Kingsbury paid only sixty dollars for Bartley and waited four years to tell him he was free, was informed by Kingsbury that the sum for Bartley's freedom was one hundred and seventy-five dollars of Kingsbury's own money. Kingsbury expressed a regret that after laboring for more than thirty years in the missionary field for no other compensation than a bare living, that he would be suspected of wronging an aged black man out of his just wages. During the four-year period, Bartley was not only unable to work much of the time because of attacks of rheumatism but was doctored and waited on by Kingsbury and others.

Kingsbury stated that the one hundred and seventy-five dollars for the "ransom" of the black man was literally true--Bartley did not

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[35]Cyrus Kingsbury to Board, Pine Ridge, December 25, 1844, #7, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

become his slave. Kingsbury acquired "no right to sell him, no, not for a globe of Gold," he wrote. Although he acquired a legal title to him as far as his former owner was concerned, his services for Kingsbury were on the ground of an open and fair contract, "between the black man and Kingsbury--" just as Kingsbury would have made with a free man in a free state. In answering the criticism that the slave was living in a "log hut near Br. Kingsbury's house," Kingsbury said they both lived in log houses near each other and that each was well satisfied with the house he occupied.[36]

In common with thousands in the slave country, he never failed to express his regard for slavery as a great evil--"one which cast a dark and ominous shadow over the future prospects of this people." Had he consulted feelings rather than duty, he would have fled from it to a land with a freer and more congenial atmosphere, he reasoned. But most of those for whom he labored were not involved in the "evil," and since he was constantly reminded that the Savior had said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,"[37] he dared not leave them. With "not one particle of sympathy for slavery," he believed he was instrumental in mitigating and removing its evils through an approach in a spirit of kindness and love.[38] As long as the laws of the land permitted the master to sell and to purchase slaves, the missionaries

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[36]Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend J. Blanchard, Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, February 22, 1847, #34, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend J. Blanchard, Pine Ridge, May 25, 1847, #38, Ibid.

[37]St. Mark 16:15.

[38]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, July 1, 1851, #78, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

were not permitted, as ministers of the gospel, to oppose the laws under which they lived unless those laws were "palpably opposed to the Law of God," he said.[39] Kingsbury repeatedly cautioned the Board in response to its increasing hardness and abolitionist dogmatism, that

> there needs to be a more humble considerate and prayerful state of mind, throughout our whole country before anything effectual can be done for the removal of slavery.
>
> We cannot hope for the amelioration of the condition of the slave, only as far as the Gospel may obtain an influence, over the hearts of those who hold them in bondage, and this can only be done by approaching them in a spirit of kindness and of love.[40]

Most of the other missionaries in the Choctaw Mission under the American Board shared Kingsbury's opinions. Often letters defending their views were signed: "Brethren of the Choctaw Mission,"--Cyrus Byington, Alfred Wright, C. C. Copeland, E. Hotchkin, David Breed, H. H. Copeland and D. H. Winship. Kingsbury not only purchased slaves in order to liberate them, but he and other missionaries were instrumental in freeing slaves and aiding them in going to Liberia. Before leaving Mississippi they assisted a planter in emancipating more than twenty slaves and sending them to Liberia. Since the beginning of the Choctaw Mission, the missionaries used their own funds to secure liberty for eight slaves.[41] They continued this practice until the Civil War. As a result of the abuses sometimes experienced by the enforcement of the Choctaw law excluding all free blacks from the country, slaves often

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[39]Cyrus Kingsbury to Israel Folsom, Pine Ridge, April 8, 1848, #50, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[40]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, July 1, 1851, #78, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[41]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Stockbridge, Choctaw Nation, April 14, 1849, #73, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

sought assistance in going to Liberia. Although this exclusion law was not universally enforced or approved by the majority of the Choctaws, in the instances where it was enforced, suffering and injustice were experienced by the slaves.

As an example, a black woman who was a member of Kingsbury's church and was "truly a mother in Israel," purchased for three or four hundred dollars, her own son, Israel J. Mills. She took a legal bill of sale in order to secure his freedom when he became of age. On her death, the bill of sale fell into the hands of her husband Abram. A white man, husband of the woman who had sold the boy and one who had attempted to enslave another freed slave, went to Abram and requested to see his papers. Abram, who could not read and who suspected no bad designs, handed over his papers. The man took the bill of sale and destroyed it. The boy, nineteen years old, was aided by Kingsbury and others in escaping to Liberia with ample testimonials from Major Armstrong and others as to his right to freedom.[42]

As the debate increased, the missionaries were called upon to defend their views on slavery in the nation and missions from every angle. One of the major issues had to do with their use of slave labor at the stations. By this it was thought that they "countenanced and encouraged the system" and made that kind of labor more profitable to the owner while justifying or excusing the relation.[43] The missionaries' answer

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[42]Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, July 2, 1847, #40, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Cyrus Kingsbury to Greene, Pine Ridge, July 28, 1847, #41, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Box 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[43]This letter of April 14, 1849, was read at the meeting of the Board at Pittsfield, approved by the Board and Committee. Cyrus Kingsbury

to this was that it had been a necessity to hire slave labor since there was no other suitable help in the nation. They reminded the Committee at Boston that during the past twenty years the Board had failed to send them helpers to perform the manual labor. They explained that it was much more difficult to hire free help in their present location--especially since the beginning of the Mexican War. Some who came to them with "fair appearances and professions, . . . proved profane, intemperate, dishonest, and licentious." The fact that the missions were almost entirely schools of females, there had been occasions whereby the schools were almost broken up by the improper conduct of their free hired help. They experienced deep anxiety while having to leave the stations for weeks at a time dependent upon such help and under those circumstances. On the other hand, they had frequently hired slaves, both male and female, of established character in whom the community and the missionaries had complete confidence. Nevertheless, the missionaries stated that they greatly preferred good free help when available and that they had repeatedly and earnestly solicited a supply of such help, although they were sure the Committee at Boston would have granted their request had it been in its power to do so.[44]

As to the amount of encouragement given to slavery by the hiring of slaves in the mission, they answered on two points: the pecuniary gain resulting to the owners; and the moral influence arising from their

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to Treat, April 30, 1851, #121, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[44]Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, "Brethren of the Choctaw Mission, Cyrus Kingsbury, Chairman, to S. B. Treat, Stockbridge, Choctaw Nation, April 14, 1849, #75, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

example. Admitting the pay helped to make slavery profitable, they pointed out that what they paid a year for the hired slave labor was inconsiderable as compared to immense sums paid by the free states, England and the rest of the world for the products of slave labor. Kingsbury observed that if the market for slave products should be closed in the free states and in the other parts of the world, the system could no longer survive. If that were impracticable, they commented, how much more so would be the use of free labor in the midst of slavery and where free help was not to be obtained. The use of slave products and slave labor was not a mere matter of convenience or a calculation of profit and loss, but a matter of necessity with no other alternative. They expressed surprise that they were expected to abstain from their small part in the profit of slavery while the rest of the world, with ample funds, was sustaining it on a vastly larger scale without rebuke. And since there was no attempt by the free states, England and the rest of the world to put an embargo on slave products, they believed God had another way of bringing the grievous and oppressive system to an end--"Through the power of the gospel and of an enlightened public sentiment." The Church, Kingsbury stated, through the law of love faithfully and affectionately applied, both to masters and servants should overcome and eradicate all opposing interests.[45]

In relation to the second inquiry regarding the moral influence of their example, they assured the Board that they were not considered by the people where they lived as being advocates and abettors of slavery. It was understood that they employed slaves reluctantly and from

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[45]Ibid.

necessity. In fact, they were regarded as opposed to slavery and by many were called "Abolitionists."[46]

As to the criticisms against admitting slaveholders into the church, the missionaries referred to the Report of the Board in 1845 which so "fully defined"and settled the principles on which they were to proceed that they apprehended no serious embarrassments. The two fundamental principles referred to were:

> (1) The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper cannot be scripturally and rightfully denied to those who give credible evidence of piety;
> (2) The missionaries, in connection with the churches which they have gathered, are to be the sole judges of the sufficience of this evidence.[47]

Referring to the beginning of the missions to the Choctaws, they recalled the visits of former officials of the Board. They cited conversations and correspondence they had had with the Committee through Jeremiah Evarts, one of the early secretaries of the Board. At that time they discussed and settled, they thought, the subject of slavery as it related to their missions, on a Scriptural basis. When Evarts was asked his opinion on hiring slave labor, he answered that such a course could not be wrong, provided the "colored man himself," was fully informed of the labors which would be expected of him, the treatment he would receive and the advantages he would enjoy. But, he cautioned, no step was taken without regard to his wishes.[48]

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[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, Statement respecting the employment of salves at the Southwestern Missions to Prudential Committee, January 23, 1837, #59, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Until recently, the missionaries claimed they had never heard from the Board or from any other source that in their admittance of masters and servants to the fellowship of the church, they had done wrong. The new attitude confused the missionaries. Were they expected to receive no more slaveholders into the church? Were the slaveholders in the church required to emancipate their slaves?[49]

In conclusion, they expressed accord with the views of their Cherokee brethren as written in a letter of March 21, 1848, and read before the Board. The letter said, in part, that

> in regard to the question of rejecting any person from the church simply because he is a slaveholder, we cannot for a moment hesitate. For (1) we regard it as certain that the Apostles, who are our patterns, did receive slaveholders to the communion of the church; and we have not yet been able to perceive any such difference between their circumstances and ours, as to justify us in departing from their practice in this respect. And (2) our general rule is to receive all to our communion who give evidence that they love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; and we cannot doubt that many slaveholders do give such evidence.[50]

A few months later, fearing that his part in the controversy would bring embarrassment to the American Board, Kingsbury wrote S. B. Treat, Corresponding Secretary of the American Board:

> After having been so long & so pleasantly connected with the A.B.C.F.M. the thought of a separation is painful and affecting. But should it take place, it is obvious the Board would be exempted from much reproach which has fallen on them, on account of what I have done, & yet it is true the grasping slaveholders will rejoice, that I am prohibited from emancipating any more slaves.[51]

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[49] Ibid.; Cyrus Kingsbury to David Greene, Pine Ridge, July 2, 1847, #40, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[50] Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Choctaw Nation, April 30, 1851, #121, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[51] Cyrus Kingsbury to Treat, Fort Towson, September 5, 1848, (Re: #59), #60, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Box 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

The Prudential Committee made a statement in relation to their correspondence with the Cherokee and Choctaw Missions in which they said the Committee had given no instructions to the missionaries in relation to slavery, but only addressed their brethren "with suggestions and arguments." There were distinctions between suggestions, opinions and arguments on the one hand, they said, and decisions, rules and instructions on the other. They added that the Committee had never had any intention of "cutting off" the Choctaw Mission from its connection with the Board. In conclusion the Committee "hoped & believed that, in some way, free labor" would be successfully introduced at an early day.[52]

The issue was rekindled by a letter of one of the secretaries of the Board relating to the subject of slavery in the Cherokee and Choctaw Mission churches which was published in the Prairie Herald of February 4, 1851. Again, the missionaries restated their views:--that they were not, and never had been, either the advocates or apologists of slavery; that they regarded it as one of the greatest evils that afflicted their country, morally, civilly and politically and that they had been and hoped ever to be the uncompromising advocates of enlightened freedom for their whole society.[53]

The letter in the Prairie Herald by the Secretary of the Board spoke of receiving slaveholders to the Choctaw mission churches and said "I do not think it probable, that others will be received," to which the

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[52]Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, Missionary House to Cherokee and Choctaw Missions, August 31, 1849. Read before the Board at Pittsfield, September 1849, #70, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[53]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Choctaw Nation, April 30, 1851, #131, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

missionaries responded that their desire and prayer was that every slaveholder in the nation should become truly pious and be received into the church. At this point, they again quoted the Cherokee letter of March 21, 1848. Furthermore, they quoted a letter of June 22, 1848, from the Prudential Committee which stated that the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper could not be scripturally and rightfully denied to those converts who give credible evidence of piety and that the missionaries were the sole judges of the sufficiency of that evidence. The letter added that in their opinion slaveholding did not always involve individual guilt in such a manner as to exclude every person implicated therein from Christian fellowship. At a subsequent meeting of the Board, a committee of nine supposedly in agreement with the unanimous opinion of the missionaries of the Cherokee and Choctaw Missions, stated that any express directions from the Board requiring them to adopt a course of procedure on the subject of slavery essentially different from that which they had hitherto pursued, would be "fraught with disastrous consequences to the mission, to the Indians, and to the African race among them." The Report of the Committee received the unanimous approbation of all the members of the Board present at the meeting.[54]

After such repeated declarations by the Board, the missionaries were surprised to see contradictory reports in print. A statement in the Prairie Herald said that only one hired slave was in the employ of the Choctaw missions and that he would probably be dismissed soon, if not at that time. The missionaries who deplored the necessity of hiring slaves rather than free labor, defended the practice by reminding the Board that

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[54]Ibid.

when the boarding schools were established the Choctaws agreed to furnish six-seventh of the funds, provided the Committee would furnish the other seventh of the funds plus the teachers and others necessary to carry on the schools. The question was, therefore, should they disband their schools, sustained principally by the funds of the Choctaws, because the Committee could not send a sufficient number of free laborers to carry them onward? Further, would it not be a breach of good faith and disastrous to the interest of the Board among the Choctaw people to discontinue the schools rather than to hire slaves?[55]

As the debate continued between the missionaries of the Choctaw Mission and the American Board, dialogue began between the Board and the Choctaws due to some disturbances in the mission. The Prudential Committee of the American Board wrote the members of the Choctaw Council on July 29, 1852, asking protection for their missionaries. The chiefs[56] attempted to reassure them that they highly esteemed the missionaries and would be the last of all the people on earth to offer insult or violence to their friends.[57]

The spark that ignited the controversy, however, was the School Law passed by the General Council and approved by Chiefs G. W. Harkins and C. McCurtain on November 16, 1853. The law, having fourteen resolutions, created a Board of Trustees and a General Superintendent of Schools and

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[55]Ibid.

[56]The Chiefs: George W. Harkins, Cornelius McCurtain and George Folsom; Trustees: Thomson McKenny, Noel Gardner and Nicholas Cochnauer; National Judges Joseph Dukes and David Folsom.

[57]Chiefs, Trustees and Judges to the Prudential Committee of the A.B.C.F.M , Boston, Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, Doaksville, Choctaw Nation, November 5, 1852, #77, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Academies of the nation and gave the trustees of the districts sole authority to select the scholars to be sent to the various schools. It specifically stated that:

> no slave or the children of slaves would be taught to read or write in or at any school or academy in the nation by any person whomsoever employed or connected in any manner whatever either as Superintendent, Missionary, Teacher, Farmer, Matron, Pupil or otherwise with any school or academy in the nation under pain of dismissal from such school and removal out of the nation in case the person offending is not a citizen of the Choctaw Nation.[58]

Kingsbury and the other missionaries immediately reported the new school law to the American Board with the explanation that the law was passed without the knowledge and consultation of the missionaries and teachers. Of even more significance, the law was passed without the knowledge and consent of the majority of the Council and did not express the views and feelings of the Choctaw people. A few "strongly proslavery" men presented and passed the law just at the close of the session of the Council when everyone wished to be on his way home. It was read, interpreted and passed without any discussion and without the members generally understanding it. Kingsbury quoted several educated men, even large slaveholders, who admitted they had failed to understand the exceptional parts of the bill when it was read and interpreted, forgetting the beginning before the end was reached. Many claimed the law was unconstitutional but could not be changed before the next Council--if then. The law differed in some

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[58]Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, "Extracts from the laws of the Choctaw General Council passed at the session of 1853," #96, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy 12.

important particulars from the School Act of 1842. Therefore it created "grave questions" which would have important bearings on the religious and educational interests of the people.[59]

Byington wrote Kingsbury on the matter, expressing fear that their meeting houses and churches would be in jeopardy next. "We are United States citizens and under its government alone. The Choctaws can make contracts with us but not laws for us," he emphasized. "Some of it is in direct violation of their own constitution which provides for liberty of conscience, opinion and speech."[60] Byington was concerned lest the Board should make the first move to break up the missions. If the dissolution of the missions was to be the result, he thought the ones who made the law should be the instigators and not the missionaries.[61]

According to Kingsbury's report to the Board, Peter P. Pitchlynn was the individual who framed the School Law. At one time Colonel Pitchlynn was "loud in his praises" of the missions and the American Board, but during the past two or three years he had been "veering towards other points of the compass." He followed Chief Israel Folsom to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and was greatly troubled by the "anti-slavery character" of the Board missions. He had been the leading man in getting the

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[59]Cyrus Kingsbury and Cyrus Byington to American Board, Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, December 14, 1853, #124, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Cyrus Kingsbury, Cyrus Byington to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, December 27, 1853, #126, Ibid.; "Extracts from the Records of the Choctaw Mission of the A.B.C.F.M., May, 1854, Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy Reel 12.

[60]Cyrus Byington to Kingsbury, Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy 12.

[61]Ibid.

appropriation for the boarding schools but had been unable to have his children educated in them. Kingsbury explained that Pitchlynn's children had been under little restraint at home and accustomed to no industry. Therefore they could not be retained in any of the schools in the nation. Consequently, they were sent to Tennessee for their education. This was the experience of many of the wealthier people of the nation and was one of the principal reasons for their developing lack of interest in the boarding schools.[62] At that time Kingsbury could not name a single pupil in the schools from families who had a leading influence in the politics of the nation. None of their children were then being benefited by the school system. There were several middle class children attending, but none of the children of the leading men.[63]

Kingsbury continued in his report to explain that Pitchlynn was a man of "considerable smartness & intelligence," who had been in Washington long enough to understand the "intrigues & management of those politicians, whose characters are there developed, in no very enviable light." Pitchlynn had succeeded in being appointed General Superintendent of Schools and President of the Board of Trustees by the Council.[64]

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[62]Cyrus Kingsbury and Cyrus Byington, Committee of Missions, to Treat, Pine Ridge, December 27, 1853, #126, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[63]Cyrus Kingsbury to Treat, Pine Ridge, February 21, 1854, #104, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[64]Ibid. Pitchlynn was called the "Calhoun of the Choctaws" according to Cushman, The History of the Indians, pp. 235, 242. He died at Washington, D.C., January 17, 1881, and the Choctaw Nation erected a monument in Washington to him, Swanton, Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians, pp. 30-31.

Throughout the period known as the "fiery fifties" it was evident that there was a "considerable suspicion and jealousy in the minds of certain politicians both in the nation and out of it," concerning the missionaries' views on the subject of slavery. Many reports in the states and in the Choctaw Nation accused the northern missionaries and teachers of having "considerable anti-slavery influence" in the Choctaw mission. They were often considered "dangerous Abolitionists."[65] Kingsbury was denounced in the North as a pro-slavery man by those whom he esteemed. He responded by saying, "I can bear it all, God granting me grace. I must do that which I think is in accordance with the words of God, and the dictates of my own conscience, in view of all the light which I have on the subject."[66] He added, "We are decidedly opposed to slavery."[67]

Although the party acting with Israel Folsom and Pitchlynn was not large, it was composed of men with much influence. However, not all of the influential leaders were opposed to the northern missionaries. Sampson Folsom, who was educated at Mayhew in the Old Nation and, with one exception was one of the largest slaveholders among the Choctaws, proclaimed the School Law of 1853 unconstitutional and stated that the Council had no right to prevent him from employing whom he pleased to teach his black people to read. Unfortunately, due to poor health, he was unable to take an active part in the nation politically.[68] Nine-tenths

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[65]Cyrus Kingsbury to Board, Pine Ridge, February 1, 1854, #102, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[66]Cyrus Kingsbury to Treat, August 3, 1854, #111, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[67]*Ibid*.

[68]*Ibid*.

of the Choctaws had no interest in slavery.[69] The "common people" among the Choctaws, some of whom had held high offices and who still had great influence, were honest and sincere friends to the missions.[70]

The School Law of 1853 placed the American Board and the missionaries of the Choctaw Mission in a difficult position. The missionaries agreed that since neither the American Board nor the missionaries had sought the privilege of conducting the boarding schools which were not subject to the new law and had taken them at the request of the Choctaws with a view to benefiting them and not themselves, they would be willing to continue the schools under the original assumptions. If, however, the Choctaws insisted on a change, the missionaries would be willing to give up the schools.[71] They did not wish to continue them if the Choctaws were not satisfied with their present mode of operation. Then the responsibility would rest solely upon the Choctaws.[72]

The first reaction by the Board to the controversial school law was to wait and see how the majority of the Choctaws responded and whether the bill would be repealed or enforced. Perhaps it was at this particular time that the American Board first began seriously to consider the possibility of closing the Choctaw missions. In less than a year after the law was passed, the American Board began to correspond directly with the

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[69]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, April 25, 1854, #105, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[70]Cyrus Kingsbury to Treat, Pine Ridge, February 21, 1854, #104, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[71]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, April 25, 1854, #105, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[72]*Ibid.*

Choctaw Council concerning the issue--to the alarm and embarrassment of the missionaries, especially Cyrus Kingsbury.

"With sorrowful hearts" the Prudential Committee of the A.B.C.F.M. addressed a letter to the Council of the Choctaw Nation on August 1, 1854, concerning the school laws. Two of the resolutions received special attention. The one which stated that the Board connection with the schools was dissoluable by either party on six months' notice was objected to by the committee on the ground that it had been difficult enough to obtain an adequate supply of missionaries and teachers without this provision and that henceforth they utterly despaired of doing so.[73]

Another resolution stated that no slave, or children of slavery would be taught to read or write, in or at any school or academy in the nation, by any person whomsoever, employed or connected in any manner whatever with any school or academy in the nation as either a superintendent, missionary, teacher, farmer, matron, pupil or otherwise. Violators would be dismissed from such school and removed from the nation if not a citizen of the Choctaw Nation. The Committee remarked that the law had made it the duty of the General Superintendent and Trustees of the Schools to promptly remove, or report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for removal of any or all persons who were connected therein who were known to be abolitionists or who disseminated, or attempted to disseminate, directly or indirectly, "abolition doctrines, or any other fanatical sentiments," which in their opinion were dangerous to the peace and safety of the

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[73]The Prudential Committee of the A.B.C.F.M. to the Council of the Choctaw Nation, Mission House, Boston, August 1, 1854, #78, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Choctaw people. The Committee stated bluntly that they could not conduct the Choctaw schools on such a basis since the gospel was for all. They referred the Council to the statement of the Board on the relation of slavery to the Board as written in the letter of June 22, 1848, addressed to the Choctaw Mission and available in the hand of Kingsbury. The Committee closed the letter with an appeal to the Council to "take down this barrier," which was interpreted as a request for the law to be repealed.[74]

Before the letter from the Prudential Committee was mailed to the Choctaw Council, S. B. Treat, Corresponding Secretary of the Board, sent a first draft of the proposed letter to Cyrus Kingsbury for his opinion. Kingsbury immediately responded with a plea for the Board not to interfere. He warned that in presenting the subject to the Council in this way would bring about a discussion on slavery which would have a "no good result." To those favorable to slavery, it would be represented as a political movement gotten up by Northern people to establish an Abolition community in the Choctaw Nation, he said. He acknowledged that the Committee understood the case so far as the North was concerned but pointed out that the Committee did not understand it in the Choctaw Nation so well.[75]

He explained that in the Choctaw Nation there were two distinct classes of people who would be affected by the communication. One class, the slaveholders, who were generally intelligent, wealthy and influential,

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, August 14, 1854, #112, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

had no objections against the Board or its missionaries except as related to the subject of slavery. Their suspicions and jealousies had been aroused by articles which had been published and by some who had spoken on the subject. This class would regard all anti-slavery movements as Abolitionism designed to deprive them of their lawful inheritance. It would be as difficult to persuade these people that slavery was sinful, as it would be to convince the most decided Abolitionists that it was not sinful, he stressed. This class was not considered as under the influence of the missions.[76]

The other class, the "common Choctaws," many of whom were members of the churches, were sincere and hearty friends of the American Board and willing to do all that they could to favor the Board and its missionaries. Few of these were accustomed to taking the lead in public matters. Kingsbury said that it was true of them as of all other Indians, that they did not seek to accomplish their objectives by noisy and angry discussions, but in as quiet and peaceable way as possible. At that time, petitions were being circulated among them for signatures to be presented to the next General Council "praying that the late school law may be repealed." Kingsbury warned that if the Choctaws were left to manage their business in their own way, there was hope that they would succeed; otherwise, should the Prudential Committee bring the subject before the Council, it would be disastrous.[77]

He explained that the friends of the Board among the Choctaws were not capable of going into an antislavery discussion with those who

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[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

would oppose them, and that if they were, they would only bring down upon themselves not only the leading men of the nation but also the United States Agent and the surrounding white settlements. No one acquainted with the state of feeling in the region on the subject could possibly suppose that anti-slavery sentiments could be sanctioned by an act of legislation. The moment that happened, the influence of those who attempted it would be greatly impaired, if not destroyed.[78]

Kingsbury asked this question:

> Has it become necessary that these churches, composed principally of poor & simple hearted Choctaws, should be crushed, and our usefulness, as the servants of the Lord Jesus cripled, [sic] if not destroyed, in order that the A.B.C.F.M. may stand before the community of New England, as an Anti-slavery Society?[79]

He concluded with the thought that as much as he loved the American Board and as highly as he appreciated the great work they were doing in the dark world, he had rather be cut off at once, than to have matters brought to a confrontation.[80] Nevertheless, the Prudential Committee ignored Kingsbury's plea and mailed the letter to the Choctaw Nation.

Kingsbury became further alarmed a few months later when he learned that the Prudential Committee had publicly discussed the Choctaw laws at their meeting at Hartford before hearing from the Council concerning their letter and had made a resolution to sever their connection with the schools. Kingsbury immediately wrote Treat that before the action of

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[78] *Ibid.*

[79] *Ibid.*

[80] *Ibid.*

the Board, most people in the nation said the law would have been undoubtedly repealed; but after the unfortunate incidence, attitudes had changed and there was little hope for such action. One of the Choctaw chiefs stated that they could not submit to dictation in times of political excitement. Furthermore, Kingsbury expressed surprise that the Board "felt constrained to act in a case in which their knowledge of facts was so imperfect," for up until that time nothing had been changed by the laws and as far as they were concerned, it had remained a perfectly dead letter. Again he stressed what he believed to be the more important matter--the slave's "emancipation from the bondage of sin & death," and reiterated that much could be done for the slave if it could be done without having a noise made about it.[81]

Kingsbury was correct in his analysis of the far-reaching effects of the Prudential Committee's letter to the Choctaw Council and open discussion at Hartford. Newspapers entered into the controversy and commended an address by Governor C. Harkins to the Council. One newspaper said that Harkins had come down "sledge hammer fashion, on this nest of abolition fanatics, who have been issuing their bulls from the city of Boston--the place where it is unlawful to smoke, whittle or whistle in the streets." The newspaper praised Governor Harkins for "his firmness and frankness" in the matter, contrasting it to the "wishy-washy message of John Ross, Chief of the Cherokee Nation." The news article quoted Harkins' speech which said that from the Board's action, the Choctaws could infer that they had a greater feeling for the welfare of the slaves

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[81]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, December 12, 1854, #115, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

among them, than for the Indians. Governor Harkins said further that "if the abolitionists are not satisfied to teach our children alone, then I say for one, let the connection between us and the American Board be dissolved, and every abolitionist be driven out of the Nation at once."[82]

Another newspaper reported that the meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions at Hartford, Connecticut, had adopted reports and resolutions, which would produce a "deep sensation throughout the United States," and that the Board, in its official capacity, had attempted to regulate the politics and legislation of the Choctaws.

> Thus that noble Institution, that has done so much for the evangelication of the heathen, has been diverted from the preaching of the cross of Christ, and prostituted to the base end of existing political dissensions. . . . It has abandoned the peaceful work of the Prince of Peace, and has madly rushed into the squabbles of Caesar. "How art thou fallen!"[83]

Prophetically the article continued: "This action of the Board severs another of the few remaining bonds which unite the religious communities North and South. An entire separation seems inevitable, . . ."[84]

Needless to say, the position of t' missionaries became untenable. Kingsbury expressed their situation to Treat:

> If the Committee & the Board cannot sustain us any longer, they must cut us off; but they must not ask us to commit suicide. The Committee want ground to stand upon before the community at the North. If we are to remain here & to preach the gospel to

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[82]Newspaper reprint, Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, George W. Harkins, Chief Apuck District, Choctaw Nation, November 2nd, 1854, #149, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[83]Newspaper clipping, Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, no date, #148, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[84]*Ibid*.

> Choctaws, & to the poor slaves, we also must have a little ground to stand on.[85]

However, the situation grew worse. Circumstances and the actions of the Prudential Committee of the American Board continued to widen the schism between the missionaries and the Board. In the summer of 1855, the Reverend G. H. Wood visited the Choctaw Mission at Goodwater as a deputation from the Prudential Committee. The meeting seemed conciliatory, and it appeared that the Board had yielded on some of the points of differences. The missionaries took this for granted as there seemed to be agreement on certain principles as discussed. The first intimation that they had been mistaken came when a statement was made by Wood in Utica, New York, that the result of the meeting at Goodwater "involved no change of views or action on the part of the Prudential Committee and Secretaries."[86]

Kingsbury, Byington, Hotchkin and Stark wrote a joint letter to Treat and tendered their resignation, stating that

> we cannot go with the Committee and the Board, as to the manner in which, as ministers of the gospel and the missionaries, we are to deal with slavery.
>
> We believe the institutions of the apostles in relation to this subject are a sufficient guide, and that, if followed, the best interests of society, as well as of the church will be secured.
>
> We have no wish to give the Committee or the Board further trouble on this subject; and as there is no prospect that our views can be brought to harmonize we must request that our relation

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[85]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, September 27, 1854, #114, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[86]Kingsbury, Byington, E. Hotchkin, O. P. Stark to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, November 13, 1855, Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy 12; Cyrus Kingsbury, Cyrus Byington, Ebenezer Hotchkin, O. P. Stark to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, November 13, 1855, #127, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

to the A.B.C.F.M. may be dissolved in a way that will do least harm to the Board and to our mission.[87]

Two weeks later, Kingsbury wrote:

> I am now satisfied, that it is best, (painful & humiliating as it is,) that we should separate.
>
> To my mind there is Divine wisdom in the directions given by the Apostles in relation to slavery. They directed all their instructions to the relative duties devolving on masters & servants, & did not meddle with the peculiar relation subsisting between them.
>
> After an experience of nearly forty years, we are well satisfied that no other course is calculated to remove the evils of slavery, & especially to prepare the slave for the exercise & enjoyment of that liberty, which every benevolent heart would wish to see him enjoy.[88]

On January 17, 1856, Wood addressed a long letter to the Prudential Committee in which he gave a detailed report of his visit to the Choctaw Missions, especially Good Water. He reiterated that the report of the meeting which the missionaries had heard had been a newspaper report which was at variance with that of the religious journal, which source should be the authority. The journal stated that "the remarks of Mr. Wood, which we publish, strengthen the conviction that all occasion for collision has been removed, and that the mission will hereafter be conducted with increased energy and success."[89] He regretted the misunderstanding and hoped the missionaries would reconsider their resignation.[90]

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[87] Ibid.

[88] Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, November 28, 1855, #120, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[89] New York Observer (July 12, 1855).

[90] George W. Wood, New York, January 17, 1856, to Prudential Committee of the A.B.C.F.M., Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy 12.

On January 31, 1856, Treat addressed a similar appeal for understanding and the reconsideration of the missionaries' notice of resignation. Included was a copy of resolutions of the latest meeting of the Prudential Committee suggesting that the four missionaries withdraw their letter of resignation.[91]

The four missionaries wrote the Prudential Committee on April 15, 1856, "cheerfully" reconsidering their resignation,

> if the Board will withdraw all past legislation on the subject of slavery, give up all control of it to the missionaries, to act according to the instructions of the New Testament & their own best judgment, & make distinct public announcements of this, we will withdraw our resignation; if not, we wish it to be accepted, to take effect December 31, 1856.[92]

This letter was signed by the four above mentioned missionaries with the additional signatures of Charles C. Copeland and John Edwards.[93]

Six months later, they were still defending their decision, citing the previous action at Hartford as well as the construction put upon the Good Water document by the Board at Utica.[94]

In the meantime, Kingsbury was in correspondence with the Reverend J. Leighton Wilson, Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, New York, relative to a possible transfer of some of

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[91]S. B. Treat to Cyrus Kingsbury, Cyrus Byington, Ebenezer Hotchkin, O. P. Stark, Mission House Boston, January 31, 1856, Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy 12.

[92]Cyrus Kingsbury et al. to the Prudential Committee of the A.B.C.F.M., Bennington, April 15, 1856, #129, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[93]Ibid.

[94]Cyrus Kingsbury et al. to S. B. Treat, Lenox Choctaw Nation, September 6, 1856, #131, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

the Presbyterian missionaries from the American Board to the Presbyterian Missions in the Choctaw Nation. Treat advised Kingsbury that should a transfer become necessary, it would be proper for the mission to request it on the ground that they could proceed with their work better under the Presbyterian Board than under the one in Boston. Kingsbury wrote Wilson for his opinion on the matter, although he added that it was "not likely soon to become a practical question."[95]

During most of 1857 and 1858, the slavery issue became relatively quiet, submerged by the conflict among the Choctaws concerning the Skullyville Constitution and the proposed territorial bill. Even so, the missionaries were blamed in a measure for much of the strife over these other problems as a result of years of dialogue over the slavery question. In the March 1858 issue of the American Missionary, an article described the new state to be formed from the Choctaw country:

> A constitution has been formed, a governor elected, and the country opened to immigration, in all which the people have not been consulted. The matter is cut and dried for them by white slaveholders, and the few among themselves who aspire to be leaders; if it succeeds the destruction of the mass of the people is certain.[96]

A direct attack against the missionaries, whom the author designated as pro-slavery, stated that

> White men and missionaries here must not open their mouths; if they do, they bring upon them the wrath of those here who have the power to do harm, and the displeasure of those in the white community

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[95]Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend J. Leighton Wilson, Pine Ridge, February 4, 1857, Indian Missions, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

[96]American Missionary (March, 1858), Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, #146, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

who care for nothing good. The state of things is to be lamented.[97]

A few men in the nation seemed desirous of "getting up, in the white settlements, an excitement against the missionaries." One of these was Israel Folsom who charged all the trouble over the constitution on the Northern missionaries whom he said were emissaries of an abolition society silently plotting to carry out the views and plans of their Northern patrons. One of the articles in the new constitution related to immigrants' bringing slaves into the country. This was interpreted as an abolition movement and created opposition.[98] In neighboring Texas and Arkansas, it was generally believed that the missionaries were the cause of the troubles among the Choctaws and several public newspapers urged the Choctaws to drive them out of the country.[99]

Many of the intelligent men in the nation stated that the real issue between opponents was not so much on account of slavery and anti-slavery or extension of a territorial or state government over the nation, but over the legality of the new constitution. Many believed that the majority were in favor of a change, but since the convention which had formed the new constitution had proceeded illegally, it had been unanimously agreed to abide by the old constitution until a new one could be formed which would meet the views of the people.[100]

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[97] Ibid.

[98] Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, March 1, 1858, #132, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[99] Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, July 17, 1858, #138, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[100] Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, March 1, 1858, #132, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

The dialogue between the Prudential Committee of the American Board and the Choctaw Mission intensified by the fall of 1858. At this time, Treat sent a letter to the Choctaw Mission which referred to the report of the Committee written at their annual meeting in Detroit. The missionaries were shocked at the report which stated that it seemed desirable to the Committee that the Board should be relieved as early as possible from the "unceasing embarrassments and perplexities connected with the missions in the Indian Territory."[101] The Prudential Committee submitted a question to the Choctaw Mission asking "whether, in existing circumstances, it would not be wise and expedient" that their connection with the Board be terminated. Treat added that the suggestion was made with "unfeigned regret." Then he listed several reasons for the decision: donations were decreasing, churches were demanding that the Board be freed from the "embarrassments," replacements on the mission field were becoming more difficult to find and fears were expressed that political agitations which were likely to take place in the coming year would aggravate the evil. It was suggested that the missionaries could become a part of the Foreign Missionary Board which had their cordial sympathy and entire confidence.[102]

Kingsbury answered that the Committee's report from Detroit, known as Bacon's report, in September 1858, regretfully barred an amicable transfer of their mission from the American Board to the Foreign Missionary

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[101]Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, Copy, S. B. Treat, Secretary of A.B.C.F.M. to the Choctaw Mission, Mission House, Boston, October 5, 1858, #82, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[102]*Ibid*.

Board of the General Assembly.[103] The missionaries expressed surprise at the action of the Board since there had been peace and quiet on the subject for the two previous years. They stated that they did not desire to separate from the American Board and that the Missionary Board referred to in the letter in which they were "in ecclesiastical relations," had been charged by the American Board at Detroit with "a lametable [sic] deflection from som [sic] of the first and most elementary ideas of Christian morality." They added that this was an implied censure upon them.[104] "Such sweeping assertions against large bodies of Christian ministers and churches, . . . ought to be a voided," Kingsbury added in a later letter. He reminded the Board that the missionaries had been following the same course that had been uniformly practices by the mission from its commencement more than forty years previously.[105] He suggested that the only alternative was for the Board to be relieved of the Cherokee and Choctaw missions by dropping them and letting them take care of themselves.[106] Meanwhile, reports were being circulated that a slave state was soon to be inaugurated there under the auspices of the missionaries of the American Board.[107]

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[103] Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend Mark Hopkins, D.D., Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, January 10, 1859, #145, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Copy, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[104] Cyrus Kingsbury Mss, Choctaw Mission to Reverend S. B. Treat, Yakni Okchaya, Choctaw Nation, December 24, 1858, Copy, #82, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend Mark Hopkins, D.D., Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, January 10, 1859, #145, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Copy, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[107] Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, October 18, 1858, #141, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Although it seemed that the opponents on the slavery controversy were evenly divided, Kingsbury estimated that an unbiased vote on the slavery issue would be three to one against it. He explained this by saying that the pro-slavery men had a leading influence on account of their "wealth and superior intelligence." Furthermore, he said that the real condition of the slaves there was greatly misapprehended since they were not in the degraded and oppressed condition which was reported in many of the free states. He concluded that if Lewis Tappan and the editors of the Independent required him to leave those poor people because he preached to their masters a portion of the time, he was not willing to do it. "They may cast out my name as evil, they may look upon me as unworthy to be connected in the missionary work with the good people of New England. I can bear the reproach, so long as I hope the Savior will not cast me off."[108]

The Choctaw reaction to the report of the Committee in Detroit in September of 1858 suggesting that the missionaries separate from the American Board appeared to be one of peaceful acquiescence. The superintendent and trustees of the public schools wrote Treat requesting that a representative meet with them in order to make a final separation from the American Board with "no apology to make or argument to offer on the subject," with the "only hope that it might be effected in peace and friendship." The letter was signed by Robert W. Nail, Superintendent and George Folsom and Kenedy McCurtain, Trustees.[109]

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[108] Ibid.

[109] Cyrus Kingsbury Mss, Nail, Folsom and McCurtain to Reverend S. B. Treat, Choctaw Nation, December 6, 1858, #104, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Evidently, this letter from the superintendent and trustees was written without the knowledge and consent of the Choctaw people. Joseph P. Folsom wrote to Treat asking for a copy of the communication and stated that the "General Council did not, by an act or resolution, instruct or encourage them to make an attempt to brake [sic] up the Choctaw public schools," and that they were "acting without the authority or instructions either from the General Council or the Choctaw people." He said they were "bitter enemies of the missionaries of the American Board" and would probably be put out of office.[110] Kingsbury wrote to Treat that had it not been for Bacon's report at Detroit, the trustees would probably have made no movement against the schools. "But God can, & will overrule the mistakes of good men, as well as those of bad ones, for the furtherance of his own blessed cause," he rationalized.[111]

Nevertheless, in accordance with Nail, Folsom and McCurtain's request of December 6, 1858, the Prudential Committee invested the power to give up the schools at their stations to a committee of Kingsbury, Byington, Chamberlain, Libby and Edwards on April 8, 1859. Therefore, on June 8, 1859, 7 o'clock A.M., it was resolved that

> the Reverend C. Kingsbury and Mr. I. D. Chamberlain be appointed a committee to meet the Board of Trustees and relinquish the appropriation for Chuwahla, Wheelock, and Iyanobi Female Seminaries for the "remainder of the 20 years as specific in the law passed November 29, 1842, and to deliver into their hands such school

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[110] Joseph P. Folsom to Reverend Selah B. Treat, Bennington, Blue County, Choctaw Nation, April 7, 1859, #142, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[111] Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, May 30, 1859, #152, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

property as belongs to the Nation, at such time and in such a way as shall be agreed upon."[112]

At Wheelock and Pine Ridge, the buildings, stock, wagons and farming tools belonged to the mission and at Iyanubbi, all belonged to the Choctaws.[113]

On July 27, 1859, Treat, as Secretary of the A.B.C.F.M., wrote a letter to the Choctaw Mission in which he reviewed the relationship between the Choctaw Missions, the Prudential Committee of the American Board and the Superintendent and Trustees of the Choctaw schools up to and including the letter from the Superintendent and Trustees requesting the Committee to "authorize some person to meet them and make a final separation from the American Board." Then prefacing the resolutions of the American Board concerning the course of events, Treat wrote:

> The thought that this letter brings your mission to a close, is exceedingly painful. There is no other course, however, which we can properly pursue. It is the recorded judgment of the Board that it should be relieved as early as possible, from the difficulties which have grown out of its operations in the Indian Territory. . . . It only remains that I apprise you of the formal action of the Committee, on the 26th of July, which is as follows:
>
> Resolved. 1. That in view of the embarrassments connected with the missionary work among the Choctaws, which affect injuriously, as well the labors of the brethren in that field, as the relations sustained by the Board to its friends and patrons, it is incumbent on the Prudential Committee to discontinue the Choctaw missions; and the same is hereby discontinued.
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> Resolved. 2. That the members of this mission be informed that the preceding resolution does not at once terminate their

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[112]Cyrus Kingsbury to American Board, Wheelock, Choctaw Nation, June 7, 1859, 8 o'clock P.M., #106, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[113]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, May 30, 1859, #152, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

> personal relations to the Board; that they are, nevertheless, at liberty to make such arrangements for the future as they shall severally judge proper, and that the Committee fully recognize their claim to such pecuniary aid, whenever they shall return from their connection with the Board, as, in accordance with its rules and usages, it is able to afford.
>
> I am also authorized to say (1) that the Committee propose to give you as a retiring allowance, in whole or in part, the property now in your possession & occupancy, (excepting so much as may be in the boarding schools;) and (2) that they regard Messrs. Kingsbury & Byington, in consideration of their advanced age and long continued service, as having special claims upon the Board, and therefore, unless they shall elect to become united with some other missionary organization, these brethren will be at liberty to look to the Board for their comfort and support, during the residue of their lives. . . .[114]

The following day other correspondence from the Board was received by Kingsbury and Byington stressing that Kingsbury and Byington were still individually missionaries of the Board and that the personal relations were not severed. Whether Kingsbury and Byington chose to stay among the Choctaws or go elsewhere, the Committee agreed to be responsible for their "comfortable maintenance. . . . so that in this matter there need be no solicitude on" their part. This plan, they assured them, had its origin in feelings that were "eminently kind and fraternal."[115]

Kingsbury and Byington declined the offer of the Committee in a letter addressed to Treat from Pine Ridge, December 2, 1859. Although expressing appreciation for the "kind feelings which prompted this generous offer," they cited certain considerations which led them to decline

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[114]Cyrus Kingsbury Mss, S. B. Treat to the Choctaw Mission, Missionary House, Boston, July 27, 1859, #83, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[115]Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, Copy, S. B. Treat to Reverend C. Kingsbury, Mission House, Boston, July 28, 1859, #154, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Cyrus Kingsbury MSS, Copy, S. B. Treat to Reverend Messrs. Kingsbury & Byington, Mission House, Boston, July 28, 1859, #132, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

it. They referred to a letter from the Committee on October 5, 1858, which said that the churches had an increasing desire that the Board be freed from the "embarrassments" arising from their relations to the missions subsequently decreasing the donations to the treasury with manifest injury to the churches and to the missions. Therefore, they felt that "every objection, . . . which could lie against the mission's receiving aid, on account of the damage it would bring on the Board, the churches, and the missions, would be equally valid against our receiving it." Consequently, they announced that on that same day they had made application to the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions to be under their patronage. In closing their correspondence they added that they would not cease to pray for the Board, its officers and patrons.[116] Kingsbury suggested that the sum of two hundred dollars, received by him from the Secretary of the "Southern Aid Society," be applied to the payment of the native helpers, for the last half of that year.[117]

People outside of the church circles as a whole were pleased with the separation of the Choctaw Mission from the American Board, according to a report from the Choctaw Agent Douglas H. Cooper:

> It is a matter of congratulation among the friends of the old Choctaw missionaries who have labored thirty years among them, and intend to die with the armors on, that all connection with the Boston Board has been dissolved. If it had been done years ago,

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[116]Cyrus Kingsbury and Cyrus Byington to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, December 2, 1859, #133, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 6, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[117]Cyrus Kingsbury to S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, December 8, 1859, #161, ABC 18.3.4, Vol. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

> when their freedom of conscience and missionary action was attempted to be controlled by the parent board, much of the suspicion, ill-feeling and diminished usefulness which attached to the Choctaw missionaries in consequence of this connection with and support by a Board avowedly and openly hostile to Southern institutions would have been prevented."[118]

Cyrus Kingsbury felt that the course of events that resulted in the separation of the mission from the Board had been "ordered of the Lord" and would be "overruled for the best interest of his church."[119] "I have no doubt but the Committee did that which they judged would be best for our mission, as well as best for the Board," he wrote concerning the separation.[120]

Kingsbury's primary concern was for the best interest of the Choctaws--as a nation and individually. Shortly after the separation from the Board, he expressed great distress over the attempt by government officials and white people in the surrounding states to persuade the Choctaws to have their country surveyed and each one to hold his land in severalty. The unoccupied land would then be sold or leased and he feared that the country would be overrun by white people--"the worst class of them. . . . The white people are no more satisfied that the Choctaws should remain here in quiet possession of their country, than they were that they should remain in Mississippi," he exclaimed.[121] "If they

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[118] Annie Heloise Abel, The Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1915), p. 43; Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1859, pp. 190-191.

[119] Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, April 20, 1860, #141B, ABC 18.3.1, Vol. 14, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[120] Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, April 2, 1860, #141A, ABC 18.3.1, Vol. 14, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[121] Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, April 20, 1860, ABC 18.3.1, Vol. 14, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

consent to this . . . then will come the end of the Choctaws. . . . Some of the most intelligent Choctaws think the prospects of the Africans, are far better than for themselves."[122] He could see no solution to the problem since there seemed to be division between the mixed bloods--the enlightened part of the nation--and the full bloods. The temptation to enrich themselves by the sale of their surplus land was too great to be resisted. He predicted that when that event took place, the poor Choctaws among whom the missionaries were laboring would pass away and the churches would be scattered.[123]

In writing to Reverend Wilson of the Missionary Board, Kingsbury said it would be almost a death blow to their missionary labors among the people and that the people were not prepared for such a measure. His letter closed with the statement that "In the Lord alone is our hope. He can deliver these poor people out of the hand of all those who would harm them. Pray that the Lord may continue to favor the Choctaws."[124]

Kingsbury was equally concerned with the welfare of the slaves. He expressed astonishment that in all the discussions on the subject of slavery, that so little regard had been shown for the spiritual interests of blacks. He believed they gave "promise of being a numerous, & an enduring race" and were "favorable for the reception of the Gospel." The

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[122]Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, February 17, 1860, #141 , ABC 18.3.1, Vol. 14, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[123]Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, April 20, 1860, ABC 18.3.1, Vol. 14, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[124]Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend J. Leighton Wilson, D.D., Pine Ridge, March 26, 1860, Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy 10.

slavery agitation, however, he added, was a terrible blow to the Choctaw missions from which the missions would not soon if ever recover. Few missions had passed through so many changes and had been called to encounter so many obstacles as the Choctaw mission.[125]

Wishing to continue their labors among the Choctaws, the former missionaries of the American Board made application to the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions on December 2, 1859, to be received as missionaries under its care. They stated that because God had blessed them in their labors as evangelists and teachers in their churches and schools and in translating and circulating the word among the Choctaws for forty years, they could not desert the field.[126] The missionaries assured Walter Lowrie, Secretary of the Missions, that they had no unkind feelings towards the American Board, although its members had been "in an error, as respects the 'vexed question,'" in relation to the mission.[127] The following month, the two ordained native preachers, Pliny Fisk and Allen Wright, and four licensed preachers, Dwight, Dukes, Field and Benton, applied jointly to the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church to be under their care.[128]

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[125]Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend R. Anderson, D.D., Pine Ridge, April 23, 1861, #141E, ABC 18.3.1, Vol. 14, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[126]Cyrus Kingsbury, Cyrus Byington, Ebenezer Hotchkin, Charles C. Copeland, Oliver P. Stark, John Edwards to the Honorable Walter Lowrie, Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy 10.

[127]Cyrus Kingsbury to Walter Lowrie, Secretary, Pine Ridge, December 13, 1859, Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy 10.

[128]Cyrus Kingsbury to Honorable Walter Lowrie, Secretary of

The missionaries requested that their salaries begin with the year 1860 since they settled with the American Board at the close of 1859. On receiving their appointments with the Presbyterian Board, the missionaries submitted an estimate of expenses for the year 1860. Adjustments were made according to the individual needs of the missionaries. Allowances were made for extra expenses incurred by location and number of children. For instance, Allen Wright was given five hundred dollars a year because he lived at Boggy Depot, an expensive place, and had a wife and two children. Pliny Fisk, the other native preacher, was paid three hundred fifty dollars. Salaries decreased when expenses were less. Since the schools at Wheelock and at Pine Ridge belonged to the American Board and not to the Choctaw Nation, the Board gave the buildings, stock teams and all the other property which the Board had at Pine Ridge, to Cyrus Kingsbury without reserve.[129] Yet Kingsbury wrote to Wilson that he expected to use it without "cent or remuneration, so far as it may be needed, in sustaining this school" and that the Committee was to consider the buildings and other property as under their care and protection to be used in their service as long as he remained there and it was needed to sustain the school in connection with the appropriation made by the nation

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Presbyterian Board of Foreign Mission, Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, January 23, 1860, Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy 10; Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend J. Leighton Wilson, D.D., Pine Ridge,January 28, 1860, Ibid., Microcopy 10.

[129]Cyrus Kingsbury to Honorable Walter Lowrie, Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, December 8, 1859, Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy 10; Cyrus Kingsbury to Honorable Walter Lowrie, Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, January 24, 1860, Ibid., Microcopy 10; Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend J. Leighton Wilson, D.D., Pine Ridge, January 28, 1860, Ibid., Microcopy 10; Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend J. Leighton Wilson, D.D., Pine Ridge, January 31, 1860, Ibid., Microcopy 10.

and the small allowance made to him by the Board.[130] Kingsbury required less salary than some of the other missionaries since he used all the property there for the support of the school.[131]

The day schools, and to a great extent, the Sabbath Schools, were entirely supported by the Choctaw Nation. Both were usually taught on Saturday and Sundays and the teachers were paid out of the public funds or by subscription.[132]

In the meantime, the former missionaries of the American Board had been requested to submit a formal written resignation to the Board. Until thus reminded, it had not occurred to them to do this, since they had been directed to take the liberty to make such arrangements for the future as they should severally judge proper.[133] Admitting an oversight on their part, the following missionaries retired formally from the American Board by letter, February 16, 1860: Cyrus Kingsbury, Cyrus Byington, E. Hotchkin, C. C. Copeland, O. P. Stark and John Edwards. They

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[130]Cyrus Kingsbury to J. Leighton Wilson, Pine Ridge, August 15, 1860, Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy 10.

[131]Cyrus Kingsbury to Honorable Walter Lowrie, Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, December 8, 1859, Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy 10; Cyrus Kingsbury to Honorable Walter Lowrie, Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, January 24, 1860, Ibid., Microcopy 10; Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend J. Leighton Wilson, D.D., Pine Ridge, January 28, 1860, Ibid., Microcopy 10; Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend J. Leighton Wilson, D.D., Pine Ridge, January 31, 1860, Ibid., Microcopy 10.

[132]John Edwards to Reverend Leighton Wilson, D.D., Wheelock, March 21, 1860, Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy 10.

[133]Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, February 17, 1860, ABC 18.3.1, Vol. 14, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

accepted all property in their possession not belonging to the Choctaw Nation for a retiring allowance and for current expenses while waiting for the completion of other arrangements for their support. They expressed gratitude for all past personal kindnesses extended to them throughout the previous years and the wish that the Board would prosper in its work.[134]

The schools in the Choctaw Nation that were transferred from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions were Iyanubbi Female Seminary at Stockbridge Mission, near Eagletown, the Reverend Cyrus Byington, missionary; Chuahla Female Seminary at Pine Ridge, near Doaksville, the Reverend Cyrus Kingsbury, Missionary and Superintendent; Wheelock Female Seminary at Wheelock Mission, the Reverend John Edwards, Superintendent; Koonsha Female Seminary at Goodwater, the Reverend George Ainslee, Superintendent.[135]

Three-fourths of the funds necessary for the maintenance of the larger schools was furnished by Choctaw tribal funds and annuities from the United States resulting from treaties; and one-fourth was contributed by the Mission Board. Until the break between the missionaries to the Choctaw Indians with the American Board, most of the Presbyterian missionary activity to the Choctaws had been under the auspices of the American

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[134]Cyrus Kingsbury, Cyrus Byington, Ebenezer Hotchkin, Charles C. Copeland, Oliver P. Stark, John Edwards to Reverend S. B. Treat, Secretary of the A.B.C.F.M., Pine Ridge, February 16, 1860, Cherokee Missions 1860-1871, ABC 18.3.1, Vol. 14, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[135]William L. Hiemstra, "Presbyterian Mission Schools Among the Choctaws and Chickasaws, 1845-1861, Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVII (1949-1950), p. 34.

Board except the supervision of Spencer Academy which had begun in February 1846 with sixty pupils.[136]

Joining the other Presbyterian missionaries in the spring of 1860, was a young woman named Sue McBeth at Goodwater. Although she remained only a year and one-half among the Choctaws, she kept an excellent diary of her activities and observations in the schools and began a history of the Choctaw missions. Even though much of this material was lost, the surviving portion proved to be a valuable source of information on the work of the missionaries at this time. Miss McBeth was described as frail and partially paralyzed, but with a mind and a vision far greater than her frailities. Her letters form one of the most colorful accounts of all the mission correspondence.[137]

The Choctaw Nation suffered greatly during the year 1860 with a severe winter, drouth, dying stock, poor crops, high prices and subsequent famine and starvation. The drouth damaged the corn supply and the severe winter killed the wheat. Kingsbury reported "starving conditions" and gave $50.00 of his small annual salary of only $200.00 to the needy Choctaws.[138] Early in the spring, a boatload of supplies from the New

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[136]Although Presbyterian missionaries established a work among the Chickasaw Indians through the Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Synod of South Carolina and Georgia in 1820, the missions were transferred on December 17, 1827, to the supervision of the American Board. William L. Hiemstra, "Presbyterian Missionaries and Mission Churches Among the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians, 1832-1865," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVI (1948-1949), pp. 33-34.

[137]Harold S. Faust, Tragedies and Triumphs of the American Indian, Presbyterian Historical Studies, No. 1 (Philadelphia, Pa.: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1945), p. 64.

[138]Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend J. Leighton Wilson, Pine Ridge, May 22, 1860, Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy 10.

York City office of the Presbyterian Board was sunk.[139] The unusual heat, drouth and distress for bread continued into August and September of that year. Kingsbury reported that the Choctaw government had no funds for the relief of the people except the school funds and that if the schools were to be carried on, they had to share their food with the suffering and destitute around them even though by their "utmost efforts" they were barely able to obtain a sufficiency for the school. If they had to feed both school and other people for any length of time, their supply would run out.[140]

The schools had capacity enrollments of approximately 500 students in 1860--a fact that "proved" that many citizens of the nation were pleased with the schools and their curricula.[141] All Choctaws did not wholeheartedly support the educational program of the Presbyterian mission schools, however. A minority group was hostile and at best, indifferent. The Reverend S. A. Lee of Spencer Academy described the antagonistic members of the anti-school minority among the Choctaws in early 1860. He said:

> There are those in the Nation who would be glad to see all the schools broken up in order to keep the mass of the people in ignorance, that they might retain their influence the more easily, for, with the increase in intelligence among them the full-bloods are

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[139]Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend J. Leighton Wilson, Pine Ridge, April 4, 1860, Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy 10; Hiemstra, "Presbyterian Missionaries and Mission Churches," p. 465.

[140]Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend J. Leighton Wilson, Pine Ridge, August 15, 1860, Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy 10; Hiemstra, "Presbyterian Missionaries and Mission Churches," p. 466.

[141]Hiemstra, "Presbyterian Mission Schools," p. 36.

rapidly gaining their place in influencing the affairs of the Nation.[142]

The mixed bloods had enjoyed prestige through education earlier, but by 1860, the full bloods were becoming educated through the mission schools and were holding positions of control in the affairs of the Nation.[143] Kingsbury believed this to be the "seed ground of hostility to the schools."[144] He noted that of the three candidates for the chief magistracy of the nation in the fall of 1860, the two who received the highest number of votes for that office "were educated in the mission schools in the old nation, and received all the education they ever had, in those schools." He concluded that "of this, we must not boast," however.[145]

But this hostility was only a shadow of a division in the nation in a far greater dimension. For, on April 12, 1861, at 4:30 A.M., the first shots of the Civil War were sounded at Fort Sumter. Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, issued a proclamation calling forth the militia of the several states of the Union.

Both contenders in the Civil War sought an alliance with the inhabitants of the Indian Territory at the very beginning. Each recognized that the location would be valuable as a supply base for troops

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[142] Ibid., p. 35.

[143] Ibid., p. 36.

[144] Cyrus Kingsbury to J. Leighton Wilson, D.D., Pine Ridge, September 4, 1860, Letters, Presbyterian Missions to the Choctaws, 1840-1886, Tulsa University, Microcopy 10.

[145] Ibid.

west of the Mississippi or as a highway to and from Texas and possibly as a base for securing Colorado Territory and the new state of Kansas.[146] Furthermore, it was believed that Indian warriors would make valuable allies.[147]

As a nation, the Choctaws had come to respect the United States government as a friend so that it was not easy for them to turn away from their allegiance and annuities. But they had once lived in the South and had a natural sympathy for the people with whom they had intermarried. Furthermore, almost three thousand slaves belonged to Choctaw citizens in the Indian Territory.[148] Another factor which influenced the Choctaws to identify with the Confederacy was the fact that the climate and products of their nation and that of the South were similar and trade was carried on with that area by way of the Arkansas and Red rivers. In addition, Indian agents and many U.S. army officers stationed in the area, were sympathetic to the Southern cause and used their influence in persuading the Indians to join the Confederacy.[149]

Consequently, the first public resolution in the Indian Territory concerning the conflict over slavery and secession of the Southern states, was passed by the Choctaw National Council on February 7, 1861. The Council resolved

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[146]Abel, The Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist, p. 12.

[147]Harriette Johnson Westbrook, "Aboriginals Fought on Both Sides at Battle of Pea Ridge," The American Indian, IV (October, 1929), p. 12.

[148]"Peter Pitchlynn, Chief of the Choctaws," p. 492.

[149]Muriel H. Wright, "Choctaws and Chickasaws Were Allied with Confederacy," The American Indian, I (January, 1927), p. 6.

> That in the event a permanent dissolution of the American Union takes place, our many relations with the General Government must cease and we shall be left to follow the natural affections, education, institutions and interests of our people, which indissolubly bind us in every way to the destiny of our neighbors and brethren of the Southern States, upon whom we are confident we can rely for the preservation of our rights of life, liberty, and property and the continuance of many acts of friendship, general counsel and material support.[150]

The same month, the Texas convention appointed commissioners to the Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Creek and Seminole nations to "invite their prompt cooperation in the formation of a Southern Confederacy," and on March 12, Commissioner James E. Harrison addressed a convention of the Chickasaws and Choctaws at Boggy Depot.[151]

A position of neutrality was impossible in the Indian Territory. At the outbreak of the war, all United States military posts in Indian Territory had been abandoned except three garrisoned posts: Fort Arbuckle and Fort Washita in the Chickasaw Nation and Fort Cobb.[152] The Indians were left defenseless and at the mercy of such pro-Southern leaders as Douglas H. Cooper, the Choctaw and Chickasaw agent. Aware of the importance of utilizing the talents and influence of the Southern sympathizers among officials and ex-officials in the Indian Territory, the Confederate government on May 13, 1861, appointed the Texas ranger, Benjamin McCulloch, brigadier-general of its Provisional Army and assigned

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[150] Ibid.; Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington: GPO, 1880-1904, Series I, Ip. 682; Dean Trickett, "The Civil War in the Indian Territory, 1861," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XVII (September, 1939), pp. 315-316.

[151] Trickett, "The Civil War in the Indian Territory, 1861," p. 316.

[152] Ibid., p. 318; Abel, The Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist, p. 11.

him the command of three regiments of white troops in the Indian Territory. He was to raise two Indian regiments as soon as possible. On the same day General McCulloch received his orders, the Confederate Secretary of War, Leroy P. Walker, instructed Douglas H. Cooper to raise a mounted regiment among the Choctaws and Chickasaws to serve under him in cooperation with General McCulloch. David Hubbard, the Confederate Superintendent of Indian Affairs, was entrusted with the duty of raising these additional regiments.[153] In the meantime, the Provisional Congress had set up a Bureau of Indian Affairs under the control of the War Department.[154]

Soon after, Albert Pike, a former New Englander and presently an extreme Arkansas secessionist, volunteered his services to the Confederacy and was forthwith commissioned to negotiate treaties of friendship and alliance.[155] Pike was especially knowledgeable of the Choctaws since he had acted as an attorney for the nation at Washington for a number of years in prosecuting claims arising under the treaty of 1830.[156] The Choctaws and the Chickasaws were the only Indians in the territory who made treaties with the Confederacy at this early date.[157] Delegates from the two nations met at North Fork, Creek Nation, on July 20, 1861, to

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[153]Abel, The Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist, pp. 12-13.

[154]Trickett, "The Civil War in the Indian Territory, 1861," p. 404.

[155]Abel, The Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist, pp. 13-14.

[156]Trickett, "The Civil War in the Indian Territory, 1861," p. 408,

[157]Abel, The Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist, pp. 13-14.

draw up a "treaty of friendship and alliance." The two nations received the status of territory in the Confederacy and were allowed to send a delegate to the Confederate Congress. The members of the two tribes were almost unanimous in favor of the treaty. Less than fifty of the two tribes refused to enter the Confederate service.[158] After completing the work of negotiating Indian treaties, during the months of June and July, Pike was made commander of all the Indian troops in the Confederate service.[159]

Meanwhile, during the negotiation of the treaty, George Hudson, Principal Chief of the Choctaws, issued a proclamation calling for seven hundred troops to serve as riflemen and an additional force to serve as Home Guards.[160] All citizens and residents of the Choctaw Nation between the ages of 18 and 45 years subject to military duty were required to enroll either in the volunteer or the reserve militia.[161]

Although the Choctaws with the Chickasaws raised three regiments for the Confederate army, they did little fighting in the Civil War. The Choctaw and Chickasaw country was never occupied by Federal troops except guerrilla bands and federal scouting parties who came as far south as Boggy Depot. Confederate allies from other nations of the Indian Territory were given refuge in the Choctaw Nation.[162]

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[158]Wright, "Choctaws and Chickasaws Were Allied with the Confederacy," p. 6.

[159]Abel, The Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist, p. 16.

[160]Ibid., pp. 15-16.

[161]John Bartlett Meserve, "Chief George Hudson and Chief Samuel Garland," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XX (March, 1942), pp. 11-12.

[162]Chief George Hudson, Principal Chief, 1860-1862, was educated

The Choctaws and Chickasaws were willing to fight outside of Indian Territory--a fact which proved to be of military significance to the Confederacy. Southern Arkansas and northern Texas could not have been held by the South without the support of the Indians who fought outside of Indian Territory. Texas was a major food and mineral producing region of the Confederacy. Confederate Indian forces contributed a large influence on the military events in the Trans-Mississippi West by fighting outside of Indian Territory.[163]

The Battle of Pea Ridge (Elk Horn Tavern) Arkansas on March 6-8, 1862, was the turning point of the war for Indian Territory. It was the first decisive victory west of the Mississippi for the Union Army. Pike's Indian Brigade was under the command of Major General Earl Van Dorn, commander of the Confederate Army of the Southwest. After the battle, General Van Dorn ordered the secessionist Indians to return to Indian Territory to protect it. There they were to harass the Federals by cutting off their supply lines and by raids on undefended places. In the meantime, the Choctaw and Chickasaw Regiments were successful in checking Federal assaults. In the Battle of Newtonia in Missouri, Colonel Tandy Walker and his Confederate First Choctaw and Chickasaw Regiment turned back a Federal assault and later at the Battle of Poison Spring in Arkansas Colonel

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in Mississippi at Mayhew Mission school under Cyrus Kingsbury. Samuel Garland, Principal Chief, 1862-1864, attended schools in Mississippi and the Choctaw Academy in Kentucky. He and his brother-in-law, Peter P. Pitchlynn, exchanged their lands in Mississippi obtained in the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek for slaves and moved west. Garland was a member of the Presbyterian Church. Meserve, "Chief George Hudson and Chief Samuel Garland," pp. 9, 14-17.

[163]Leroy H. Fischer and Jerry Gill, "Confederate Indian Forces Outside of Indian Territory," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XLVI (Autumn, 1968), p. 284.

Samson Folsom led a Confederate Choctaw regiment which turned the Federal right flank and captured a battery of four guns.[164] However, there was some criticism of the fact that Confederate Indian forces fought outside of the Indian Territory. Albert Pike issued a proclamation to the Cherokees, Creeks, Seminoles, Chickasaws and Choctaws stating that they had been betrayed by the Confederacy by being taken out of their country in violation of their treaties leaving their own country exposed to a "merciless horde of jayhawkers . . . yet no appreciable number of white troops had been sent to their assistance." Soon after, Pike was put under arrest and Cooper became leader of the Indians.[165]

Confederate soldiers were stationed in camps at Doaksville, Fort Washinta, Fort McCulloch, Boggy Depot and Armstrong Academy--the Confederate Choctaw capital (Chahta Tamaha). A church building at Old Boggy Depot which had been erected in the 1850's by the Presbyterian Church served as a hospital during the war. Mrs. John Kingsbury and Mrs. Allen Wright were among the women who helped minister to the soldiers there. The military quarters at Boggy Depot occupied about thirty acres in the southwestern part of town where several rows of log cabins were erected for the soldiers. On the main street of the town, near the public well, the Confederate flag waved from a tall flag pole

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[164]Westbrook, "Aboriginals Fought on Both Sides at Battle of Pea Ridge," p. 12; Gary N. Heath, "The First Federal Invasion of Indian Territory," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XLIV (Winter, 1966-1967), pp. 409-411; Fischer and Gill, "Confederate Indian Forces Outside of Indian Territory," pp. 254-265.

[165]Abel, The Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist, pp. 21-22.

for four years.[166] Although there were no major battles fought in the area during the way, several raids by "Cherokee Pins" (Federal Scouts) were attempted on the town. One group was so bold as to ride up and down the front porch of one of the homes, while whooping and firing into the house.[167]

Meanwhile, the war greatly affected the work of the mission schools, for all the schools and churches were closed in 1861 at the outbreak of the Civil War. "Our boarding schools are all stopt. The Govt. officers at Washington refuse to pay the Choctaws any more money on any account. Of course the Schools must close," wrote Cyrus Byington July 29, 1861.[168] As the payment of monies due by the United States government was suspended, the schools were shut down and Indian refugees from other tribes tended to absorb the necessary resources of the Choctaws adding to the financial crisis. Law and order broke down as bands of white renegades drove away their stock and raided their homes.[169] Schools closed for lack of funds and teachers. Spencer Academy was terminated and used as a Confederate hospital for eighteen months.[170]

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[166]Wright, "Old Boggy Depot," pp. 4-8; Wright, "Choctaws and Chickasaws Were Allied with Confederacy," p. 6; Muriel H. Wright and LeRoy H. Fischer, "Civil War Sites in Oklahoma," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XLIV (Summer, 1966), pp. 158-215.

[167]Ibid.

[168]Cyrus Byington MSS, Cyrus Byington, Stockbridge, Choctaw Nation, July 29, 1861, Gilcrease Institute, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

[169]Ibid.; Meserve, "Chief George Hudson," pp. 16-17.

[170]On May 24, 1871, Spencer was reopened under the auspices of the Southern Presbyterian Church. Ten years later, New Spencer was moved to a new location at Nelson under the control of the northern Presbyterian Church and under Oliver P. Stark, a former Spencer teacher and

Almost all of the missionaries except Cyrus Kingsbury and family left at the first of the war.

The Presbyterian Church became divided by the organization of the Southern Presbyterian Church under the name of "The Presbyterian Church in the United States." The first assembly met at Augusta, Georgia, in December of 1861. The Moderator of the meeting was Dr. B. M. Palmer, brother-in-law of Mrs. Alfred Wright, missionary to the Choctaws. Allen Wright, native preacher and Principal Chief of the Choctaw Nation in 1866-1868 was present. Representing the Indian Territory were Cyrus Kingsbury and R. M. Longbridge. Forty-six ministers and thirty-three ruling elders signed the document creating the Southern Presbyterian Church.[171] A speech by Dr. J. Leighton Wilson referred to the great work which had been accomplished since 1818 and he strongly recommended that the Assembly assume responsibility for the continuance of the labor in Indian Territory by reappointing all the old missionaries and teachers who were in the field. He also proposed that six new missionaries be assigned.[172] However, work was not continued until after the close of the war.

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superintendent. Baird, "Spencer "Academy," pp. 33-36. In 1886, Spencer was destroyed by a fire. The Nation made an attempt to rebuild Spencer, but the importance of the school had ended by this time because the educational system was passing out of tribal control, Angie Debo, "Education in the Choctaw Country After the Civil War," Chronicles of Oklahoma, X (September, 1932), p. 385. In 1884, Wheelock Academy was reopened by Reverend John Edwards, Flickinger, The Choctaw Freedmen, p. 18.

[171] Souvenir by the Executive Committee of Religious Education and Publication, Richmond, Virginia, on the Occasion of the Seventieth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States in Session at Charlottesville, Virginia, May 1930, Muriel Wright Papers, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

[172] Lewis Anthony Kensell, "Phases of Reconstruction in the

Cyrus Byington expressed his feelings about the division in the Presbyterian Church:

> The Old School Presbyterian church is now divided, . . . We must give up our relations to the Northern Division of this church. The Southern Division is making arrangements to sustain us. This is strange indeed. Once the N. England people & others at the North aided us cheerfully & for forty years carried on the Mission. They dropted us. And then the Gen. Assembly's Board took us under their care. Now before I die I am called to make another change--My heart is with my people.[173]

War demoralized the work of the Presbyterian Church in the Indian country. The schools and missions were closed during the war. Most were not reopened until 1894 when the Southern Board of Home Missions established some schools, mainly among the Choctaws.[174]

The task of the Southern Church proved to be too great for the lack of men and means to re-open boarding schools and supply churches with ministers. Arrangements had to be made for the foreign mission board of the Presbyterian church to resume its former work as soon as workers could be obtained. In the fall of 1883, the Presbytery of Indian Territory was re-established with a membership of sixteen ministers, eleven churches, 385 communicants and 676 Sunday school scholars.[175]

The war was a time of great distress in the Choctaw Nation. "Difficulties & perils thicken around the pathway of your missionaries

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Choctaw Nation, 1865-1870," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XLVII (Summer, 1969), pp. 141-142. William B. Morrison, The Red Man's Trail (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1932), pp. 70-72.

[173]Cyrus Byington MSS, Cyrus Byington, Stockbridge, Choctaw Nation, July 29, 1861, Gilcrease Institute, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

[174]Gibbons, "Work Among the Indians," pp. 12-14.

[175]Ibid., p. 17.

among the Choctaws," wrote Cyrus Kingsbury to Walter Lowrie of the Presbyterian Missions on June 18, 1861.[176] Kingsbury continued to live at Pine Ridge throughout the war and carried on the missionary work on a limited basis since all the boarding schools were closed. "The missionaries that remained felt it be our duty not to desert our people, but to do what we could to ameliorate and counteract the evils in which we saw they would be involved, . . ." Kingsbury explained.[177]

The missionaries continued to suffer, however, over the secession issue just as they had from the slavery controversy. The secretary of the Southern Presbyterian Mission, Dr. Wilson, in his zeal to place the missionaries favorably before the South, wrote that the missionaries took the lead in the secession movement among the Choctaws. Kingsbury reported that

> this is not correct as respects the mission generally. It was not until some months, if I remember rightly, after the Choctaws had decided on their course, that the mission took any action on the subject. There probably was an earlier expression of individual feelings & views. We all advised them that whatever course they took, to be united. After they had taken their stand, we were under the power which they had established; & considered it our duty to remain in subjection to that power.[178]

Nevertheless, there were still some who identified the missionaries as Northerners. Concerning this, Kingsbury wrote:

> There was a strong prejudice against us, & not a little persecution was experienced on account of our being "yankes," &

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[176]Cyrus Kingsbury to Honorable Walter Lowry [sic], Secretary, Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, June 18, 1861, #100, Indian Missions, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

[177]Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, December 4, 1865, #143, ABC 18.3.1, Vol. 18, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[178]Ibid.

> favorable to the blacks. I was at one time, threatened with hanging, if the man could have procured a sufficient number to assist in the operation. He was a white man.[179]

Throughout the whole period of the "desolating & bloody war, . . . a kind providence watched over" them, and they were permitted to go on with their, though to greatly diminished numbers. They suffered in various ways, but much less than they "had reason to expect."[180] By disposing of such property as he did not need which the American Board had given to him, Kingsbury was able to aid his "brethren" with a few thousand dollars so that they could continue their work of preaching the gospel.[181]

The work of the missionaries was interrupted at times by the presence of troops in their neighborhood. For seventeen months, the Headquarters of the Indian District was located within half a mile of Kingsbury's house and three of the principal officers were housed in his buildings. Kingsbury used this opportunity to perform some of the duties of chaplain. Also, from 200 to 300 persons connected with the army were located within a convenient distance of his church and attended regularly.[182]

> During the whole period of this desolating, & bloody war, the path which a Kind Providence marked out for us, has been one of comparative peace & safety. When a hostile army were approaching

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[179] Ibid.

[180] Ibid.

[181] Ibid.

[182] Cyrus Kingsbury to Henry Hill, Esq., Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, June 21, 1865, #142, ABC 18.3.1, Vol. 14, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

> us, & all were fully expecting them in our midst, a hand unseen arrested their progress, & we were left unmolested. We could not leave our people, & were willing to share with them, their perils & their losses; & we have been wonderfully preserved. Not one of quiet & peaceful habitations have been invaded. We have all been permitted to remain at home, & to pursue our usual labors.[183]

In spite of the comparative "peace and quiet" in the Choctaw Nation during the war, Kingsbury felt that great moral as well as physical evils fell on the Choctaws, and it was doubtful to him if they would recover.[184] The Indians who fought were considered rebels against the government and much of their land was seized. Those who fled to Kansas lost everything when they left the Nation. One Indian wrote that he and his family had to leave in the night and could not take anything with them. He and his family lost about fifty thousand dollars worth of property.[185]

The condition of the blacks at the end of the war was critical. Although Kingsbury said he was "truly glad" that slavery was done, he expressed regret at the manner in which it happened. The blacks endured great hardships and sufferings. Many people who had to give up their slaves sought

> revenge on the helpless and destitute negroe. . . . The able bodyed will find employment, while the women & children in countless numbers, will be left to famish, and perish. They will have no protecter, . . . & I fear there are many who will no more hesitate to take the life of a negroe, than of a dog. It is sickening to contemplate the prospect that is, (I hope but for a little season) before us. . . .

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[183] Ibid.

[184] Ibid.

[185] Faust, Tragedies and Triumphs of the American Indian, pp. 36-37.

> What is wanting now, is a wise and efficient protection for the slave.[186]

During the war years, Kingsbury experienced a deep personal loss. On April 30, 1864, Electa May Kingsbury, his wife who for forty years "shared his toils & trials" died. "She was 80 years one month & 19 days old."[187] Deeply expressing his innermost thoughts, Kingsbury wrote to the Secretary of the American Board:

> She will not return to me, but I must soon go to her. May my end be peaceful & happy, as was hers. O eternity! how solemn the thought. How important that we should "give all diligence to make our calling & election sure." So be it.[188]

Cyrus Byington said of Mrs. Kingsbury's life work and death:

> Look back all the way from the place of her burial to her arrival at Mayhew & beyond, to the place of her birth & you can see the gracious hand of God guiding her, protecting her & fitting her for a place of great & long continued usefulness in this nation as the companion of our bereaved brother. But her work is done. We shall see her face no more. Her voice & her footfall will not again be heard in any room at P. R. [Pine Ridge]. . . . How much better to serve the L. J. [Lord Jesus] in such a station, than to gather the wealth of the earth. . . . "Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord.--that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."[189]

Cyrus Kingsbury (Jr.) and his family who had come from Iowa to assist the elder Kingsbury, returned to their home in June of 1865. In less than a month after they had reached their home, Mrs. Kingsbury,

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[186]Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend S. B. Treat, Pine Ridge, December 4, 1865, #143, ABC 18.3.1, Vol. 14, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[187]*Ibid.*

[188]Cyrus Kingsbury to Henry Hill, Esq., Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, June 21, 1865, #142, ABC 18.3.1, Vol. 14, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[189]Byington Speech, Stockbridge, June 21, 1864, Sue McBeth Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society.

Lucy Ann Denning, was "laid in the grave by the typhoid fever."[190] Throughout all of the many trials, hardships and afflictions, Kingsbury kept his faith and prayed that he would "be the better fitted for his service by the afflictions" he experienced.[191]

Before the war drew to a close, the Choctaws held a convention at New Hope in March, 1864, and appointed Thomas Edwards provisional governor and delegated E. P. Perkins to represent them in Washington. Some protested the move declaring the Choctaw Nation was committed to the Confederacy, but there was little fighting in which the Indians were involved. Eventually, the war ended and in September, 1865, representatives of the several Indian nations met commissioners of the United States at Fort Smith, Arkansas, and concluded a provisional treaty of peace.[192] Peter P. Pitchlynn and Captain Robert M. Jones were the Choctaw delegates and Winchester Colbert and Colbert Carter were the Chickasaw representatives. When they arrived at Fort Smith, they wrote a formal statement saying that they had willfully joined the Confederacy--an act which they claimed as their right. They concluded their document with the statement:

> The Confederate States government having ceased to exist, our relations ceased with it, and we recognize the government of the United States as having maintained its supremacy, and

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[190]Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend John C. Lowrie, D.D., Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, September 24, 1866, Indian Correspondence, #431, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

[191]Cyrus Kingsbury to Honorable Walter Lowry, Secretary, Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, June 18, 1861, Indian Correspondence, #110, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

[192]Abel, The Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist, pp. 25-26.

as offering to resume, by treaty, its former relations with us.[193]

The meeting at Fort Smith adjourned after twelve days without having accomplished its goals although the United States commissioners promised to call the Indian delegations together again in Washington, D.C., in the near future. The call came in the spring of 1866. Alfred Wade, Allen Wright, James Riley, John Page and Peter P. Pitchlynn, Principal Chief, represented the Choctaws; Edmund Pickens, Colbert Carter, Homes Colbert, Robert H. Love and Governor Winchester Colbert represented the Chickasaws.[194]

The Treaty of 1866 was signed on April 28, 1866,[195] ratified and signed by the President of the United States, Andrew Johnson, on the 10th day of July, 1866.[196] The United States again recognized the tribal governments and restated the tribal rights of the Choctaws and Chickasaws.[197] It provided for the allotment of the Choctaws lands in severalty, but during July 1870, the Choctaws voted by a large majority against allotment and that provision of the Treaty of 1866 was of no effect.[198]

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[193]Wright, "Choctaws and Chickasaws Were Allied with Confederacy," p. 12.

[194]Ibid.

[195]Walt Wilson, "Freedmen in Indian Territory During Reconstruction," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XLIX (Summer, 1971), p. 235.

[196]Joseph P. Folsom, Constitution and Laws of the Choctaw Nation Together with the Treaties of 1855, 1865 and 1866. Chahta Tamaha, 1869 (New York City: Wm. P. Lyon & Son, Printers and Publishers, 1896), pp. 37-67.

[197]Wright, "Choctaws and Chickasaws Were Allied with Confederacy," p. 12.

[198]Edward Davis, "The Mississippi Choctaws," Chronicles of Oklahoma, X (June, 1932), pp. 259-260.

Furthermore, the Federal government made an effort to force territorial organization upon the Choctaws after the war, but they stood firmly and unanimously against it. When the territorial bills were before Congress in 1874, the Indians memorialized against them:

> We do hereby most solemnly and emphatically declare that the articles of the treaties of 1866, do not authorize the formation by Congress of a Territorial government of the United States over the Indians of the Indian Territory. On the contrary the agreements on our part in assenting to the establishment of said council was entered into for the very purpose of obviating the alleged necessity of such a Territorial government. . . . We held that that country was exclusively an Indian country, as contridistinguished from a Territory of the United States, and we treated upon that basis . . .[199]

Regarding slavery, there were two stipulations: slavery was to be abolished and measures to be taken to incorporate the slaves into the tribes with full rights of citizenship. The Government was to invest $300,000.00 (money due the tribes from the Leased District) at five percent interest, until the Chickasaws and Choctaws passed laws granting their former slaves full citizenship. The time allowed to accomplish this was two years. Three-fourths of the $300,000.00 plus interest would be paid to the Choctaws and one-fourth to the Chickasaws when such laws were passed. If the laws were not passed, the money would be used to aid the freedmen by transporting them to another region and establishing them.[200] This law was not carried out, however, since the Chickasaws and Choctaws did not adopt their freedmen at this time and the Federal government did not move them. Serious difficulties developed as a result.

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[199] Abel, "Proposals for an Indian State, 1778-1878," pp. 100-101.

[200] Ibid., pp. 235-236. Folsom, Constitution and Laws of the Choctaw Nation, pp. 38-67.

Since the freedmen were not citizens of the Indian nations, they could not claim the land they farmed. Their legal status was that of United States citizens living in the Indian country. They had no recourse to Indian courts but had to travel to Fort Smith to the United States court.[201]

The position of the Choctaw and Chickasaw freedmen in the Indian Territory was difficult politically and socially because they were free with no rights and privileges. The Choctaws generally were more lenient in their dealings with the freedmen than the Chickasaws. At the end of the war their Council enacted a law providing jobs and welfare for them. The freedmen actually received comparatively good treatment in the five Indian nations of the Indian Territory. The Choctaws finally granted citizenship to their former slaves. The Chickasaws never adopted their freedmen. They would have been outnumbered and would have lost their own identity in their country had they done so.[202]

"Lawlessness, violence, robbery and theft" depicted the social and economic ruin throughout the Choctaw Nation at the end of the Civil War.[203] Peter P. Pitchlynn, the Principal Chief of the Choctaw Nation in 1864 noted that a state of suffering and destitution unprecedented in the history of the Choctaws existed.[204] During the period of transition

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[201]Wilson, "Freedmen in Indian Territory During Reconstruction," pp. 240-241.

[202]*Ibid.*, pp. 242-243.

[203]James Davidson Morrison, "Social History of the Choctaw, 1865-1907," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1951), p. 176.

[204]Kensell, "Phases of Reconstruction in the Choctaw Nation, 1865-1870," p. 130.

from the Choctaw allegiance to the Confederacy and back to the Federal government, there was widespread destruction of property by soldiers, freedmen, refugees and by gangs of white renegades who plundered the countryside. Law enforcement was negligible and the financial structure was unstable. Confederate money became worthless and the tribal annuity had been discontinued during the war. After the Treaty of 1866 was ratified, the United States resumed payments of annuities and on the Leased District, but in depreciated greenbacks.[205] A state of anarchy threatened and with the influx of white immigration with the advancing frontier, a struggle existed between conservative and liberal leaders.[206]

Allen Wright, Principal Chief of the Choctaw Indians, stated in his inaugural address in the fall of 1866, that

> This was the second time in our history that the bright future prospect for the Choctaws in the rapid march to civilization--progress of education, and wide spread of religion among them have been impeded and paralyzed by direct and indirect acts of the Government of the United States.[207]

Gradually, Chief Wright and the General Council began to initiate new laws which discouraged much of the crime and disorder.[208]

On December 27, 1866, as one of their first reconstruction measures, the Council passed an act putting neighborhood schools back into operation throughout the nation. These schools were opened in

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[205]Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 94.

[206]Kensell, "Phases of Reconstruction in the Choctaw Nation," p. 146.

[207]Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 93.

[208]Kensell, "Phases of Reconstruction in the Choctaw Nation," pp. 143, 146.

January of 1867 with two-thirds of the teachers Choctaws who had been educated in the schools or the United States.[209]

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church was eager to continue work among the Indians. The report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Missions made the following statement in 1866:

> Nor must we bate one jot of heart or hope in the Indian field. The hands of the venerable Father Kingsbury, who has stood so long at the post of honor and danger, must be held up; the survivors of the noble band of brethren who have rallied around him, like a forlorn hope, must be cheered and supported.[210]

The Assembly was unable to send missionaries to re-establish schools at this time, however, because of insufficient funds. The southern churches had worked among the Choctaws prior to the Civil War and had become impoverished.[211]

It was impossible to continue the Indian Mission schools on the pre-war basis, for conditions would not allow it. Many urgent calls went forth from the Choctaw Nation for preachers and teachers in 1868 and 1869, but it was difficult for the Presbyterian Foreign Mission to find recruits to take the place of the old missionaries. The Choctaw Mission began to rely more and more on native preachers.[212] In 1869, the

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[209] Natalie Morrison Denison, "Missions and Missionaries of the Presbyterian Church, U. S., Among the Choctaws--1886-1907," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXIV (1946-1947), p. 427; Kensell, "Phases of Reconstruction in the Choctaw Nation," p. 148.

[210] Denison, "Missions and Missionaries of the Presbyterian Church," p. 426.

[211] Kensell, "Phases of Reconstruction in the Choctaw Nation," p. 149.

[212] Denison, "Missions and Missionaries of the Presbyterian Church," p. 427.

Choctaw government resumed its policy of sending a selected group of students to the United States for higher education opportunities.[213]

During the five-year reconstruction period in the Choctaw Nation there was only a minimum of economic and educational progress. The period can best be described as one of turmoil, disorganization, despair, crime and apathy. Yet, within a short period, the Choctaws again demonstrated their remarkable ability to restructure and strengthen their nation. They took up their work sadder and wiser, but with a renewed hope of progress and with a fresh impetus to trade. The aftermath was a widely modified social and economic structure.[214]

The decade ending in 1870 saw the end of the era of the old Presbyterian missionaries to the Choctaw Indians. Veterans of fifty years or more, they began to die one by one. Reverend Ebenezer Hotchkin died on the 28th of October, 1868, while visiting in Massachusetts. The following month, Mrs.Hotchkin died. Hotchkin had labored among the Choctaws thirty-nine years and Mrs. Hotchkin for forty-four years. Kingsbury's son John who had married the Hotchkin's daughter, Hannah, died on December 10th of the same year. He had long suffered from a pulmonary disease. He had been a member of the Presbyterian Church for more than twenty years and for the last eleven years, was a ruling elder. He and his family had been made citizens of the Choctaw Nation--evidence of the high honor and esteem with which they were held by the Choctaws.[215]

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[213]Kensell, "Phases of Reconstruction in the Choctaw Nation," pp. 148-149.

[214]Ibid., pp. 152-153.

[215]Anna Lewis, ed., "Diary of a Missionary to the Choctaws, 1860-1861," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XVII (December, 1939), p. 440;

On January 7, 1869, Mrs. Cyrus Byington wrote from Belpré, Ohio: "This letter will carry to you the heavy tidings of my dear husband's death. He has gone 'forever with the Lord.' His long and useful life closed with the closing year, the 31st of December."[216] Byington had returned to Ohio during the war hoping to complete translations of the Bible in Choctaw. He was unable to do so before his death. Colonel Samson Folsom wrote Cyrus Kingsbury the following letter concerning Reverend Byington:

> His translations of the Old and New Testaments of the word of God, his Choctaw hymn book, grammar, definer, tracts for Sunday-schools, and other valuable Choctaw books of which he was the author, will ever be read and had in commemoration of his exemplary and laborious Christian character, so long as the Choctaw language exists.
>
> "He being dead yet speaketh," was the text of his funeral sermon, more than twenty years since, on the death of my beloved uncle, Col. David Folsom. Now he, too, "being dead, yet speaketh;" and his life shows conclusively to me, and ought to those who were the objects of his Christian love and training, that to live and die for the cause of Christ is great gain.
>
> I first knew the deceased when I was ten years of age at Mayhew School, then under your charge in the Old Choctaw Nation, east of the Mississippi River. I am now in my forty-ninth year.
>
> The news of the death of Mr. Byington touches my heart most tenderly, and leads me to look back to the days of his pastoral services in the Nation. I beg leave to sympathise with his friends generally, especially with his interesting family, who have lost a good husband and father. He is the last one of those missionaries who came to the Choctaw Nation and commenced Christian labors with you before I was born.[217]

Letters from Missionaries, Microcopy, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

[216]Letters from Missionaries, 1869, p. 51, Microfilm, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

[217]Cyrus Kingsbury, Letters from Missionaries, Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, February 15, 1869, p. 51, Microfilm, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

Kingsbury wrote that an unsolicited testimony such as that from a person who had been acquainted with Byington for over forty years, was of more value to the churches than any obituary which he could write. Kingsbury recalled the time of Byington's arrival when "almost fifty years ago, in the infancy of our mission, and when we were few and feeble, our beloved Brother Byington, having left a lucrative position in the law, enlisted as a volunteer . . . to come and labor among the Choctaws."[218]

Kingsbury concluded:

> Let us rejoice and give thanks that God converted our beloved brother in his youth, that he inclined him to give up the pursuit of earthly gain for the service of Christ, that he inclined him to come to the Choctaws at a time when his services were so much needed, that he had grace and ability given him to accomplish so much, that he endured unto the end, and that he has now gone to receive the reward of a good and faithful servant.[219]

The Report on the Choctaw Mission of July, 1869 said: "This mission, as is already known, has been deprived by death of one of its brightest ornaments. The name of the Rev. Cyrus Byington has long since become a household word with all who feel any interest in the vineyard."[220]

The Reverend C. C. Copeland, who labored in the same field for thirty years and superintended the station at Bennington, died at Wheelock in 1869, November 1st. He contributed several translations and tracts in the Choctaw language.[221]

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[218] Ibid.

[219] Ibid.

[220] Report on Foreign Missions, July, 1869, Microfilm, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

[221] Ibid.

Kingsbury, who had married Priscilla G. Child, a missionary teacher, on October 20, 1867, continued his missionary labors as the only remaining minister of the old veterans who had worked for more than a generation. Yet, he at 82 in 1868 wrote that although he and Mrs. Kingsbury had both been ill with chills and fever, he had been able to attend his appointments every Sunday. "Last Sunday," he wrote, "I was able to spend six hours in two religious exercises and two Sunday schools--one for white and one for the freed people. I mention this to show the Lord's goodness to me at my advanced age."[222] One year later, Kingsbury wrote that he and his wife had suffered another attack with chill and fever on August 12th. He had been spared, but his "beloved wife" had been taken.

> Her sickness was short, terminating in congestion of the brain, on the evening of the 17th. During the last five hours she was deprived of consciousness. She felt not the pangs of dissolution, and was spared the deep feelings of sorrow that would have over whelmed her at the thought of leaving me to make the remainder of my earthly pilgrimage alone.[223]

His wife had been a devoted teacher in one of the Presbyterian mission schools for seven and a half years. In 1867, she left a large circle of relatives and friends in Ohio that she might assist Kingsbury in finishing his missionary labors among the Choctaws. Kingsbury wrote that in his "extreme age and feebleness," he leaned upon her "kind and efficient arm." He added that "the Lord has removed this support also.

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[222] Letters from Missionaries, October, 1868, p. 102, Pine Ridge, August 28, 1868, Microfilm, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

[223] Letters from Dr. Kingsbury, Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, August 27, 1869, Letters from Missionaries, 1869, p. 149, Microfilm, the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

The Lord alone is my helper. May this bereavement bring me nearer to himself; and may he at all times be my all-sufficient portion."[224]

The Missionary journal of the Presbyterian Foreign Mission, reported that

> In the space of little more than two years it has lost three veteran missionaries, viz., Rev. Messrs. Byington, Hotchkin, and Copeland. It would be difficult to point to any missionaries, either in ancient or modern times, who have been more earnest, more self-denying, or more steady and persevering in their work. . . . Dr. Kingsbury, the founder of the mission, still lives and labors, though he has been in the field upwards of fifty years. It is a strange providence that has left him the sole representative on the ground of all the missionaries that have occupied that field within the last half century.[225]

In February, the missionary report stated that the "venerable Kingsbury is the only Presbyterian missionary in all the Choctaw country. Our brethren Wright and Benton, native Choctaws, are faithful and devoted ministers of the word; but they can scarcely supply a tithe of the work now dependent on them."[226]

After Mrs. Kingsbury died in the fall of 1869, Kingsbury, eighty-three years old and sorely afflicted, was left without kindred or relative to take care of him in the Choctaw land. Still laboring for the cause, he wrote that

> grace enabled me to triumph. I chose the poverty and reproach of the ministry to the hoarded treasures of earthly gain. And never

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[224] Ibid., p. 150.

[225] Choctaw Mission, January 2, 1870, Microfilm, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

[226] Report by Reverend Messrs. J. A. Dickson & J. M. Brown, commissioners appointed by Synod of Arkansas to Reverend J. Leighton Wilson, D.D., Secretary of Foreign Missions, Choctaw Churches, February, 1870, p. 20, Microfilm, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

> for a moment have I regretted the choice I then made. I have reason to blush and be humbled that I have done no more for him who died for me. But feeble and unproductive as my labors have been, I am better satisfied with the result, than I should be to have my name enrolled among the millionaires of the day.[227]

Since Pine Ridge Missionary station was only a mile from Doaksville where there was a large schoolroom available, Kingsbury held services there for the freedmen until May of 1870.[228] "Not a few around me think it small business to instruct the negroes. But did not Christ die for them? . . . I thank God for the privilege, and for my good health, and find a reward for all my toils in the good deportment of the freed people around me," he reported.[229]

But finally, in May of 1870, Kingsbury left Pine Ridge and moved to Boggy Depot to remain with his daughter-in-law until his death in June.[230]

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[227]Letters from Missionaries, July, 1869, p. 108, Microfilm, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

[228]J. H. Colton, March 16, 1870, Wheelock, May, 1870, Letters from Missionaries, p. 72, Microfilm, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

[229]Report on Foreign Missions, June, 1869, Cyrus Kingsbury, Pine Ridge, April 20, p. 92, Microfilm, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

[230]Letter from Wheelock, from Reverend J. H. Colton, March 16, 1870, Letters from Missionaries, May, 1870, p. 72, Microfilm, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Today, all that remains of Old Boggy Depot, the once proud and busy center of trade in peace and war, are clumps of china-berry trees marking the sites of former residences, a portion of the stage line road and the old cemetery. At this historic spot lie the graves of Cyrus Kingsbury and Allen Wright.[1]

Many important people in the history of the Choctaw Nation and Oklahoma passed through Old Boggy Depot, but by far the most influential person to live and die there was Cyrus Kingsbury of whom Allen Wright (former principal chief of the Choctaw Nation and student of Kingsbury's) wrote: "all the civilization, social improvement, and progress in education and religion, of which the Choctaws can boast, is intimately associated with his name."[2]

Cyrus Kingsbury, beloved and respected "Father of the Choctaw Missions," breathed his last breath on the 27th of June, 1870.[3]

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[1]Wright, "Old Boggy Depot," p. 16.

[2]Allen Wright, "Sketch of the Life and Labors of Reverend Cyrus Kingsbury, D.D.," January, 1871, Letters from Missionaries, p. 6, Microcopy, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

[3]He was afflicted with diarrhea from the 15th until the 27th. Ibid.

Kingsbury, whose life was "distinguished for his practical good sense, his earnest consistent piety, and his uncompromising devotion to the great work to which he had consecreted his life," was eighty-three years old when he died.[4]

In the memorial address at the funeral of Cyrus Kingsbury, June 29, 1870, Allen Wright gave a brief biographical sketch of Kingsbury followed by this tribute:

> Good and great man has falled in Israel--a father to the Choctaw Mission and I might truly say the Choctaw Nation. It is through his self denying labors for moral elevation as well as spiritual welfare of the Choctaws--our present state of intelligence and prosperity are acquired from degradation and superstition. He was great because he was good. His greatness was in his moral power for good. For his goodness, he was beloved by all our people. His name is a household [word?] not only among the Choctaws, but also in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ--at home and abroad. In his death we have lost a kind and beloved friend and a father. He had a kind word for everybody; and a religious truth is always dropped in a most appropriate manner with whom he comes in contact; both young and old. It is a grace of God that made him what he was.[5]

The Indian Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church passed resolutions on the death of Dr. Kingsbury, noting that during a period of fifty-two years, Kingsbury had left no earthly honors and fame, yet he left a sorrowing and affectionate people, therefore

> Resolved, That in the death of the Rev. C. Kingsbury, D.D., that we, as a Presbytery, have lost a kind beloved co-laborer, a Christian brother, and a father in Israel.

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[4]Wright, "Sketch of the Life and Labors of Reverend Cyrus Kingsbury, D.D.," January, 1871, Letters from Missionaries, p. 6, Microcopy, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

[5]Notes on Memorial Address at funeral of Cyrus Kingsbury, June 29, 1870, Boggy Depot, Allen Wright MSS, Muriel Wright MSS, Oklahoma Historical Society.

> Resolved, That in his death the Choctaw Missions and the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in this land have lost a firm supporter and defender of the "truth once delivered to work which the Master committed to the saints."
>
> Resolved, That in his death this Presbytery has sustained a great loss in a ripe scholarship which admirably fitted for the great Rev. Dr. Kingsbury.[6]

By the time of the Civil War, the Choctaw Nation was considered to be a Christian Nation "in the popular acceptation of that term," Kingsbury wrote. He based this observation on the fact that all who made any pretentions to religion were Christian numbering one-fifth to one-fourth of the whole population (a large portion of those not members were believers in the Christian Scriptures); the Christian Sabbath was observed as a divine institution with no public business transacted on that day; the sessions of the General Council uniformly opened and closed with prayer; all public officers and jurymen were required to take the oath usually administered in the United States and in the usual form and no man was considered competent to be a witness who denied the existence of a Supreme Being.[7]

Certainly the years of labor by Kingsbury and other missionaries left a deep and lasting influence upon the Indian nations who were eventually labeled the "Five Civilized Tribes" in 1876 by the Office of Indian Affairs.[8]

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[6]Allen Wright and N. Cochnauer, "The Late Reverend Dr. Kingsbury," Missions of Other Churches (December, 1870), Microcopy, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

[7]Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend R. Anderson, Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, March 11, 1861, #141D, ABC 18.3.1, Vol. 14, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[8]Cherokees, Seminoles, Creeks, Choctaws and Chickasaws.

In order to accomplish this, the missionary schoolmaster was required to have certain qualifications to teach the Indian children. He must be religious, possess a peculiar aptness to teach, be fond of his employment and be religiously conscientious. He ought to possess "patience which could be scarcely exhausted," and mildness of disposition and manner. He ought to be a man of unyielding decision and inflexible firmness, stable, persevering and thorough. He should possess an extensive knowledge of mankind, alertness of body and mind and be willing to labor at any kind of business. He ought to be industrious, punctual and a good singer. And above all, he ought to feel a "lively sense of the worth of immortal souls and have a tender concern for their salvation."[9]

The achievement of the missionary goals required the cooperation and interaction of the missionaries, teachers, parents and students. In seeking the cooperation of the parents, Loring S. Williams, the first missionary teacher who accompanied Cyrus Kingsbury to the Choctaw Nation in 1818, wrote a pamphlet in the Choctaw language for the parents of students in the schools. The pamphlet entitled, "Family Education and Government: a Discourse in the Choctaw Language," (Boston, 1835), advised parents to instill early obedience, self-discipline, industry, book learning and a knowledge of God.[10]

The Choctaws were noted for their educational system and schools which became a pattern for similar institutions established by the

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[9] Missionary Herald, XX (1824), pp. 386-388.

[10] Robert F. Berkhoffer, Jr., Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions and American Indian Response, 1787-1862 (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), p. 48.

Chickasaw, Creek and Seminole nations.[11] Perhaps the Choctaw Indians were one of the first nations to learn the great truth that Alexander Campbell expressed in the maxim, "To educate the citizen is the first and imperative duty of the State."[12] Expressing a similar view, Cyrus Kingsbury said: "Whoever has the education of the rising generation, will unquestionably either directly or indirectly, have a large share in the religious, & literary & civil concerns of the nation."[13] This proved to be the case, for even when the Indian tribes were removed to the territory which became Oklahoma, they brought "'mighty leaders, schools, a splendid home life, churches, and the printing press and set up laws, customs and courts that have given color, force and dignity to our history not bequeathed by Indian life to any other state.'"[14] With their enforced removal they accepted a "wild and remote" frontier which they conquered by a readjustment of their "spiritual, educational and, ultimately, their political visions."[15] By the beginning of the Civil War, "'from the church and school there came a stream of ministers, physicians, legislators, judges, lawyers and teachers to serve their nation.'"[16]

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[11]Wadley, The Five Civilized Tribes, p. 6.

[12]Speech of Honorable Claude Weaver of Oklahoma, in the House of Representatives, February 20, 1914, "A Century of Progress: The Story of the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians" (Washington, 1914), p. 24.

[13]Cyrus Kingsbury to Reverend David Greene, Pine Ridge, June 15, 1842, #56, ABC 18.5.1, Vol. 1, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[14]Oscar William Davison, "Oklahoma's Educational Heritage," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVII (Winter, 1949-1950), p. 354.

[15]Meserve, "Chief George Hudson and Chief Samuel Garland," p. 11.

[16]Hiemstra, "Presbyterian Missionaries and Mission Churches," p. 39.

One of the best remembered Choctaw leaders at this time was Allen Wright, Principal Chief of the Choctaw Nation, 1866 to 1870. He was elected chief while he was in Washington, D.C., as a delegate to the Choctaw-Chickasaw Treaty of 1866 at the close of the Civil War. When the Commissioner of Indian Affairs asked the tribal delegates what name they would give their territory, Wright immediately answered, "Oklahoma," meaning "red people" from the Choctaw words, okla (red) and homma (people).[17]

Most of the men who had a leading influence in the Choctaw Nation had been members of the missionary schools at one time or another. In 1861, Kingsbury observed that the three candidates for the office of Principal Chief in the preceding election were educated in the American Board schools in the old nation--not to mention others who at different times had held the highest offices in the Nation. He added that two of the present Supreme Judges, the national attorney and two district attorneys received their education in their schools also. Kingsbury concluded that it was the success of the schools inaugurated by the A.B.C.F.M. that had led to the establishment of many other schools both among the Choctaws and other tribes.[18]

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[17] James B. Wright, Allen Wright (McAlester, Oklahoma, 1961), pamphlet, pp. 1-7; Muriel H. Wright, "Governor Allen Wright, Choctaw Indian, Names Oklahoma," The American Indian, I (October, 1926), p. 3; Hudson, "A Story of Choctaw Chiefs," pp. 199-200. It was not until 1890, a year after the opening of the lands to the public that the Territory of Oklahoma was organized--as a separate territory from the Indian Territory; even though provisions had been made to organize an Indian Territory with the name "Oklahoma" in the Treaty of 1866. Seventeen years later, 1907, Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory were admitted to the Union together as the forty-sixth state with the name of Oklahoma.

[18] Cyrus Kingsbury letters to American Board, June, 1861, #141, ABC 18.3.1, Vol. 4, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

The educational heritage of the Choctaws has continued unbroken from generation to generation. Educated Choctaws have made significant contributions to their own people, their state and their country in a wide range of fields.

Not only have the Choctaws carried on their tradition of education and service, but descendents of the missionaries to the Choctaws have continued to contribute to the Choctaw communities in Oklahoma. Cyrus H. Kingsbury, grandson of Cyrus Kingsbury and Ebenezer Hotchkin, was listed in Leaders and Leading Men of the Indian Territory in 1891. It stated that there was no young man in the Choctaw Nation "more honorable or more gentlemanly in his daily acts and business than Cyrus Kingsbury" who had a multitude of friends and not one enemy.[19] Dr. Ebenezer Hotchkin, the third, was president of Oklahoma Presbyterian College in Durant which was established in 1894.

Although the missionaries and mission schools have relinquished their role in secular education among the Choctaws, the Presbyterian Church continues in the Choctaw community today. A recent survey

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[19]H. F. O'Beirne, Leaders and Leading Men of the Indian Territory with Interesting Biographical Sketches, Vol. I, Choctaws and Chickasaws: With a Brief History of Each Tribe: Its Laws, Customs, Superstitions and Religious Beliefs (Chicago: American Publishers' Association, 1891), p. 98.

[20]Robert Harris, "The Oklahoma Indians and the United Presbyterian Churches," As a Special Summer Project for the Department of Town and Country Church--Indian Work and the Office for Field Survey (New York: Board of National Missions United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1963), p. 106. Today it is not a college but a dormitory for boys and girls who attend Southeastern State College.

reported eight Indian churches of the Presbyterian Church, U.S. (the southern church which Kingsbury worked with after the Civil War), thirteen Cumberland Indian Churches and sixteen United Presbyterian Churches, U.S.A.[21]

From the outbreak of the Civil War until the early 1880's the Presbyterian work among the Choctaw Indians was under the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. In 1884, the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., listed a "Presbytery of Indian Territory" in the Synod of Kansas. This area of patchwork of presbyteries (including a 500 member all-Indian Choctaw presbytery) was absorbed in a merger in 1956 and became the "Choctaw Parish of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America." Today the majority of the churches are served by Choctaw-speaking native ministers and commissioned lay preachers.[22]

In a recent account of a three-day meeting of the District Sunday School Convention among the Choctaws, it was interesting to note that many of the old customs were followed. As was practiced over a hundred years previously in Mississippi, the men sat on the right side of the church and the women on the left in a hymn-sing held in the church. The hymns were all sung in the Choctaw language from the Choctaw Hymnal[23] in parts without accompaniment. "The singing was excellent with

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[21] Ibid., p. 107.

[22] Ibid., pp. 15-16, 19-20.

[23] Ibid., p. 75. These hymnals were published by the publishing house of the U.S. Church. They are now out of print. Reverend Bailey Sewell, Associate Secretary of Language Mission of the Southern Baptist Convention has a supply. His address is 1141 North Robinson, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

everyone participating and seeming to enjoy it. . . . All were sung in very slow tempos." The native preachers conducted the worship services in the Choctaw language and spoke in low voices in a disciplined and non-emotional manner with great deliberation and dignity in every part of the service. In the communion service, the men were served the elements first, the women second and the elders last.[24]

At the request of the missionaries who work among the 16,000 Choctaw Indians in Oklahoma today, the American Bible Society has reprinted the Choctaw Psalms titled "Atuloa Hulisso."[25]

Some institutions begun before the turn of the century are still active in southeastern Oklahoma. Goodland Orphanage, established in 1848, serves children of grade school age. Oklahoma Presbyterian College in Durant is not a college today but is a dormitory for students attending Southeastern State College in Durant.[26] The oldest church building in Oklahoma still in use is the old stone Wheelock Mission Church. It was built of log structure in 1832 by the Presbyterian missionary Alfred Wright of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and replaced with stone in 1846, at which time it was dedicated by Allen Wright. Standing near the site of the old Wheelock Academy, it is a historic reminder of the role of the mission churches. For education

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[24] Ibid.

[25] "Good News: Here," American Bible Society Record, November, 1972, p. 11.

[26] Harris, "The Oklahoma Indians and the United Presbyterian Churches," p. 106.

based upon Christian principles and teaching was the ideal striven for by the majority of the Choctaw Indians.[27]

Over one hundred fifty years ago, the Choctaws recognized their need for education. Today, education is still their primary need and hope. True to their heritage from the early-day mission schools, they continue to be leaders and models for other Indians in the field of education. Their schools, bi-lingual programs, workshops and cultural programs today are imitated by many other native American peoples. Since the role of the missionaries and mission schools has diminished, the Choctaws, in their quest for knowledge, seek their educational goals through other avenues; primarily, the United States government through the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The work of the first missionaries to the Choctaws is not forgotten in the minds and the hearts of the Choctaw people today. Each year in May, they gather to relive their history through a historical pageant presented in a natural outdoor setting in Atoka, Oklahoma. The pageant, written and produced by Choctaw Todd Downing, begins with Dancing Rabbit Creek, Mississippi, September 27, 1830, and concludes with the "wedding" of Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory when Oklahoma becomes a state in 1907. The title of the pageant is "Journey's End."[28]

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[27]Muriel H. Wright, private interview, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, April 28, 1971.

[28]The Atoka County Times, April 22, 1971, pp. 1-2. Todd Downing, "Journey's End," a historical pageant of Atoka County, taped, May 1, 1971.

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APPENDIX

Regulations for the Civilization of the Indians

The position selected for the establishments, a plan of the buildings contemplated with an estimate of the costs, to be submitted to the Secretary of War to be laid before the President.

Government will, if it have the means, and approved of the arrangement, pay two thirds of the expense of erecting the necessary buildings. No part of the money to be advanced until after the buildings are commenced; and one fourth to be [saved?] until they are completed. The payment to be made on the certificate of the agents of Indian Affairs, for the tribe or nation in which the establishment is located, as to the facts of the commencement and completion of the buildings.

The President of the United States will contribute out of the annual appropriation, to such institution which may be approved by him, a sum proportionate to the number of pupils belonging to each, regard being had to be necessary expense of the establishment, and the degree of success which had attended it. No advance to be made, except for the buildings, till the school is in actual operation; of which fact, and the number of pupils belonging to it, the certificate of the superintendent or person having the principal contract of the instruction, will be sufficient evidence.

A report will be annually made for each establishment, on the first of October, of the number and names of the teachers, and other persons belonging to it. The number of students; the number which have completed their course and left the institution, since the 1st day of abode of the proceeding year; the number entered; the amount of disbursements, for the same period; and the value and disposition of property on hand; which report will be certified by the superintendent or person having the principal contract of the establishment.

It is considered to be the duty of all persons who may be employed, or attached to any institution, not only to set a good example of sobriety, industry and honesty, but as far as practicable, to impress on the minds of the Indians, the friendly and benevolent views of the government towards them, and the advantage to them in yielding to the policy of the government, and cooperating with it, in such measures as it may deam necessary for their civilization and happiness. A contrary course of conduct cannot fail to incur the displeasure of the government, as it is impossible that the object which it has in view can be

[approached?] and peace be habitually preserved, if the distrust of the Indians, as to its benevolent views, should be incited.

J. C. C.
[John C. Calhoun]

Letter sent by Secretary of War, Indian Affairs, 1800-1824, National Archives, Microcopy M 15, Roll 116.