

THE MISSION SCHOOLS  
OF  
THE FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES IN OKLAHOMA

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I. Early Missions of the  
Five Civilized Tribes

The Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole Indians are called the Five Civilized Tribes. Of these, the Cherokees are of Iroquoyan origin, while the Seminoles, Creeks, and Choctaws are of Muskogean lineage. Of the Muskogean tribes, the Choctaws and Chickasaws are closely related, while the Seminoles are an offshoot of the Creeks. None of the Muskogean tribes is a unit in either blood or language. The Creeks lived in Georgia and Alabama and were divided into two classes, the Upper Creeks and the Lower Creeks. The Lower Creeks moved into Florida. Because these Indians fled from the Creek nation, the Creeks called them "Seminoles," which in the Creek language means "runaway." The Seminoles, some of whom were established in Seminole County, Oklahoma, during the removal era, were a menace to the peace of the southeastern United States. It is strange that missionaries failed to reach them, as they reached most other tribes.<sup>1</sup>

The Five Civilized Tribes were located about 1820 in the southeastern United States. There were Cherokees in Georgia, South Carolina,

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<sup>1</sup> E. Davis and H. R. Antle, "Historical Study of the Tuskegee in Florida," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XIV (1936), 53, 55, 65.



and eastern Tennessee; Creeks in Alabama and Georgia; Seminoles in Florida; Choctaws in Mississippi and Alabama; and Chickasaws in Mississippi and Tennessee.

The Creek Indians took the lead and established the first mission in southeastern United States. The success of the new institution encouraged the civilized tribes to found other missions, but the work was gradually discontinued during the removal of the tribes to the West.<sup>2</sup>

The early educational interests of the Cherokees were in the hands of the missionaries of the Moravian, Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, and Baptist churches. The United Brethren, or Moravians, commenced their missionary work among the Cherokees at Spring Place in Georgia in 1801. The American Board of Foreign Missions, maintained by the Presbyterian and Congregational churches, entered the field at Brainerd, South Carolina, during the same year but soon allowed their work to lapse until 1820, in which year Valley Town Mission was founded. In 1834, the Methodists established their first mission in the Cherokee country. However, some of the Cherokees probably attended schools in neighboring states prior to first missionary endeavors, one of them being Charles Hicks, a half-breed, who was known to have had a good education.

Public and higher schools for the Cherokees were advocated and provided by the treaty of New Echota in 1835. The Cherokee negotiators in this treaty were John Ridge, Elias Boudinot, John West,

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

Archilla Smith, Samuel W. Bell, William A. Davis, and Ezekial West.<sup>3</sup>

The Treaty of New Echota provided that the seminaries and, in fact, all the schools of the Cherokee Nation be supported by money derived from the sale of lands to the United States government and invested in United States registered stocks. Only the interest of this investment is drawn and used for educational purposes. The boarders are charged a nominal sum, which is added to the school fund. The United States government renders no assistance to the seminaries, asylums, or common schools of the Cherokee Nation, other than paying interest on money borrowed from the Nation.

The interest on the invested schools funds of the Cherokees as shown by various annual reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs was: 1839, \$2,606.90; 1860, \$11,848.00; 1870, \$29,460.04.<sup>4</sup>

The Cherokees inhabited a tract of country lying within the limits of Georgia, extending into North Carolina on the east and into Alabama on the west. They inhabited an area comprising not less than ten million acres. The soil was generally good and the climate was healthful. The Indians were partially civilized, and some of the wealthy citizens had horses, cattle, sheep, swine, and saw and grist mills. In the Nation there were over five hundred slaves. Inter-marriage with the whites produced a mixed race in which the English language and habits prevailed. Many of the children were well educated.

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<sup>3</sup> Emmet Starr, History of the Cherokee Indians, p. 62.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

The first mission was undertaken by the Tennessee Conference in 1822. The Rev. A. J. Crawford was appointed missionary to this tribe. He arrived on December 30, 1822, and started his school at once. A tribal council had been called and gave its consent to the mission, and it seemed that prosperity would come through his efforts, although the missionary met some opposition. Through the influence of Riley, at whose home they had been meeting, the natives soon built a comfortable church where they had regular services on the Sabbath. In addition, occasional week-day preaching was held by the preachers from the Paint Rock circuit.<sup>5</sup>

Religious work increased. This beginning was so encouraging that in 1824 three missionaries were appointed to labor in the nation. These men were Nicholas D. Scales at the upper Cherokee station, Richard Neely at the lower station, and Isaac W. Sullivan at the middle station. The missionaries attended to their schools and preached on the Sabbath. They were assisted by some of the natives, who took the circuit in company with the missionaries, interpreting them when necessary.

Mr. McMahon, the superintendent, gave a very gratifying account of the progress of the gospel and of the increase of the Cherokees in the knowledge and love of God. He said the schools were prosperous and several scholars had become disciples of the Lord Jesus.

There has been an addition of two hundred twenty-five members this year. The former members stand fast in the faith, and many of them were bright ornaments of their Christian profession. We have in the whole, six hundred seventy-five members in the nation, three circuits, four

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<sup>5</sup> J. Tracy, History of American Missions, January, 1831, p. 16, col. 3.



schools, which are stations, and some three or four societies attached to them. We have regular societies, leaders and church officers through the circuit, and several of the converted officers are licensed exhorters and preachers who zealously declare the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, to their red brethren, in their own native tongue.<sup>6</sup>

Accounts from various quarters confirmed that information. In 1828, there were not less than eight hundred church members, under the care of seven missionaries. Turtle Fields, a Cherokee leader, was distinguished for his deep piety and devotedness. In the midst of such unexampled prosperity, the disturbing influence of wordly policy changed the prospects to scenes of sorrow and mourning. The general proposition to remove all the Indians west of the Mississippi involved them in serious difficulties and trials. The political measures in Georgia in 1831, and their general influence, are matters of history too well known to be detailed here.

Out of the limits of Georgia, the religious work went on well, but all within her claims was confusion and contention. Those places vacated by the natives were filled up by a population, to say the least, far below the natives in their worst state. The converted Indians continued steadfast and determined, wherever they were, to carry their religion as their only solace in trouble and as preparation for a better country that could not be taken from them.<sup>7</sup>

The chiefs proclaimed a National Fast, with a special design to humble themselves before the Almighty God, and call upon him for help in time of need. It was an affecting sight to witness the Christian

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 16, col. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 17, col. 6.

patience, submission, and forbearance of these natives under the troubles they were doomed to experience. The mission now numbered nine hundred and thirty native members, and six schools contained about one hundred and twenty scholars.<sup>8</sup>

A second Cherokee mission was opened in the bounds of the Missouri Conference in the Arkansas Territory, in which there was one missionary. He had charge of one hundred and thirteen church members, and also four schools, two of which were supplied with teachers. The prospects were very encouraging. This mission in 1835 was reported to be considerably strengthened by the emigration of the old Cherokee Nation. Two preachers and one interpreter had joined the Cherokees in the West. The mission held a gracious revival and expected to add many natives to the church.

The old Cherokee mission in Georgia had been broken and divided by the removal, but five hundred and twenty-five church members were collected, and the schools continued. The latest accounts told of their numbers being decreased by removals to the land west of the Mississippi. Those who went were accompanied by their faithful missionaries, who resolved to consecrate themselves to the present and eternal welfare of their beloved flocks.<sup>9</sup>

The first Creek Indian mission, which was undertaken by the South Carolina Conference in 1822, was called the Asbury Mission. The Rev. Dr. Capers was charged with its important interests. The Creeks numbered about twenty-four thousand at that time and inhabited a tract

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 17, col. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 17, col. 6.

of land within the chartered limits of Georgia and Alabama. They were partly civilized, "but greatly sunk in vicious habits." In August, 1822, the Rev. Dr. Capers, in company with Colonel R. A. Blount, a member of the church, visited the agency at Flint River, Indian Territory. They did not find the agent at home, so they hastened forward to Coweta. On the next day, they had an interview with McIntosh, a Creek chief, through Lovett, an interpreter. He presented an address to the bishops and South Carolina Conference. The terms of this address were approved and the way seemed to be prepared for the commencement of operations. Difficulties, however, soon arose. The Big Warrior, another influential leader of the Creeks, showed determined opposition to having the gospel preached among the Indians.

Though little encouragement was found in preaching the gospel, it was not without some fruit. In 1827, twenty-six members were connected with the church, eight of whom were natives.<sup>10</sup>

Two years later the prospect was better. Seventy-one members were reported, consisting of twenty-four Indians, and forty-five persons of color (blacks). The mission school had fifty-five scholars.

During the same year, five hundred Creeks arrived from their former home, the state of Alabama. However, there were almost twenty thousand still to be removed.<sup>11</sup>

The Indians of the Choctaw tribe inhabited country lying between the Tombigbee and Mississippi rivers, principally in the State of

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<sup>10</sup> J. Tracy, History of American Missions, July, 1840, p. 7, col. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 7, col. 2.



Mississippi, but partly in Alabama. Their number was estimated at about twenty thousand. The American Board of Missions had an interesting establishment among these Indians.

In 1825, the Mississippi Conference commenced a mission among the Choctaws under the superintendence of the Rev. W. Winans. The Rev. Wiley Ledbetter was appointed missionary.

Very little was effected until 1828, when good religious work commenced at a camp meeting. The way had been previously prepared for the favorable reception of the word by the faithful labors of the Rev. A. Talley. Four captains and a number of private individuals put themselves under the care of that missionary. The work was followed up, means were used for its extension, and the converted natives became intensely engaged for the salvation of their friends, and the spread of the work. Their labors were not in vain, for during that year no less than six hundred had made a profession of religion, among whom was a principal chief of the Nation, Colonel LeFlore, who became a zealous and successful preacher of righteousness. In addition, six captains, together with several other important members, were converted. At that time, two missionaries and two school teachers were employed.<sup>12</sup>

In 1830, there were reported upwards of four thousand church members. Three missionaries, three interpreters, and four school teachers were employed in that mission.

At a great tribal council held in March, 1830, it was voted to sell their lands to the United States. Mr. Talley undertook a journey

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<sup>12</sup> J. Tracy, History of American Missions, September, 1823, to March, 1824, p. 61.



in company with some of the chiefs to survey the country of their future residence. He found it a rich, well-timbered, and well-watered soil. Prairie, freestone, limestone, mill seats, and all the advantages for a good settlement were found there. This report was highly gratifying to the friends of removal. Measures were accordingly adopted for their journey. Mr. Talley accompanied them, and in March, 1831, in an article dated Choctaw nation, West, said,

Ninety-two Choctaws were numbered by the Commissary department, preparatory to their being furnished with a year's provisions. The church members gave good evidence of having sustained but little loss in their spiritual enjoyments.

From this time the reports of the Choctaw missions name the East and West as being separate, though they were the same originally.

In September, 1831, Mr. Talley stated that almost five hundred emigrants had arrived at their new home, and most of them were church members. Their attendance on divine worship was regular, serious, and devotional.<sup>13</sup>

Particularly interesting instances of zeal and devotedness are given in Dr. Bang's history of these missions. The patience with which they submitted to trials, their meekness under persecution, their long-suffering under afflictions of every kind, etc., evinced the sincerity of their profession and reality of their religion. They buffeted every trial in their removal, in forming new settlements, and in the spirit of persevering faith and prayer.

A new series of trials awaited them. The Choctaws' West Mission

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

was visited with sickness, so that their school was suspended, and the school house was converted into a hospital for the sick. Notwithstanding that they were prevented by sickness from spreading the work into new settlements, the number of converts was increased. The missionaries had seven hundred and thirty Choctaw members in the church, seven whites, and five colored, making a total of seven hundred and forty-two. In addition to four missionaries, one a full-blood, they had five exhorters, all of whom were zealous and faithful. Mr. Talley had translated portions of the Scripture into the Choctaw language, and the Board printed them for use by the Indians. In 1833, Mr. Talley found it necessary to retire from his post because he was exhausted with labor and fatigue. He carried with him the affections of a grateful and devoted people, and the sympathies of his Christian brethren throughout the church.

He was succeeded by the Rev. Dr. Robert D. Smith, who had charge of the mission. Considerable hostility was manifested by the pagan Indians, but the Rev. Dr. Smith did not evade the issue. This mission was of vast importance as a rallying point for the broken fragments of the societies scattered by removal from various states and territories to the new home of the Indian tribe.<sup>14</sup>

Mr. Talley took charge of the Upper Fauxburgh and LaFayette missions in the vicinity of New Orleans. While on a journey to visit his friends, he fell a sudden victim to the cholera and died in 1834. He had acted well his part, and his name will be revered by all lovers

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

of missions. Two hundred and fifty members were added to the Choctaw West Mission; there were two white and five native preachers, three exhorters, twenty class leaders, and five stewards on the station that year. The day and Sabbath schools were prosperous and taught by native teachers in their own language. They had three hundred and seventy-three pupils, one hundred and seventy-three of whom were able to read and write, and two hundred others were in the spelling classes. On that mission site they erected dwellings and meeting houses. They cultivated land and arts of civilization, as well as good order. From the East Mission there was no report that year. On the whole, the Choctaw mission continued in a prosperous condition, and the missionaries were greatly encouraged to continue the important religious activities.<sup>15</sup>

After the Choctaws had been induced to consent to a treaty with the national government, by the operation of which they were obliged to forsake the graves of their ancestors and emigrate some hundreds of miles into the great western wilderness, they evinced a strong desire to have some of the missionaries accompany them in their exile to preach the gospel to them and their families and direct their weary souls to that land "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."<sup>16</sup>

Two missionaries of the American Board, the Rev. Alfred Wright and

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>16</sup> Cherokee Phoenix, New Echota, Georgia, July 2, 1831, p. 1, col. 3.



the Rev. L. S. Williams came in 1831 and furnished the editor of the Cherokee Phoenix with letters and translations of letters received from their Indian friends. Some extracts will now be given, indicative of the feeling above described.

The letter from which the first extract is taken was composed by an Indian who had some knowledge of English and was signed by a considerable number of elders and private members of the mission churches.

Choctaw Nation,  
March 20, 1831.

To the Missionaries of the A. B. C. F. M. now among the Choctaw People:

Friends and Brothers: Good many years ago you came in our nation, and said you came among them in order to teach the children of the Choctaw people. Our people rejoiced to have you teach their children, and were glad to embrace the opportunity. You told us that you had a beloved book, which tells about great Jehovah. The talk from this book we have not heard as we ought to have done. But good Spirit, who is the maker and head of all things, has been pleased to open the years of many of our people to hear the words of this good book. But we will appeal to what is known to yourselves of our attachment to the schools among us, and more particularly the word which this good book teaches to walk upright before God and man. Also 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.

Friends and Brothers, we can multiply words, and say much on many advantages that we have received. But we will stop and ask our hearts, who had done these things whereof we are glad?

Friends and brothers, when you came among us, good many years ago, you found no school - no gospel - no songs of praise to Jehovah was heard.

Friends and Brothers, we will give glory and praise to Jehovah in sending some here to teach us the way of life. It is you dearest friends whom the Saviour of sinners has been pleased in his goodness to make you an instrument in his hand of what has been done for us.

Friends and Brothers, therefore you see our situation. We are exceedingly tried. We have just heard of the ratification of the Choctaw Treaty. Our doom is sealed. There are no other



courses for us, but to turn our faces to our new homes, toward the setting sun. Our rulers have assured us on many accounts it will be best to make preparations to remove next fall; and as many as can get off, it will be done.

Brothers, therefore we claim it as our privilege, as members of the church here, and also we have the full assurance of approval of head men generally - that we humbly request the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, to send us many of the preachers to go with us. Those who are here, we would be glad to go with us to our new homes. We would offer the same protection and friendship as we have done here. You see us, how we are situated. Unless you do something for us more beyond the great river Mississippi, we shall be in a distressed situation.

We humbly ask the prayers of the church which we stand in relation to (the Presbyterian church) - We need their prayers, and help from them as we are about to return to the wild woods.

We are your friends and brothers in Christ.<sup>17</sup>

A young native who was a member of the church wrote thus to one of the missionaries:

Do pray to our Heavenly Father for me. I am a sinner, have a wicked heart; therefore perhaps my white brother will remember and pray for me. If we go over the river, oh that he would go with us. - Though our land is gone - as to our souls, they are not gone. If we get to our Heavenly Father's country, we shall be happy.

Another wrote as follows:

Oh, my brother, though the people say that our land is gone, it is nothing to me. The good land above - Heaven - that good resting place is reserved for me. This continually I think of. I may perhaps go over the Mississippi - but I do not know. I may first get to heaven - I do not know. I want you to pray that Jesus would have mercy on me, and I will also pray to our Father above. Jesus is altogether good. Jesus is our Saviour. Thinking of this, I greatly rejoice.<sup>18</sup>

A third thus expressed himself:

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., December 9, 1828, p. 2, col. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., December 9, 1828, p. 3, col. 2.

Oh, my beloved friend, I will tell you my mind. Formerly I did not know my Father above. I lived without a knowledge of the way of life. Notwithstanding this was the case, my Father above designed that I should know him. I greatly rejoice. Though I have in some way to die, yet if I have been true to my Heavenly Father I shall be happy. Meditating on this, I humbly pray to him continually. O my beloved friend, this short talk I salute you with from my very heart, O my brothers.

From another Indian convert similar expressions are given:

As the gospel has come into my heart I am happy. Although I leave my country and go away, my mind is to follow my Lord Jesus Christ wholly. If I break off from my Saviour, sorrow will come upon me. Believing this and standing before Jesus Christ (or in his presence) I write to you. It will be long before we see each other; but our separations will not be eternal. Sometime we shall be seeing each other at the right hand of Jehovah, our beloved father.

Another of the natives, who had enjoyed the advantages of an English education, uses the following language:

O remember this poor people while you are gone, and pray for them. Pray that believers may be strengthened in faith to go on their way to heaven; and pray that unbelievers may be brought into the kingdom of Christ. We rejoice to think you intend coming back and going with the Choctaws over the Mississippi to preach to them. O may God have mercy on this poor people and bless them abundantly with the riches of his grace. Remember poor us before a throne of grace. Pray continually for us, for we need the prayers of good people.

Many individuals asked their missionaries with tears,

Will you not go with us? Shall we not have the beloved book and our ministers and teachers with us in that distant land to which we go? You surely will not leave us. How can we go in the right path without a leader or guide? We shall be like lambs among wild beasts.

Others expressed themselves to this effect:

You are like our parents; will a mother forsake her little child? If you leave us, we shall be orphans; we beg you to pity us poor Choctaws, and give us the bread of life.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., March 3, 1830, p. 1, col. 1.

They prayed that God would put it into the hearts of their white brothers to send the gospel with them when they went to the West.

Some of the missionaries who spoke the Choctaw language were ready to accompany the thousands of emigrant Choctaws on their long journey up the Arkansas River. And will not those Christian people, who cannot go on such a self-denying errand of mercy, and whose homes are secured to them so that they are not obliged to go, as their brethren of the Choctaws are - will not those who are so eminently favoured of God have compassion on those who, in God's inscrutable providence, are so greatly afflicted? The Choctaws must not be deserted and their prayers go unanswered.

The following material gives information on finances in religious activity among the Choctaws in 1853.

Choctaw Agency, West Arkansas.  
September 3, 1853.

The Armstrong Academy, under the care of the American Indian Mission Association, \$2,900.

Wheelock Female Seminary, under the care of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, \$1,600.

In addition to the above, \$1,000 contributed by the missionary boards of different denominations of Christians to the institutions under their care.<sup>20</sup>

The following statement shows the amounts provided by the treaties of education:

Cherokees, West	May 6, 1828	2,000.00
Choctaws	September 27, 1830	2,500.00
Chickasaws, Choctaw Academy	May 24, 1834	3,000.00

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<sup>20</sup> Messages from the President of the United States and Documents, Part 1, 33 cong., 1 sess., pp. 405, 406.

Creeks, Choctaw Academy      February 11, 1833      1,000.00<sup>21</sup>

The Creeks had a small school which was supported by the contributions of the people who employed them. Four-room houses were built. The sum of \$500.00 was paid each year by the United States through the office of the Secretary of War.<sup>22</sup>

A letter written in 1845 by a missionary to the Choctaws is quoted to show the work of that year:

Dear Sir:

I have the honor to enclose the report under my care. The Society has furnished the buildings. The only alteration in our building worth mention is the wall of our meeting and school house, which has fallen down in consequence of severe beating of rains.

The repairs are to cost us \$40.00. We have in time paid to native teachers \$41.50, and given to the school books and stationery \$32.50, clothing \$44.51, medicine and sundries, \$42.74, a total of \$281.26.

Besides the boarding of children for eighty-one weeks for the purpose of teaching them English, our receipts for the year include donations of clothing and provisions and books, amounting to \$850. We also received sixty bushels of potatoes. Last year the Indians were here to plant food, probably the greater part of the potato seeds were eaten rather than planted, but they have far more potatoes growing than ever before.

If they could be assured the fruits of this labor, which the white man has, I am persuaded we should soon see a manifest improvement.

I am &c.  
Thomas S. Williams  
Missionary of Choctaws, A.B.C.F.M.<sup>23</sup>

The reports of two superintendents, an agent, and a missionary

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 465.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 520.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 585.



give similar information:

At the close of the inventory of gifts, there had been contributed to the amount of \$17.94 in money and goods. Our disbursements of the past year amounted to \$588.78, received from the United States government, through the Baptist board of the general convention, \$350.

Respt. yours,  
L. Slater,  
Supt. of Choctaw Colony.<sup>24</sup>

One pair of oxen, 3/4 of which belong to the Department, and 1/4 to the mission, one ox cart, one log chain, and one set of harrow teeth.

With sentiments of respect,  
I am,  
A. Bingham.  
Supt. Baptist Mission.<sup>25</sup>

For Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes the Indians contributed \$7,800 per annum and the missionary society \$6,000, and other expenses borne by their parents.

Major W. M. Armstrong,  
W.S. Agent for the Choctaws.<sup>26</sup>

\$20 for the purpose of building of house of Divine Worship, where we may have Sunday school as well as school. Col. G. C. Mattock very generously gave \$10.00 for our house of worship. I give my grateful thanks, hoping the Lord will reward him a hundred fold in this world, and in the world to come with life everlasting.

James Essex.  
Teacher and Missionary  
of Methodist church.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 29 cong., 1 sess., No. 41, September 10, 1845, p. 571.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., No. 43, July 17, 1845.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., No. 47, October 20, 1845.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., No. 65, September 26, 1845.

## II. Establishment of First Missions in Oklahoma

In the early autumn of 1825, two persons from New England started on a journey to Georgia. The travelers were Samuel Austin Worcester and his wife, Ann Orr Worcester. Samuel, yet a young man, had decided to become a missionary to some nation which did not know his God.<sup>1</sup> The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions had assigned him to the Cherokee Nation whose language was supposed to be as difficult as Chinese.<sup>2</sup> But Samuel was not idle, and he learned all the skills that a missionary might need to know, from printing a book to curing a beef.

When they started out, they kept a simple account of their expenses on the trip. It took them six weeks to travel from Boston to the Cherokee Nation in Georgia, the expense to the Board being \$59.60.<sup>3</sup>

Their destiny was the Brainerd Mission, founded eight years earlier. The Worcesters felt a special kinship with this mission station to which they had come, because Samuel's uncle, Dr. Samuel Worcester of Salem, was buried in the churchyard there. His monument told passers-by that he had been one of the founders of the American Board.

When the American Board was founded, it had taken as its ambitious

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<sup>1</sup> A. Bass, Cherokee Messenger, pp. 15-18.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 19-21.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 29-31.

goal to christianize the whole world within a generation. But with the first of the missionaries actually in the field, the delegates decided to allow a longer period of time for their evangelization.<sup>4</sup>

The Worcesters continued their service with translations of the Cherokee languages, until they found that the Cherokees were going to move westward. Therefore, in the spring of 1835, the Worcesters moved their furniture to Indian Territory and established their home at Dwight on the Sallisaw river. The new Cherokee mission was located at that place. In December, 1836, they left Dwight and established their home at Park Hill, where they continued their work until his death in 1859. The Rev. Worcester had been a missionary to the Cherokees for thirty-four years.<sup>5</sup>

Prior to 1820 two or three thousand Cherokee Indians had removed from time to time into Arkansas Territory and settled along the north side of the Arkansas river. In that year Alfred Tinney of Vermont, the Rev. Cephas Washburn of Georgia, and James Orr and Jacob Hitchcock of Massachusetts selected a site for a mission among these Indians on the west side of Illinois Bayou near the site of the present Russellville, Arkansas. After securing permission from the Cherokee Indians to locate the mission, they began work on some of the buildings. After completion of them, they brought their families from Georgia. The first service was held on May 13, 1821, and the sermon was preached by the Rev. Cephas Washburn.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 73-79.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 176, 206, 344, 345.



The mission was conducted here in the midst of many difficulties and discouragements caused principally by the warfare between the Cherokee and the Osage Indians and by the low class of predatory white people who were forcing themselves into the Indian country. Though the fruits of their labors were missionaries, they continued here until the Cherokees were removed to the present Oklahoma under the terms of the treaty of 1828.<sup>6</sup>

When the missionaries commenced work among the Cherokees at the beginning of the nineteenth century, they found a condition awaiting them unique in the experiences of Christian workers to a heathen people. Less than three-quarters of a century before, Christian Priber, an ex-Jesuit, had identified himself with this tribe. He had learned their language and related to them the Biblical stories, which the tribesmen had retained and remembered in infinite detail, although they had entirely forgotten Priber as the source of the stories.

Then missionaries came, telling the self-same Bible stories that the Cherokees had but recently derived from Priber. Forgetting him, they attributed their origin to their old religion that had legendarily been destroyed by the Ku-ta-ni. Upon an attempt to tell the story of Abraham, the missionary was almost invariably stopped by Cherokee auditors, who then told the story. They used astonishing precision, even giving personal names with remarkable correctness.

Mulberry Mission had been established as a branch station to

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<sup>6</sup> Cherokee Phoenix, December 3, 1830.

Dwight. Located on Mulberry Creek in Pope County, Arkansas, it was moved in 1828 to a location some fifteen miles north of Dwight, and its name was changed to Fairfield. It was placed under the direction of Dr. Marcus Palmer.<sup>7</sup>

With hardly an intermission the Baptists had founded Valley Town Mission, 1820-1839; Baptist Mission, 1839-1867; and Baptist Mission at Tahlequah, 1876-1885; but because the Cherokee Nation would not make them satisfactory land grants, the Baptists moved the mission to the Muskogee Nation. Its name was changed to Sacone University, and it has maintained a laudable existence since 1885.

The policy of the Methodists was not to build mission establishments. Their work was more along the evangelical lines, instruction being subsidiary. In 1822, at the solicitation of Richard Riley, the Rev. Richard Neeley of the Tennessee Methodist Conference commenced to preach in the Cherokee country. Riley and several others joined the church during this year. The Rev. I. W. Sullivan and Ambrose E. Driskill succeeded Neeley.

The first Methodist Mission school was established in the Cherokee country in 1824. During that year John Fletcher Boot was licensed to preach. "As an orator, he was simple, unaffected, unstudied, graceful, and powerful."<sup>8</sup> He died while filling the Canadian District circuit in 1852 or 1853.

On December 23, 1843, a council authorized the establishment of

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<sup>7</sup> Niles Weekly Register, February, 1824, p. 357, col. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 357, col. 2.

seven additional public schools, which brought the number up to: Delaware District, three; Saline, two; Going Snake, three; Tahlequah, two; Illinois, two; Canadian, one; Skin Bayou, two; and Flint, three. The two school sessions were fixed at five months each, with a winter and summer vacation of one month each. The maximum wage for teachers was forty dollars a month.

In 1845, there were eighteen public schools in the Cherokee Nation. The schools and numbers of pupils follow: Delaware District - Tahlequah, 42; Honey Creek, 47; Lebanon, 34. Saline District - Spring Creek, 35; Saline, 32. Going Snake District - Locust Grove, 27; Oak Grove, 61; Evan Jones, 31. Tahlequah District - Caney, 43; Fourteen Mile Creek, 21. Illinois District - Greenleaf, 23; Vian, 23. Canadian District - Webbers Falls, 36. Skin Bayou - Sweetwater, 22; John Benge's, 29. Flint District - Honey Hill, 57; James Bigby's, 37; Clear Springs, 55. This made a total of 653 pupils.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 357, col. 3.



### III. Development of the Missions in Oklahoma

Over one hundred years ago, while the destinies of this country were still in the balance, while the ownership of land was still being made and altered, a little band of missionaries came up the Arkansas River, drifted up the Illinois River, and finally stopped on the head waters of big Sallisaw Creek.<sup>1</sup>

While these missionaries were carrying Christianity into the heart of the Indian lands, Congress passed a legislative act which has since had a great influence on many Oklahomans, particularly those who are Indian or part Indian.

That act provided for the removal of Dwight Mission from Old Cane Hill, near Russellville, Arkansas, to its present location in Oklahoma near Marble City. Passed in 1828, the act also provided that the Cherokees then in Arkansas should be moved to the Indian Territory, which would be kept for their use "as long as grass shall grow and water run." Dwight Mission was named after Timothy Dwight, president of Yale University.

The Rev. Cephas Washburn was the missionary at Dwight. The Rev. Alfred Tinney, one of the oldest members of this mission, died in 1827. The growth of the mission continued slowly, and the church contained only eleven native members in 1829.

Dwight Mission was then removed from the hills of Arkansas and re-

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<sup>1</sup> Muskogee Times-Democrat, September 17, 1929, p. 14 (Special Write-up by C. T. Lorman).

located at its present site, the place where the little band of missionaries had located earlier in the '20's. This site is on the west bank of the Sallisaw River, twelve miles from its mouth and midway between Fort Smith and Fort Gibson. By the spring of 1829 the mission was established. All buildings had been erected, and the work of educating the Cherokees had been started.

The work of removing this mission to Oklahoma presented one of the greatest problems with which the early teachers had to cope. While located in Arkansas, Dwight had grown to be a large and influential institution, and was known as the "Glory of the Cherokees." The good will of the Indians, who were just emerging from barbarism, the buildings and fences which had been built so laboriously, the land that had been cleared and planted, all were assets which were hard to carry one hundred miles through the wilderness.<sup>2</sup>

But the staff of the school set bravely to work with the Rev. Cephas Washburn at their head. The party, about twenty-five in number, struck out through the primeval territory.

Soon after their arrival at the new Dwight site, twenty-one log houses had been erected. The largest was about eighty feet long. Wells were dug, fences erected, and land cleared for planting. An orchard, part of which still remains, was set out near the grounds.

As soon as comfortable homes had been erected, a school was started. Forty girls and forty boys were cared for at Dwight free of charge. The chief subjects taught were domestic science for the girls

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

and manual training and agriculture for the boys.

During the Civil War the school at Dwight was discontinued, and the buildings were used often as a camping spot for soldiers of both armies. Some time after 1867 the property passed into private hands, but the Indians never ceased to wish that the school might be reopened.

Finally, in 1884, a representative of the Presbyterian home mission board visited the territory and was met by a delegation of Cherokees who implored him to have the school established again. This resulted in the reopening of the mission by the Rev. Nicholas Neerkin and his wife. More recent superintendents were the Rev. F. L. Schaub, John M. Robe, and Harvey C. Hansen.<sup>3</sup>

Through the efforts of instructors at Dwight, the Cherokee Bible and the Cherokee Hymnal were printed in the two decades beginning with 1840. A thousand copies of the hymns and a thousand copies of the Gospel of Matthew were printed in Cherokee by Dr. Worcester at the Park Hill press. Hundreds of copies of these books were left unbound at the beginning of the war and were sent east to remain in New York for more than forty years before they were brought back to Dwight and bound after 1900. Thus, it took nearly sixty years to complete these Indian books and put them into circulation.

In 1923 and 1924 new dormitories for both boys and girls were erected, as well as a home for the superintendent. Other buildings included a laundry, a dining hall, a school and administration building,

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



a modern dairy, horse barn, and several cottages, one of which is one of the original buildings of the mission, built over one hundred years ago.

Because it is recognized that most of the students will seek a living through farming and agriculture, an attempt at fitting them for this occupation is being made rather than to train them for the professions.

It is a fixed principle of the school to train Indians to become home-makers. Beadwork and other handicrafts are also taught. Typing and stenography courses are open to all older students of the school. Both boys and girls are enrolled in the courses in business training.

Each student either pays all or part of his tuition, which is only \$100.00 a year. Many of the students work several hours each day on the farm or about the school to pay for their board, room, and tuition.

Ever a mission school, Dwight keeps uppermost the religious nurture of the Indians. Evening devotion, chapel exercises daily, Bible study in the class room, Sunday school, and several Christian Endeavor societies are a part of the religious ministrations given the Dwight students.

The student body usually consists of about fifty-five girls and a similar number of boys, all with a large percentage of Indian blood. They range in age from eight to eighteen.

Thirteen tribes were represented in 1938, the Cherokees being in the majority. There were also a number of Kickapoos, Choctaws, Creeks, and Shawnees.

During the century and more of service that this oldest of Oklahoma missions has rendered, it has increased not in senility, but in an enlarged usefulness.

No longer are the half-wild Indian children received to be fed and clothed and sent to bed on a pallet on the floor. Instead, Dwight now receives the children of the Indians it has helped to educate and accepts its present function as the complete education of the still needy Indians.<sup>4</sup>

Much modern history of Dwight Mission is contained in the pages of a small magazine called Cherokee Gospel Tidings, which was first printed on the Presbyterian Mission Press at Siloam Springs, Arkansas. The paper bore Going Snake, Indian Territory, on the date line in January 1889; and in August, 1900, it was to be its future home.

The Rev. Frederick L. Schaub and his wife arrived at Dwight Mission in 1900, and the following eleven years of their lives were devoted to the upbuilding of the school. Mr. Schaub was superintendent and served as editor of the magazine, while his devoted wife gave her time to the welfare of the Indian children.<sup>5</sup>

The Dwight Mission is now the most prominent mission school in Oklahoma. It has two dormitories, one dining hall, and several residences for teachers. There is an enrollment of eighty-eight for the year of 1937-1938.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> C. T. Foreman, "The Cherokee Gospel Tidings of Dwight Mission," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XII (1934).

The name of the American Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church, which remained for many years that way, is now changed to the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church of New York. The schools of Oklahoma are under their unit of schools and hospitals.

There is a fee of \$100 at Dwight Mission, but there are very few who can pay this. The students have to furnish their own clothing. Most of them are on relief.

The original home of the Dwight Mission before the Civil War was partly burned but was rebuilt and most of it was saved. During the Civil War, soldiers used it as a refuge.

The teachers have twelve months' salary. They each get five hundred dollars cash for the twelve months and forty dollars allowed for their board and room. They work ten months and have two months' vacation.

Mr. Hanson became superintendent in 1923 and remained until 1937, when he left to become Dean of Education at Arkansas University. His wife then took over the school, but this fall she will be replaced by a man coming from Cornell University.<sup>6</sup>

The American missionaries and their stations were: the Rev. Dr. E. Butler, Fairfield Mission on the Sallisaw River, Flint District; the Rev. Mr. Butrick and the Rev. Mr. Willey of Dwight Mission, Illinois District; the Rev. David Cummins and the Rev. Thomas Berhoff, Methodist circuit riders; the Rev. Mr. Mack of Moravian Mission; the Rev. Evan Jones, Baptist Mission, Going Snake District; the Rev. S. A.

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<sup>6</sup> Statement of the present secretary at the Dwight Mission.



Worcester, Park Hill, Tahlequah District.

For a number of years after its establishment, Dwight Mission on the Sallisaw River was the only school among the Cherokee people. Before the Cherokees moved into the Territory there were a few whites living scattered about through the country. One town was on the Sallisaw River, half-way between Fort Smith and Fort Gibson, with a postoffice called "Lovely's Court House." This was the only postoffice in the country outside of the military posts.<sup>7</sup>

The Moravians had the honor of commencing mission work among the Cherokees. The Rev. Messrs. Abraham Steiner and Gottlieb Byhan began a mission in the old Cherokee Nation at Spring Place, Georgia, in May, 1801. Mr. Steiner soon left the mission, but Mr. Byhan remained for ten or more years. In 1803 he was joined by the Rev. Jacob Wohlfart, who remained two years. The Rev. John Gambold and his wife came in 1805. A church was organized, and the first Indian convert was a woman. The next was Mr. Charles R. Hicks, second in rank and said to have been first in influence among the chiefs of the nation.

In 1803, the Rev. Gideon Blackburn of Tennessee was appointed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church to labor as a missionary among the Cherokees. He secured the endorsement of President Thomas Jefferson and the Secretary of War. Having obtained the sanction of the principal chiefs and of a council of more than two thousand Cherokees, the Rev. Mr. Blackburn selected a place for the mission school near the Hiwassee River.

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<sup>7</sup> Muskogee Twin Territories, II (May, 1900), 5.

The Baptists began mission work in 1817 among the Georgia Indians. The Rev. Humphrey Posey of Georgia was the first missionary. He established a mission school at Tinawatti. In 1821 several other missionaries were sent. John Tinson was the first Indian convert and was soon followed by his wife. A school was founded in the same period and was soon overcrowded with pupils.

Methodist missions were begun among the Cherokees in Tennessee by the Tennessee Conference in 1822. The Rev. A. J. Crawford was appointed missionary to the tribe. The number of converts increased rapidly, and in 1827 about four hundred church members were reported in the station. Such were the conditions among the Cherokees when they were torn from their homes and driven into guarded camps at the point of the bayonet by United States soldiers. This policy was used in order to transport them to the western country from the homes they loved so well and which God had given to them.<sup>8</sup>

In 1817, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions had established a station among the Cherokees near Chattanooga, Tennessee. This was the Missionary Ridge of Civil War fame. The Choctaws then requested a similar work among their people. As a result, the Presbyterian, Cyrus Kingsbury, an instructor in the Cherokee school, was sent to their country. Consequently, in 1818, he established a mission at Eliot, on the Yalobreska River. The Choctaws said that hunting had declined, and it was best to turn their attention to indus-

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<sup>8</sup> J. S. Murrow, "The Beginnings of Gospel Mission Work among the Cherokees," Chronicles of Oklahoma, III (1901), 2.

try and farming, and they wished the establishment of a school.<sup>9</sup>

The devoted workers received no salary. Their maintenance was provided by the American Board. White friends of the mission made donations, but the main expenses were borne by the Choctaw nation.

The Choctaws also made an arrangement with Colonel Richard Minter Johnson by which he established an academy for the boys. This school was initiated by the Baptists.

It is apparent that the Choctaws' support of the missionary activities was due to their educational and economic, rather than their religious interests. Few converts were made during the first ten years, but in 1828 a great revival movement swept the country. The wealthy and mixed bloods soon became converts, and a large number of more humble citizens came into the church in a great wave of emotional excitement.<sup>10</sup>

This religious movement may have been due to the evangelistic efforts of the Methodists, who began their work in 1825 and who reported a thousand members in 1830.

It was the Methodist missionaries who actively supported the removal schemes of the United States government, because they dreaded the demoralizing effects of the white people, as well as the liquor traffic, to which the Choctaw country was thrown open by Mississippi law.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> A. Debo, Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 30.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

After the Choctaws were established in their new home in Indian territory, they began to build their school system. The initiative was taken by the missionaries of the American Board, who in 1836 reported eleven schools with an enrollment of two hundred and twenty-eight Choctaw Children.

Most of their schools opened in 1833 and 1834. There was one school in each district of the Choctaw Nation with an enrollment of fifty-one. They were maintained by an annuity provided by the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek.<sup>12</sup>

The greatest step was taken in 1842, only nine years after the removal, when the Council provided for the establishment of a system of schools. As a result, the Spencer Academy was located ten miles north of Doaksville in February, 1844. Fort Coffee, near Skullyville, and Armstrong Academy, in the Pushmataha district, were also started in 1844, and New Hope, near Fort Coffee, was opened two years later. The schools of Pine Ridge, Stockridge, Goodwater, and Wheelock had also been established earlier by the American Board. They were operated by the Methodists and the Presbyterians. In 1848, the Choctaws had nine boarding schools supported by the mission board which furnished the teachers and paid their salaries.

The adult Choctaws experienced little difficulty in learning to read. Before they had been in their new home for a generation, the Choctaws became, at least as far as their own language was concerned, a literate people.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 82, 230, 231.

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In 1881, there was a dispute with the United States Department of the Interior. A law was passed that missionaries had to produce credentials from some board or church to continue to work as missionaries. They had very strict ideas regarding Sunday observance. Ball-playing and horse-race betting were forbidden on Sundays. Business houses were closed, and it was unlawful to hunt with a dog or gun on Sundays.

Most of the Choctaws at first were Presbyterians or Methodists, as were their earliest missionaries, but in 1858 the Baptists began carrying on their work with great success and won many converts from other denominations.<sup>14</sup>

Usually the school term was nine to ten months, but it was frequently closed at the end of half of that period because of lack of funds. There was a compulsory attendance law passed in 1884 by the mission which penalized the parents by a fine of ten cents a day for unexcused absences of pupils. Some of the teachers were white, but most of them were Choctaws who had been educated by their tribal schools. They received a salary of \$200.00 a month for each child.<sup>15</sup>

The Choctaws have been fortunate in having leaders who have encouraged the best education possible. Hence they are considered one of the leading tribes in the United States in education. Jones Male Academy, located four miles northeast of Hartshorne, Oklahoma, is one of the youngest Choctaw institutions. It was established in 1891.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 232-236.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 237.



The school adopted the name of Jones in honor of the Choctaw chief, Wilson Jones. Simon Dwight was selected as the first superintendent. Mr. Dwight was a full-blood Choctaw Indian. He was a college graduate, having been educated in one of the Eastern states.

Besides the school building, there is a farm of seven hundred and twenty acres located near the school. This school is doing a great work towards educating and molding the character of the Indian boys of Oklahoma who otherwise would never get an education.<sup>16</sup>

There was a school at Pine Ridge Station, about a mile from Doaksville. It was called the Chuala Female Seminary. The Newark School for boys was five miles from Wheelock. Another school was located about eight miles east of Wheelock and was called the Iyanubi Female Academy.

The Methodists had two schools - Fort Coffee Academy and New Hope Female Seminary. They were both in Musholitubi District on the Arkansas River.<sup>17</sup>

Bloomfield Academy was established during the fall of 1847 by John H. Carr. He was born in Lebanon, in Wilson County, Tennessee, and later came to Lafayette County, Arkansas. In the spring of 1852 he was appointed superintendent of the Bloomfield Academy and began the first missionary boarding school for girls among the Chickasaws. A manual labor school for boys had been established in 1861 near

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<sup>16</sup> G. Foreman, "Notes from the Indian Advocate," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XIV (1936), 67.

<sup>17</sup> J. N. Kagey, "Jones Academy," Chronicles of Oklahoma, IV (1926), 338, 339.

Tishomingo, superintended by the Rev. J. C. Robinson.

Bloomfield was endowed by interest from money donated by the first Congress of the United States to General Washington in acknowledgment of his revolutionary service. The Board contributed one-third and the Choctaw Nation gave two-thirds of all the money used for the current expenses of the school. Mr. Carr received sixty-six dollars and sixty-six cents yearly a pupil, and his salary was six hundred dollars a year. His teachers' salaries raised gradually from one hundred dollars the first year to two hundred and fifty at the close. All the hired help and all of the salaries, as well as school books, stationery, and every other expenditure, were paid out of the yearly appropriation. Mr. Carr cultivated a farm on which he raised wheat, corn, and potatoes. He also had two orchards.<sup>18</sup>

The girls were taught, if necessary, the English language and the alphabet in addition to spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic. In the afternoon they were taught to cut, make, and mend their clothes. They were taught fancy work and music by the superintendent's wife, Mrs. Carr.

Mr. Carr preached in the school house on Sabbath mornings, once in two weeks, but in summer he used an arbor near the school for the services.

The school closed each year with a public examination. During the Civil War a private school was kept three hours during the morning. In the early part of the war the Chickasaw battalion had orders to

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<sup>18</sup> J. Susan Carr, "Bloomfield Academy and Its Founder," Chronicles of Oklahoma, II (1924), pp. 368, 371.

occupy the buildings at Bloomfield, but they were not large enough to accommodate the main body of the soldiers. The school house was used for a hospital.

In 1876 the Chickasaw National Legislature enacted a law that Bloomfield Academy should henceforth be known as Bloomfield Seminary. In 1899 the Federal government assumed control of all tribal schools in Indian Territory. In 1914 Bloomfield was destroyed by fire. It was not rebuilt, but the school was moved to Ardmore, where the old Hargrove College property was purchased for its accommodation. It has since been conducted at that location.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 377, 379.

#### IV. The Effects upon

#### Missions in Oklahoma

##### The Appeal to the Great Spirit

Alone and silent there he sits, a king  
 Of dying races, dying ages past,  
 Astride a sturdy mountain-pony, last  
 Of all the steeds that made his heart once sing;  
 His soul rebelling at this strange new thing  
 The white intruder brought into his life.  
 He treks the "trail of tears" brought on by strife,  
 And now with mute appeal he tries to bring  
 Compassion from his God. Great Spirit, Thou  
 Alone can give the Indian love and peace;  
 Descend on him, the most unhappy man  
 The world has ever seen; give, oh, give him now  
 The sweet relief, remove that curse, release  
 His soul from mis'ry - Thou, Great Spirit, can!<sup>1</sup>

The opening of the nineteenth century was also the beginning of systematic, organized Christian work by the churches among Indians in the United States. Up to 1800 Protestant Christian effort for these people had been largely the result of individual consecration and initiative. Catholic Indian missions have from the beginning been the special projects of a particular order or society rather than the obligation of the Roman Catholic Church as a whole.

The Methodist churches began a mission among the Creeks. They later opened a station among the Cherokees, employing the services of four missionaries, who had great success in gathering the Indians into church membership and who exercised a large influence upon the people of the Cherokee Nation in the negotiations concerning removal west of the Mississippi.

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<sup>1</sup> Hugh T. Cunningham, "The Appeal to the Great Spirit," Chronicles of Oklahoma, VIII (1930), 310.

The Cumberland Presbyterians also had a school among the Chickasaws. The Presbyterian churches were already doing considerable independent work for Indians through their local presbyteries and had received an endowment fund of six thousand dollars for Indian education.<sup>2</sup> The bulk of the work, however, was done under the American Board. Its budget in 1828 was over one hundred thousand dollars, and that of the Baptist Board fifteen thousand dollars. That of the Methodists was six thousand. In 1831 there was a record of nearly twenty-seven stations among the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Osages, including those west of the Mississippi, with twenty-one missionaries and ninety-nine teachers, doctors, farmers, and mechanics.<sup>3</sup>

Through the active efforts of an Indian minister, a Baptist, the Creek legislature was persuaded to grant them one hundred and sixty acres of land near the City of Muskogee as a site of Bacone College, at present the only institution of college grade for Indians.

In 1894 there were seven hundred and eighty-six Indian churches maintained by eighteen Protestant denominations, besides Roman Catholics. These churches listed over twenty-eight thousand members. Since that time several groups of denominational churches have completely dropped out of the Indian field in eastern Oklahoma. The Disciples of Christ had seventy-three churches in 1894, but none now; the Cumberland Presbyterians had fifty-two, none at present. Those denominations

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<sup>2</sup> G. W. Hinmon, The American Indian and Christian Mission, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 39.



which still report churches and members have decreased greatly. The Southern Methodists had two hundred and seventy-four churches with nearly ten thousand members in 1894, although the seating capacity of their churches was twenty-four thousand. Now they report fifty-five churches with a membership of two and one-half thousand.

Southern Baptists reported one hundred and eighty-one churches, with nine thousand members. The total number of churches among the Five Tribes in 1931 was about two hundred, compared with nearly eight hundred in 1894. Membership had decreased from twenty-eight thousand to eight thousand. There are now five Protestant churches, instead of eighteen as in 1894.

In 1894 Presbyterians were maintaining eleven mission schools among the Five Tribes; Baptists, six; Methodists, three; and Congregationalists, one. There remain only two Baptist and two Presbyterian missionary institutions for Indians, though Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians have large schools which receive both Indians and whites.<sup>4</sup>

As a matter of fact, there are very few self-supporting churches among American Indians, after many years of continuous missionary work. In many cases practically everything that goes to the support of a local Christian center is paid by the white missionary in charge out of appropriations from the mission board, or often from his own pocket.

Records of the Oklahoma Federation of Churches show that one denomination paid its Indian ministers on the average less than a

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

dollar a week, and another nothing at all. Of course, it does not mean a self-supporting church if the minister supports himself, even though it does not cost the mission board anything.

The difficulty is not with the Indian's interest in religion, but that he has not been taught to give for the support of church work. Contributions to support the old tribal religion were usually forced rather than voluntary; they were, at least, given under the pressure of tribal custom.

Missionaries have had to pay fifty cents an hour to Indian interpreters, although the average family income of the tribe among whom they were working was less than two hundred dollars a year.

Some mission boards provide the Indian preacher with a house and a considerable amount of land, granted to the mission by the government, and expect him to earn most of his living by farming. The difficulty about this plan is that the preacher does not, for various reasons, do much with his farm and also that the more time he spends on his farm the less time he has for the intellectual and spiritual preparation he needs for his church work.<sup>5</sup>

It may be true that in some cases an Indian preacher who received no financial support from his people is worth no more than he receives, and that the relatively small payments the Indian preacher is granted from the mission board are as much as he earns in the time spent on church work.

As regards the Five Tribes in eastern Oklahoma, where there has

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

been in the past strong Indian leadership for many years, the Indian ministers do not now have enough instruction and inspiration from fellowship with their neighboring white ministers, or even from the general missionaries especially designated for this work. On the other hand, many white missionaries think it better to do the work themselves than to trust the Indian. In some parts the Indian workers are left too much to themselves; in others, they are not given adequate recognition and authority. The Indian Christian workers must develop strength and power in their ministry.

The Indian pastor, working through his own strong, active church, can make that church a community center for a people who have lost their old social groupings and cultural institutions. He has an unique opportunity of erecting a new group culture which preserves all that is best in the old and builds around the social ideals of Christianity.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

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