The Baptist Frontier: Isaac McCoy, Indian Missions, and the Making of a Denomination

by

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Abstract

This dissertation explains how the missions to Native American tribes run by Isaac McCoy in the Old Northwest (Indiana and Michigan Territory) shaped the development of the Baptist denomination in the early American republic and how the Baptist denomination shaped the federal policies of Indian reform and Indian removal. It suggests that Baptist history grew out of the frontier, the zone of contact between white Americans and Native Americans, and it taps into the intellectual and experiential roots of Indian removal. It explores the web of evangelism that connected the frontier to the settled east. McCoy and his fellow Baptist missionaries brought their Christian faith and American culture with them to the field, intending to instill their worldview in their native charges. They lived and worked among the Indians and reported their interactions with them to their fellow Baptists in the east in an effort to enlist their aid in the cause of Indian reform. These reports spurred grassroots activism both to raise funds for the Indians and to influence government policy toward them; they likewise informed the decisions that leaders of the Baptist Triennial Convention made both financially and politically, although members of the Board did not always heed McCoy's advice and their relationship was often strained. How Baptists in the east responded could thus either further or limit the work that the missionaries did on the field: sending donations, sponsoring Indian children, and signing petitions furthered the cause, while refusing to allocate funds, questioning missionary judgment, and blocking political proposals hindered it. Surrounded by natives whom he believed were ignoring his preaching and beset by administrative troubles with his Board, Isaac McCoy came

to advocate Indian removal as the only way to save and civilize the tribes around him. He proposed giving them their own self-governing territory west of Missouri in order to give them time to convert to Christianity and adopt an American way of life. He attempted to enlist the Baptists to support the plan before Congress. Initially, he succeeded. During the heated debates over Indian removal instigated by Andrew Jackson, however, the denomination divided over McCoy's plan, and the leadership refused to support it. Isaac McCoy, his fellow missionaries, and the Baptist Triennial Convention help us better understand the religious meanings of American Indian policy before the Civil War.

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Introduction

An Odawa chief in Michigan Territory would at first glance have little in common with a denominational bureaucrat in Boston, a housewife in Maine, and a rugged frontier preacher from southern Indiana. Noaquageshik (or Noonday), a village leader of the Grand River Band of the Odawa tribe, had fought with the British during the War of 1812 and taken part in the burning of Buffalo, New York, in December 1813.[1] He had taken up arms to resist American cultural and political dominance. The bureaucrat, Lucius Bolles, was a well-educated minister with responsibility for communicating with his denomination's missionaries scattered around the world and "sustain[ing] the expenses of the brethren," as he once described it.[2] The housewife, Rebekah Pinkham of Sedgwick, Maine, was one of many women in New England who organized or joined a benevolent or reform society during the first half of the nineteenth century; her particular interest, and that of her society, was the "glorious" object of "the salvation of the poor heathen."[3] The preacher, Isaac McCoy, traveled through Indiana and Illinois preaching the Christian message, feeling his "heart burdened with desire for the salvation of Sinners."[4]

All of these disparate people were connected in a great web of evangelism. Noonday was the convert, McCoy was the preacher, Sedgwick gave the money, and Bolles coordinated. If one takes their word for it, the web of evangelism accomplished its purpose. In 1825, Noonday

[1] For an account of the sacking of Buffalo, see Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 255-58.

[2] Lucius Bolles to Isaac McCoy, January 10, 1826, McCoy Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

[3] Rebekah Pinkham to McCoy, September 15, 1824, McCoy Papers.

[4] Isaac McCoy, *Journal* (June 1816), McCoy Papers. The precise date of this entry is not clear.

opened up his village on the Grand River to Baptist missionaries and eventually converted to Christianity himself in 1832. Worshipping with Noonday later inspired another minister to write, "Now he was bowing before that GOD who is no respecter of persons, and we bowing with him and his people, all of us 'brought nigh by the blood of JESUS,' all of us brothers in CHRIST; heaven's best of blessings invoked for us by the red man, his hands but yesterday, as it were, red with the blood of our countrymen."[5] On the other hand, some might say the web was successful despite the people involved. Bolles and McCoy did not see eye-to-eye on many of the logistics of missionary work. McCoy preferred a degree of independence to manage his missions as he saw best. Bolles wanted as many decisions as possible subjected to his Board's approval, regardless of the logistical challenges of seeking said approval. He once chided McCoy, "[The Board] are indeed told that you wish to do [a thing], but before they have time to deliberate, are informed that the whole arrangements are made for doing [it], & that a grievous disappointment will be experienced if it is not done. Allow me to say that the Board feel utterly dissatisfied with such a procedure."[6] Indeed, the correspondence between the two men was characterized by frequent, unpleasant exchanges and hard questions with evasive answers about everything from financial management to federal policy.

This study uses Isaac McCoy's missions to think about the nineteenth century Protestant missionary movement, especially among the fast-growing Baptist denomination. In particular, it suggests that Baptist history grew out of the frontier—not only of the frontier revivals, but of the actual zone of contact between white Americans and Native Americans. Events in this zone impacted grassroots activism of eastern Baptists at the local and denominational level. They also affected government policy, which in turn changed the way missions, Indians, and Baptists

[5] "[Rev. Mr. Cuming's letter]," *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, September 1839, 226-227.
[6] Bolles to McCoy, November 28, 1826, McCoy Papers.

related to one another. This study ultimately demonstrates that Christian missionary efforts were an important link between east and west in the early republic. If it is true that the Indians of the nineteenth century shaped the United States as much as they were shaped by it, then the missions and missionaries were a vector of that change. Letters, clothing, books, money, missives, reports, names, and, of course, people—the missionaries and the Native Americans themselves—went back and forth between the frontier and the east coast.

Likewise, this study also taps into both the intellectual and experiential roots of Indian removal. It explores the belief systems that the missionaries brought with them to their work beyond the frontier, and it seeks to understand if and how their interactions with the Indians modified those beliefs. It reveals how they communicated those beliefs and interactions to their sponsors in the east. In turn, it shows what those sponsors did with the information they were given by investigating how a mission board managed the work of their missionaries and what effects their (often-poor) choices had on the missionaries, the Indians, and even national policies. It also explains the role that laymen and women played in the development of missions and the development of federal policy. All of these elements—east and west, clergy and lay, sacred and secular, native and white—made Indian reform and Indian removal what they were.

In this story, not only did Native American chiefs such as Noonday become part of the web of evangelism with Baptists in the east; so did small children. A Potawatomi woman brought her nine-year-old daughter, Agat, to McCoy's mission in June 1824. Meanwhile, the Female Industrious Society of the Third Baptist Church of Boston sent $20 to McCoy to provide for one of his native children, whom the missionaries were to rename Ann Sharp after the wife of their pastor. No doubt thanking God for such providential timing, McCoy joined the would-be sponsors with the recently-arrived beneficiary and wrote about it for the entire Baptist

denomination to read in the *American Baptist Magazine (and Missionary Intelligencer)*. In McCoy's retelling of the event, Agat's mom had told the missionaries, "The Indians die very fast so that it seems they will soon all be gone. I have brought my daughter hither in hopes that she will learn something good before her death." McCoy wrote the women in Boston, "Permit me…in behalf of this little girl, and of her mother, who wished her daughter to learn 'something good before her death,' to repeat sincere thanks to your Society for their kindness." In the pens of missionaries, then, instances like these conveyed to readers that the Indians needed the missionaries in order simply to survive. The missionaries, in turn, needed laypeople to send money so they could save the Indians.[7]

Indeed, Baptist laypeople in the east heartily responded to that call throughout the 1820s with cash, clothing, and encouragement. Agat—now Ann Sharp—continued to receive aid from the ladies in Boston, who in return received samples of Ann's work to grace their society rooms; according to McCoy, Ann went on to become a promising student, a trophy of Baptist Indian missions.[8] Agat and the Third Baptist society are, of course, not the only example of the connections between missionaries, donors, and Indians. This study investigates numerous more. On the other hand, the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions under Bolles' direction did not respond as heartily. It became wary of the massive expenses of Indian reform, which required running large boarding schools and farms. Members preferred to rely on donors like the ladies in Boston and government funds for Indian reform, and they diverted other resources to missions in Burma, which they considered far more glamorous than missions to Native Americans. Their management complicated the process, tangling even further an already-tangled web.

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[7] Female Industrious Society to McCoy, April 22, 1824; McCoy to Francis Wayland, July 14, 1824, McCoy Papers; "Letter from the Rev. J. [sic] M'Coy to one of the Editors," *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer*, September 1824, 425-427; "Letter from Mr. M'Coy," *American Baptist Magazine*, February 1825, 53-54. For a detailed analysis of this case, see chapter 4.

[8] Elizabeth Groves to McCoy, June 25, 1826; McCoy to Bolles, September 24, 1827, McCoy Papers.

Before turning to this story, however, a few definitions are also in order. I refer to the Old Northwest as the territory that made up the Northwest Territory created by the Congress of the Confederation in 1787; this includes the present-day states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and parts of Minnesota. The geographical focus of this study is of course more limited to the areas in which Isaac McCoy worked: northern Indiana and southwestern Michigan.

The Baptist denomination of which McCoy was a member traces its origins to a group of English Separatists in exile in Holland in 1609. Led by John Smyth and Thomas Helwys, this group came to embrace the belief that the rite of baptism should not be applied to infants but instead only to those who could consciously embrace the Christian faith. Believers' baptism was thus the key distinction of the new movement. Baptist teachings arrived in the New World relatively early. Roger Williams established the first Baptist church in the Americas at Providence (in what later became Rhode Island) in 1639 after being forced from Massachusetts for his teachings. Baptists faced numerous restrictions in most of the American colonies and were often persecuted by the established churches, as they had been in England. During and after the American Revolution, they lobbied for the disestablishment of the state churches and for religious liberty at the state and federal levels. In the years that followed, they reaped the benefits of their efforts. During the first half of the nineteenth century, and with the help of the Second Great Awakening, they joined the Methodists as one of the two largest religious groups in the United States. They had nearly 500 churches with approximately 60,000 members in 1780, but by 1830 they had more than 2,500 churches with over 400,000 members. [9] The

[9] Pamela R. Durso and Keith E. Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States* (Brentwood, TN: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2006), chs. 1-2, 4-5; Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 3; Bill J. Leonard, *Baptists in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 24; Albert W. Wardin, Jr., *Baptist Atlas* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 12. See also John A.

Baptists were therefore influential on the American religious scene. They would certainly have the ear of many government officials.

No one can dispute that McCoy and his fellow Baptists were racist, ethnocentric, and paternalistic. It is not my purpose to belabor this point, although I do mention it where appropriate. The statement of that reality fails to acknowledge the deeper motivations of the missionaries on the frontier and the men and women in the east who sent them. To them, Heaven and Hell were real places; Heaven and Hell really were on the line.[10] In this study, I attempt to understand their theological assumptions, their social agenda, and their political goals as well as to explore how these ideas shaped their work, the natives in their charge, the denomination, and the nation itself.

Because the subject matter is complex, I have chosen to organize each chapter topically, rather than chronologically, and to give each an argument of its own. Chapter 1 begins with the troubles that came with the birth of the Baptist Triennial Convention, particularly the troubled relationship between the missionaries at Fort Wayne, Carey, and Thomas stations and the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions in the east during the 1820s. The trouble came from four distinct areas. First, the missionaries were beset by financial difficulties due to the expense of the missions as well as the Board's mismanagement. Secondly, the Board attempted to micromanage its mission stations and clashed frequently with the missionaries in the process. Third, Chief Missionary McCoy believed that mission work involved both converting the Indians to Christianity and teaching them to live like white men, which involved establishing farms, schools, and blacksmiths—in short, an expensive proposition. His certitude of this method only

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Ragosta, *Wellspring of Liberty: How Virginia's Religious Dissenters Helped Win the American Revolution and Secured Religious Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[10] I am indebted to my colleague in the Auburn University History Department, Christopher Bishop, for this phrase.

increased as the decade advanced. On the other hand, the Board's thinking developed in the opposite direction, and its members came to advocate a preaching-centered ministry with little else. Finally, the Board simply did not make Indian missions a priority, valuing higher-profile missions in Burma rather than its works among the American native population. This chapter asks what this strained relationship between Baptist missionaries and their Board reveals about the project of Indian reform in the United States and how this troubled relationship set the stage for Indian removal. In the end, Baptist Indian reform efforts were mismanaged as well as misguided.

Chapter 2 explores how McCoy interpreted aspects of Native American life for his Baptist readership during the 1820s. He described what he considered to be the sins of the Indians: their devotion to pagan superstitions and their propensity to alcoholism and violence. He was convinced that the remedy for these sins was Christianity and civilization. McCoy's reports also pointed toward the future that he imagined for the Indians as Christians and Americans. These reports were designed to compel the Baptist public to support their missionaries, of course, but they were also designed influence the Baptist public's thinking about the Indians. By writing, McCoy was enlisting his fellow Baptists in his quest to save the Indians. Chapter 3 then centers on the mission schools run at Fort Wayne, Carey, and Thomas stations and explores the conversion narratives that McCoy reported. These success stories confirmed to Baptist readers that they were not wasting their resources when they gave to Indian missions. They proved that the Indians could be saved from sin and from savagery and that Baptists were truly helping McCoy and his cohorts accomplish that goal with their donations. On the other hand, a closer look at the Indians about whom McCoy reported reveals that their acceptance of the Baptist faith, message, and culture was more nuanced and qualified. McCoy's Indian

students used what he and his fellow missionaries taught them for ends that the missionaries had not determined. They adopted and adapted the elements of the missionaries' program that most fit their own efforts to survive in a land now dominated by white Americans who wanted them out of the way.

Chapter 4 turns to an investigation of McCoy's donor networks within the Baptist denomination, revealing how lay Baptists responded to and interpreted McCoy's reports. The letters that accompanied these donations and have survived in McCoy's papers reveal how Baptist laypeople imagined the Indians. They provide a glimpse of the natives' future as these laypeople imagined it, the outcome of the Indian reform project. They also reveal individuals' motives for donating to Indian missions. This chapter proves that Indian reform was embraced by thousands of ordinary Americans; it was not just an elitist government experiment. Baptists embraced Indian reform as a biblical imperative as well as a national project, as their writings show. They believed that the Indians would become civilized Christians. Many of them did indeed embrace McCoy's vision for the Indians' future.

The study then turns to Indian removal. All of the multiple streams of experience and thought discussed in chapters 1 through 4 came together in the late 1820s as a divided response of the Baptist denomination to Indian removal. McCoy decided that to colonize native tribes in a specially-designated territory west of the Mississippi River would be a better solution to their problems—a better way to save them. He concluded that this territory was the only way to buy the Indians the time they needed to assimilate into American ways; without it, they would be destroyed by the crush of white settlers across the frontier. This proposed Indian Territory become McCoy's master plan, the only way he could achieve his vision for the Indians' future. It provided the space and security he needed to make Christians and Americans out of the tribes,

both of which had been in short supply in the Old Northwest. In short, McCoy turned the perceived threat of Indian extinction into a prime moment for conversion. Furthermore, a self-governing territory under the aegis of the federal government also ensured better sponsorship for his work than the unreliable Baptist Board of Foreign Missions.

Despite the Board's unreliability, McCoy enlisted the help of the Baptist denomination to make his dream a reality. He presented his plan to the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions and before the meetings of the Triennial Convention. Chapter 6 explores this process. The years between the 1829 and the 1832 Triennial Convention meetings determined the course that the United States would take toward the Indians, particularly with the election of Andrew Jackson, who campaigned on a promise to remove the Indians. These years also determined the course the Baptist denomination would take. As the nation hotly debated Jackson's removal plan, the Board became less willing to support McCoy's, despite the fact that they had done so initially. At the 1832 Convention, the Board killed any hope of a unified Baptist advocacy of the plan. The denomination was, in fact, deeply divided by the prospect of Indian removal—somewhat along regional lines but not exclusively. A resistance on the Board's part to any further lobbying about Indian issues in the coming years perhaps contributed to the failure of the Indian Territory to be created in the mid-1830s.

This study contributes to historical knowledge on several fronts. It explores the connections and conflicts of the Old Northwest after the War of 1812; while the Northwest theatre of the War has been explored, few writers have studied the world the war made. Richard White's influential study *The Middle Ground* explores how Europeans and Indians "constructed a common, mutually comprehensible world in the region around the Great Lakes" through accommodation, but the work ends when he believes this so-called middle ground failed after

American victory in the War of 1812.[11] Historians have also studied native involvement in the war, especially in the personages of Tenskwatawa and Tecumseh with their pan-Indian, anti-American alliance. McCoy's papers and reports, on the other hand, hold a significant amount of information about the complex ways in which Indians in the Great Lakes region accommodated to the reality of American dominance *after* their defeat in the War of 1812.[12] The lives of the Potawatomi, Odawa, and other surrounding tribes were punctuated by treaties with the United States government that surrendered land in exchange for help in becoming "civilized." This help took the form of Christian missionaries and schools. The Baptist schools among the Potawatomis and Odawas, as all the others, sought to inculcate native children (and nearby villagers) with the values of Christianity and American civilization, and the missionaries wrote home to their fellow Baptists about their progress. McCoy's reports introduced Americans to native cultures as well as to individual Indians who were becoming what the missionaries wanted them to be, but they also reveal how complex native responses to the missionaries were, even though the missionaries did not pick up on many of these complexities.

Such a study is also useful because removal in the north is underexplored. The Cherokees captured the imagination of the nation at the time, and they have since captured the imagination of historians. The Trail of Tears is now common knowledge in the United States. Yet Indian removal also happened in the Old Northwest, and this fact has not received the

[11] Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge 1991).

[12] For native involvement in the War of 1812, see R. David Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983); Alfred A. Cave, *Prophets of the Great Spirit: Native American Revitalization Movements in Eastern North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006); Adam Jortner, *Gods of Prophetstown: The Battle of Tippecanoe and the Holy War for the American Frontier* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); see also Sandy Antal, *A Wampum Denied: Procter's War of 1812* (Carleton, ON: Carleton University Press, 1997); David Curtis Skaggs, *William Henry Harrison and the Conquest of the Ohio Country: Frontier Fighting in the War of 1812* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014); Taylor, *Civil War of 1812*. Historians who approach the post-war years are Matthew Dennis, *Seneca Possessed: Indians, Witchcraft, and Power in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Joseph B. Herring, *Kenekuk, the Kickapoo Prophet* (Lawrence: University Press of Kanas, 1988), and R. David Edmunds, *The Potawatomis: Keepers of the Fire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978).

attention it deserves. Recently, however, historians have begun to explore this experience of the tribes in Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. Mary Stockwell masterfully details the travails of the Ohio tribes after the War of 1812 and up to their eventual removal in the *Other Trail of Tears*. John P. Bowes' *Land Too Good for Indians* is an excellent survey of removal in the entire region that also places the removals of the 1830s in the broader series of removals that had happened to numerous tribes since their first contact with Europeans. This study contributes to that developing discussion by examining missionary Isaac McCoy and his Baptist denomination's role in the process.[13]

This study of the McCoy papers also reveals more about how evangelical laypeople in the early republic engaged political ideas, and Indian reform and removal (especially the latter) was one of the defining political ideas of their time. Nathan O. Hatch's *Democratization of American Christianity* details the rise of evangelical denominations such as the Methodists, Christians, and Baptists and its implications for both American Christianity and American society. Although he insightfully discusses the democratic, populist impulses of these groups, he does not explore any of these groups' political activism.[14] Yet Richard Carwardine argues in *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* that "hundreds of thousands of American citizens felt a commitment to a particular party (and, increasingly, to a section) because they understood that

[13] Robert G. Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia* (Atlanta: Georgia Baptist Historical Society, 1989); Robert G. Gardner, *Early Baptist Missionaries among the Western Cherokees: O'Bryant, Aldrich, and Curtiss* (Atlanta: Georgia Baptist Historical Society, 1988); William G. McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789-1839* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984); Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, *The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears* (New York: Viking Press, 2007); Robert S. Walker, *Torchlight to the Cherokees: the Brainerd Mission* (New York: MacMillan Press, 1931); Mary Stockwell, *The Other Trail of Tears: The Removal of the Ohio Indians* (Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing, 2014); John P. Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians: Northern Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016).

[14] Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989). Christine Leigh Heyrman does discuss how Baptists and Methodists approached social and political issues in *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

party (and their section) to be most in tune with their religious concerns."[15] Thus, religion and political activism in the early republic were closely linked. Furthermore, Indian removal under Andrew Jackson was the fulfillment of this democratic impulse: Americans removed the Indians so that the common white man could have land. Baptists participated in that event—advocating on both sides of the issue, as this study reveals—on the basis of what they believed their faith dictated.

This study also expands our knowledge of how ideas about benevolence, race, and citizenship functioned in evangelical denominations—in regard to Indians and not to slaves. Susan M. Ryan explains in *Grammar of Good Intentions* that the outcomes of social reform in the early republic were the product of the best of intentions (benevolence) combined with beliefs about race, class, and gender. Historians have studied the reform movements of the early nineteenth century, groups of men and women (especially in New England) who set out to solve the world's evils and make society more just, humane, and/or godly. The Baptist organizations that contributed to McCoy's Indian missions were a part of this phenomenon. They did their benevolence work, however, with certain beliefs about race, class, and gender. Since the arrival of the first Europeans in the New World, white policy had been that the Indians were deficient and needed to be reformed, as Robert Berkhofer demonstrated in *The White Man's Indian*. The standard explanation of that deficiency changed over time, however. Thinkers like Thomas Jefferson in the eighteenth century blamed the Indians' environment for their deficiency and argued that a change in environment would raise the Indian to the level of the white man. On the other hand, Reginald Horsman's *Race and Manifest Destiny* explains how the first half of the nineteenth century saw the development of a romantic racism that declared the Anglo-Saxon race

[15] Richard J. Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), xviii.

superior to all others, and the science of the day began to classify races on the basis of biological differences. Americans now increasingly questioned whether the Indians could be reformed at all, and many assumed the Indians would simply perish before the superior white race.[16] McCoy conducted his work among and for the Indians against the backdrop of these trends, and those who supported his work were thoroughly saturated with these ideas. He eventually proposed citizenship for the Indians (albeit in a vague and undefined way), and that suggestion ran up against racial assumptions that denied Indians citizenship (and, in some cases, even humanity). His Baptist denomination took his proposals to save the Indians and ultimately rejected them.

A study of the Baptist work among the tribes of the Old Northwest also adds complexity to our understanding of how evangelical denominations managed Indian reform and responded to Indian removal. Historians have documented how Christian missionaries were a key component in the United States government's effort to civilize the Indians. This study takes a closer look at the Baptists' management of Indian reform and reveals that it left much to be desired; not only was it misguided, it was also mismanaged. Carol L. Higham's *Noble, Wretched, and Redeemable* (2000) explores the missionary-native relationship as well as the roles that sending agencies, governments, and the public played in the Christianizing endeavor. Higham accepts the idea that missionaries shaped the images of Indians in both American and Canadian society, but she goes further to argue that the actions of sending agencies and governments also shaped them by putting pressure on the missionaries, which in turn shaped their portrayal of Indians.

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[16] Susan M. Ryan, *The Grammar of Good Intentions: Race and the Antebellum Culture of Benevolence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 3-4; Anne M. Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism: New York and Boston, 1797-1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); Steven Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers: America's Pre-Civil War Reformers* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1995); Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Random House, 1978), 113; Bernard W. Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), ch. 1; Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of Racial American Anglo-Saxonism* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1981); John Wood Sweet, *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730-1830* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

This study investigates the pressures that the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions put on McCoy and how those pressures shaped his missionary and political work. That evangelicals opposed removal is likewise well documented. John A. Andrew's detailed biography of Jeremiah Evarts, the secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and main opponent of Andrew Jackson's plan, is a prime case in point, and Mary Hershberger also skillfully details the unprecedented evangelical campaign against it.[17] There were evangelicals on the opposite side of the debate during removal, however, and evangelical denominations were sometimes divided over the plan, as this study will show.

Many explorations of the life and work of Baptist missionaries among the Indians of the Old Northwest are old and/or hagiographical. Early biographies of McCoy by Walter N. Wyeth (1898), Randolph Orville Yeager (1954), and Edward R. Roustio (1954) do provide thorough narratives of the missionary's career despite their hagiographic tendencies. A series of dissertations from Central Baptist Theological Seminary in the 1950s provided biographies of McCoy's associates, Johnston Lykins, Jotham Meeker, John Gill Pratt, and Robert Simerwell, but again these were hagiographical and written for a narrow, Baptist audience. In 1972, George A. Schultz presented a critical examination of McCoy's work for an Indian state in its national context with *An Indian Canaan: Isaac McCoy and the Vision of an Indian State*; this work is solid, but it minimizes McCoy's Christian faith as a motivating factor. Jack Reynolds applies

[17] R. Pierce Beaver, *Church, State, and the American Indians: Two and a Half Centuries of Partnership in Missions between Protestant Churches and Government* (St. Louis: Concordia Press, 1966); Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions and American Indian Response, 1787-1862* (New York: Athenaeum Press, 1972); Henry Warner Bowden, *American Indians and Christian Missions: Studies in Cultural Conflict* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Herman J. Viola, *Thomas L. McKinney: Architect of America's Early Indian Policy, 1816-1830* (Chicago: Sage Books, 1974); Carol L. Higham, *Noble, Wretched, and Redeemable: Protestant missionaries to the Indians in Canada and the United States, 1820-1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000); John A. Andrew, *From Revivals to Removal: Jeremiah Evarts, the Cherokee Nation, and the Search for the Soul of America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992); Mary Hershberger, "Mobilizing Women, Anticipating Abolition: The Struggle against Indian Removal in the 1830s," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 1 (June 1999): 15-40. See also Ronald N. Satz, *American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975).

historiographical insights from the field of New Indian History in his 1998 narrowly-focused study of Carey Mission, showing that few Indians actually converted to Christianity or even adopted the life of settled farmers as the missionaries wanted. As recently as 2002, George Melvyn Ella produced a 660-page biography of McCoy that is thorough but once again hagiographical. As many of these works outdated, narrow in focus, and for a parochial audience, this work therefore attempts to explore McCoy and his fellow missionaries in their denominational and national context in conversation with and using the insights of recent historiographical trends such as New Indian History and frontier history.[18]

Frontier history owes its beginnings to Frederick Jackson Turner, who in 1893 presented his thesis that the United States was defined by the frontier—that line between American settlement and the open wilderness. From the time Europeans had first come to the New World,

[18] Walter N. Wyeth, *Isaac McCoy: Early Indian Missions* (Philadelphia, 1895); Randolph Orville Yeager, "Indian Enterprises of Isaac McCoy, 1817-1846" (PhD diss., University of Oklahoma, 1954); Edward R. Roustio, *Early Indian Missions: As Reflected in the Unpublished Manuscripts of Isaac McCoy* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2000); see also Albert H. Fauth, "History of the American Indian Mission Association and Its Contributions to Baptist Indian Missions" (ThD diss., Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1953). Joseph Pettie Grant, "Jotham Meeker, Orthographer, Pioneer Printer and Missionary" (ThD diss., Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1952); Curtis A. Hutcherson, "The Contributions of Dr. Johnston Lykins and Robert Simerwell to the Preservation, Advancement, and Evangelization of the American Indians" (ThD diss., Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1952); Jack W. Manning, "John Gill Pratt, Missionary Printer, Physician, Teacher, and Statesman" (ThD diss., Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1951). Jack Reynolds, "Carey Mission: Protestant Missionaries and Native Americans on the Indiana-Michigan Frontier" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1998), 229-31. New Indian History pioneered ways of retrieving the voices of Native Americans. Since written sources from Native Americans are rare in the early republic, historians learned to use anthropological and archaeological sources as well as to account for personal and cultural biases of the written sources, which largely come from Europeans or Americans. Richard White's *The Middle Ground*, mentioned above, is one example. Kathleen DuVal coined a different term, the *native ground*, to describe the ways in which the Indians of the Arkansas River Valley were powerful enough to set the terms of engagement with Europeans. Her book, which bears that name, demonstrates how Native Americans from their first contact until the 1820s "drew a successive series of European empires into local patterns of land and resource allocation, sustenance, goods exchange, gender relations, diplomacy, and warfare" (*The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006], 5). Though not dealing with Indian missions exclusively, works like these give historians tools with which to recover the perspective of Indians as they study missions. *The Indian Great Awakening*, Linford D. Fisher's 2012 study of native engagement with Christianity during the eighteenth century utilizes these insights to argue that conversion was not a clear-cut phenomenon among New England natives. He presents a "tale of ebb and flow, engagement and disengagement, affiliation and deaffiliation, which varied by individual and community" and "situates these religious decisions in the lived, on-the-ground realities of eighteenth-century Native lives" (*The Indian Great Awakening: Religion and the Shaping of Native Cultures in Early America* [New York: Oxford, 2012], 8).

he argued, white settlers had moved progressively westward across the North American continent, filling a vast expanse of free and uncivilized land with democratic institutions and technological progress. Contemporary scholars take issue with the self-serving idea that Americans filled an empty landscape and have turned their focus to discussing the peoples who were there before the Americans arrived: Native Americans, French and British fur traders, and Spanish officials. Daniel K. Richter seeks to reorient the historical narrative of westward expansion by *Facing East From Indian Country*, looking at the arrival of Europeans and the subsequent conquest of the continent as the Indians might have seen it in what was truly Indian Country.[19] Andrew Lipman's award-winning *The Saltwater Frontier* also details the contest between English and Dutch settlers and the native tribes for the Atlantic coastline between what is now New York City and Boston, giving those tribes an equal role in the contest rather than treating their defeat as pre-determined. He looks "toward the sea rather than the land" and treats the southern coast of New England as a frontier.[20] Anne Hyde, meanwhile, fills the supposedly-empty North American West between 1800 and 1860 with networks of *Empires, Nations, and Families*, exploring the interlocking webs of trade and intermarriage between the Indian, Spanish, French, British, and American families who inhabited the region before the United States fully solidified its control.[21] Like Hyde, this study emphasizes networks that connected those in the "frontier" west with those in the east. It looks at the religious frontier—from the Baptists' perspective, the line beyond which few inhabitants (native or white) were Christians—and how that overlapped with other elements of the American frontier: federal Indian policy,

[19] Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[20] Andrew Lipman, *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 4. Lipman's analysis of the Turner thesis and subsequent historiography is unsurpassed, see 8-13.

[21] Anne F. Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A New History of the North American West, 1800-1860* (New York: Harper-Collins, 2012).

white settlement, and politics. The fact that conversions at Indian missions in Michigan Territory were being circulated in Boston reveals that the frontier was not as far-removed a place as geography made it seem. What happened there influenced the day-to-day choices that individuals, churches, and organizations made in the east. The frontier influenced their religion as well as their politics, and religion and politics were intertwined.

Since the chapters of this study are arranged topically rather than chronologically, the reader may find helpful a brief explanation of the people and tribes that appear in the narrative that follows. When McCoy first began to work among the Indians in 1818, he was with the Miami tribe, and the move to Fort Wayne in 1820 was designed to better facilitate ministry among them. The Treaty of Chicago of 1821 opened the door for establishing a station among the Potawatomis and Odawas, the stations that became Carey in December 1822 and Thomas in December 1826, respectively. The mission schools usually included a mixture of students from all of these tribes. McCoy also mentioned interactions with the Delaware, Kickapoo, and Wea tribes during his tenure in Indiana and Michigan. While on his first exploration of the proposed Indian territory, he led delegations from the Potawatomi and Odawa tribes in the north, as well as delegations from the Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Creek in the south.[22]

As for McCoy's fellow missionaries, his right-hand man was Johnston Lykins. Lykins was born in Virginia in 1800, and McCoy hired him to be the mission's schoolteacher in 1819. At the time, Lykins was not even a professing Christian, but he was converted 1822. He eventually studied to be a doctor and proved invaluable to McCoy's missionary work. He began to call McCoy father and even married his daughter, Delilah, in 1828. After moving west with

[22] Isaac McCoy, "Indians of Illinois: Extract of a Letter from Elder M'Coy to the Corresponding Secretary," *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer*, November 1819, 224; "Fort Wayne and Carey Stations," *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer*, May 1824, 330-331; Lela Barnes, "Journal of Isaac McCoy for the Exploring Expedition of 1828," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (August 1936), 228.

the Potawatomi, the Lykins family settled in what became Kansas City, and Lykins was elected as its first mayor.[23] Robert Simerwell joined the staff of Carey Station in the summer of 1824, McCoy having met him in New York while on a fundraising trip. Simerwell was born in Ireland and came to the station as the blacksmith. He, too, became a crucial part of the mission work, serving in numerous capacities through the years. He married one of the schoolteachers at Carey, Fanny Goodridge, in 1825. The Simerwells were the last missionaries to leave Carey when it closed in 1833, and from there they headed west to continue their work among the Potawatomis who removed.[24] Jotham Meeker came to Carey in November 1825 after hearing Simerwell preach in Cincinnati, and the Board officially appointed him as a missionary in August 1827. By 1828, he went to Thomas to manage that station among the Odawas along with Leonard Slater. Meeker's contribution to the work was developing an orthography that could be used with several Indian languages. He briefly served at the Baptist station among the Ojibwes at Sault Ste. Marie in 1832 but finally moved west in 1833. He operated a printing press at the Baptists' Shawnee Mission there and printed scriptures, hymnals, and even newspapers in Shawnee, Odawa, and several other native languages using the orthography he developed. When the Odawa finally arrived in 1837, he went to continue his mission work among them.[25] Leonard Slater was from Worcester, Massachusetts. He began his work at Carey in 1826 and was transferred to Thomas along with Meeker. He and McCoy were often at odds about various points of management in the years that followed. In the end, he did not support removal and

[23] Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, 75, 139.
[24] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 222, 260, 403.
[25] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 277, 403-404; Grant, "Jotham Meeker."

remained in Michigan with the Odawas, eventually buying land to stay with them at Richland when Thomas Station had to be sold.[26]

Members of the Board of Missions with whom McCoy frequently interacted were as follows. William Staughton was corresponding secretary (in short, the mouthpiece of the Board) when McCoy was first appointed in 1817, and he remained in that position until 1826. Born in England, he immigrated to the United States in 1793. He was the pastor of Sansom Street Baptist Church in Philadelphia from 1811 to 1823, and after that, even while serving as corresponding secretary, he was the president of the ill-fated Columbian College in Washington, District of Columbia.[27] In 1826, Staughton became president of the Board, and Lucius Bolles replaced him as corresponding secretary. Originally from Connecticut, Bolles had served as pastor of First Baptist Church of Salem, Massachusetts, prior to becoming corresponding secretary. The church formed a society to sponsor the translation of the Bible into various eastern languages even before the Triennial Convention was formed, and Bolles was an enthusiastic supporter of the Convention when it was created. His devotion to foreign missions over Indian missions did not endear him to McCoy.[28]

McCoy also frequently and understandably corresponded with the agent and treasurer of the Board. Luther Rice was the first man in the position—indeed, he was instrumental in the creation of the Triennial Convention in the first place. Originally from Worcester County, Massachusetts, he set out to be a Congregationalist missionary to India in 1812. While on the ship, his views about infant baptism changed as he read the Bible; he was baptized and became a Baptist upon his arrival in India and then returned to the United States to resign from the

[26] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 283, 292; Schultz, *Indian Canaan*, 154, 180-181; Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians*, ch. 6. One can follow the actions of all the missionaries in the annual reports of the Board of Missions, as well.

[27] William Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopedia* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881), 1096-1097.

[28] Ibid., 111-112.

Congregationalist Board and to enlist the help of the Baptists. He traveled the country raising funds and was instrumental in organizing interest in the first meeting of the Baptist General Convention in the United States for Foreign Missions (Triennial Convention), which met in Philadelphia in May 1814. He served as its agent, travelling almost incessantly to raise money. He was also heavily involved in the establishment of Columbian College as a Baptist school to train ministers. His efforts to expand too rapidly put the fledgling college in serious debt by the mid-1820s. At the 1826 Convention, he was ousted from his position and blamed for many of the financial problems.[29] Rice was replaced in McCoy's correspondence about money by Heman Lincoln in 1826, who was now treasurer of the Board. Lincoln, also from Massachusetts, had served in the state legislature before becoming treasurer of the Convention. He was not an ordained minister but rather a deacon in a Baptist church in Boston.[30]

Spencer Houghton Cone, originally from Princeton, New Jersey, had done numerous jobs before coming to influence in the Baptist denomination: he had been a teacher, lawyer, and actor, bookkeeper, publisher, and civil servant. After entering the ministry, he served as chaplain to the United States House of Representatives in 1815-1816. He became pastor of Oliver Street Baptist Church in New York City in 1823 and went on to be one of the most sought-after Baptist preachers of his day. He was president of the Convention in 1832. From his position of influence, he attempted to help McCoy achieve his vision of an Indian state.[31] Francis Wayland was another correspondent of McCoy's and influential Baptist preacher. Born in New York City, he served as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Boston from 1821 to 1826, during which time McCoy kept him informed of the progress at Carey. In 1827, he became president of Brown University and served in that capacity until 1855. He was on the Board of Missions by

[29] Ibid., 978-980. On Rice's role in the financial problems of Columbian, see Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, 590-610.
[30] Cathcart, *Baptist Encyclopedia*, 702-703.
[31] Ibid., 262-264.

1831 and appointed as one of the vice-presidents in 1832. If McCoy is to be believed, it was his influence that year that so damaged the Convention's resolve to support the colonization plan.[32]

[32] Ibid., 1220-1222.

Chapter 1: Mismanaged Missions

In its 1822 report, the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions offered a millennial vision of what it believed would become of its efforts to Christianize and civilize the natives of the American frontier. Its members anticipated a day "when the Indian shall be brought, not only to unite with white men in the worship of God, but to cooperate with them in the business of agriculture and trade." Members also envisioned that their Indian stations "shall become flourishing settlements, where the worship of the true God shall be maintained, and where the refinements of civilized society shall be enjoyed." Because of the work being done at a few Baptist missions along the frontier, the theory went, as the Indians would assimilate into the American republic, they would also become citizens of the Kingdom of God. The republic and the kingdom would then spread together across the North American continent: "red men and white men shall unite together to carry the gospel, and the blessings of civilized life, to the dark and distant regions of the West,—until the rocky mountains shall resound with harmony and praise, and the shores of the Pacific shall be the only boundary of this wide sweep of civilization and Christian benevolence." The Baptists would do their part to fulfill both American Manifest Destiny and the Christian Great Commission. The costs of their benevolent efforts in the present would be more than repaid in the future, and it would happen soon. With the exception of the Indians becoming Christian missionaries, this vision might have made Thomas Jefferson proud.[1]

The Board's grand visions of saving and civilizing a benighted people quickly turned into an administrative nightmare in the 1820s, however. Four key problems marred the Baptists'

[1] Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, *Report* (1822), 385.

efforts for Indian reform. The first, and most obvious, was financial: Isaac McCoy's missions were expensive. To make matters worse, Board members were not wise stewards of the denomination's resources; they invested money designated for missions in numerous other schemes and built up astronomical debts in the process, leaving themselves plagued by lack of funds. As a result, McCoy did not get all the money that he needed or even that he was promised in some cases. Ironically, the Board would then turn around and berate McCoy for going into debt.

Secondly, the Board did not do well at maintaining good relations with its missionaries on the frontier. They were often neither consistent nor realistic in their instructions; they made promises and failed to keep them. Ultimately, they sought a greater degree of administrative control than was possible or desirable, and this desire to control cost them the trust and respect of their missionaries. Their desire to micromanage especially clashed with McCoy's expectation of having the authority to make decisions and spend money as he deemed best. The third problem that marred Baptist Indian reform was the disagreement over methodology that developed by the end of the decade: the Board wanted to shift from the boarding school and farm model that McCoy advocated to an itinerant ministry model in an attempt to save money. As part of this methodological shift, they refused to support efforts to bring Indian boys eastward for education, a proposal that also fell victim to changing racial attitudes in the country at large during the decade.

Finally, as McCoy loudly proclaimed at the time at the time and as his biographers have since, the Board simply did not make Indian reform a priority. Baptist mission boards had other goals besides the conversion of Native Americans, and these priorities edged out people like McCoy and his Indians. It is possible to overstate this point; after all, there were numerous

cordial and productive exchanges between McCoy and the Board. Nevertheless, the Board's protests that they respected McCoy often clashed with their administrative blunders.

This chapter describes and analyzes the troubled relationship between Baptist missionaries and their Board. The general consensus among historians is that Indian reform was *misguided*. In order to get Indian lands without a war of extermination, the American government funded an effort to convert the Indians to Christianity and settle them on farms like white frontiersmen. In the process, the Indians could be talked (conned, even strong-armed) out of lands they no longer needed for hunting in exchange for the money they needed to reform—and in many cases, simply to survive. If the Indians did not accept these terms and assimilate, they would die out in the face of advancing American civilization. There was no other choice for the tribes. This approach was, of course, ethnocentric and racist, as well as theologically problematic, and basically amounted to cultural genocide. Americans turned to Indian removal as a solution to the "Indian problem" when the Indian civilization program did not produce Christianized and civilized Indians faster than white settlers found themselves in want of Indian lands (a process that was repeated again and again across the American landscape).[2] In the case of the Baptists, denominational leaders not only saw too few Christian Indians, they were also overwhelmed by the financial costs and administrative burdens of their Indian reform project, their mission efforts around the world, and other ventures they had attempted. Whatever else

[2] See James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: the Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Robert F. Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Random House, 1978); John P. Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians: Northern Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016); Reginald Horsman, *The Origins of Indian Removal* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1970) and *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of Racial American Anglo-Saxonism* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981); Susan M. Ryan, *The Grammar of Good Intentions: Race and the Antebellum Culture of Benevolence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Ronald N. Satz, *American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1975); Bernard W. Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973); Mary F. Stockwell, *The Other Trail of Tears: The Removal of the Ohio Indians* (Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing, 2014); Herman J. Viola, *Thomas L. McKinney: Architect of America's Early Indian Policy, 1816-1830* (Chicago, IL: Sage Books, 1974).

Indian reform was, it cannot be avoided that these efforts were *mismanaged* as well as misguided.

Baptists in America began organizing themselves into groups of churches called associations as early as 1707. This Philadelphia Baptist Association, and others that followed, served for fellowship, consultation on doctrinal matters, and accomplishing ministry tasks that one church could not do alone (for example, education and missions). Associations were generally connectional and in theory had no power over the local church. By the end of the eighteenth century, there were associations along the entire Atlantic Coast. In the North, Baptists also established societies to carry on mission work, usually along the frontier or to a local Indian tribe. The Massachusetts Domestic Missionary Society was one of the first, organized by Baptists in 1802. Mission societies were independent of associations, and some were even interdenominational (for example, the New York Missionary Society). When particular societies did actually not send their own missionaries—and often they did—they raised funds to support the missionaries of other organizations. Fundraising societies frequently opened their membership only to certain segments of the population: mite societies for women and youth associations for children and teenagers. Establishing a society dedicated to eradicating some social ill (such as alcoholism, prostitution, or slavery) or to encouraging moral habits and good character (e.g., education or Sabbath-keeping) was a common practice during the first half of the nineteenth century, especially in the north. Baptists (along with many other denominations) therefore utilized a common method of encouraging social reform to organize their efforts for evangelization, as well. Such would have seemed only natural to people who

believed that proclamation of the Christian message and social reform were two sides of the same coin.[3]

These associations and societies were local, regional, and occasionally state-wide affairs, however. Baptists did not establish their first *national* organization until after they had unintentionally acquired their first foreign missionaries. In 1812, the Congregationalist American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions appointed Adoniram and Anne Judson missionaries to Burma and Luther Rice missionary to India. While en route to the East both the Judsons and Rice began to study the Bible in order to be able to defend their faith when they arrived. Instead of being bolstered in their Congregationalism, they came to the conclusion that the practice of infant baptism in that denomination was not biblical. British Baptist missionaries in India baptized them, and Rice headed back to the United States in 1813 to see if Baptists would be willing to support them. Having become aware of the situation, Thomas Baldwin and Lucius Bolles led Baptists in Boston to organize the Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in India and Other Foreign Parts to support the Judsons, hoping eventually to enlist the aid of Baptists across the country. When Rice returned to the United States, he visited Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, and Savannah, speaking to society leaders where mission societies existed and organizing them where they did not. While traveling, Rice devised a plan for a national body that would support Baptist missionaries.[4]

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[3] Pamela R. Durso and Keith E. Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States* (Brentwood, TN: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2006), 37, 89-90; Bill J. Leonard, *Baptists in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 91; Albert W. Wardin, Jr., *Baptist Atlas* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 11; Earl Eugene Eminhizer, "The Rise and Fall of the Triennial Convention" (MA thesis, Crozer Theological Seminary, 1956), 9-12. On reform societies, see Anne M. Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism: New York and Boston, 1797-1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); Steven Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers: America's Pre-Civil War Reformers* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1995).

[4] Durso, *Baptists*, 92-98; Eminhizer, "Triennial Convention," chs. 2-3.

Church leaders in Philadelphia issued a call for such a gathering, and thirty-three delegates from across the nation gathered there on May 18, 1814, to organize the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions. They agreed that the convention's membership would in the future consist of delegates from local missionary societies as well as from Baptist churches and associations, each of which paid at least $100 annually for the support of missionaries. The convention was to meet every three years—hence the name by which it became more commonly known, the Triennial Convention. To handle business in the interim, delegates elected a twenty-one member board of managers, officially called the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions for the United States, that was to vet and approve missionaries, address the concerns of missionaries on the field, collect and distribute funds to support them, and keep the convention abreast of missionary news. The Board (as missionaries generally came to call it) was initially based in Philadelphia before it moved to Boston in 1826, and it met in the spring of each year. Whichever members were available or lived in the area would often meet monthly to conduct business; this smaller body eventually took the name the Acting Board. A corresponding secretary sent and received letters from the missionaries on the field and then presented their concerns to the Board, while a treasurer handled financial matters. There was also a President of the Board and three vice-presidents. Board members organized themselves into committees of three or four members to conduct investigations and make recommendations; some of these committees were permanent (such as the Committee on Indian Missions), while others were ad hoc. The Convention itself had a similar structure of officers and mode of conducting business.[5]

The Board first broached the topic of sending a missionary to the Indians of the nation's expanding western frontier at its 1816 meeting and reported to the Convention of 1817 that it

[5] Eminhizer, "Triennial Convention," 33; Durso, *Baptists*, 99-100.

was "deeply convinced of the propriety of immediate attention" to the Indians.[6] Isaac McCoy was among their first appointees, but problems existed from the moment of his initial appointment. In 1817, he applied to Board of Missions with the goal of going to St. Louis, but the Board appointed John Mason Peck and James E. Welch to that vicinity apparently because they had applied first. The Board instead offered McCoy a year-long appointment that September in Indiana and placed $500 at his disposal. This appointment had ended, however, by the time he and his family established their first mission station along Raccoon Creek on October 30, 1818. Nevertheless, using this location in west-central Indiana as a base, he began to preach among the Delaware, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, and Wea tribes and hired a schoolteacher. His letters to William Staughton, the corresponding secretary of the Board, discussed his plans and movements and offered to send financial statements. On October 26, the Board considered these letters and, continuing as if McCoy's term of service had not even expired, expressed pleasure with his prospects but advised him not to incur expenses without consulting them first. Staughton wrote on December 2 to inform McCoy of this decision. His letter also assured McCoy that his drafts had been honored and would continue to be so; the missionary could also expect an allowance of $500 annually. This decision pleased McCoy.[7]

Biographers of McCoy have found it inexplicable that the Board appointed McCoy only for one year, but the Board's own records show that this was not a singular occurrence (unusual perhaps, but not singular). In June 1818, they appointed Henry George to work among the

[6] Board of Foreign Missions, *Report* (1816), 116; General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions, *Report* (1817), 130.

[7] William Staughton to McCoy, September 16, 1817, and December 2, 1818, and McCoy to Staughton, June 23, July 31, September 21, and November 4, 1818, McCoy Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka; Baptist Board of Foreign Missions Records (October 12, 1818), typewritten MS, American Baptist Historical Society, Atlanta; Isaac McCoy, *History of Baptist Indian Missions* (Washington: William M. Morrison, 1840), 43-47, 54; George Melvyn Ella, *Isaac McCoy: Apostle of the Western Trail* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2002), 60-62, 69-70. See also other letters dated March-July 1817 in the McCoy Papers; the Baptist General Convention, *Report* (1817), 140-141; and Board of Foreign Missions Records (May 17, 1817).

Sandusky and Wyandot tribes of Ohio for only three months at the same pay rate as McCoy; they finally discontinued this mission officially in April 1819. Apparently, the latter years of the 1810s were a period of experimentation with Indian missions. The Board was trying to determine which tribes held the most fertile ground for Christianity and civilization—in other words, where they could get the most results for their investment.[8] Furthermore, George Melvyn Ella's suggestion that the Board did not know what to make of McCoy and therefore put him on a probationary period has at least some merit. McCoy was a man whom they had never met who "had presented himself without a formal education and no means of support and had taken on the task of evangelizing a people who were scorned by most."[9]

The Board seems to have assumed based on McCoy's ongoing correspondence with Staughton that he wanted remain in their patronage and that the fields of Indiana were ripe for harvest (theologically speaking) and worth their investment. They therefore continued to instruct him without any further formalities. Given future events, it is also possible that they lost track of the fact that he only held a one year appointment and that they needed to renew it. McCoy certainly expected an official statement renewing his appointment and was disappointed that one never came.[10] This would not be the last time the Board would give unclear instructions or have unrealistic expectations. The Board would also demonstrate a propensity to lose track of or back away from its promises. In years to come, even their willingness to acknowledge McCoy as their missionary would sometimes be based on political expediency rather than actual fact.

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[8] Board of Foreign Missions Records (June 2, 1818; April 29, 1819; June 7, 1819). Note Ella's perplexity about the year-long appointment in *Isaac McCoy*, 60ff. In 1820, the Board even discontinued support for the mission started by Peck and Welch. White settlement in that area had made their mission self-sustaining, and the two men had proven unable to work much among the Indians due to those large numbers of white settlers (Baptist General Convention, *Report* [1820], 125, 132-33).

[9] Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, 67.

[10] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 54; Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, 69-70.

The common denominator in almost every battle McCoy had with the Board was money. It is possible in most cases to trace through correspondence McCoy's needs and requests for funds along with the Board's response or lack thereof. One can also follow the Board's published financial reports, but they do not always align neatly with the correspondence. The main financial problem at Carey and Thomas was that McCoy's elaborate methods of civilizing the Indians, of which the Board approved at first, resulted in cost overruns and debt throughout the decade. Missionaries had to erect buildings on the frontier, purchase equipment and seed to establish a farm and school, and then continue to buy many of their supplies beyond what they could produce in order to sustain a mission that eventually housed nearly one hundred people. There were also the unpredictable expenses: hospitality to passing Indians, medicine for frequent illnesses, travel in pursuit of mission goals, and the like. The station frequently went into debt. Furthermore, because sending and receiving mail took so long between the east (Philadelphia, Washington, or Boston) and the stations and there was no guarantee that a letter would even arrive at its destination, McCoy often could not wait for approval of expenditures as the Board instructed; he had to make financial decisions and apologize after the fact. The Board had very little appreciation for how much things cost on the frontier and usually responded with doubts about the necessity of such expenditures and demands for retrenchment.[11]

Indeed, it did not take long in 1819 for the mission to run through its $500 allotment, apparently only in the course of normal business (as described above). In fact, McCoy drafted $1,100 on April 12 so that he could have a little cash on hand. The Board did not respond to this letter until September and refused to pay such a large amount without further information from him, although they did pay another draft of $118.50. In an apparently unrelated decision, they determined on October 27 that they owed him $495.86¼ and voted him $500 on top of that,

[11] Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, 94-95.

having approved of his submitted accounts. As winter drew near, McCoy, not knowing of these allowances, wrote on November 8 that it was time to lay up their corn, pork, and salt for the winter, which he estimated would cost $250. Medical bills were also growing, as the family had been sick. They had also lost two horses, which would require another $50-$80 to replace. McCoy anticipated that the food expenses would decrease in the future as they were able to grow more for themselves, but other expenses would remain unpredictable. In short, then, the Board paid out $1,139.86¼ (including another $25.50 listed in their 1820 annual report), but McCoy needed over $1,500—all of this was well over the originally allotted $500.[12]

After Congress allotted $10,000 per year for Indian improvement in the spring of 1819 (a bill that the Board favored on record), McCoy applied to become a government teacher and asked his patrons to write letters on his behalf. The government money would help with expenses and take a burden off the denomination, he argued. The first fruits of this effort arrived in March 1820, when Secretary of War John C. Calhoun notified the Board that the government had appropriated $200 for McCoy's station and that amount would grow with the station. In the meantime, McCoy had begun to look for a location that might provide more return for the investment. One of the local chiefs promised to send his youngest son and many of his grandchildren to the school if McCoy would start it in Fort Wayne. As Fort Wayne was a trading post and a central point between the Miamis, Potawatomis, and Shawnee, McCoy chose that village as the location for his next mission.[13]

[12] McCoy to Staughton, April 12, November 8, and December 16, 1819; Staughton to McCoy, September 22, and October 27, 1819, McCoy Papers.

[13] Board of Foreign Missions Records (February 8, 1819 and March 13, 1820); McCoy to Staughton, May 13, December 16, 1819, and April 3, 1820, McCoy Papers; McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 68-69.

McCoy, his family, Johnston Lykins, a few students, a hired laborer, and all their cattle, pigs, and sheep therefore crossed Indiana to Fort Wayne in May 1820.[14] This decision necessitated new buildings, and McCoy insisted that the Board had to pay for them. On June 9, Staughton wrote an unusually stern letter complaining that even though McCoy's drafts had been honored, they had "cost [him] some difficulty to manage." Had McCoy gone $200 over his $500 allotment, that would have been acceptable, Staughton said, but $1,100 in one draft was inexcusable (apparently in reference to his large draft of a year previously). Staughton reminded McCoy that the Board had to justify all its expenses to others, and they were having a hard time doing so when they could not understand them themselves. Staughton was likely referring to the delegates of the General Convention, who had just completed their triennial meeting. These lines have the smell of special pleading; one suspects that it was not delegates at the Convention who were complaining about McCoy's costs but rather Board members who were anxious to invest money in other ventures (as we will see). The corresponding secretary lamented that McCoy had never had more than eleven children in his care and was therefore not seeing results commiserate with his expenses. This complaint would resurface frequently in the years to come, even in times when the mission was relatively prosperous.[15]

Furthermore, Staughton protested that McCoy had left for Fort Wayne without the Board's permission—that he was making decisions unilaterally and leaving the Board to foot the bill. "The Board has a strong aversion to a Missionary removing his station and especially to his putting up buildings of any kind, at their expense without their previous concurrence," he wrote scathingly.[16] He then informed McCoy that the Board had passed rules designed to prevent this situation in the future: they would no longer honor drafts that exceed the missionary's stated

[14] Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, 85-86.
[15] Staughton to McCoy, June 9, 1820, McCoy Papers.
[16] Ibid.

compensation; missionaries should not procure a mission site and erect buildings without prior approval; and missionaries who abandoned their stations without their permission would no longer receive support.[17] McCoy had repeatedly written the Board about his plans to move since at least the previous December, and it is not entirely clear that he had heard from them in the meantime one way or the other. At any rate, there is absolutely no evidence that they expressed any objections to the move before this point. The Board's complaining was based in terms of dollars, cents, and administrative authority instead of on the ability of their missionaries to do their jobs.

The Board thus berated McCoy to his face, yet they praised him before the Baptist public. In an irony that McCoy certainly would not have missed, Staughton had written his letter in the margins and on the back of a printed circular letter from the Board to the churches and societies of the Convention. Therein, they reported that "Brother M'Coy has gone from his late situation to *Fort Wayne*. The Managers recommended and approve of this change, as it will bring the mission more immediately into the centre of an Indian settlement, and furnish him with the greatest prospect of doing good."[18] The Board could acknowledge and even take credit for a good decision after the fact in public, but they felt free to criticize their missionaries on the field behind the scenes when they thought they had lost control of the process from their conference rooms.

McCoy's protests that the missionaries were living frugally as well as his suggestion that a member of the Board visit Fort Wayne to see the fact in person went unheeded.[19] His requests for money to meet expenditures and debts, although honored, were met with alarm throughout 1820 and into 1821. The Board's exasperation is clear in its minutes from September 28: "That

[17] Board of Foreign Missions Records (April/May 1820).
[18] Staughton to McCoy, June 9, 1820, McCoy Papers.
[19] McCoy to Staughton, July 24, 1820, McCoy Papers.

they find it difficult to comprehend after the liberal appropriations made by the Board, how Mr. McCoy and family could be in a state bordering on poverty." They demanded yearly statements of expenses in advance from him and redoubled their efforts to keep him within his yearly salary, which had apparently been raised to $600.[20] Early on, then, the Board developed an acute distaste for the cost of Indian reform as McCoy (and the federal government) envisioned it.

Even though the Board was realizing how expensive the Indian reform project was—the 1821 annual report noted that the Ft. Wayne station was $1,042.60 in arrears—they did not question the methods at this point.[21] They still directed McCoy "to encourage agriculture, and all the arts of civilized life, among the Indians to as great an extent as possible" at their annual meeting in April 1821. Yet they continued to insist that he was to do this "provided the expenses shall not transcend the amount of funds assigned him." They went on to raise his annual allowance to $3,000, to be drawn in bimonthly intervals of $500, but even this could not meet the needs of the station.[22] It amounted to $250 per month to feed, clothe, and equip a boarding school that now had nearly forty scholars (and growing) in a town beyond the frontier where basic supplies were expensive and sometimes even scarce. McCoy's correspondence contains numerous letters between the missionary and his suppliers that drive home this point. It is therefore not surprising that he continued to have crippling debts.[23]

The Treaty of Chicago in the fall of 1821 must have seemed to McCoy like manna from heaven. The Potawatomis donated one square mile of land for a mission and (according to McCoy) specifically requested that the Baptists start a mission there. In return for ceded lands,

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[20] Board of Foreign Missions Records (September 28, 1820).
[21] Board of Foreign Missions, *Report* (1821), 373.
[22] Board of Foreign Missions Records (April 1821).
[23] A letter from McCoy to Staughton on December 29, 1820, itemizes some of the mission's expenses see also McCoy to Staughton, March 3 and 9, 1821, McCoy Papers. During these early years, McCoy's correspondence contains frequent letters from suppliers Corbly Martin, George Evans, James Galloway, G. W. Green, R. Montgomery, James Parrein, H. G. Phillips, and Lewis C. Suggett.

the Potawatomis received $1,000 for a teacher and a blacksmith for 15 years. Likewise, the Odawas received $1,500 for 15 years for a teacher, a blacksmith, and a farmer.[24] All of this money was to be put in the Board's hands for its missionaries to use. McCoy could now expect $2,500 from the government and $3,000 from the Board.

Or could he? Staughton initially suggested that government money would be included as part of the $3,000; in other words, the Board would only really provide $500 each year from its own pocket (and less if they received donations specifically for McCoy). The corresponding secretary remarked that some members of the Board thought $3,000 was too much. A safe guess for the rationale behind their sentiment is that there was no need to spend so much money on a people who were probably going to die out anyway. In January 1822, however, the Board agreed that the $3,000 per year would be in addition to the money from the government.[25] There was, then, disagreement among McCoy's patrons regarding what they should give him, and a decision going on record did not mean that the differences of opinion had been settled or the members would honor that decision.

The finances of Baptist Indian reform became more complex and confusing in the years ahead. In addition to differences of opinion about what to allocate for Indian missions, the Board had by this point focused its attention on other pet projects. They invested missionary funds in two newspapers, the *Columbian Star* and the *Latter Day Luminary*, to keep the denomination informed about its missionaries and raise money for those missionaries in the process. Neither of these periodicals turned the hoped-for profit; in fact, a committee at the 1826 Convention found their finances in total disarray. The Board eventually sold the *Columbian Star*, and the *Latter*

[24] McCoy to Staughton, September 6, 1821, McCoy Papers; McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 145-151; Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, 143-150.

[25] Staughton to McCoy, July 2, 1821, McCoy Papers; Board of Foreign Missions Records (January 18, 1822).

Day Luminary simply ceased publication.[26] The biggest drain on the Board's resources, however, was Columbian College in Washington. Started in 1822 as a school to train pastors and missionaries, Columbian was poorly managed from the beginning and sank further and further into debt in the 1820s, especially when the Board attempted to expand it in 1823. The disaster that was the denominational college not only directed money away from denominational missionaries; it increasingly distracted Board members away from their duties in providing for those missionaries.[27]

In February 1822, McCoy and his associate missionaries agreed to put whatever funds they received (salaries from the government, donations, etc.) into the common purse and standardized this procedure in a document called the Family Rules. This policy was based upon the procedure of the Baptist missionaries in India and was designed to protect against private greed as well as silence those opponents who said the missionaries were in the work solely for the money. The Board approved this arrangement, and the agreement was initially signed by the McCoys, Johnston Lykins, and Daniel Dusenbury.[28] Of course, finding and keeping personnel who could submit to such rules and live such an austere lifestyle was a perennial problem for the mission, and in late summer 1822, a potential missionary arrived who greatly contributed to the problems McCoy had with the Board.

John Sears and his family arrived on August 1, 1822, to serve as teacher of the Odawa but left on November 26. In the intervening months, sickness ravaged the mission, and Sears' brother died as a result of his illness. According to McCoy, more than discouragement with these hardships of missionary life contributed to his dissatisfaction. Sears wanted to borrow money to improve his housing, but McCoy forbade him from doing so due to lack of funds. He

[26] Baptist General Convention, *Report* (1826), 23-25; *Report* (1831), 5-6; Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, 125-126.
[27] Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, Appendix 1; Eminhizer, "Triennial Convention," ch. 7.
[28] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 170-172.

then requested to go study medicine before he went among the Odawas, and again, McCoy denied this request on financial grounds. Sears also allegedly neglected to submit a financial report of his journey to the mission as was required and kept private property that should have gone to the mission, contrary to the Family Rules. Finally, Sears and his family left Fort Wayne just shy of a four-month stay.[29] Such a short tenure would have been nothing but an ignominious blip on the history of the mission had it not been for what Sears did when he returned east.

In January 1823, Sears went before the Board and charged that McCoy was egregiously mismanaging the station. Staughton explained Sears' complaints in a letter to McCoy, and a written statement of Sears has also survived. Some charges were relatively petty and personal: Sears complained about having to camp in the woods for eleven nights and that McCoy did not want him to go to study medicine. Other charges related to the condition of the mission and the integrity of the work were more serious, however. He claimed that the students' accommodations were worse than wigwams. Little learning took place at the school, by his account, because the missionaries failed to keep good order; in fact, the school was not even in operation from August to December. He also alleged that some writing specimens the missionaries had sent east to show how the Indians were improving had actually been created in Detroit, not at Fort Wayne. He accused the missionaries of misusing money, supplies, and food. They left corn out to rot, he said, and simply wasted milk and butter, resulting in the necessity of buying expensive supplies. The missonaries also spent large sums on coffee, tea, and sugar and then threw their cups into the well. For good measure, Sears ended his statements by reporting

[29] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 145, 153, 165-167.

that an unnamed visitor to the mission said he would rather "be doomed to state prison…than to go there."[30]

The Board did not take Sears' story at face value. It informed the 1823 Convention that they were investigating these charges. Staughton was particularly suspicious; he had doubted Sears' competence for missionary work in the first place and now "felt it my duty to cover the fault-finder with the shame it appeared to me that he deserved."[31] McCoy categorically denied Sears' charges and protested that some of them "must have been premeditated falsehoods." Sears had had access to the books, McCoy argued, but he never even hinted that he suspected any embezzlement.[32] McCoy attended a Board meeting in February 1824 to answer questions, bringing with him letters of commendation from his friends in the vicinity of the station. The Board's annual report for 1824 announced that they were satisfied with his accounting of himself. The Convention 1826 finally resolved that the reports of 1823 were unfounded and they were confident of McCoy's zeal and integrity.[33] The affair took its toll on McCoy's reputation, however, and rumors of this nature continued to hound him.

Meanwhile, McCoy and his fellow missionaries had established themselves among the Potawatomis. In December 1822, in order to fulfill the terms of the Treaty of Chicago, McCoy and the other missionaries moved from Fort Wayne to the banks of the St. Joseph River in Michigan Territory to what became known as Carey Station. They erected buildings along the river, which, as of May 1823, had cost $1,530. The Board appears to have paid this sum without too much grumbling and sought government reimbursement for two-thirds of the cost. The

[30] Staughton to McCoy, April 2, 1823; Sears to the Board of Foreign Missions, May 20, 1823, McCoy Papers.

[31] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 168; Staughton to McCoy, April 2, 1823, McCoy Papers.

[32] McCoy to Staughton, June 10, 1823, McCoy Papers.

[33] Board of Foreign Missions Records (January 17, 1823; February 2, 1823; March 14, 1823; May 1823; February 17, 1824; May 1, 1824); Triennial Convention, *Report* (1826), 17.

school grew rapidly, and, of course, expenses mounted. Back in Washington, the expenses of Columbian College were mounting, as well; in fact, it was $30,000 in debt. On August 6, 1823, Rice wrote that the Board's funds were exhausted, begging that McCoy not draw for funds unless it was absolutely necessary and he explained why first.[34]

McCoy did find it necessary, and he received another letter from Rice on December 8 complaining about having to pay four $500 drafts in the previous three months. On that very same day, however, the Board had met. The members had voted to cut the allowance of Carey and its other Indian stations to $250 quarterly ($1,000 per year). Furthermore, the missionaries would not get this money automatically but would have to get prior approval for every draft. The Board formed a committee to write a letter to these missionaries informing them "of the necessities of the Board, which render the measure indispensable." McCoy might have seen a small silver lining in the fact that the government had agreed to raise his allowance due to the increased number of students at the station.[35] That silver lining notwithstanding, the Board had dramatically slashed its own support to Carey. Under different circumstances, those members who had earlier considered $3,000 too generous an allowance might have felt somewhat satisfied.

The Board now unable and unwilling to meet Carey's expenses, mostly for food, McCoy decided to head east to seek help in early 1824. He reported on the condition of the station at the Board's February meeting (and also answered Sears' charges). The records of that meeting note that 75 people now lived at the station, and they consumed 100 barrels of flour each year. As a

[34] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 177ff; McCoy to Luther Rice, May 21, 1823; Rice to McCoy, August 6, 1823; McCoy to Staughton, September 28, 1823, McCoy Papers; Board of Foreign Missions Records (October 1823); Eminhizer, "Triennial Convention," 66.

[35] Rice to McCoy, December 8, 1823, McCoy Papers; Board of Foreign Missions Records (December 8, 1823). The amounts Rice mentions, $600 or $700, suggest that this raise was most likely applied to McCoy's $400 salary as teacher of the Potawatomi.

result, they were in debt for $1,482. Looking to the future, they hoped to be able to raise more of their food to reduce the possibility of going in debt. Meanwhile, an agent sent by territorial governor Lewis Cass the previous fall had reported favorably about the station and its prospects for usefulness. With this information in hand, the Board authorized McCoy to take a fundraising trip through the Northeast to relieve his debts.[36] By the time McCoy returned to Carey in June, he had raised $3,369.48, which included clothing and books worth $820, $566 from the government (with the promise of $200 added to his annual allowance), and $1,623 in cash. He was able to pay the station's debts and get more supplies: 30 bushels of wheat, 100 barrels of flour, and 24 barrels of salt. He even found another missionary to join them in Robert Simerwell. McCoy later wrote that "from this time until,…in 1830, the affairs of the mission at that place were wound up, we never had occasion to draw on the board of missions for any funds intrusted [sic] to them by the benevolent, excepting some donations which were made *specially* for Carey…. With this exception, the mission, henceforward, cost the charity funds of the board *nothing*."[37]

McCoy may not have needed help from the Board's undesignated funds for awhile, but he still depended on them to send him his government allowance because War Department protocols required disbursement of funds to denominational officials first. All that they allowed him to draw after September 1824 was $150 per quarter, which adds up to his $600 annual salary as teacher of the Potawatomi. There were questions then, as now, about whether he actually received all the government money that was his due from their coffers. They certainly did not send him any of his money automatically; he had to draft it. Furthermore, they were apparently throwing the money they received from the government into the same account with all of their

[36] Board of Foreign Missions Records (February 4 and 9, 1824); certificate from Staughton, February 23, 1824, McCoy Papers. See also McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 214-215; Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, 202-203.

[37] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 222-223.

other funds, so questions about misappropriation were almost obligatory later. They preferred for designated giving to come through them as well (as opposed to donations going straight to Carey), even when that was an added inconvenience. Board members viewed themselves as the control room of all funds and all denominational activity, but under their management, things were spinning out of control. The years between the 1823 and 1826 conventions were financial chaos for the denomination. In fact, the Board did not even publish financial statements annually during those years; they waited until 1826 and printed them all at the same time. The center of their attention was Columbian College, which was drifting further and further into debt. McCoy's sons, who were students there, noted the troubles to their father.[38]

McCoy continued to dodge accusations throughout the 1820s that he and the missionaries were living extravagantly on the frontier. These circulated as early as 1821, when one Benjamin Archer wrote to notify McCoy that a former guest of his named Timothy Squire had started a rumor that the table at the mission "was spread with the most superfluous dainties" and that McCoy "presided over the company like a little god."[39] Timothy Smith, a trader from South Bend, Indiana, visited Carey in 1826 and published a scathing pamphlet in late 1832, entitled *Missionary Abominations Unmasked*. Smith claimed that the missionaries cheated the Indians, beat their students, and sold goods at exorbitant prices to whites.[40] Anti-mission Baptists in Indiana and Kentucky also spread rumors about the mission. Corbly Martin traveled the Ohio Valley in 1823 raising money for the mission and encountered rumors that the "young Indians" were McCoy's "slaves to make [him] rich." Anti-mission Baptists spread these rumors to

[38] Rice to McCoy, September 2, 1824, and December 8, 1825, McCoy Papers.
[39] Archer to McCoy, May 3, 1821, McCoy Papers.
[40] Timothy S. Smith, *Missionary Abominations Unmasked, or A View of Carey Mission* (South Bend, IN: The Beacon Office, 1833). A copy can be found in the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society Correspondence at the beginning of the 1833 Isaac McCoy Correspondence (American Baptist Historical Society, Atlanta).

discredit their missionary opponents as well as the Board of Missions with which they cooperated.[41] There was often a laudatory report to counter these rumors, however. Barely a month after McCoy learned of Timothy Squire's mischief, he read a published letter from John Vawter of Vermont, another former guest, to Richard Mentor Johnson that praised the order and harmony at Ft. Wayne despite the station's poverty. Vawter called McCoy "perhaps one of the most pious of his day" and advocated giving him a generous share of the federal government's Indian civilization fund.[42] Visitors from the government generally praised Carey Station, as well. Despite the praise, the rumors kept coming.[43]

Whatever troubles McCoy had, the Board's finances were worse. The mission proved more expensive than expected, but the Board could not and would not help because it was more overcommitted than the mission. Unrealistic expectations and inconsistent instructions made matters worse. The pre-1826 Board hinted and mused that different methods of Christianizing and civilizing the Indians might be cheaper, but they allowed McCoy to continue on course.

The decisions of the post-1826 Board frequently appear as organized antipathy. The new management found the treasury empty and sought to get the financial chaos under control. Indian reform was, in their minds, a key contributor to that chaos.[44] They confronted the missionaries about these costs and made baseless accusations of waste that produced much

[41] Martin to McCoy, November 1, 1823; see also Martin's letters dated May 8 and November 17 of that year in the McCoy Papers.

[42] John Vawter to Richard Mentor Johnson, June 20, 1821, McCoy Papers.

[43] Note the laudatory report of the expedition of Maj. S. H. Long in June 1823 and also from Charles Noble, Lewis Cass's agent, that October in McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 197-199, 213. For examples of laypeople enquiring about the rumors, see Jemimah Parker to McCoy, September 27, 1825; Thomas Bentley to McCoy, July 15, 1826; and Horatio Pratt to McCoy, October 2, 1828, McCoy Papers.

[44] According to the 1826 *Report* (pp. 30-32), expenditures for the years 1823 to 1826 had been $34,229.32, but there is no record of the Board's income during that time. Indian reform was, indeed, expensive: Carey had cost $4,593.29; the Valley Towns Station among the Cherokee had cost $5,574.39; Withington Station among the Creek had cost $4,499.12. (How much of this had come from the government—probably most of it—was left unspecified.) One also notes that the Board had spent $5,092.96 for "Education purposes," which meant Columbian College; of course, this money did not save the college from massive debts of over $30,000. The Board had also spent $9,000 on "Eastern Missions," the largest of which was the Burman Mission.

bitterness. They told McCoy outright that they preferred other methods of Indian reform, although he was able to maintain the course until after removal. They began to veto his expert proposals even as they tightened the purse strings far more than the old Board had attempted to do. They made it quite clear that Indian reform was not a priority for them, as they excluded the Indians from their definition of foreign missions. The relationship between McCoy and his patrons, which had been strained, deteriorated significantly after 1826.

The first conflict McCoy had with the new Board began even before the new personnel were in power. In July 1825, McCoy wrote Staughton and other members of the Board hoping to place "seven promising Indian youths" in Columbian College. McCoy reported that they had converted to Christianity during the revival earlier that year, and all of them had been baptized in January. They gave "evidence of genuine piety" and felt "strong desires to be useful to their less fortunate countrymen." Going to Columbian would enable them to continue their education so that they could return to help lead their tribes into civilization. Indeed, they were the ideal candidates for this role, as they already spoke the native languages and were already "well acquainted" with the native "manners and customs and sufferings." McCoy expected that the government would designate some of the funds for Indian reform for them. He also expressed "a full conviction that their names would not disgrace your catalogue or in any way detract from the character of the institution."[45]

The Board received his letter, discussed the proposal at its September meeting, and decided to put the question before the Convention in 1826 and seek to obtain Indian Civilization funds from the Secretary of War. For the rest of 1825, McCoy continued to mention the subject

[45] McCoy to Staughton, July 11, 1825, McCoy Papers.

to members of the Board in his regular correspondence with them.[46] The only apparent explanation of the Board's decision to McCoy was ambiguous and came in the margin of a letter from Luther Rice dated September 29. Rice simply reported, "Your communication relative to the young brethren has been before the Board and a Committee appointed to wait on the gov't & endeavor to get some aid for them."[47] Not sure of what the Board was doing and determined to achieve his objectives regardless of what they said, McCoy informed Rice and Staughton on December 17 that he was coming with the boys in January. He assumed that the silence from the Board meant they were having trouble getting funds from the government. No matter, for he had already solicited educators at other institutions to place the boys if there was no place for them at Columbian.[48]

Meanwhile, the administrative troubles at Columbian had reached the tipping point, and with the new year in 1826 and an effort to mitigate the disaster came a changing of the guard on the Board that would be finalized at that year's Convention in April.[49] On January 10, Lucius Bolles of Salem, Massachusetts, wrote McCoy that the leadership of the Board was now in the hands of men in Boston, who had found the treasury empty. The Board had enough money to run its stations on the strictest economy, but that economy did not include educating Indians in the east. The Board now deemed it better to educate the boys among their own people, since

[46] Board of Foreign Missions Records (September 10, 1825). See McCoy to Rice, October 31, 1825; McCoy to Staughton, November 21, 1825; and McCoy to Francis Wayland, November 24, 1825, McCoy Papers.

[47] Luther Rice to McCoy, September 29, 1825, McCoy Papers.

[48] McCoy to Rice, December 17, 1825, McCoy Papers; see also McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 269.

[49] Staughton later allegedly described this meeting as a revolution. Francis Wayland led the Convention to sever ties with Columbian College and return solely to its original purpose of foreign missions. Lucius Bolles replaced Staughton as corresponding secretary of the Board, Heman Lincoln replaced Rice as treasurer, new Board members were elected, and the Board was officially moved from Washington to Boston (Ella, Isaac McCoy, 240-241; Eminhizer, "Triennial Convention," ch. 6). At first, McCoy was happy, despite the fact that the deposed Rice and Staughton were his friends. He anticipated that the financial nightmares of the past few years would end now that the Board no longer had Columbian College around its neck (Ella, Isaac McCoy, 241-242; McCoy to Corbly Martin, June 22, 1826, McCoy Papers).

they would be living among them anyway. In fact, the government would probably pay for a teacher to go there, which would be cheaper than bringing them east.[50]

Bolles' letter came too late, however. McCoy had already left for Washington with the boys on January 16, and the Board learned of this at its meeting on January 27. Staughton wrote McCoy on behalf of the Board the following day, chiding him for leaving prematurely and instructing him to take the boys to Richard Mentor Johnson's Choctaw Academy in Kentucky. There they could be educated among their fellow Indians in subjects such as the manual arts, which the Board deemed more appropriate for Indians than the classical curriculum at Columbian. The senator had agreed to take them at a cost of $150 per year, Staughton said, and the government would give them an annual appropriation of $100 each to attend. (Assumedly, the remaining $50 each would come from Carey's budget.) The Board had also projected that the white students at Columbian would be dissatisfied with their presence. With thinly-veiled exasperation, Staughton noted that they had reached this conclusion only after a long meeting. Rice wrote letters to McCoy at three different points along his anticipated route with these same instructions, and Francis Wayland, an influential Boston pastor and member of the Board, even added to the chorus.[51]

According to McCoy's account of what happened when he received these letters in February at Wheeling, Virginia, the boys themselves objected to going to the Choctaw Academy. They knew that the journey to that place would require retracing their steps through Ohio in subzero temperatures, and they insisted on either going forward to Washington or returning to Carey. McCoy, for his part, did not believe that they could get any better education in Kentucky

[50] Lucius Bolles to McCoy, January 10, 1826, McCoy Papers.

[51] George A. Schultz, *An Indian Canaan: Isaac McCoy and the Vision of an Indian State* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 81; McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 269-70; Board of Foreign Missions Records (January 27, 1826); Staughton to McCoy, January 28, 1826, McCoy Papers.

than they could at Carey, thus defeating his purposes. Having a letter in hand from Daniel Hascall of the Baptist Theological Institute in Hamilton, New York, that said that school could find a place for at least some of the boys, McCoy left the majority of them in Cumberland, Maryland, and headed on to Washington with one of the boys, Luther Rice (Noaquett), and an Odawa chief, Gosa, to meet with the Board.[52]

Over the course of four days in early March, McCoy met with the Board to try to decide where the boys should go. Contrary to the Board's earlier stated reservations about fears of student discontent, the students at Columbian wanted the Indian boys to attend there and signed a petition to the faculty in hopes of getting them there.[53] It was no use. The Board was determined for a "variety of reasons" not to send the boys to Columbian, but the minutes noted the overall conclusion that "the general tenor of the studies of that Institution, is not of the character which it is desirable these youths should pursue."[54] Even Rice, McCoy's ally in most cases, remarked that "it would be quite useless for them to study the Latin & Greek."[55]

McCoy attributed the real problem to a lack of funds, and he was correct that finances were weighing heavily on the Board's mind (Bolles' letter of January 10 had stated emphatically that the treasury was empty). Nevertheless, more than financial concerns were on the table, and it is hard to ignore a clear gulf that was developing between the Board's vision for Indian reform and McCoy's. In the meantime, since Hamilton was prepared to admit them, the New York school must have seemed like a good compromise. The Board agreed and McCoy returned to Maryland to pick up the boys and take them there.[56]

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[52] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 270-271.

[53] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 271; see also McCoy's letter of thanks to the Columbian students in McCoy to Baron Stow, March 17, 1826, McCoy Papers.

[54] Board of Foreign Missions Records (March 8, 1826).

[55] Rice to McCoy, January 28, 1826, McCoy Papers.

[56] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 271.

Bolles referred to one "Cornwall school" in his correspondence with McCoy on the subject of Indian education in the east, and this reference—far from being obscure and irrelevant—provides the key to understanding this episode. In 1817, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions opened the Foreign Missions School in the small town of Cornwall, Connecticut, and in the events that took place there, one can see the same combination of concerns about the cost of boarding and educating students from distant tribes, the relationships of those international students to members of the community, and the curriculum they should learn to be of best use in Christianizing and civilizing their fellow natives that the Baptists showed in this episode with McCoy. Over the decade or so of its existence, the Foreign Missions School brought together students from Hawaii, the Pacific Islands, China, India, the Malay Peninsula, Europe, Mexico, and numerous Native American tribes, where they studied the English language, mathematics, philosophy, classical languages, and a broad range of other subjects in the hopes that they would become Christians and return to their homeland as missionaries with far more effect than whites could. All was going tolerably well until John Ridge, a student from a prominent Cherokee family, fell in love with and married Sarah Northrup, the daughter of the school's steward, on January 27, 1824. This marriage was followed by that of Elias Boudinot, also a Cherokee, to Harriett Gold, daughter of a prominent Cornwall family, on March 28, 1826. These interracial marriages sparked outrage in the community; Harriett was even burned in effigy by townspeople (including members of her own family). The press in Connecticut and the nation at large condemned these unions in starkest terms, although there were also numerous defenders. Many blamed the school, and donations dropped precipitously. Indeed, it was a public relations nightmare for its managers. These

incidents gave fuel to the anti-missions fire that had smoldered alongside the flaming American missionary zeal.[57]

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions had recognized the difficulties and disappointments in such a school long before the marriage crisis arose. The students came from dramatically different cultures and diverse economic conditions, yet the administration tried to maintain equality among them. The goals of the school necessitated that students both adopt western cultural norms and maintain proficiency in their native culture, which resulted in cliques of students from the same homeland. As was to be expected, discipline problems abounded, some that were of a nature common at any boarding school, while others resulted from cultural misunderstandings. Many students, especially those from tropical regions, became ill as they adapted to the harsh New England climate. (Indeed, it was sickness that brought Ridge and Northrup together.) The community regarded the students with both curiosity and prejudice, and the school's administrators tried to regulate the students' contact with the outside world as much as possible, which did not prove easy. Because the students were of dramatically different ages, they could not all study the same curriculum: some had to learn English to even begin studying theology or mathematics, while others were prepared to dive into Greek and Latin. Even adjusting for the unreasonably-high hopes placed upon them, very few of the ninety-five students ever became effective missionaries; a few even became famous apostates. Although the members of the Board of Commissioners did not oppose the Ridge-Northrop and Boudinot-Gold marriages themselves, they used the outrage surrounding them as an opportunity. In November 1825, they began the process of closing the Foreign Missions School. In doing so, they emphatically stated that they no longer believed in the model of

[57] John Demos, *The Heathen School: A Story of Hope and Betrayal in the Age of the Early Republic* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), ch. 6.

bringing promising young "heathen" to America for education in preparation for mission work; they believed it more economical to train them for that task in their homelands.[58]

Members of the new Baptist Board of Missions would have certainly been familiar with the details of the Foreign Mission School and watching events there closely. (Because the American Board of Commissioners met in Boston where the new Baptist Board would move, it is likely that the members of both boards knew each other.) One can easily see how the themes they struck to McCoy in early 1826 mirror those addressed at Cornwall: the cost of educating youth among whites, white dissatisfaction with the arrangement, and the challenges surrounding the curriculum. Likewise, the overall proposal of saving money and trouble by educating the Indians in their homeland obviously comes from the boardrooms of the ABCFM. Their counterparts there had settled the issue as far as they were concerned.

The sticking points between McCoy and his new patrons were not just about Indian education but about Indian missions as a whole. Bolles made perfectly clear the new Board members' priorities in the same January 10 letter in which he shot down McCoy's plans for the boys. After telling McCoy that the brethren in Boston who had staged the coup d'état had found "the treasury empty, exertion abated & confidence impaired," he reported that "[t]heir first efforts were therefore directed to secure sufficient [funds] to sustain the expenses of the brethren abroad. They succeeded in doing this, & had it belonged to them without appearing to stretch themselves beyond their measure, I have no doubt they would have obtained enough for our Indian stations also, managed upon a frugal scale. This it was inexpedient for them to attempt & the result has been as it is."[59] Even though Bolles was trying to maintain an encouraging façade, he was essentially telling McCoy that Indian missions were not top priority for the new Board.

[58] Demos, *The Heathen School*, 219-239.
[59] Bolles to McCoy, January 10, 1826, McCoy Papers.

The new Board's focus would now be on missions outside of North America, which were the only ones in their minds that could claim the legitimate title of "foreign." If there were leftovers to be had, they would send them on to the Indians, but if not, McCoy and his associates would have to do without. The Board had given them second-class missionary status, choosing to leave their funding as much as possible to the federal government.

Indeed, even before 1826, the Burman mission was the Baptist crown jewel and tended to get the most press in denominational publications, as well as the most money. Adoniram Judson, after all, had the distinction of being the first Baptist missionary from the United States. He had arrived in Burma in 1813, quickly mastered the language, begun to write numerous tracts, and worked to translate the Bible. These tracts were printed on Baptist-provided presses in Burma and even returned with much fanfare to the United States to satisfy the curiosity of laypeople. By 1824, Judson had translated the entire New Testament and baptized eighteen converts. He and his fellow missionaries had even obtained an audience with the emperor. More relevant to the events of 1826, however, is the fact that Judson had been imprisoned for nineteenth months during Burma's recent war with Great Britain; the Burmese government had deemed foreigners suspect and taken him into custody. Even taking into account the Board's desire to support missionaries in such emergencies, Bolles' letter leaves the nagging question: why not at least attempt to divide the meagre resources more evenly? Of course, the Baptists had missionaries in India and Liberia by that point, as well. These simply took priority for the new Board; India mattered more than the Indians.[60]

[60] Board of Foreign Missions, *Report*s (1821), 338; (1824), 418; (1825), 215-216. Note, for examples, the Burmese quote on the inside cover of the Board's 1817 *Report* and a translation of a Burmese tract in the 1818 *Report* (213-215) and the aforementioned 1826 *Report* of the Board for how Burma got more press. See also a discussion of Judson's imprisonment in Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *Mission for Life: The Story of the Family of Adoniram Judson, the Dramatic Events of the First American Foreign Mission, and the Course of Evangelical Religion in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Free Press, 1980), ch. 3. For a brief history of Judson's ministry, see Durso, *Baptists*, 90-98.

The committee assigned to report on the status of Carey and Thomas stations at the Convention was sympathetic, however, and criticized the Board's management. It observed that "the want of timely and explicit instructions from the Board has occasioned no small embarrassment to your Missionaries on more than one occasion." It also reported that "no supplies have been furnished by the Board for this Station." It continued, "The Mission since that period has been supported by monies granted by the United States, by the labour of the missionaries, and the produce of their farms; and by money, clothing, and provision collected by Mr. McCoy and a few others in the pressing exigencies of the Mission."[61] The Convention therefore recognized that the Board had left the funding of its Indian missions to the government and the charity of individuals. Unfortunately, the prospects for improvement with the new Board were not good. In the end, the Board members determined that they owed Carey $1,113.55½ and voted to send $1,000. Their long-term solution was to put the missionaries on a salary, which was in direct violation of the Family Rules. Of course, McCoy complained vigorously about this new arrangement. He argued that being salaried encouraged private interest while distracting from the ministry and robbed the missionaries of the privilege of giving their services to the Lord. At its August 29 meeting, the Board reversed the decision to put the missionaries at Carey on a salary.[62]

Another part of the new Board's efforts to get the Convention on sound financial footing was cutting off funding for McCoy's sons' education. In February 1824, the old Board had agreed to admit Rice and Josephus McCoy to Columbian College for a medical education, which would be useful to the mission. In July 1825, they had decided to allow $400 per year (the amount of McCoy's government salary) for that purpose as an expression of respect to McCoy.

[61] Baptist General Convention, *Report* (1826), 25-27).

[62] Board of Foreign Missions Records (April 19, May 10, and August 29, 1826); McCoy to Bolles, July 22, 1826, ABFMS Correspondence; McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 283-285.

Apparently, the old Board, overextended as it was, had lost track of this commitment. The new Board, in the midst of sorting through accounts, suddenly learned that the boys' bills were not being paid and resolved that educating missionary children was no longer their obligation. In the same June 17 letter in which he informed McCoy that the missionaries would be going on individual salaries, Bolles also told McCoy that he was now to take charge of his sons' education. McCoy protested vigorously on July 22 that the Board was going back on its promises. He questioned how they could expect him to pay for his sons' education when his salary went into a common fund and he was arguing on principle against doing otherwise. This decision, he lamented, would deprive missionary children of the chance for a good education.[63]

The Board nevertheless held firm on August 29 that it was not going to pay for the education of missionary children or of any more Indian children. On September 1, Bolles reported these resolutions to McCoy, arguing that the education the missionaries' children received at the mission stations should be adequate and that educating the Indians in the east was an unnecessary privilege that left them dependent on whites and unwilling to return to their homes, which defeated the purpose of educating them in the first place. He reiterated the Board's earlier point that Indian students would be better served by a common education that emphasized manual labor so that they could make their living from the soil and be independent of whites. (Of course, this was exactly the purpose Carey Mission; yet by harping on this point, Bolles accused Carey of failing to achieve it.) There was, then, this intermediate stage between native culture and settled, educated white culture. Once the Indians as a whole were at the

[63] Board of Foreign Missions Records (February 17, 1824; July 9, 1825; June 13, 1826); Bolles to McCoy, June 17, 1826, McCoy Papers; McCoy to Bolles, July 22, 1826, ABFMS Correspondence.

intermediate stage of civilization, the secretary maintained, then some of them could be educated alongside the whites in the east to learn higher refinements of culture.[64]

One cannot help but observe that the board's definition of privilege and privation appear to have been based not as much on objective economic standards as on their ethnocentric assumptions that America was rich and the rest of the world was poor, that European civilization was the epitome of culture while the rest of the world languished in ignorance. Likewise, this supposed concern for avoiding dependency was rooted in the American cultural devotion to hard work and independence (pulling oneself up by the bootstraps); it is the same impulse that produced (often self-righteous) efforts to discern between the deserving and undeserving poor in the New England benevolence movement. Again, here the Baptist Board was echoing the American Board of Commissioners. Members of that group had likewise expressed concern when the Foreign Mission School closed that its students were getting a taste of privilege in America and losing their ability to undergo the privations necessary to Christianize and civilize their people. Ostensibly based on their experience with graduates who did return home only to fail to live up to the high hopes placed upon them, they concluded that students who never left their homelands in the first place might prove to be better candidates for enduring the supposed hardships of missionary life. In reality, however, both boards were capitulating to the prejudices of the white community and blaming perceived failures of the Indians for their actions. In this case, Bolles blamed his own missionaries, as well.[65]

Bolles even used an excerpt from McCoy's journal to prove his point. The *American Baptist Magazine* had published an extract that very month in which the mission employed McCoy's first ever Indian student (only his initials, C— D—, were given) because they had

[64] Bolles to McCoy, September 1, 1826, McCoy Papers.
[65] Demos, *The Heathen School*, 223.

found him wandering around Fort Wayne destitute. When they no longer needed his labor, they advised him to improve a farm in the area. He responded by "weeping like a child" and saying the task was too hard. The missionaries encouraged him and helped him select a place.[66] Bolles analyzed that the student's "habit of industry & dependence upon his own exertions in the new direction given to them, was not fully formed. He had been accustomed to modes of living with you to the enjoyment of a bountiful table spread by benevolence which he could no longer realize without industry & application to which he was averse."[67] Being no doubt familiar with the conclusions of the ABCFM regarding the "privilege" of students trained among whites, Bolles read those into this anecdote and threw in the stereotype of the Indians as lazy for good measure. Here was proof that even students being educated in their homelands had fallen prey to privilege. Having left the comfortable mission environment, one of them did not even know how to build a life for himself, least well to help his fellow countrymen do the same.

Bolles went on to make a broader point about the methods for Indian reform, revealing a clear gulf between the Board and its missionaries: a boarding school to civilize the Indians was too expensive and produced too few positive results. This discussion was also the prime opportunity to resurrect the ever-circulating rumors of lavish living at Carey, and Bolles did not pass on it. He chastised the missionaries that it was "as wrong to create a constant disposition in [the students] for articles not essential to wholesome living as it would be to accustom them to the use of spirits." Furthermore, all of that alleged tea, coffee, and sugar the missionaries were doling out was creating a dependence in the Indian students similar to the alcohol addiction that raged through the villages of their parents, and when they could not get it, they sank back into their "savage custom." Never mind that these rumors had been debunked by the previous Board

[66] "Extracts from the Journal at Carey," *ABM*, September 1826, 273.
[67] Bolles to McCoy, September 1, 1826, McCoy Papers.

and before the Triennial Convention itself. The Board assumed that since Carey was costing so much, the rumors must have been true.[68]

Bolles was now hitting McCoy, who prided himself in his self-deprivation and advocacy of temperance, below the belt. McCoy received Bolles' September 1 letter on September 25 and responded in part on September 27. While thankful that the Board backed down from putting the missionaries on a salary, he remained adamant that they should also continue to provide for his children's education. First, he dealt with the Board's proclamation that the common education the missionary children got at the Indian station would be adequate by lamenting that the missionaries could not give their children a common education in the wilderness. He protested, "I assure you that no father or mother with anything like right feelings will ever consent to bring up their children among Indians who are in the depraved and savage condition which these are among whom we labor." The Board was basically condemning missionary children to the same low prospects as the Indians, he argued, because they could not expect to function in white society with what they could get among the Indians.[69] This complaint amounts to a candid (and unintentional) admission of the failure of Indian reform as it had been conducted to that point. It is an observation that the Indians most directly associated with the Baptist mission could not meet the standards of christianization and civilization that the Baptists espoused.

McCoy went on to claim the education of his children as a right after all he had done for the Board and its missionary efforts. He had brought in thousands of dollars in government money for Baptist missionary efforts, and he promised that he would send another letter with precise figures. He emphasized that he had not spent a cent of this money on himself but on the mission. In fact, three small tracts of land were his only private property, property that he would

[68] Ibid.
[69] McCoy to Bolles, September 27, 1826, ABFMS Correspondence.

have to sell to provide for his children. Finally, he rehearsed some of the hardships the missionaries had faced, which reinforced how "depraved and savage" the Indians were in his mind. He described for Bolles how an Indian had attempted to strangle his nine-year-old daughter while they were at Fort Wayne. He explained that "an old Indian woman, a domestic of our family" had been murdered near their house the previous July. He pled, "Take these facts as specimens of thousands similar and then ask yourself, my good brother, if you would bring up your sons, and your daughters among such a people! No. You could not. You ought not." McCoy felt he was doing dirty work in the name of God that no one else should want to do; for that reason, a Board-sponsored education for his children was his "righteous due." Again, one also sees the candid admission that Indian reform was failing. The attack on his daughter had taken place near the beginning of McCoy's ministry; the attack on the old woman had happened within the previous month. Little had changed in McCoy's estimation.[70] Even as Bolles and McCoy disagreed on methods to civilize and Christianize the Indians, they agreed that what had been done was not achieving the results they desired.

This exchange is insightful because it reveals a tension between McCoy and the Indians in addition to the obvious tension between McCoy and his sponsors. In McCoy's mind, he had sacrificed and suffered for the Indians, but they had repaid him with rejection—and even attempts on the lives of his family members. Intellectually, McCoy had accepted such as a reality of Christian ministry. Emotionally, however, it had clearly drained him. His demands to the Board were not mere reactions to perhaps callous and incomprehensible mismanagement; they were an outgrowth of his own self-righteous sense of martyrdom.

The letter closed on the subject of the education of Indian students. As if bringing the Hamilton boys to the east to study had not caused enough complications already, McCoy now

[70] Ibid.

notified Bolles that he intended to bring two more boys to Castleton, Vermont, for medical school. He had already written Bolles about this plan two weeks earlier on September 11 while requesting more money to relieve debts. Friends in Vermont had arranged for their studies, but they needed money for travel. He asked the Board for $300 to that end. Having returned to that topic, McCoy now addressed the Board's new preference for educating the Indians in their homeland. He warned Bolles that even if 500 Potawatomis learned how to plow (i.e., the mechanical arts education the Board emphasized), they still could not compete with the United States government. They needed to go east to mingle with whites and learn how to contend for "the rights of man." In other words, they needed to learn how to defend their rights in the American legal system and argue for them in the public square. The best place to learn how to do that was not on the isolated frontier, but in the place where they would be doing it: the centers of white power.[71]

McCoy was true to his word, and on November 23, he compiled a list of all the money he had gotten from the government for Baptist Indian missions, including what he had gotten at the late treaty. The treaty reserved a total of 10,240 acres for former pupils of Carey and other Potawatomis who were connected to the school. The mission received $500 in goods, and McCoy also expected that $1,200 of the $2,000 reserved for education would go to Carey.[72] These most recent additions brought the total amount of money McCoy had brought or expected to bring in from the government to $72,381.50. Then, McCoy began to answer Bolles' charges of making the Indians dependent upon the mission, which he said he had almost been willing to ignore. When C— D— was with them, they lived in poverty and labored hard. Sometimes they

[71] McCoy to Bolles, September 11 and 27, 1826, McCoy Papers. See also Pharcellus Church to McCoy, August 12, 1826, McCoy Papers.

[72] These funds eventually went entirely to Richard Mentor Johnson's Choctaw Academy (Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, 257-258; Schultz, *No Indian Canaan*, 88).

went without bread, he protested. Now to be accused of making the Indians as dependent on the mission as if they were teaching them to drink whiskey was "too hard! We expect the Board to take it back, or to favour us with the evidence on which they predicate their censure." The missionaries did not use flour except on the occasions that it could be gotten cheaper than corn meal. They did drink milk because it was not expensive, but they only used coffee sparingly. They made their own tea. Often, they did not even have these items or they were reserved only for the sick. Their expenditure reports should show all of this, McCoy reminded Bolles. He ended the letter on a conciliatory note, expressing his desire to be cooperative and obedient.[73] Nevertheless, the Board persisted in its refusal to fund the education missionary children and Indian students.[74]

As the year 1827 progressed, the Board continued to seek money-saving measures and urge retrenchment, while the missionaries responded that they were living in poverty and doing all that they could to be resourceful. One cost-saving measure that the Board recommended amounted to shutting down the boarding schools at Carey and Thomas and establishing missionaries in the Potawatomi and Odawa villages. This suggestion came in a letter from Bolles on February 22, 1827. The corresponding secretary proposed putting a man in the Indian villages who would act as a pastor and teacher. He would school Indian children part time and spend the rest of his time visiting in Indian homes to pray and teach. This might be a more economical model for converting and civilizing the Indians, Bolles suggested. He requested McCoy's thoughts on the subject.[75]

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[73] McCoy to Bolles, November 23, 1826, McCoy Papers.

[74] Bolles to McCoy, November 28, 1826, McCoy Papers. McCoy's frustration with the Board is underlined by the fact that he had someone copy all of his correspondence with Bolles in the latter half of 1826 into a separate notebook. He apparently wanted the evidence in one place so that he could use it in his defense should it be needed. See also another letter from a missionary at Carey to Bolles, dated January 10, 1827, in the McCoy Papers.

[75] Bolles to McCoy, February 22, 1827, McCoy Papers.

McCoy replied to this proposal on April 16, addressing first the root issue at play: how expensive Carey had proven. He admitted that the boarding school and farm was expensive and that it might have grown too large, yet he did not regret taking on the number of students that Carey had. He explained that the mission had grown so large of necessity, "to secure a tolerable share of public patronage." He might have added—but did not—that the school had grown so large because the missionaries found it hard to turn away potential students, each one of whom provided them the opportunity to help the Indians. Then, McCoy took up the Board's proposal for a village missionary. A teacher in the villages part time would not work, he argued, because Indian parents were indifferent to education. They would not compel their children to attend, and the children would not do so voluntarily. Furthermore, the Indians hunted in fall and winter and farmed for subsistence in the summer, so this missionary in the villages would be alone for a greater part of the year. He might help a few Indians, McCoy projected, but he would not benefit as many as a boarding school would. The way the missionaries at Carey and Thomas were operating at that time was the best way given the "unsettled" state of the Indians.[76] McCoy hoped that he was laying this suggestion for a change of methodology to rest, but the Board continued to look for cheaper options and demand retrenchment at all of its Indian stations, not just Carey and Thomas.[77]

Carey's financial troubles endured through the decade. McCoy and his fellow missionaries continued to ask the Board for money to pay the station's debts. The Board honored almost every plea for specific amounts, although at times with raised eyebrows, but they never appear to have completely paid off the debts as McCoy frequently requested. It seems highly likely that only the sale of Carey Station in preparation for removal actually retired its

[76] McCoy to Bolles, April 16, 1827, ABFMS Correspondence.
[77] Board of Foreign Missions Records (April 22, 1827; December 14, 1827; May 1, 1828).

debts. A key problem in the relationship at this stage was that the missionaries believed they were entitled to more money in hand than the Board actually gave them. McCoy claimed that they were only giving Carey money from government sources and designated giving—rarely from the general fund. On one occasion when McCoy made this claim, the Board responded that they had in fact already applied the money to his debts instead of sending it to him directly. Yet again, in July 1829, McCoy went through asking about funds that he thought would be available.[78] Clearly, McCoy and the Board had different expectations even after almost a decade of working together. McCoy claimed he was entitled to a government allowance, designated giving, and money from the general fund—and he expected this money to be put at his disposal. As a missionary in the employ of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, this was not an unreasonable expectation. The Board, meanwhile, did not want to dip into its often-meagre general fund for Indian reform unless it had no other choice. The discrepancies in accounting became obvious on March 29, 1830, when the Board appointed a committee to examine the accounts, "as there appears to be a difference in the results at which [McCoy and the treasurer] have arrived." What became of this investigation is unclear.[79]

As the decade drew to a close, the attention of McCoy, his fellow missionaries, the Board, the Baptist denomination, and the nation itself was increasingly on Indian removal, as

[78] McCoy to Bolles, April 16 and May 29, 1827, and April 7 and June 25, 1828, ABFMS Correspondence; Bolles to McCoy, August 15, 1827, and July 13, 1829, McCoy Papers; Board of Foreign Missions Records (August 7, 1828). McCoy even took his claims that the board relied solely on government money to fund Indian missions before the 1829 Convention (see *Baptist Indian Missions*, 382). The government appraised Carey for $5,721.50 in the fall of 1830 (Board of Foreign Missions Records [November 1, 1830]).

[79] Board of Foreign Missions Records (March 29, 1830). Biographers of McCoy usually interpret McCoy's statements during this period to mean that the Board misappropriated government funds, as well (see McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 370; Reynolds, "Carey Station," 83; and Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, 314-315). In fact, there is no conclusive evidence that they did so, even though their actions are often questionable. The fault seems to lie more with the government than the Board in this instance. Bolles reported on August 17, 1827, that the government had changed the rules inexplicably, which is why McCoy had not received his allowances for the previous few months. A $2,000 annuity from the Miami treaty also seems to have stopped inexplicably. Political intrigue also cost Carey Station some income that had been promised, and Richard Mentor Johnson with his Choctaw Academy was a key player in it (see the Board of Foreign Missions Records [November 12 and 21, 1828; January 7, 1829; and April 1, 1829]).

many doubted the success of Indian reform in situ. The management of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions had not helped matters. They had failed to anticipate the high costs and tried to cut corners when that high cost became apparent. They had focused too many resources into failed investments, which siphoned money away from missions—to the Indians or anyone else. They had failed to maintain a sustained, productive working relationship with their missionaries, which led to bitterness and distrust. They had questioned the methodology of their missionaries, and finally even their integrity. One can seriously question whether Indian reform was a priority in the Board's mind at all. The task of Indian reform as McCoy conceived of it proved in the end to be well beyond the resources and will of the Baptist leadership. Indian reform failed and so did the Baptists.

Chapter 2: The Sins of the Indians

The visit from a prophet must surely have been no ordinary house call. On Monday, May 13, 1833, Kenekuk the Kickapoo Prophet stopped in Jackson County, Missouri, to see Baptist missionary Isaac McCoy. Kenekuk and his Vermillion Band of Kickapoos had been removed from their home in Illinois, and he had come to renew his request that the Baptists establish a school for them in their new home west of the Missouri River. Kenekuk, like McCoy, had spent the last decade condemning the drinking of alcohol that was devastating native communities. He, too, had preached that his hearers must follow the Great Spirit's commands or face damnation. He, too, honored the Sabbath. He had made every effort to get along with his white neighbors; in fact, his followers looked a lot like them. The Baptists, then, not surprisingly thought that the Kickapoos would be easy converts to Christianity; they were already knocking on the door. Yet the Baptist mission to the Kickapoos quickly failed. Kenekuk, in fact, preached his own interpretation of Christianity mixed with native beliefs that was designed to make his followers look like their white neighbors while yet maintaining their native identity. His followers adhered to his preaching strictly, for he was one of them—not an outsider like McCoy and the other missionaries. His path had proven a far more resilient (although by no means foolproof) way to resist white encroachment than other nativist preachers like Tenskwatawa.

A disgusted McCoy, however, offered his final evaluation of Kenekuk's religion as "a step from savage blindness into greater absurdity." The missionary had been advocating different plans for the Indians' future. The goal of his missions for the previous decade had been

to turn the natives into civilized American Christians, effectively eradicating their distinct identity as Indians. The tribes could not remain as Indians and survive, McCoy believed; they had to follow his prescriptions for their future as Americans or perish. This encounter with Kenekuk demonstrated to McCoy that the Indians were still trying to go their own way. In his mind, this effort was as foolhardy as it was sinful. It was as ill-advised as it was theologically heterodox.[1]

This chapter explores how Isaac McCoy interpreted aspects of Native American life throughout his ministry in the Old Northwest during the 1820s. In his letters, journals, and reports, the Baptist missionary took great pains to describe the culture, religion, and lifestyle of his Potawatomi and Odawa neighbors, and these writings provide a wealth of information about the world of the Great Lakes tribes between the defeat of Tenskwatawa and Tecumseh's militant nativism in 1815 and removal in the 1830s. Of course, McCoy's reports served a purpose other than documentation: they were the medium by which he pled with his fellow Baptists for their prayers, their donations, and even their presence on the mission field. He was therefore very conscious in his writing of appearances and the need to justify his presence in Indian country. As a result, he detailed for his Baptist readership what he considered the sins of the Indians: a devotion to superstitions and a propensity to alcoholism and violence. His purpose as a missionary was to save them from these sins, and in effect, his reports also pointed to the new life he imagined for the Indians as Christians and Americans.[2]

The historians who have used McCoy's voluminous writings have typically done so to talk about the missionaries themselves or the government's policy of removal, and indeed, his

[1] Isaac McCoy, *History of Baptist Indian Missions* (Washington, DC: William M. Morrison, 1840), 456-458; Isaac McCoy, *Journal* (May 23, 1833), Isaac McCoy Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka; Joseph B. Herring, *Kenekuk, the Kickapoo Prophet* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988).

[2] McCoy would have been quick to interject that he was not the one who would save them but rather that he was preaching to them the one who could save them.

papers are an invaluable resource for those subjects. Historians have seldom, however, used his collection to talk in any detail about the Native Americans to whom he was ministering. McCoy's most recent biographers, George A. Schultz and George Melvyn Ella, do not discuss at any length what McCoy's papers reveal about Potawatomi and Odawa culture; Ella, in particular, takes McCoy's perspective on their world at face value. R. David Edmunds has masterfully described the culture of the Potawatomi and their encounter with Europeans and Americans in *The Potawatomis: Keepers of the Fire*. Although he naturally mentions McCoy's mission at Carey, he does not explore McCoy's reports that detail the day-to-day interactions of the Potawatomis with the station. Historians who explore McCoy's role in removal likewise study his opinions but not the people among whom he ministered.[3] The interactions McCoy had with the natives at his stations are useful in explaining why he eventually advocated removal as a way to Christianize and civilize them as well as how the tribes adapted to the presence and power of whites—often in hopes of avoiding removal. This chapter therefore attempts to explain McCoy's perspective on the world of the Potawatomis and Odawas, but it does not take that perspective at face value.

Isaac McCoy was born in western Pennsylvania in 1784, and his family migrated to Kentucky when he was six years old. He was converted under his mother's influence at the age of sixteen and baptized on March 6, 1801. His father taught him to be a wheelwright. That trade helped to support his family—he married Christiana Polke on October 6, 1803—but his passion

[3] George Melvyn Ella, *Isaac McCoy: Apostle of the Western Trail* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2003); Edward R. Roustio, *Early Indian Missions: As Reflected in the Unpublished Manuscripts of Isaac McCoy* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2000); George A. Schultz, *Indian Canaan: Isaac McCoy and the Vision of an Indian State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972); Walter N. Wyeth, *Isaac McCoy: Early Indian Missions* (Philadelphia, 1895); R. David Edmunds, *The Potawatomis: Keepers of the Fire* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978); John A. Andrew, *From Revivals to Removal: Jeremiah Evarts, the Cherokee Nation, and the Search for the Soul of America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), ch. 6; Mary Hershberger, "Mobilizing Women, Anticipating Abolition: The Struggle against Indian Removal in the 1830s," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 1 (June 1999): 15-40; William G. McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789-1839* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), ch. 11.

was to be a Christian missionary. He began his pastoral ministry by starting a Baptist church on Maria Creek near Vincennes, Indiana, in 1809. As McCoy settled in to shepherd his flock on Maria Creek, a Shawnee religious leader named Tenskwatawa was shepherding his at Prophetstown, further up the Wabash River.[4]

In 1805, Tenskwatawa was known as Lalawethika. That year, he claimed to have received a vision from the Master of Life, after which he took on the mantle of a prophet and the new name, which means "the open door." Tenskwatawa proclaimed that the Great Spirit now required his Indian children to separate from whites; they must not wear white clothing, eat food cooked by whites, or continue commerce with them. Indians who desired eternal life were to refrain from drinking alcohol or intermarrying with whites. They were to restore communal ownership of property and practice monogamy. Tenskwatawa also instituted new rituals, including dances and prayers to the Master of Life. He also had traditionally-sacred medicine bundles destroyed to protect against malevolent powers. In early 1806, his followers executed as witches four Delawares who had converted to Christianity or otherwise tried to accommodate to white ways. He began to attract members from other tribes into his fold at Greenville, Ohio, and by 1808, the community had moved into Indiana to a location on the Wabash that became known as Prophetstown. Tenskwatawa dreamed of an independent Indian nation carved out of lands that had not been ceded to the Americans and refused to sell any more lands.[5]

This dream put him on a collision course with Indiana's conniving territorial governor, William Henry Harrison, who hoped to revive his ailing political fortunes by squeezing more

[4] Isaac McCoy, *The Autobiography of Isaac McCoy: Recounting His Early Life, Conversion, Marriage, and Ministry in Indiana 1784-1816* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2011); Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, 42-46.

[5] Alfred A. Cave, *Prophets of the Great Spirit: Native American Revitalization Movements in Eastern North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), ch. 2; R. David Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), chs. 2-4; Adam Jortner, *The Gods of Prophetstown: The Battle of Tippecanoe and the Holy War for the American Frontier* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), ch. 11.

land cessions from the tribes. Tecumseh, Tenskwatawa's brother and diplomat, met Harrison face-to-face in August 1810 and July 1811 in summits designed to maintain peace, but they accomplished little—Harrison, for his part, did not make a good-faith effort. The governor's forces finally moved north from Vincennes in the fall of 1811 to launch a preemptive strike on Prophetstown that was again designed more to revive Harrison's political fortunes than to protect Indiana from the threat of an Indian attack. The American troops and native warriors engaged in battle during the dawn hours of November 7 about a mile from Prophetstown. Although feted in later American political lore as a glorious victory for Harrison, this Battle of Tippecanoe was in reality a disaster for both sides. The Americans burned Prophetstown and retreated, but the Indians rebuilt it within weeks. Tenskwatawa, Tecumseh, and their native allies went on to fight alongside the British after the Americans declared war the following June.[6]

McCoy lived through these events during his days at Maria Creek. It is possible that he even witnessed the fanfare surrounding the summits between Governor Harrison and Tecumseh. During the War of 1812, Tenskwatawa's forces conducted raids into the neighborhood of Maria Creek, killing settlers and destroying property. White families in the area spent the early part of the war in the local fort for protection. A church member later recalled that the church had to set sentries to keep watch for Indian raids during services, and McCoy often had his rifle with him as he preached. McCoy himself later recollected leading expeditions in pursuit of retreating Indian raiders.[7]

Did McCoy's war-time experience affect his subsequent professional life as a missionary to the Indians? His biographer, George M. Ella, thinks so, writing "It was while fighting with a rifle in his hand that McCoy realized that he must return [to Indian country] with a Bible instead

[6] Cave, *Prophets*, ch. 3; Edmunds, *Shawnee Prophet*, ch. 5; Jortner, *Gods of Prophetstown*, chs. 12-14.
[7] Wyeth, *Early Indian Missions*, 12-14; McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 344.

of a rifle." It is certainly believable that McCoy, whether while fighting or reflecting later on the experience, thought that if he took the Christian message of God's love and peace to the Indians they would soon be at love and peace with the Americans. Nevertheless, McCoy's own surviving writings do not romanticize the events in this way and offer little commentary on how he went from fighting the Indians to preaching to them. His journals in the years 1816, 1817, and 1818 as well as his description of the course of events in his *History of Baptist Indian Missions* (1840) suggest that his passion was simply to be a missionary; he wrote in the summer of 1816, "My anxiety to preach, to spend my time wholly in the work of the ministry…was such that I was restless." The Indians were indeed a concern, he recollected, but a secondary concern, and he would have gone to white frontiersmen in Missouri just as readily. Nevertheless, when his appointment from the Board of Missions came in September 1817 and someone else went to the western frontier, he took that chain of events as his cue to go to the Indians in his home area.[8]

He therefore moved his family into the forests of western Indiana in the fall of 1818 to work among the Miamis along the Wabash River. The 1820 Convention instructed him to move to Fort Wayne because the Miamis had objected to his station along the Wabash. McCoy moved from Fort Wayne in December 1822 to a square-mile tract of land on the banks of the St. Joseph's River in southwestern Michigan Territory (near present-day Niles) granted by the Potawatomis at the Treaty of Chicago in 1821; this station was named Carey after the famed Baptist missionary to India, William Carey. The Treaty of Chicago also opened the door for a mission to the Odawas, although tribal opposition prevented McCoy and his associates from establishing a school (on the site of present-day Grand Rapids) among them until December

[8] Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, 56-57; McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 43-44. Note McCoy's journal in the fall of 1816 for his desire to be a missionary; the first—and sudden—reference to the Indians is on November 11, 1817, after he had already received his appointment from the Board. See also General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions, *Report* (1817), 141; Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, *Report* (1818), 199-200.

1826. The missionaries christened this station Thomas after another British Baptist missionary to India, John Thomas. From Fort Wayne, Carey, and Thomas in the 1820s, McCoy wrote to his fellow Baptists with numerous details about the world of the tribes around him—and the sins from which he hoped to redeem the Indians.[9]

McCoy closely observed life in the villages around him, but his concern was conversion and not anthropology. He described numerous native traditions and beliefs in detail for his readers, thus introducing them to the Indians' first sin as he saw it: a devotion to superstitions. The January 1824 edition of the *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer* contained McCoy's description of a feast the Odawas held each spring when they returned from their winter hunting grounds. During the feast, the villagers gathered around a table and sang thanksgiving to the Great Spirit for preserving them through the previous year. An elder then led in a prayer, both thanking the Spirit for bringing them together in a new year and requesting the Spirit's blessings on their endeavors in the coming year. McCoy's informant reported that the words of his request were often as basic as, "O, my father, we want corn, we want beans, &c. &c. give us these things." After the meal and more songs, the villagers would disperse to plant their crops for the year.[10]

In October 1823, McCoy actually attended an Odawa feast of a different nature. This *metawuk*, or medicine dance, consisted of a day-long series of dances and speeches concluded by

[9] Isaac McCoy to William Staughton, September 6, 1821; Richard Mentor Johnson to McCoy, March 26, 1822, Isaac McCoy Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka; McCoy, *Journal* (July 16, and December 9, 1822), McCoy Papers; Baptist General Convention, *Report* (1820), 133; Baptist General Convention, *Report* (1823) in *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer*, July 1823, 138-39; Board of Missions, *Report* (1827), 8; Isaac McCoy, "Fort Wayne and Carey Stations," *ABM&MI*, May 1824, 330-331; "Extracts from Mr. M'Coy's Journal at Carey," *American Baptist Magazine*, February 1825, 55-56; "Letter from Rev. Isaac M'Coy to One of the Editors," *ABM*, March 1825, 86-87; "Extracts from Mr. M'Coy's Journal," *ABM*, April 1827, 104-108; McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 174. For more on Odawa opposition to the Treaty of Chicago, see Theodore J. Karamanski, *Blackbird's Song: Andrew J. Blackbird and the Odawa People* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2012), 35-36, and James M. McClurken, *Our People, Our Journey: The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2009), 23.

[10] "Extracts from the Journal of the Rev. Mr. M'Coy," *ABM*, January 1824, 261.

an evening meal. The villagers gathered in a specially-erected arena covered by deerskin mats and surrounded by chest-high log walls. Around 11:00 in the morning, the lengthy series of dances began. McCoy noted that the pace of these dances could be very fast; he counted up to 150 drum beats per minute. Every male in the village led a dance in turn while robed in elaborate animal skin costumes. Interspersed between the dances were rounds of smoking and speeches. McCoy learned at the end of the day that these speeches served for moral exhortation and also to address the spirits as if they were physically present. His description of them revealed as much about his own belief system as it did about the value and evaluation of public speaking in Odawa culture: "Some speeches were long, others short. Some spake deliberately, others as fast as the tongue could clatter. It is supposed that a capacity to deliver very long sentences without taking a breath is a fine accomplishment. I often thought during their speeches of our Lord's words in relation to vain repetitions in prayer." Most likely, the pace and length of individual speeches were closely related to the purpose of the speech, but because McCoy could not understand the Odawa language, he could only make a broad statement—indeed, a condemnation. The day concluded with a meal consisting only of boiled meat, which was held between sundown and dark. When the meal was finished, the villagers dispersed in silence to their own homes. McCoy was able to learn the supposed origin and purpose of the *metawuk* from a member of his company. Long ago, the Great Spirit had sent a spirit in the form of a boy to the first man, ordering him and his descendants to perform these medicine dances. In addition to moral exhortation, this festival provided an opportunity to intercede for the sick. All the tribes in the area observed these speeches, McCoy noted.[11]

The missionary concluded his long description of the *metawuk* with a final evaluation: "I now venture to repeat what I have elsewhere written, that I believe no secret society, united by

[11] "Continuation of Extracts from Mr. M'Coy's Journal," *Latter Day Luminary,* April 1824, 113-118.

systematic forms, and mutual obligations, exists among the Indians, any further than what relates to conjuring and juggling." From the perspective of Christianity with its rigorous doctrinal statements, complex theological arguments, ancient religious rites, established church institutions, and expansive moral codes, the Odawas appeared to have no system in their religion. Conjuring—doing dances, playing drums, giving long speeches, carrying medicine bundles to invoke the spirits—could not be systematic by comparison, in McCoy's view. Furthermore, according to Christian theology, the spirits that the Odawas supposedly invoked in these rituals existed in opposition to the supreme God; they were, at best, demons, if they even existed at all. McCoy could thus reduce Indian religion to "rude feats of hocus-pocus," as if it was the work of cheap magicians bent on tricking people.[12]

Despite his dismissal of the festival he witnessed, McCoy was accurate in his observation that rituals such as these were central to Odawa religion. The natives' system—and it *was* a system—of rituals was designed to access spiritual power, both for individuals and for the community, and to preserve the natural order of the world. The spring festival McCoy described for his readers was a ritual that the Odawa believed ensured a good harvest; indeed, without proper observance of that ritual, they feared drought and starvation. The Odawa *metawuk* that McCoy witnessed sought to access spiritual power for healing of the sick.[13] Algonquin tribes, which included the Potawatomi and Odawa, believed in a creator god, but they did not traditionally believe him to be omnipotent or omniscient; they usually believed him to be too busy to care for individuals on a regular basis. Many of these tribes also believed in subordinate deities who helped the creator run the universe and were also too busy to intervene in human

[12] Ibid., 117-118.

[13] Cave, *Prophets*, 37, 69, 71, 76-79; Edmunds, *Potawatomis*, 20-21. See also Matthew Dennis, *Seneca Possessed: Indians, Witchcraft, and Power in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York: Knopf, 1970).

affairs. It was the lesser spirits in the natural world around them whose help they most often sought in their rituals, giving attention to the creator only on the most important occasions (for example, the spring festival). Within this context of a worldview based on attaining spiritual power, it is easy to see how the native people who encountered McCoy and his fellow missionaries could incorporate various Christian ideas and interpret them as a new source of power without necessarily converting in the way in which the missionaries understood it, that is, rejecting the old tribal belief system entirely in exchange for worship of one God.[14]

These lesser spirits inhabited many corners of the natural world, the Odawas believed, and they could both harm and help individuals. McCoy relayed several instances of this belief in the March 1828 edition of the *American Baptist Magazine*. Not far from Thomas Station, he explained, was a lake that the Odawas supposed to be the haunt of spirits that emitted sounds like gunfire. In the center of the lake was a mysteriously-growing heap of ashes as well the trunk of a tree inexplicably suspended in the water, which had been so for years and would capsize any canoe that ventured too close. Another tree on the bank of the lake had been struck by lightning the previous fall and was still burning. Although the snow had been over a foot deep that winter, the fire had melted any snow within a radius of the burning tree. The Odawas feared that "when the fire reaches the earth it will enkindle in it, and continue to burn, as it is evidently a kind of fire unquenchable by water." The spirits in this Gun-Lake were dangerous and to be avoided at all costs.[15]

Other spirits, however, were beneficial. In the same report, McCoy told the story of a group of Odawas "[t]hree ages ago" (possibly three generations) that was starving from the

[14] For an explanation of the cosmology of the Delawares and Shawnee, see Cave, *Prophets*, 28-35, 69-73. Tenskwatawa's omnipotent Master of Life, therefore, was apparently a new innovation (Cave 72). On the idea of incorporating Christian ideas as a new source of power, see Dennis, *Seneca Possessed*, 27; also, Fisher, *Indian Great Awakening*, 8.

[15] "Mr. M'Coy's Journal, Addressed to the Corresponding Secretary," *ABM*, March 1828, 65-66.

inability to make useable pots. A spirit appeared to one of them one night and led them to the French in Quebec, where they received an iron pot. In this case, the spirit initiated native contact with Europeans, and such contact proved beneficial. In another case, however, the spirit benefitted the Indians by reminding them of their distinctiveness in the face of white pressures. A large group of Odawa men set out on a journey in the fall of 1826 to sign a treaty but could not find any meat along the way. One of their company had a dream in which a man told him that they were in this predicament because their chief had not made the traditional sacrifice before they started. They set out in the manner of white men rather than of Indians and had angered the Great Spirit, the man in the dream said. When the group made the proper sacrifices, and their chief fasted for a day, they were able to hunt enough food. One might imagine Tenskwatawa or another nativist leader chiding his followers in a similar fashion, telling them that they had set out like white men rather than Indians and were being punished for their neglect. The spirits thus helped the people maintain their lives and identities. McCoy, of course, concluded his narration with a blunt dismissal: "I make these statements as evidence of the influence of superstition over these ignorant people."[16]

McCoy's understanding of superstition is clear at this point. Something superstitious was something that was not Christian—more specifically, something that was not Protestant, for McCoy lumped Roman Catholic rites with superstition.[17] Superstitions like these he witnessed among the Indians were what kept them in ignorance of the true God; such credulity—their willingness to believe these tales—kept them in an uncivilized state, as well. In McCoy's mind

[16] "Mr. M'Coy's Journal, Addressed to the Corresponding Secretary," *ABM*, March 1828, 67.

[17] To cite one example, McCoy once dismissed a Potawatomi who greeted him by "virtually *crossing* me according to the Catholic ceremonies" and who then requested baptism for his deceased friend as a simpleton (*Baptist Indian Missions* 111-112). He also described the worship and ideas among Kenekuk's followers as "more nearly" resembling "those of the Catholics than any other sect," dismissing it again as "a step from savage blindness into greater absurdity" (457).

(and he was not alone in his thinking), their beliefs were patently false, and they had to get rid of them in order to be a part of the nation and the church. This was a matter of God's glory, but it was also a matter of national security. The young republic, of which the Indians were expected to become a part, could not abide such credulity. The United States needed rational leadership and a moral population, but superstition like this corrupted the state.[18]

In many native societies, not only the Potawatomi and Odawa, the village shamans, or medicine men, were powerful individuals—the ones with special access to the spirit world. They used both herbal medicines and divination to cure sicknesses, claiming the ability to speak to spirits that would inform them of the nature and cure of the disease. Shamans could provide medicine that would protect one against disease. They were also masters of spiritual rituals, harnessing the powers of the spirit world for the good of the community. They could also access those powers for harm, however, and the villagers were careful not to offend the medicine men for that very reason. In reality, anyone could learn to harness spiritual power for evil, especially through use of sacred medicine bundles, and Potawatomis, Odawas, and many other tribes in the Great Lakes region lived in fear of witches who did just that.[19]

McCoy encountered shamans and dismissed their skill as hocus-pocus, reducing it to "dancing and conjuring."[20] In April 1827, an Odawa chief's relative was suffering from a chest complaint, which the medicine man diagnosed as an infestation of small insects. The shaman

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[18] Adam Jortner, *Blood from the Sky: Miracles and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017), 17, 85-87, 114. McCoy implied (and lamented) that even some whites believed in the power of these native festivals ("Continuation of Extracts from Mr. M'Coy's Journal," *LDL*, April 1824, 118). In reality, whites in the early republic continued to believe in demons, witches, and other supernatural forces. Gordon Wood observes that during the Early Republic the "borders between science and superstition, naturalism and supernaturalism…were blurred" ("Evangelical America and Early Mormonism," in Jon Butler and Harry S. Stout, eds., *Religion in American History: A Reader* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], 183, quoted in Dennis, *Seneca Possessed*, 63, 83).

[19] Cave, *Prophets*, 37, 69, 71, 76-79; Edmunds, *Potawatomis*, 20-21. See also Dennis, *Seneca Possessed* and Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York: Knopf, 1970).

[20] "Carey Station," *ABM*, March 1826, 91.

attempted to heal the woman by applying "a hollow tube about the size of a goose quill to the breast, on a sound skin, and by magick and suction, extracted one of these mischievous insects." McCoy heard this story—he did not witness it himself—from Chief Noonday, who reportedly did not have much hope that all the insects could be removed in time to save his relative. Noonday, of course, did not necessarily question the shaman's legitimacy; he only questioned whether he could work fast enough to save the woman's life.[21] McCoy put no credence in the medicine man at all; based on his knowledge of the science of medicine, he diagnosed the disease as rheumatism, not an insect infestation. The conjurer's discovery and removal of an insect therefore had to be some sleight-of-hand trick. "*Medicine men*, or women, of all others," he wrote, were "the most ignorant and superstitious." They were the biggest obstacle to the future he imagined for the Indians.[22]

McCoy worried that the Indians sometimes treated him as a shaman with access to powerful spirits. In May 1823, an Odawa woman brought her son to be healed of convulsive fits. She had been to two medicine men, who said they could do nothing because of the position of the moon, but they speculated that McCoy might have control over the moon. She gave other reasons for coming to the mission station: one of her relatives' sons had improved after a Roman Catholic priest had prayed for him, and even her own son's symptoms had improved since McCoy arrived. This latter claim seems particularly aimed to show respect to (and flatter) one whom she considered a powerful shaman. McCoy responded that he could not heal the young man; indeed, the disease had lasted so long already that he did not think it would ever be cured. McCoy insisted that his mission was to turn the tribes to Christianity—with its all-powerful God who could not be manipulated by ritual—and civilization—with its burgeoning science of

[21] "Mr. M'Coy's Journal, Addressed to the Corresponding Secretary," *ABM*, March 1828, 66.
[22] "Carey Station," *ABM*, March 1826, 92.

medicine based on observation and reason (not invisible spirits). In the light of what medicine McCoy did know, the young man's case was hopeless, and he may have been trying to preserve whatever valuable medicine he had for cases with better prognoses. Even offering to pray for the man seemed more likely to confirm the woman's beliefs that McCoy could control the moon, which he believed was ruled by natural laws designed by God. McCoy did not want to fit into the mold of a village shaman. He also did not want the mission to suffer if he proved unable to treat the child's illness. He wanted to move the Indians forward.[23]

Furthermore, McCoy did not want to be accused of witchcraft if something in his treatment went wrong. He had witnessed accusations of witchcraft among the villages around him. While still stationed at Fort Wayne, he had cared for a dying man. When the man died, his relatives blamed McCoy's magic. The intoxicated nephew proclaimed that "his uncle had been poisoned; and set off, declaring that he would go immediately and kill the Indian whom he suspected of the crime." Clearly, the man had died of drinking and exposure, but the fear of witchcraft loomed over the scene.[24] Matthew Dennis explains the workings of witchcraft in Iroquois society, and Potawatomi and Odawa society clearly operated on similar principles: "When natural remedies failed to produce results…, it became clear that witchcraft lurked nearby…. Witchcraft offered a wicked person the covert means to assault antagonists…, to indulge hatred, rivalry, and jealousy in a secret way." Fear of witches was common, and because they practiced their arts in secret, Indian villages were plagued by suspicions not unlike those of which McCoy was accused at Fort Wayne.[25] McCoy told his readers that he never administered

[23] "Extracts from the Journal of the Rev. Mr. M'Coy," *ABM*, January 1824, 260.
[24] "Extracts from the Journal of the Reverend Mr. M'Coy," *LDL*, October 1822, 317-318.
[25] Dennis, *Seneca Possessed*, 90.

medicine for fear of being accused of witchcraft if the sick person should die and advised that any physician coming to Indian country should be similarly cautious.[26]

McCoy considered the Indians superstitious in death as well as in life. To demonstrate the point, he described for readers the various modes of burial that he had seen or heard of among the Miamis, Potawatomis, Odawas, and Ojibwes that testified to their superstition. He wrote that he had seen two people buried inside a log: the surviving family members felled a tree and carved out a trough in it for the body; after laying the body in the trough, they covered it with smaller logs, disguising the burial place as an ordinary, fallen tree trunk. One of McCoy's acquaintances told him that a deceased Ojibwe had been wrapped in a blanket and placed high among the branches of a tree. He had also heard of a man on the Wabash River who had been placed standing erect near a coal mine in order to guard its valuable contents from white encroachment. A more common method of burial, however, was to lay the body on the ground or bury it near the surface and erect an enclosure of poles over the site. One woman was even buried seated on the ground with a window in her enclosure facing east so that she could watch the sunrise. Usually, however, the families made holes in burial enclosures so that they could slip their deceased relative tobacco, food, or alcohol. McCoy reported that a Potawatomi man, named Tobacco because of his fondness for smoking, had requested burial at the fork of the road between Detroit and Chicago in the hope that passersby would frequently slip him some.[27] McCoy once witnessed a mother going to the graveside of her child with her female friends a few days after the burial and having a meal there, giving the child some food by placing it on the head of the grave. He also reported that families visited the graves of their relatives when they

[26] "Extracts," *LDL*, October 1822, 317-318; "Carey Station," *ABM*, March 1826, 91. One also notes that outsiders (including missionaries) and accommodators were frequently the targets of the witch hunts (Cave, *Prophets*, 79-90, 202-203; Dennis, *Seneca Possessed*, 28; Edmunds, *Shawnee Prophet*, 42-47).

[27] "Extracts from the Journal of the Reverend Mr. M'Coy," *LDL*, October 1822, 317-318.

returned from their winter hunt each year in order to tend the grave, to speak to the deceased, and to have a feast. He even saw a group of men drinking around the grave of their friend—and giving the dead man some whiskey in the process. To alert the deceased to his or her presence, family members and friends could rap on a stick set by the side of the burial plot.[28]

All of these traditions would indicate that the Indians did not believe the deceased to be "really insensible," McCoy reasoned (perhaps hopefully, as a belief in the afterlife could provide a stepping-stone to Christianity), but he said he could find no one who could explain their beliefs on what happened after death reasonably. He therefore concluded that they held no firm views on the matter.[29] This conclusion obviously should not be taken to mean that these tribes really did not have solid beliefs about the afterlife. R. David Edmunds has reconstructed that the Potawatomi believed that "departed souls traveled to the west, beyond the sunset, and were assisted on their journey by Chibiabos, a mythological figure who guided them to heaven."[30] If this is true, then the food, tobacco, and alcohol were probably intended to assist the soul on that journey. McCoy's evidence suggests a nuance to this belief: even if the deceased departed to the west, they somehow remained cognizant of events in their former homes and could possibly even be affected by them. Regardless, McCoy was more likely dismissing what the Indians had told him as more superstition—not worth relaying or deciphering. The idea of feeding dead bodies seemed laughable to him and his readers, a testimony to the credulity of the Indians. Their Christian tradition had no equivalent to feeding deceased relatives; indeed, it needed no equivalent because it believed that spirits departed the world entirely. For that reason, McCoy

[28] "Extracts from the Journal of the Rev. Mr. M'Coy," *ABM*, January 1824, 260-262; "Extracts from the Journal of the Reverend Mr. M'Coy," *LDL*, November 1822, 335.
[29] "Extracts from the Journal of the Rev. Mr. M'Coy," *ABM*, January 1824, 260-261.
[30] Edmunds, *Potawatomis*, 19-20.

deemed feeding the dead unreasonable. The Indians were in his eyes superstitious to the core, and from that sin they had to be redeemed with the truth of Christianity.

A second concern for McCoy was the sin of alcoholism. In fact, he wrote more about the devastating effects of alcohol than about native belief systems. He was not the only white person to do so. Nearly every European and American visitor to Indian country noted problems with alcohol, and drunken Indian stories (the true, the imagined, and the embellished) were ubiquitous from the time of first contact. Whiskey was indeed a high-demand item among the natives, and it became a key means for Europeans to integrate them into the colonial economy. White traders sold whiskey to Indians with complete disregard for colonial and (later) state laws; corrupt government officials even doled it out on treaty grounds.[31] McCoy commented on the prevalence of whiskey in Indian country from the beginning of his ministry. In late May 1819, while on an early preaching tour, he found villages of the Delaware, Miami, and Wea tribes in a "deplorable state of intoxication."[32] The incidents of alcoholism that he and his fellow missionaries reported in the following years ranged from the annoying to the tragic to the comical. In August 1825, he wrote that drunken Odawas had injured some of their cattle. The chiefs profusely apologized and promised that it would not happen again, but the missionaries were doubtful. On July 27, 1826, McCoy heard that the principal chief of the St. Joseph Potawatomis, Topinbee, had died after falling off his horse while drunk. The chief was not alone; in the previous year, 25 Potawatomis had been murdered or otherwise died while under the influence of alcohol in what McCoy called "their Bachannailian revels." On August 18 of that same year, McCoy said that he was awakened by an intoxicated Indian on their roof, trying

[31] See Peter C. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

[32] "Domestic Mission: Indians of Illinois," *ABM&MI*, November 1819, 224.

to break in and get fire for his pipe. The end of the incident came when the missionaries "gave him the fire, and a severe reprimand, and let him go."[33]

The missionaries grew weary from having to deal with alcoholism and witness its deadly effects. They started temperance societies and preached against it. Although they did not morally excuse individual Indians for the sin of drunkenness, they typically laid the blame for the problem at the feet of whites—traders and other low-class, unprincipled whites who brought the poison into Indian country. Topinbee's death, for example, was directly "attributable to the whiskey sellers."[34] The missionaries cooperated with territorial authorities as far as possible to stop the illegal whiskey trade. Lewis Cass, the governor of Michigan Territory, even offered McCoy a commission as justice of the peace in 1825 as part of that effort, but McCoy turned it down because he felt that an official position would increase his already heavy workload.[35]

Indeed, the presence of alcohol brought violence and death into native villages. While McCoy was away in May 1822, his family had to go bury a man who had been murdered by his brother. The murderer had stabbed his victim seven times and then ripped open his side. McCoy reported that the man "was so hardened, as to show them, without any appearance of remorse, where and how he stabbed him." They assumed the men were drunk.[36] Johnston Lykins relayed how Porcupine Moccasin, a prominent villager, went after one of his sons with a glass bottle and a gun. The mother had to run to the school to fetch her elder son, who had to go confront his father and save his younger brother. Lykins did not explicitly say Porcupine Moccasin had been drinking, but the presence of a bottle leaves open that possibility.[37] Some encounters with

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[33] "Carey Station: Mr. M'Coy to One of the Editors," *ABM*, November 1825, 344; "Carey Station: Journal of the Mission," *ABM*, January 1827, 25. See also, McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 286.

[34] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 286.

[35] McCoy to Lewis Cass, March 24, 1825; Cass to McCoy, May 6, 1825; McCoy to Cass, September 30, 1825; McCoy Papers.

[36] "Extracts from the Journal of the Reverend Mr. M'Coy," *LDL*, November 1822, 340.

[37] "Extracts from the Journal of Brother Lykins," *ABM*, September 1826, 274.

drunkenness had far higher casualty numbers, especially during the distribution of yearly annuities, when lots of men had lots money to spend on lots of liquor. One Miami chief, Legro, told McCoy how villagers "received their money, got drunk, fought, and killed each other. You could see my people's blood running in the street."[38] Any communal gathering had the potential to degenerate into a drinking binge, which could lead to angry attacks and even murders; many government agents, missionaries, and visitors to Indian country bemoaned this tendency. In fact, it was notable to McCoy when an annuity gathering in Chicago in November 1825 did *not* devolve into drinking and murders. The missionaries made clear that despite the fact that such violence was frequent, some tribal leaders wanted change and begged the missionaries not to leave. The problems with alcoholic violence were an area where villages could indeed use the missionaries' help to make marked improvements. (The leaders who made these entreaties were not necessarily promising the deference the missionaries and their white readers assumed in other areas of the missionaries' program, however.)[39]

Some Indians thus recognized the problem of alcoholism and the danger it presented to their lives and communities. One Potawatomi village that McCoy visited had managed to get rid of its whiskey under the leadership of its chief, Menominee; they begged McCoy to come and live among them so that, among other things, they would not fall prey to alcohol again. Legro agreed with McCoy that preventing tribesmen from drinking alcohol was good, but he said the task was impossible after they had received their treaty money every year.[40] Peter C. Mancall observes in *Deadly Medicine* that the Indians lacked "a long history of solving the problems of drunkenness." Europeans had years of experience in handling the problem by using religion and

[38] "Continuation of Extracts from the Journal of the Rev. Mr. M'Coy," *LDL*, May 1823, 151.

[39] "Carey Station: Extract of a Letter from Rev. Isaac M'Coy to His Friend in Boston," *ABM*, March 1826, 90-91; "Mr. M'Coy's Journal, Addressed to the Corresponding Secretary," *ABM*, March 1828, 65.

[40] "Extract of a Letter from the Rev. Mr. M'Coy," *ABM&MI*, January 1822, 263; "Continuation of Extracts from the Journal of the Rev. Mr. M'Coy," *LDL*, May 1823, 151.

law "to stigmatize and punish people who violated commonly held views on the proper consumption of liquor." Colonialism strained tribal resources to the breaking point, however, and in the face of those other challenges "the formulation of adequate rules to govern drinking had to be set aside." The Indians therefore needed the help of their white neighbors to tackle the problem of alcohol.[41] The help of Baptist missionaries usually took the form of temperance societies. Members of these anti-liquor societies (as it was called in Legro's village) signed a pledge not to drink and would have to pay a fine if they broke their pledge. The long-term effectiveness of these societies cannot be gauged with certainty, but it was probably negligible in many cases.[42]

It is worthy of note that the Indians were not alone in their gratuitous consumption of alcoholic beverages. The 1820s and 1830s were also white America's biggest drinking binge. W. J. Rorabaugh calculates that Americans consumed nearly four gallons of alcohol per capita in 1830, the highest in the nation's history. (After 1830, the rate of consumption plummeted to under two gallons per capita.) He attributes these staggering drinking rates to the drastic social dislocations with which Americans were dealing in the early republic: the difficulties and isolation of moving west to find arable farmland; land speculation that decreased the chances of many farmhands owning their own farms; rapid growth of cities with bad government, poor sanitation, and social alienation; the rise of a market economy with its unpredictable fluctuations; burgeoning industries that threw former farmers into long, regimented hours of wage labor and destroyed the traditional relationship between craftsman and apprentice; a general contempt for

[41] Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 120-121.

[42] "Continuation of Extracts from the Journal of the Rev. Mr. M'Coy," *LDL*, May 1823, 151. Jotham Meeker reported in March 1828 that a man named Kos-quun-ekeh signed a pledge to abstain from liquor for two years in August 1827, one example of how temperance societies worked ("Extracts from the Journal of Mr. Meeker," *ABM*, March 1828, 72). Abel Bingham, McCoy's counterpart among the Ojibwe at Sault Ste. Marie, reported more frequently than McCoy about the work of temperance societies among the native villages.

authority that denied men such as doctors and ministers the respect they had formerly received; the growth of a highly mobile work force (e.g., stage drivers and boatmen) with no roots whatsoever. To say the least, the Indians also had their own social dislocations with which to reckon: the loss of land, the encroachment of a hostile culture, and the threat of removal entirely. That they, too, should have problems with alcoholism is therefore not surprising. Rorabaugh also describes how communal binges became common among white Americans at "elections, court sessions, militia musters, holiday celebrations, or neighborly festivities." Such events made men "equal before the bottle" and gave them a feeling of liberty. These binges in the white community bear some similarities to those that missionaries and other white observers witnessed among the Indians at treaties and on annuity days. Disturbed by the presence of so much booze, evangelicals like McCoy were starting temperance societies in white areas with more fervor than they did among the Indians.[43]

Yet Mancall cautions against reading the Indians' problems with alcoholism as simply a general coping mechanism in the face of colonialism. They, like their white counterparts, drank for their own individual reasons, and, of course, those reasons sometimes did include the need to escape from the violence and death that surrounded them. Nevertheless, Mancall suggests three broad rationales to explain why the Indians drank as they did: 1) they valued the sense of power that came with being drunk; 2) they integrated alcohol into hospitality rituals (such as at treaties); and 3) they used alcohol as part of mourning ceremonies.[44] McCoy's accounts can verify at least the latter two, and the missionary's eye for detail as well as his willingness to ask questions of

[43] W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 9-10 (statistics); chapter 5 analyzes the reasons for drinking, and chapter 6 describe the trends of social drinking (quotes are on pages 149-151). McCoy responded to incidents of alcoholic violence among whites with as much moral disdain as he did to those among the Indians: while preaching in Illinois Territory in April 1816, he witnessed the aftermath of one drunken settler beating another to death and wrote, "Surely this must be a desperately wicked place." He had a tendency to view alcoholism among whites as an anomaly, however, while he expected alcoholism among Indians (*Journal* [April 8, 1816], McCoy Papers).

[44] Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 67, 76-77, 100.

his native neighbors about their traditions caution against dismissing his accounts despite his obvious biases. An adoption feast that McCoy described in May 1822 (but apparently did not see in person) provides an example of alcohol being integrated into hospitality rituals. "The Indians often supply the place of their departed [that is, deceased] friends by adoption," he explained. The event occasioned an elaborate feast. When the adoptee arrived, the family clothed him in the deceased's clothes, began to call him by the deceased's name, and gave him the deceased's possessions (and wife, if applicable). There was plenty of food and dancing—and, of course, "there must be plenty of liquor to drink," McCoy observed.[45]

A particularly poignant episode in McCoy's reports probably demonstrates the use of alcohol in mourning ceremonies. Four Potawatomi children returned to the Fort Wayne Mission Station on Sunday, April 14, 1822. They were hungry and cold and had been absent from school with their family since the previous fall. They told the McCoys that their elderly grandmother lay dying in a camp not far from the mission. Two other relatives arrived shortly to inform both the children and the missionaries that the woman had died and to request help with her burial, as they had no shovel. McCoy dutifully followed. He described what he found upon his arrival at their camp as shocking. The family was poor and filthy. They had no fire. They had no shelter. Their only food was a dog they had slaughtered and put in the fire to singe off the hair. They had also left the dead woman out in the elements even before she died, apparently having no alternative in their poverty. Many of the family who had gathered around their deceased matriarch were drunk.

McCoy lambasted the dead grandmother's family for drinking around the body of their loved one and ignoring their familial responsibility to her, seeing this as a sign of their native depravity. He wrote in his journal, "What insensibility and depravity must her children have

[45] "Extracts from the Journal of the Reverend Mr. M'Coy," *LDL*, November 1822, 335-336.

possessed, who had been lounging around their mother in this wretched predicament! The whole company exhibited a scene of poverty, wretchedness, and wickedness, almost unparalleled, except among the Indians." In fact, what he witnessed was most likely a mourning ritual of some kind, a culturally acceptable way of commemorating the dead person—and even contacting the spirit of the departed. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that one of the family members spoke to the departed as if he believed her spirit was still present, slipping some tobacco into the newly-dug grave and asking her to rest in peace and "not disturb us who are alive."[46]

Violence occasioned by alcohol threatened the missionaries' lives, as well. William Polke, McCoy's brother-in-law and fellow missionary, went to visit the Odawas in May 1825 as part of the effort to establish a station among them. While he was there, an intoxicated Indian approached him and attempted to shoot him, but the other Indians of the village stopped the assailant. Johnston Lykins reported in September 1826 how earlier that year they had to send off an "ill-disposed" Indian who had been hanging around the station and got very angry when they told him to leave, threatening them with his tomahawk.[47] The most tragic act of violence against the missionaries occurred in February 1822, when an Indian man (probably drunk) attacked McCoy's daughter outside their home and attempted to choke her to death. Hired hands at the station stopped the attacker and took him into custody, but because the Indian agent was absent, they had no choice but to release him. The girl survived, but more violence followed. The attacker, a Potawatomi whose name was Maatenawa, challenged McCoy to cross the river and fight him in April; McCoy refused on the principle of maintaining a Christian witness for the

[46] "Extracts from the Journal of the Rev. Mr. M'Coy," *ABM&MI*, November 1822, 465-66. Mancall provides an example of a ritual very similar to the one McCoy saw among the Potawatomi that was reported by an eighteenth century trader among the Fox Indians (67, 76-77, 100).

[47] "Mr. M'Coy to Mr. Wayland," *ABM*, September 1825, 281; "Extracts from the Journal of Brother Lykins," *ABM*, September 1826, 274.

mission—that is, leaving vengeance to God and not taking it for himself. The man then offered a $400 atonement, which McCoy refused because he assumed the offer to be a trap. Within the week, however, Maatenawa bit off his wife's nose in a drunken rage and was stabbed to death by her brother, who in turn was shot by a friend of Maatenawa.[48]

McCoy dismissed the incident a snort of, "These Indians have no idea of civil authority."[49] In fact, McCoy was a witness to—and on one occasion, a participant in—functioning traditional tribal justice. It was customary among Algonquian and Iroquois tribes to cover the murder of a member of an allied group with a present, not to seek the judicial trial and execution of the murderer. McCoy later witnessed this system in action in 1827, when he gave a local Potawatomi man, Chebass, a white flag so that he might take a horse to the council to make atonement for his son, who had recently murdered another local man.[50] It was only murder by a member of a non-allied group that required a death in exchange, which could lead to feuds and warfare. If one can assume any logic at all to Maatenawa's (possibly intoxicated) actions, he would have been operating within this system of tribal justice. He would therefore have expected McCoy to fight him to avenge his daughter; by issuing the challenge, of course, he was treating the missionary as an enemy. His later offer of $400 could have been an attempt to atone for his attack on the child. Either way, the issue would have been settled in his mind. McCoy, however, assumed that every offer from Maatenawa was a trap and that the entire incident reeked of primitive (in)justice. His definition of civil authority meant that Maatenawa should be tried and convicted by the local Indian agent and/or a jury; in other words, the state would settle the matter, not communal negotiations. This approach shocked McCoy's native neighbors, who

[48] McCoy to Staughton, March 15, 1822; *Baptist Indian Missions*, 125-128; "Extracts from the Journal of the Reverend Mr. M'Coy," *LDL*, October 1822, 316-317.
[49] "Extracts," *LDL*, October 1822, 317.
[50] "Mr. M'Coy's Journal, Addressed to the Corresponding Secretary," *ABM*, March 1828, 70-71.

interpreted McCoy's refusal to fight as cowardice and then his desire to bring the matter before white officials instead of accepting atonement as incongruous with the actions of an ally, one "who had come hither to teach them good things."[51] Furthermore, if indeed Maatenawa was drunk when he attacked the girl, the villagers might have expected McCoy to forgive the attack, as they typically did such drunken incidents.[52]

In McCoy's estimation, the sin of alcoholism was even hampering the Indians' ability to maintain their superstitious traditions. He once noted that "[f]easts and dances are still annually observed at the same season of the year, but with far less order, solemnity, and good sense." One of his native informants supposedly even lamented, "Now…our people think of nothing but whiskey!"[53] These observations should be taken as accurate depictions of the Indians' world only to a point, of course. Alcoholism was indeed a legitimate problem in Indian country, and McCoy did get caught up in its devastating effects. His descriptions of such events reveal how the missionary interpreted his observations and experiences in biblical and theological terms, even when they are prone to exaggeration. The wages of sin were proving to be death in his eyes. His readers needed to arise and help save the Indians.

Concomitant themes in McCoy and his fellow missionaries' reports were poverty and starvation. McCoy reported that Menominee's village had no meat in May 1822 except a few pigeons they had killed with sticks. They were unable to hunt the deer in their area because they had no gun powder, an item they received from the Americans. They lived off of corn and dried

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[51] "Extracts," *LDL*, October 1822, 317.

[52] White, *Middle Ground*, 75-82; Wallace, *Death and Rebirth of the Seneca*, 44-48; Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 79.

[53] "Extracts from the Journal of the Rev. Mr. M'Coy," *ABM*, January 1824, 261. This complaint interestingly echoes nativist reformers such as the Seneca Handsome Lake and Shawnee Tenskwatawa, who, having seen the devastating effects of alcoholism on their communities, demanded that their followers abstain from the drink, and who also attempted to restore (as well as modify) ancient rituals (Cave, *Prophets*, 65-79; Dennis, *Seneca Possessed*, 72-80; Edmunds, *Shawnee Prophet*, ch. 2). McCoy's goals were similar (saving the Indians from alcohol) but also different (turning them to Christianity).

beans and only had a small stock of those. During the particularly harsh winter of 1827 Johnston Lykins reported that the Indians on the Kankakee River were starving because the snow was too deep for them even to hunt muskrats, which had become their only means of subsistence in winter.[54] McCoy's most poignant description of the poverty he saw around him came in May 1824, "I have seen children gathering weeds, to boil and eat without bread, salt, or meat. I have seen a mother in a swamp, digging roots for her half-starved children. I have seen them feed on dog's flesh, and on animals that had died of disease and lain until their flesh had become putrid."[55] There is no reason to think that McCoy made these stories up, even if the overall condition of the Indians in the northwest was not actually as bad as these incidents suggest. What these stories did was to send a powerful message to his readers that the Indians were perishing and needed the Baptists to help save them.

The starvation and deprivation played a role in McCoy's plans for the Potawatomis and Odawas. He hoped and expected that their desperate condition would lead them to the mission, where they would adopt Christianity and civilization. Indeed, he would use it to the mission's advantage. Early in his career, he had explained this notion to the Board: "Some person must reside near them…and take advantage of their hunger and cold in a winter storm, so that their privations shall subserve their best interests. Let the unhappy creatures sometimes realize the comforts of a warm room on a stormy night; let them be taught by actual experience as well as by persuasive arguments, the great advantages to be derived from cattle, hogs, &c."[56] McCoy did not just see their particular circumstances as deprivation; he saw their entire lifestyle as deprivation (also uncivilized, backward, etc.). From that vantage point, he assumed that the

[54] "Extracts from the Journal of the Reverend Mr. M'Coy," *LDL*, November 1822, 339; "Extracts from Mr. M'Coy's Journal," *ABM*, July 1827, 196.
[55] "Fort Wayne and Carey Stations," *ABM&MI*, May 1824, 336.
[56] "Letter from Mr. M'Coy," *LDL*, August 1818, 184.

lights and relative plenty of the mission would draw them. How could they not want what the Americans had? Furthermore, even though McCoy did not say it, the implication was not far from the surface: God himself would work through these bad circumstances to assimilate the Indians as a whole. Many Christians referred to this phenomenon as providence.[57]

Of course, the United States government intended to give providence a push. Colonial governments had pursued a policy of converting and civilizing the Indians, and the young republic continued in that vein from the beginning. The Indian Civilization Act of 1819 designated $10,000 annually to efforts to civilize and Christianize the tribes, and the War Department disbursed these funds to Christian denominations to plant schools and churches in Indian villages. George Washington's administration also adopted the policy of purchasing Indian lands through treaties, which was again a continuation of the colonial practice. This policy continued apace after the War of 1812 as white settlers poured into the Old Northwest wanting Indian lands. This treaty system worked hand-in-glove with the civilization policy as a means to obtain these lands. As native tribes needed more trade goods to survive, they surrendered land to the whites in exchange. The loss of land made them less able to survive by hunting as they had traditionally, and, in theory, they would have to accept the rudiments of civilization—private land ownership and farming—as the only alternative.[58] The Treaty of

[57] McCoy referred to God's providence at work in the mission numerous times in his *History of Baptist Indian Missions*; note his uses in the first 200 pages on 92, 99, 106, 115, 118, 128, 134, 162, 171, 184, and 197. An interesting explanation of the providence of God driving the Indians away so that whites could have the land can be found in a letter from Rebekah Pinkham to McCoy, September 15, 1824, in the McCoy Papers.

[58] R. Pierce Beaver, *Church, State, and the American Indians: Two and a Half Centuries of Partnership in Missions between Protestant Churches and Government* (St. Louis: Concordia Press, 1966), chs. 1-2; Robert F. Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Random House, 1978), 144-145; Jason Edward Black, *American Indians and the Rhetoric of Removal and Allotment* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2015), ch. 1; Herring, *Kenekuk*, 14-15; Robert J. Miller, *Native America, Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, and Manifest Destiny* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2006), 4, 77-86; Bernard W. Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), introduction and ch. 1; Herman J. Viola, *Thomas L. McKinney: Architect of America's Early Indian Policy, 1816-1830* (Chicago: Sage Books, 1974), 42-43; Gordon S.

Chicago of 1821 that opened up the Potawatomi and Odawa tribes to McCoy and his fellow Baptist missionaries as teachers and provided for their salaries is just one example of many. It provided the tribes with the basics they needed to be civilized: a blacksmith, agricultural tools, and $1,000 annually for fifteen years to each tribe—in exchange for the vast majority of tribal lands in southwest Michigan.[59]

With God's help, and under the influence of missionaries and the government, McCoy anticipated that the Indian "would hardly fail to become a farmer, a Citizen of the U. S., A Christian."[60] They would give up their superstitions. They would give up alcohol. They would give up their violence. They would stop hunting and gathering and become farmers like the vast majority of the American population. They would own small tracts of land individually instead of large, unused, communal parcels. They would go to schools. They would worship in churches. They would no longer be uncivilized; rather, they would become a part of the civilized world. McCoy saw his work in both the physical and the metaphysical realms—as redeeming the Indians from sin and from savagery. As the 1820s progressed, however, the details about the sins of the Indian never stopped coming in his writings, although he did acknowledge improvements. The goal of saving and civilizing the Indians always seemed out of reach, the task bigger than he expected. Achieving his vision for the Indians' future would also prove more controversial among his fellow Americans than he could have imagined.

The Potawatomis and Odawas, for their part, did not take McCoy's visions for their future on his terms, although McCoy often wrote as though they did. One such occasion

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Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 126-128, 368, 370-371, 385-399.

[59] "Fort Wayne and Carey Stations," ABM May 1824, 332; Schultz, *Indian Canaan*, 53. Some tribes even continued to receive annuities from the British in Canada; McCoy reported as late as June 1826 that eighty Sauks stopped by Carey on their way to Malden ("Carey Station: Journal of the Mission," *ABM* January 1827, 23-24).

[60] McCoy, *Journal* (March 30, 1818), McCoy Papers.

happened in May 1823, when a group of Potawatomis came to the recently-established Carey Station, dressed in their finest, apparently to welcome the missionaries. McCoy soon learned that they were expecting gifts, which was a normal ritual in friendly intercourse between whites and natives. McCoy, not grasping this cultural point, replied that the missionaries had come to teach them to be independent, not to continue their dependency on gifts. The group went away disappointed, he wrote, but two of the men returned three days later saying they would move from their home on the Wabash River to be near the mission, settle down, and improve some land according to the missionaries' prescriptions.[61] In McCoy's presentation, these men had become convinced that his way was best after they gave it some thought. The supposed disappointment and delayed return could indicate a different process of deliberation, however: the men in question discussed their options and decided that improving land may have benefits for reasons other than becoming like the whites.

Indeed, McCoy reported entire villages improving their lands in May 1824: "We had encouraged the inhabitants of one village, to improve their lands, had given them garden seeds, sent our team to haul rails for fence, and to plough their land, and had assisted them in cutting hay on the prairies for a few cattle they had been prevailed upon to purchase." The example of this one village encouraged others, and McCoy concluded the Potawatomis in the neighborhood of Carey had "in the course of two or three years, fenced, and put into a state of cultivation, between 200 and 300 acres of land, have erected 26 log cabins, and procured a considerable number of cattle and hogs."[62] The following July, McCoy reported that Chief Chebass and two other families had likewise begun to improve their land, and each family had built a log house. By May 1825, the missionaries were assisting another village and eighteen different families

[61] "Extracts from the Journal of the Rev. Mr. M'Coy," *ABM*, January 1824, 257-258; White, *Middle Ground*, ch. 3, esp. pp. 98-99.

[62] "History of the Mission Under the Care of Rev. Mr. M'Coy," *ABM&MI*, May 1824, 332.

within a five mile radius of the station with fencing and ploughing. In August 1827, an Odawa council, under the leadership of Chief Noonday, resolved to appropriate their government annuity for the improvement of their lands with the missionaries' assistance. Those who followed this path of accommodation and agriculture usually did so as a strategy to stay in their homelands; it was an adaptation to a new reality, not an admission that white ways were superior.[63]

An incident reported by Jotham Meeker in September 1827 strengthens this conclusion by presenting an instance of natives doing something with annuity money that the missionaries did not prescribe. Some Odawa villagers decided to spend their money on clothing as they had always done instead of on improving their lands. Meeker attributed this decision to the malevolent influence of white traders. In reality, however, if the villagers needed clothing, the decision was not as frivolous as Meeker made it seem. Although it was not being put to the exact use the government and its missionaries wanted, it was indeed sustaining the Odawas as they determined best.[64] The tribes, too, had a vision for their future: maintaining their traditions as they saw fit on their ancestral lands. They would live with their white neighbors as peacefully as possible but not become like them. McCoy, his fellow Baptist missionaries, and the civilization fund of the United States government played a role in that vision, but those roles often extended only as far as the tribes determined. This reality becomes especially clear when one investigates the operations of McCoy's mission school and the lives of his students, who were destined to be McCoy's first converts.

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[63] "Carey Station," *ABM&MI*, September 1824, 426; "Carey Station: Mr. M'Coy to Mr. Wayland," *ABM*, September 1825, 280; "Mr. M'Coy's Journal, Addressed to the Corresponding Secretary," *ABM*, March 1828, 71; Stockwell, *Other Trail of Tears*, chs. 4-6; and Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians*, chs. 4-6. Note an early remark from McCoy about how reluctant tribes were to accept schools and improve lands in the uncertainty that followed the signing of treaties ("Indians of Illinois: Extract of a letter from Elder M'Coy to the Corresponding Secretary," *ABM*, November 1819, 224); Reynolds, "Carey Mission," 116, also notes how Indians abandoned their improvements when the possibility of removal arose.

[64] "Mr. M'Coy's Journal" and "Extracts from the Journal of Mr. Meeker," *ABM*, March 1828, 73.

Chapter 3: Indian Second Great Awakening

The Odawas are "the most savage and suspicious of any of the natives with whom we have formed an acquaintance," Isaac McCoy wrote in December 1824. He told how he and his fellow missionary, William Polke, had tried to arrange councils with two Odawa villages for the purpose of making arrangements to start a school and to preach among them, but those overtures had been rejected. Finally, they approached Chief Noonday, who opened up his village to the missionaries, giving them a tract of land for a school, and even sending two village children back to Carey in the meantime. According to McCoy, Noonday said, "I am an Indian…; nevertheless, I think of God and religious things, and had we a preacher among us, perhaps I could become good. I often reprove the vices of my children, grand children, and others; but they do not give attention to what I say. Possibly they would obey a preacher."[1] As McCoy described it, the Indians around him had two choices: outright rejection or (potential) wholehearted acceptance of their way of viewing Christ.

In fact, Indian responses were far more complex and nuanced than this simple dichotomy. This chapter centers on the mission schools run at Fort Wayne, Carey, and Thomas stations and explores the conversion narratives—the success stories—that McCoy reported during his tenure in those locations. Reading these narratives requires a degree of caution. McCoy's reports were matter-of-fact accounts of his activities, of course, but they were more than that. The missionary believed himself to be accountable to his fellow Baptists, who were supporting him with their prayers and their donations. He was therefore very conscious of appearances in his writing and

[1] "Letter from Isaac M'Coy, to one of the editors," *American Baptist Magazine*, March 1825, 86-87.

had little room for nuance. When he emphasized how the Indians were lost in pagan superstition, he validated the denomination's momentous efforts in sending him to Michigan. Conversely, if there were not at least some Potawatomis or Odawas open to his mission and some success stories, then readers might question why they were sending their precious resources to the west. The success stories that McCoy reported therefore confirmed that those resources were not being spent in vain. They proved that the Indians could be saved from sin and from savagery, and Baptists could help—indeed, were helping—God accomplish that goal.[2]

Meanwhile, most natives whom McCoy encountered responded with a qualified acceptance of the Baptist faith, message, and culture toward ends that the missionaries had not determined, as the closer examination of converts' lives and work in the second half of this chapter will show. They adopted and adapted the elements of the missionaries' program that most fit their own efforts to survive in a land now dominated by white Americans who wanted them out of the way. Historical scholarship since the 1960s—ethnohistory or the "New Indian History"—has demonstrated repeatedly how the Indians met Europeans and Americans not as passive victims of the inevitable triumph of colonialism but rather as active agents negotiating for as much control of their future as possible; to put it another way, these works give the Indians voices. McCoy's writings, in spite of the agenda behind them, provide a way to give the Indians of the Northwest a voice. They show how the tribes of the region adapted to the reality of American dominance and reveal more of the larger drama of federal Indian policy and Christian efforts for Indian reform.[3]

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[2] For an international study of missionary reports about North American Indians and how they influenced the policies of mission boards and national governments, see Carol L. Higham, *Noble, Wretched, and Redeemable: Protestant Missionaries to the Indians in Canada and the United States, 1820-1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).

[3] For a useful (although dated) historiographical article on New Indian History, see R. David Edmunds, "Native Americans, New Voices: American Indian History, 1895-1995," *American Historical Review* 100:3 (June 1995), 717-740. Jack Reynolds applies the insights of New Indian History to a case study of Carey Mission in

Linford D. Fisher masterfully details the intricacies of Native Americans' interactions with Christianity during the First Great Awakening in New England in *Indian Great Awakening*. He argues that the Indians of New England between 1680 and 1820 did not understand their adoption of Christianity as a once-for-all conversion but rather a process of engaging with the ideas of the religion and adopting, adapting, and rejecting elements according to their needs. The central concern of this process was the education offered by Europeans, which the natives hoped would help them maintain cultural autonomy and resist dispossession. Fisher argues that so-called conversions were often *affiliations* with Christian churches in which natives incorporated Christian ideas into their existing worldview; he continues, "Baptisms that in the eyes of ministers represented spiritual rebirth, a token of religious commitment, and a basic assent to reformed Christian doctrines might mean all this to Indian participants, but they could also be related to ideas of protection, access to education, and cultural uplift." When that relationship no longer served its purpose, Indians often deaffiliated with English churches and formed their own, where they could have more autonomy.[4]

Acknowledging what Fisher calls a spectrum of responses to Christianity does not mean the Indians were not sincere in those responses, nor does it close the door on the possibility that at least some conversions could have fit the traditional Christian (in McCoy's case, Baptist) understanding. James Axtell, who wrote that Christian conversion was "cultural suicide" for an Indian, also argues for the general soundness of many Indian conversions.[5] He observes that, at least in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, both Catholic and Protestant missionaries had

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"Carey Mission: Protestant Missionaries and Native Americans on the Indiana-Michigan Frontier" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1998).

[4] Linford D. Fisher, *Indian Great Awakening: Religion and the Shaping of Native Cultures in Early America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 12, 84-89, 107-113, 214.

[5] James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: the Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 330.

higher standards for Indian converts than for European ones. The first Catholic convert among the Huron of Canada, for example, was admitted to the sacrament of baptism only after three years of careful instruction. The process for Puritan John Elliot's first converts was even more rigid: they had been through six years of teaching and testing before he organized them into a church at Natick. Although potential converts at Carey might not have been subjected to as rigorous a process as this, the missionaries were not hasty to pronounce a student or neighbor a Christian.[6]

As a prelude to conversion, the students at McCoy's mission had to come to the Baptist mission schools, and most of them did so because their families made a conscious choice to send them. They believed that the education McCoy and his associates offered could indeed benefit their children and their tribe (and, in some cases, their business), even though their goals were not wholesale assimilation. In late 1823, for example, an elderly father brought his son to enroll him at Carey without any solicitation on the part of the missionaries. McCoy was hesitant to admit the boy because he appeared to be too old and the mission was strained for resources. The man insisted that his son "had grown very fast" and "was not as old as he appeared to be." McCoy relented and admitted the boy, rationalizing, "How do I know but that very youth may yet shine as a light among his countrymen?" The father's insistence on having the boy admitted suggests that he expected some benefit from an American education, even if that benefit was not to be the instrument of civilizing the Indians that McCoy expected.[7] More explicitly, Odawa chiefs Blackskin and Noonday told McCoy that "they desired very much to see, before their

[6] James Axtell, "Were Indian Conversions *Bona Fide*?" in Axtell, ed., *After Columbus: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 114-115. McCoy described in late 1824 how the native children were troubled over their sins and that he hoped they would soon be converted; nevertheless, that end was not a certainty, as he wrote to Francis Wayland that December: "I know not…whether I shall ever be allowed the pleasure of baptizing any of these youths" ("Letter from the Rev. Mr. M'Coy, to one of the editors," *ABM*, April 1825, 118-120).

[7] Isaac McCoy to Luther Rice, December 2, 1827, McCoy Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

deaths, their children enjoying the advantages of education, and of other improvements which they hoped would be made through [the Baptists'] means."[8] In consequence, the Odawas sent at least four of their boys to Carey before Thomas was established in their territory in December 1826.[9]

Probably half or more of the students at McCoy's schools were métis, usually the sons of French or English traders and native mothers. For trading families like this, an American-style education could prove beneficial to the business. (Of course, business need not have been the only motive.) Jean-Baptiste Beaubein, who worked for the American Fur Company and was influential in the founding of Chicago, sent two of his sons, Madore and Charles, to Carey. Another Carey student, Peter Langlois, was the son of a French trader and a Miami mother; Joseph Bourassa's father was a métis, while his mother was Potawatomi. In fact, in July 1823, McCoy reported that the majority of the student body was in the métis category: out of 47 students, only 18 were full-blooded Indians; 23 had one European parent; six had one European grandparent (what McCoy called quarter breeds).[10]

In other cases, children came to the school because their families did not think they could take care of them. An eight-year-old girl named Sheshho (Muskrat) became a part of the mission family in 1822, when her mother brought her to McCoy at Ft. Wayne while running from her ill-natured, murderous husband.[11] Between mid-June and mid-July 1824, six students in dire straits arrived. Even though these new arrivals strained the resources of the mission, McCoy said the missionaries were glad to take them because their parents seemed so desperate. The mother of

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[8] "Carey Station: Letter from Rev. Isaac M'Coy," *ABM*, February 1826, 63-65.

[9] "Carey Station: Extract of a Letter from Rev. Isaac M'Coy to His Friend in Boston," *ABM*, March 1826, 88.

[10] McCoy to Lewis Cass, July 1, 1823; McCoy to Lucius Bolles, July 11, 1825, McCoy Papers; John P. Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians: Northern Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016, 173-177.

[11] "Carey Station: Mr. M'Coy to Dea. Farwell," *ABM*, August 1825, 247.

one of these children, a nine-year-old girl named Agat, reportedly even said, "The Indians die very fast so that it seems they will soon all be gone. I have brought my daughter hither in hopes that she will learn something good before her death."[12] These confirmed for McCoy's readers the suppositions that the Indians were a dying people, and because of that fact, some were ready to submit to white ways. It was then the reader's responsibility to help provide for them during the transition. The death-knell of Indian culture, as McCoy explained it, was an encouragement for Baptists to support missions. In at least one instance, a father left his two children at Carey for the winter, expecting Robert Simerwell to "be as a father over them, to keep them from geting angury with each other and fighting, to make them good, and if they got sick to give them medicine and make them well."[13] For this father at least, Carey mission represented food, medicine, and protection during the starving time of winter. He was probably not the only person who thought on these terms. Baptist readers, no doubt, saw an Indian father recognizing what they believed to be a self-evident fact that white ways were superior.

Of course, not everyone was enthusiastic about having an American school in their midst. Very early in his tenure to the Northwestern tribes, McCoy described how some families objected to the education of their children. On an expedition among the Delawares, Miamis, and Weas, he convinced a young man to accompany him, perhaps to serve as an interpreter. The man's relatives objected. Then, the man suggested that his six-year-old son go to the school in his place, to which his relatives also objected. When they were finally convinced, the boy went with McCoy, and even then, his father had nearly decided to come and get him. Visiting the school, the father was satisfied at last to leave his son, but the mother eventually came to get him

[12] "Carey Station," *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer*, September 1824, 426. Some caution is in order before taking McCoy's depictions of Indian poverty at face value; what the missionary saw as impoverished desperation was likely still a calculated decision for the good of the child and the family.

[13] Robert Simerwell, *Journal* (November 11, 1826), Simerwell Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

and take him back to the tribe. McCoy called this obstruction and opined that the Indians did so out of envy—that they did not want the man or his son to "be placed in a better condition than they."[14] Perhaps envy was in the picture, but perhaps they were simply hesitant to send a loved one with an outsider. Given how much questions of accommodation to American ways divided native communities, there might also have been a disagreement over whether to accommodate to white ways to the point of sending children to a mission school. More likely, McCoy assumed that the Indians wanted to be lowly and uncivil, and this assumption served as a self-affirmation of his own noble purposes as well as those of his readers.

One of the earliest conversion experiences McCoy reported was not that of a student but rather that of a Shawnee woman named Wis-ke-ke-la-eh-qua. Her grandmother learned about Christianity from the Moravians and had passed that teaching on to her, telling her that "all people were wicked, and that Jesus Christ came into the world to save us." Once when Wis-ke-ke-la-eh-qua was sick, she claimed to have had a dream of a man in a white house before whom she became an infant and who then took her in his arms and told her that he was her friend and Savior. She said that she forgot this experience for many years until two years prior to her visit to McCoy. At that time, she began to feel that she was very wicked. She fasted four days as her grandmother had told her to, but at the end of that time, when she expected to receive a blessing, she said she still felt wicked. She pled to McCoy that she wanted to be a Christian and needed someone to instruct her. McCoy ended the story by saying that he was teaching her and implying that she would be baptized.[15]

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[14] "Domestic Mission: Indians of Illinois, *ABM&MI*, November 1819, 224-225. See Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions and American Indian Response, 1787-1862* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), ch. 7.

[15] "Extract of a Letter from the Rev. Mr. M'Coy to the Cor[responding] Sec[retary]," *ABM&MI*, January 1822, 267-268.

Was Wis-ke-ke-la-eh-qua's conversion bona fide? We have only McCoy's word for it. What is immediately evident, however, is that she walked a path to Christianity that combined both white and native elements. Fasting, as she did, was an essential religious ritual for tribes in the Great Lakes region and was designed to seek spiritual power; visions were likewise expected. At the same time, fasting was also a Christian spiritual discipline designed to seek the blessing of God or to prepare for some special task.[16] It seems likely that the formula of fasting for four days came from native thought and not white thought. Even visions were not unheard of in nineteenth century Christianity (and they were, of course, quite common in the Bible). Christian and native ideas mixed and mingled for Wis-ke-ke-la-eh-qua, and the cultural echoes are so strong that it is not easy to tell which idea came from which culture. After all, she was the product of a family that had incorporated numerous white ways. McCoy made this conversion out to be a big deal, but in fact, it may not have been as significant a move as he thought.

Despite all the ways in which the missionaries conveyed the Indians as inferior to whites socially and culturally, the conversion experiences of the Potawatomis, Odawas, and others that they reported bore many similarities to those of whites at the time. One can compare the Indians' stories with McCoy's own conversion narrative from 1819. The process of conversion typically began with the person feeling an extreme sense of sorrow over his or her sins, an acute awareness that s/he deserved God's wrath. McCoy described his own feelings as, "I discovered all my righteousness to be but filthy rags. Although by others I was reckoned a moral boy, I felt

[16] One of McCoy's stories in particular (analyzed in the previous chapter) demonstrates the importance of fasting and visions: A large group of Odawa men set out on a journey in the fall of 1826 to sign a treaty but could not find any meat along the way. One of their company had a dream in which a man told him that they were in this predicament because their chief had not made the traditional sacrifice before they started. The chief was told to fast the entire day to propitiate the deity, even as the other men were able to find meat and feast ("Mr. M'Coy's Journal, Addressed to the Corresponding Secretary," *ABM*, March 1828, 67). R. David Edmunds also discusses the vision quest, a ritual of prayer and fasting for teenage boys, in *The Potawatomis: Keepers of the Fire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 19. The missionaries themselves occasionally held days of fasting and prayer, asking God to save the Indians in their care ("Revival at Thomas Station," *ABM*, May 1832, 156-157).

myself to be a painted hypocrite—The Chief of Sinners—a guilty criminal and justly condemned to everlasting destruction. And, altho all men else should be saved, it is just, thought I, for me to go to Hell. Nor could I see how it could be otherwise, than for me to realize eternally the unhappy consequences of my sins. Indeed I imagined that the pains of hell had already got hold on me."[17]

According to McCoy, the natives in his charge were having similar experiences, and his reports to that effect provide a means to evaluate his students' actual interactions with the Christian faith and culture. His fifteen-year-old Miami interpreter reportedly told him in December 1824, "Some time ago…I did not think I was bad. I thought I was good; but since I have heard you talk so much, and heard those young men who have been baptized talk, I think I am bad too, and that I have a bad heart. Sometimes I have been in great trouble on account of my sins." He, too, described his feeling of being unable to please God. The missionaries called this feeling conviction.[18] In April 1827, McCoy had a conversation with one of his neighbors about the Christian concept of "the universal and entire depravity of man." The neighbor then asked, "Would God have mercy on such as had been a long time sinful?" He then explained how he felt sorry all the time and was in great distress, even though he attended the preaching and prayer services held by the missionaries. A week or so later, McCoy asked him if he prayed, to which he responded in the affirmative but that his prayers consisted only of "Great Spirit, pity me. Great Spirit, pity me." This man's prayer bears a striking resemblance to that of the publican in Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the publican, as recorded in Luke 18:13: "God be

[17] McCoy to the Wabash Baptist Association of Indiana, c. March 1819, McCoy Papers. For a helpful description of the conversion process in Baptist thought, see Jewel L. Spangler, *Virginians Reborn: Anglican Monopoly, Evangelical Dissent, and the Rise of the Baptists in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 2008), ch. 5.

[18] "Carey Station: Letter from Mr. M'Coy to One of the Editors," *ABM*, April 1825, 119-120.

merciful to me a sinner." McCoy's readers would no doubt have caught the similarity and judged this man to be not far from the Kingdom of God.[19]

In nineteenth-century conversions, this period of conviction would last until the person suddenly felt God remove that guilt, and s/he believed that because of Jesus' death on the cross those sins were forgiven. (This outcome was not inevitable, of course.) The realization was followed by a time of great joy and thanksgiving to God, during which the person was baptized and afterwards was considered a Christian. McCoy wrote of his own experience, "I suddenly experienced a change, which I cannot better describe than by the falling off from me a grievous load, my heart and even my whole system seemed gladdened with some unknown transport, even the face of nature exhibited a cheerful aspect. I paused a moment and enquired what these things meant, but could not long enquire, until I vocally cried out, 'It is enough, Jesus my Saviour is yet alive.' Now I was happy; my tongue, which had long uttered bitter complaints seemed all at once inspired with praise, and yet a thousand tongues could not utter the praises due to him, who had graciously pardoned a wretch so vile, for I know, it was not for works of righteousness which I had done, but by grace I was saved."[20] The story of McCoy's interpreter concluded with a similar sudden transformation: "On Monday I felt better. My troubles were gone. O my heart felt so good, I wanted to be all the time singing. I never had such feelings before. Now when I read the Testament, it makes my heart glad." Despite this transformation, the young man was not ready to be baptized, because he was "afraid of being mistaken." The record is unclear on whether he ever felt ready to be baptized.[21]

[19] "Carey and Thomas Stations: Mr. M'Coy's Journal, as Addressed to the Corresponding Secretary," *ABM*, March 1828, 67-68.

[20] McCoy to the Wabash Baptist Association of Indiana, c. March 1819, McCoy Papers.

[21] "Letter from Mr. M'Coy to One of the Editors," *ABM*, April 1825, 119-120.

Others, however, did feel ready. What McCoy called "symptoms of the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit" and "religious excitement" began at Carey on October 10, 1824, among the hired whites and then spread to the native students and neighbors. The hired men first "began in good earnest to lament for sin" and then began to be baptized in November. Some Indian pupils and neighbors "were wounded in conscience about the same time." McCoy summed up the situation in December: "Our whole establishment has assumed an aspect, different from what it formerly wore. Our young men have their meetings for prayer, and our pupils delight to sing hymns to Jesus." Finally, on January 12, 1825, McCoy baptized a seventeen-year-old Indian woman, "the first of our Indian scholars, who followed the Lord in baptism." He baptized three Indian boys the next day and three boys and a girl on January 17.[22] A letter dated March 5, 1825, reported that a seventy-year-old chief was a candidate for baptism after he "obtained a hope in Jesus in his hunting camp." An elderly Potawatomi woman had also been baptized after a period of guilt over sin. McCoy reported her exact words upon "obtaining a hope in Christ": "My heart was glad. Every thing around me appeared new. My heart rose to God. I sometimes felt like I was about to awake with God." In all, eleven of the students had been baptized.[23]

Revivals like these in Indian country happened all across the United States during the Second Great Awakening.[24] The similarities between them raise questions both of how McCoy

[22] "Letter from the Rev. Mr. M'Coy, to one of the editors" and "Extract of a Letter from Rev. Isaac M'Coy to one of the editors," *ABM*, April 1825, 118-120.

[23] "Mr. Mc. Coy's Letter to Dr. Bolles," *ABM*, July 1825, 214-215.

[24] Some insightful works on the Second Great Awakening include: James D. Bratt, ed., *Antirevivalism in Antebellum America: A Collection of Religious Voices* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006); Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Paul K. Conkin, *Cane Ridge: America's Pentecost* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); Jay P. Dolan, *Catholic Revivalism: The American Experience, 1830-1900* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978); Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989); Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978); William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on*

was interpreting native experiences and what those experiences actually were. McCoy clearly took what the Indians were telling him and interpreted it in the light of his own conversion and what he believed to be sound Christian doctrine. His readers, of course, shared his beliefs and experiences, so his interpretation of the events helped them relate more to the Indians; they saw the Indians as becoming like them. To cite another example, the Potawatomi Mission Church observed the Lord's Supper on Christmas Day 1825, and McCoy's journal reported several cases of converts telling the missionaries that they did not feel worthy to participate. The report continued that the missionaries were pleased with this recognition but used it as an opportunity to explain that it was Jesus' sacrificial death that made them worthy.[25] White Christian readers would probably have read this account as a normal experience of the faith: feelings of unworthiness are to be expected because the Christian really is not worthy of God's love; he or she has to be reminded that salvation is by grace through faith and not of works. In effect, these readers would have seen the Indians as slowly coming to believe, think, and feel like them.

Was that the experience of the Potawatomis and Odawas, however? Were they, in fact, genuinely adopting white faith and practice? Or were they appropriating the white model they had seen for their own ends? To use Linford Fisher's term, were they affiliating in order to gain "protection, access to education, and cultural uplift?"[26] These two options are not mutually exclusive, of course. There are clues that help determine what is going on and interpret the Indians' experience and theology beyond what the missionaries said. That white workers experienced the revival at Carey before natives did raises the possibility of appropriation. Even more so, the native students' and villagers' own words raise that possibility.

Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); John H. Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[25] "Extracts from the Journal at Carey," *ABM*, September 1826, 273-274.

[26] Fisher, *Indian Great Awakening*, 89.

How the natives at Carey and Thomas verbally relayed their understanding of faith, works, and grace in some cases appears to differ greatly from the missionaries' understanding. They often described themselves to the missionaries as being *bad* or being *good*, not the more standard Christian terms such as *sinful* or *righteous*. "Perhaps I could become good," Chief Noonday supposedly told McCoy on one of their early visits.[27] Another man reported that he had not previously thought he was bad, but after spending time with McCoy he felt that he was.[28] One native man came to Robert Simerwell in November 1828 and said, "I know there is something wrong. We die fast. We are wasting away. We have plenty trouble and very little pleasure. We are like a company of children forsaken by their parents. How to help ourselves we know not. The Great Spirit is angry, but how to please him we cannot tell. We have lived in darkness, and have had no guide. I would like to do right if I knew how. Tell me what is the worst thing we do so that I may try to keep from it."[29] In February 1829, a woman walked seven miles to Carey through knee-deep snow feeling how bad she was and wanting to become good.[30] The missionaries preached that all people were sinners (thus, bad) and needed to repent and have faith in Jesus Christ (in order to be good). They fell into the classic Protestant understanding that salvation was by faith, not by works (although it was *for* good works). What the Indians seemed to be requesting in these instances, however, was ortho*praxy*, not orthodoxy: they wanted to *do* something—or cease doing something—to please God. They were perhaps still seeing the Christian message in terms of deeds, not doctrine. Such an understanding fit more into their traditional belief system of ritual as a means of attaining spiritual power. If the missionaries

[27] "Carey Station: Letter from Rev. Isaac M'Coy, to One of the Editors," *ABM*, March 1825, 87.

[28] "Carey and Thomas Stations: Mr. M'Coy's Journal, as Addressed to the Corresponding Secretary," *ABM*, March 1828, 68.

[29] Simerwell to Heman Lincoln, November 22, 1828, Simerwell Papers; see also Reynolds, "Carey Mission," 150.

[30] Robert Simerwell to Joel Wallingford, February 28, 1829, Simerwell Papers.

grasped these subtle differences in understanding at all, they certainly labored long and hard to erase and replace them.

There was possibly another layer of meaning to a native's usage of these words good and bad in such encounters. Some of these instances might be what Matthew Dennis calls condolence language, "an expression of conscious and formulaic self-depreciation" that was a part of the discourse of native diplomacy in some tribes. In other words, natives, especially chiefs, may have called themselves bad but wanting to be good in order to express an ongoing desire for the missionaries' presence and practical assistance, even if they were not accepting the religious elements of that assistance on its own terms.[31] In that light, what Robert Simerwell interpreted as a cry for help in November 1828 might not actually have been one. The man who cried out did not necessarily agree with the missionaries' assessment that all was gloom, despair, and agony for him and his fellow Indians. Neither did he obligate himself to obey the missionaries' response to the question (although he might have out of deference). He instead *obligated the missionaries*, who by that point had an established friendship with the tribe, to help him by answering the question.

Baptist missionaries labored long and hard to erase and replace native religion and culture with white religion and culture, and every activity of the missionary schools was designed to do this. The missionaries constituted the Potawatomi Mission Church in 1823 not long after their arrival at Carey. While at Carey, they held worship services in English every Sunday morning at 11:00. On Sunday afternoons, McCoy went out into the village to preach. The missionaries led religious exercises with their students on Sunday evenings, beginning at 4:30; these included singing, praying, exhortations (probably short Bible lessons), and

[31] Matthew Dennis, *Seneca Possessed: Indians, Witchcraft, and Power in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 154-157.

conversations. Eventually, they began to read religious discourses in the Potawatomi language. They also held religious meetings on three evenings during the week: one for adults, the second for children, and the third for those who could not speak English. The missionaries happily reported that conversations about Christianity could happen at any time in addition to these regularly scheduled times. When Thomas Station opened among the Odawas, the missionaries conducted religious exercises along similar lines. At Thomas, McCoy reported that they called the villages to worship with a trumpet and began the services by ringing a steel bell. Sunday morning worship was in the Odawa language, and the afternoon service was in English, which was then followed by Sunday School, a time of teaching. The missionaries had daily prayers in the mornings and evenings, which they reported that some of their native neighbors attended. McCoy also made excursions into some surrounding villages to preach.[32]

Spiritual seeds were not the only things the missionaries were sowing, of course, and they were not just seeking spiritual converts but also cultural converts. Carey and Thomas stations were large establishments with a second goal of teaching the Potawatomis and Odawas how to become settled agriculturalists. By the fall of 1823, almost a year after Carey was established, McCoy reported that it had a row of three two-story log cabins for dwellings and a kitchen, a school, a blacksmith shop, a meat house, and a milk house. The staff had enclosed sixty acres of land, 36 of which was used for growing corn and potatoes, and the remaining served as pasture for five cows, six yoke of oxen, 210 head of cattle, and 92 sheep. There were seventy people living at the station, including McCoy and his wife (the superintendent), a teacher, an assistant teacher, a schoolmistress, a blacksmith, a carpenter, four farmhands, two female Potawatomi

[32] "Domestic: Carey Station," *Latter Day Luminary*, January 1825, 17-19; "Mr. M'Coy's Journal, Addressed to the Corresponding Secretary," *ABM*, March 1828, 66; Isaac McCoy, *History of Baptist Indian Missions* (Washington, DC: William M. Morrison, 1840), 202, 234. For an example of McCoy preaching in surrounding villages, see "Carey Station," *ABM&MI*, September 1824, 426-427.

laborers, eight white children, and 49 Indian students (35 boys and 14 girls). In late 1824, McCoy reported that 81 acres were enclosed, 26 of which was pasture; the remaining had been used that year to grow 150 bushels of oats, 1,600 bushels of corn, 400 bushels of potatoes, 120 bushels of turnips, 1,000 cabbages, peas, beans, and other crops. They had also manufactured 300 yards of cloth. The school had 66 students. In 1825, they erected a $700 grist mill. By 1826, there were as many as 70 students. In addition to learning the English language, reading, writing, and arithmetic, these students learned to do the manual labor that was essential to an American agricultural lifestyle, and this instruction in manual labor had the added advantage of providing for the needs of the school with the ultimate (but never achieved) goal of it becoming self-sufficient. The boys' chores included chopping wood and hoeing the garden, while the girls learned to sew, knit, and spin. In the process, the children thus learned western gender norms, whereas in native culture women tilled the soil and men hunted for game. Agricultural education was not limited to the children enrolled in the school. The staff of the mission stations also helped the Indians start their own family farms, distributing cattle, putting up fences, and plowing fields for them. The missionaries served as the channels by which the United States government distributed farming implements, as promised in treaties.[33]

Thus a typical day at Carey began at 5:00 A.M. during the summer with the sounding of the trumpet, which called students and staff to prayer; this trumpet call naturally came later

[33] McCoy to Luther Rice, May 21, 1823; McCoy to John C. Calhoun, October 1, 1823; McCoy to James Barbour, August 30, 1825; McCoy to Rice, August 30, 1825, McCoy Papers; "Carey Station," *ABM*, March 1825, 84-87; "Letter from Rev. Isaac M'Coy," *ABM*, February 1826, 64; "Carey Station: Journal of the Mission," *ABM*, January 1827, 24; McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 198; Edmunds, *The Potawatomis*, 18-19; Reynolds, "Carey Mission," 112-113. On gender-specific tasks, see also Dennis, *Seneca Possessed*, 128-142; Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 22-25. Letters discussing the logistics of getting these implements to the Indians from the government agents appear frequently in McCoy's correspondence files: examples from 1823, the first year at Carey, are Benjamin Kircheval (Indian Agent at Fort Wayne) to McCoy, January 19, 1823; Alexander Wolcott (Indian Agent at Chicago) to McCoy, March 26, 1823; McCoy to Alexander Wolcott, May 12, 1823; McCoy to Alexander Wolcott, September 3, 1823; McCoy to Lewis Cass (Governor of Michigan Territory), September 29, 1823; McCoy Papers.

during the winter months. After prayer but before breakfast, the students engaged in manual labor. Breakfast began at 6:30, with the older pupils eating first because the dining room could not contain everyone at one time. The students began their studies at 8:00 in the summer, 8:30 in the winter, and continued in that until noon. Lunch was at 12:30, and three more hours of classroom time followed, beginning at 2:00. With studies concluded, everyone ate dinner at 6:30. Religious instruction commenced thereafter and continued until 8:00 in the evening during the winter months or dusk during the summer months. Students were not required to be in bed at 9:00 P.M., but they were required to be silent after that hour. Gaps in this schedule were probably given as much to manual labor as to free time. Recreational activities occupied the students' time on Saturday, and, of course, Sunday was given to religious activities. Such a regimented schedule was typical of the Lancastrian system of the day, and, as Jack Reynolds observes, a "comparison of the course of study at Carey Mission with Common and Frontier schools suggests that the Indian pupils at Carey Mission had an opportunity to acquire an education that at least matched the opportunity offered to most white youths."[34]

Indeed, the missionaries wanted their Indian students to take that opportunity to become like white youths. It is possible to follow a handful of McCoy's Indian converts throughout their lives to determine whether they actually did become what the missionaries wanted them to be. Such an investigation also reveals the natives' experience of Christianity beyond what the missionaries said their experience was. Young men the missionaries sent east for study in 1826 and 1827 provide the opportunity for this investigation. McCoy hoped they would get an education and return to the west to be leaders in their tribes and do far more toward raising their

[34] McCoy to Lewis Cass, July 1, 1823, McCoy Papers; McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 201-202; Reynolds, "Carey Mission," 108-110. See also Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage*, ch. 2. The Lancastrian system was a new method for teaching spelling, writing, and arithmetic, developed in England by Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster; it enabled one teacher to teach more students by training older children as monitors to teach younger ones using large cards and slate rather than paper (Berkhofer 25ff).

fellow Indians into Christianity and civilization than missionaries themselves could do. They were the trophies of the missionaries' labors in the 1820s, and the first seven are discussed here in the order McCoy introduced them to William Staughton, Corresponding Secretary of the Board, in a letter written on July 11, 1825.[35]

The eldest of the group was Kenozahqua, age 21, whose mission name was Peter Langlois. He was the son of a French trader and a Miami woman and therefore was considered a member of the Miami tribe. He had arrived at the Fort Wayne mission on August 14, 1820, "ignorant of English language and habits," according to McCoy. Despite long absences from the school over the next five years, he learned to read, write, and do arithmetic; in addition to his native language, Miami, he could also speak Potawatomi, English, and French with some proficiency. The missionary credited him with having good sense, and he was baptized on January 13, 1825.[36] The biggest proof of his good sense (as McCoy saw it) came later that year after he left Carey to go home and become a trader like his father. He was ridiculed back at home for living as he was taught at the mission school, and having to sell alcohol to his fellow Indians troubled him. While contemplating how to avoid selling whiskey without dishonoring his father, Kenozahqua went to visit some friends in another place and there received a letter from the mission offering to take him eastward to continue his education. He gratefully accepted the offer in October 1825. The point of this latter story as it appeared in the *American Baptist Magazine* was that a young Indian had been saved from having to participate in the wicked alcohol trade due to the support of its Baptist readership. Kenozahqua was at least one native

[35] See also McCoy to Lucius Bolles, March 10, 1826, American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society Missionary Correspondence, American Baptist Historical Society, Atlanta. See also McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 270; Reynolds, "Carey Mission," 122ff.

[36] McCoy to William Staughton, July 11, 1825, McCoy Papers.

child who had come to see the world through the missionaries' eyes; he was a step in the right direction for Native American society.[37]

Kenozahqua, now consistently called Peter, had remained true to the education he received at Carey when it came to the sale of alcohol. He did not, however, manage to uphold the sexual ethic of the mission, and this later cost him his spot at the Hamilton Institute. After returning from his father's house and while waiting to head east to college, Peter became engaged—with McCoy's blessing—to another of the students a Carey. This young woman, Betsey, was also a promising student, according to McCoy, and the missionaries had visions of her also going to the east to continue her studies. For that reason, McCoy advised both of them to wait to marry until they had completed their studies. It was advice that he would later regret, as the young couple's relationship became sexual before they parted ways. Betsey conceived but managed to conceal her pregnancy from everyone at the mission, including Peter, who went east to the Hamilton Institute in New York in January 1826. In July, Betsey gave birth to a stillborn child. When the mission workers discovered the cover-up, they questioned her, and she confessed that the child was Peter's. McCoy hastily wrote to Lucius Bolles (corresponding secretary of the Board), Francis Wayland (a pastor in Boston), Daniel Hascall (president of the Hamilton Institute), and Peter, informing them of the situation.

The missionary was clearly shaken by the incident and took it personally. He lamented that the two Indian students had betrayed the missionaries who had befriended them. To Peter, he wrote, "Peter, why did you treat us so badly? Were not I & my fellow missionaries the best

[37] "Extract of a Letter from Rev. Isaac M'Coy to His Friend in Boston," *ABM*, March 1826, 88-90. Reynolds attributes this incident to another Carey student named Konapot and concludes that he never wound up going east (103-104). In fact, the letter in which McCoy relayed this story to Francis Wayland (the "Friend in Boston") on October 15, 1825 (which was published in March 1826), only refers to the student as K—. Kenozahqua, Peter Langlois, is a far more likely candidate given all the details in McCoy's letters. There was a Jacob Corbly Konkapot at Carey mission, but he was too young to fit the description of K—.

friends you ever had? I invited you back to our house that we might still help you, and make you a respectable gentleman & a useful Christian, and at the same time that we were praying for you, & teaching you, and seeking for you a situation in a seminary, you was wickedly bringing grief and shame on us." He expressed embarrassment to his white sponsors about the incident; they had, in fact, taken great care to prevent such things by maintaining separate living quarters for male and female students. He moaned to Hascall, in characteristic sense of martyrdom, that "[o]ur trials and discouragements are truly great." To Bolles, he called Peter "the most criminal of the two," a wretch, wicked, evil, and a seducer. The Potawatomi Mission Church had suspended Peter and Betsey from church fellowship, and McCoy recommended that the authorities send him back to marry Betsey.[38]

Paternalism, although clearly a factor, does not in and of itself explain McCoy's reaction. The missionaries also held deeply-rooted theological beliefs about human sexuality. The official Baptist position sexual activity forbade it by the command of God except between a man and woman in the bonds of legal marriage.[39] God was even more entitled than the missionaries to set the parameters of Peter's sexual activity and then demand compliance. Despite the fact that they were engaged, what Peter and Betsey had done was therefore sexually immoral; as McCoy continued in his letter to Peter, "You have sinned against us. You have sinned very much against God." Ecclesiology also came into play. In Baptist practice, church members who were found to have violated this prohibition, like Peter and Betsey, could be summoned before the entire congregation for censure. If they acknowledged their moral failure and repented, they would be

[38] McCoy to Lucius Bolles, July 14, 1826; McCoy to Francis Wayland, July 14, 1826; McCoy to Daniel Hascall, July 17, 1826; McCoy to Peter Langlois, July 17, 1826, McCoy Papers. On separate living quarters for boys and girls at Indian mission schools, see Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage*, 41. Berkhofer briefly mentions this incident with Peter Langlois but provides only barebones details and analysis.

[39] Richard Godbeer, however, points out in *Sexual Revolution in Early America* that the official norms and the actual practice of common folk were two different things; in rural areas of the colonies where ministers and magistrates were rare, couples considered themselves married without official ceremonies, and the community did not usually frown on their sexual unions (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002; p. 7).

restored to fellowship; if not, they would be expelled. On the one hand, then, the missionaries were treating Peter and Betsey as they would any white member of any church.[40]

At the same time, however, McCoy interpreted Peter's failure in cultural terms: "It will be for the Board to decide what or whether any allowance should be made for one who has spent too many years among his very depraved countrymen," he wrote to Bolles.[41] Peter's successes were therefore due to the influence of Christianity and civilization; his failures were the influence of Indian culture. No matter how acculturated he became, Peter was still a product of Indian culture, and its sexual mores did not meet the standards of white Christianity, McCoy and his fellows assumed.[42] The record does indicate that native communities did not necessarily frown on polygamy, informal divorce, and teenage sexual liaisons in the same way that white Christian society did (at least officially); in addition, these communities traditionally regulated the morality of their members, relying on shame—the fear of what people would say—more than on the guilt associated with breaking any divine commands. The missionaries, of course, made moral judgments according to the Christian scriptures; they deemed anything less as sinful.[43]

Finally, on February 7, 1827, Peter wrote McCoy, begging his forgiveness. (The reason for the delay is unclear, but distance is probably not the only explanation.) He exclaimed, "Dear father, thou art the servant of God. I beg you pray for me a poor miserable and perishing sinner."

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[40] For a helpful discussion of Baptist church discipline in the late eighteenth century, see Spangler, *Virginians Reborn*, ch. 4. Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) discusses church discipline in other denominations in chapter 1.

[41] McCoy to Bolles, July 14, 1826, McCoy Papers.

[42] In assuming this, they fit into a long tradition of Europeans worrying that the so-called savage tendencies of the Indians would corrupt their culture (Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution*, 3-4).

[43] See, for example, Dennis, *Seneca Possessed*, 75-76, 85; Wallace, *Death and Rebirth of the Seneca*, 35-37. For his part, McCoy spoke very little about Indian views and practices of sexuality, although he did deal with the issue of polygamy when he encountered Chief Menominee, who had two wives. McCoy recognized how problematic it would be for the chief to divorce one of them, so he did not issue any absolute commands. Nevertheless, he repeatedly emphasized to the chief that the biblical view of marriage did not include polygamy. Peter was far more under McCoy's authority than Menominee was, and McCoy was quite free in issuing commands to him ("Fort Wayne Mission: Extracts from the Journal of the Reverend Mr. M'Coy, *LDL*, November 1822, 338-339).

The penitent student expressed his sorrow in extensive biblical language: "I have verged to the unpardonable sin, it is against light and love that I have offended. I have forsaken God and have gone after other loves. I have committed this one wicked act which the Heavens are astonished. I have forsaken the fountain of living water and hewed to myself sisterns broken that can hold no water." He agreed to return to Carey and marry Betsey yet asked to stay at Hamilton longer so that he could keep learning and be useful to the Indians. The missionaries apparently accepted his repentance, and he was allowed to stay at Hamilton at least through the end of 1827.[44]

Peter's aptitude at using the language of the missionaries is striking. His words do seem to reflect a sincere repentance in line with the missionaries' terms as well as a desire to continue with the program they had laid out for him and his fellow natives. The theology he expresses is certainly orthodox and a reflection of McCoy's teaching: humans sin and deserve God's wrath; they must turn from their own ways in order to love and obey God, who is merciful to pardon their sin. At the same time, it is not unreasonable to suspect words and actions calculated to maintain the benefits of Baptist affiliation with the intention of using them for ends he—and not McCoy—determined. Since Peter is lost to history after this incident, one can only speculate.

One does not have to speculate about some of Peter's peers, however. Joseph Bourassa was the seventeen-year-old son of an Odawa mother and métis father. He had lived his life among the Potawatomi and "was taken from the woods" on September 26, 1820. By 1825, he could read "sensibly," write "with a tolerably good hand," and had "a pretty correct knowledge of arithmetic." In addition to his native language of Odawa, he could speak Potawatomi, French,

[44] Langlois to McCoy, February 6, 1827; Hascall to McCoy, March 19, 1827; Langlois to McCoy, June 4, 1827, McCoy Papers; "Letter from Two Indians to McCoy," *ABM*, January 1828, 19-20. The biblical references in Peter's letter can be attributed as follows: the "unpardonable sin" is addressed by Jesus in Matthew 12:31-32 (although the unpardonable sin is *not* sexual immorality); "other loves" alludes to Revelation 2:4; the heavens astonished and the fountain and cisterns language is from Jeremiah 2:12-13.

and English. He had been baptized on January 13, 1825, with Peter Langlois.[45] He, too, wound up at the Hamilton Institute, and he, too, seems to have run into problems there. He wrote to McCoy in July 1827 that he "laboured under a great distress about my state in the holy church of God." He exclaimed that he felt lost. He did not know why he had come to Hamilton and that the other Indians were saying that he brought reproach upon them. He revealed that since they arrived, "I never called any of them Brother, nor was I by them" and that he had not prayed with them, either. As a result, he was "so cast down and also no relations near." He feared McCoy's anger and begged for the senior missionary's prayers, lest he "be the one to pollute thy sons," and as he could not pray for himself. He called himself Judas and blamed the problem on Satan. The exact nature of any conflict between Joseph and the other members of the delegation from Carey, as well as the nature of the possible discipline problem, is not clear from the letter.[46] What can be determined is that Joseph, like Peter, was clearly adept at using Christian language to speak to McCoy, and he had probably absorbed and believed it, as well. Saying he felt lost—or calling himself Judas, a betrayer—would communicate not just mental confusion or agony at being away from home and family but a spiritual problem, even hopelessness, and McCoy would presumably respond to try to help like the spiritual father he assumed himself to be to the men. There is the possibility that Joseph's writing reflects a self-depreciating cultural formula of asking for help (expressed in white terms) more so than it does the real nature of the problem.

The troubles of 1827 notwithstanding, Joseph must have been able to finish at Hamilton with his peers, because the next record of him is at Richard Mentor Johnson's Choctaw Academy in Kentucky in 1832. He completed his studies in law the following year. He and his brother, Mark, who also attended the Choctaw Academy, helped encouraged their fellow students to

[45] McCoy to William Staughton, July 11, 1825, McCoy Papers.

[46] Joseph Bourassa to McCoy, July 22, 1827, McCoy Papers. See also Bourassa to Robert Simerwell, April 23, 1826, Simerwell Papers.

prepare for the western colony, an activity that no doubt pleased McCoy.[47] Upon removal, however, Joseph joined the Roman Catholic Church—perhaps the culmination of the religious struggles about his place in the church that he expressed in 1827. He subsequently met with some success as a writer of biographies of Indian chiefs. By the 1860s, the Potawatomis in their "permanent" homeland of Kansas were once again threatened with removal. Joseph became disillusioned with the civilization program he had followed at Carey, Hamilton, and the Choctaw Academy, saying that it had not equipped him to defend Indian land rights. Furthermore, he had realized that whites would never accept Indians like him as fellow citizens, no matter how educated they became. Joseph died in in Kansas in 1877, having spent his life using what he learned from the Baptists to help preserve a native identity and, indeed, to craft one that could withstand the onslaught of American Manifest Destiny.[48]

John Lalime, age thirteen, was next on McCoy's list of hopefuls. His father was a French trader, and his mother was an Ojibwe who had lived with the Potawatomis. He had come to Fort Wayne on September 26, 1820, and could now speak broken English as well as read and write "tolerably well." He had been baptized on January 23, 1825. Beyond this initial reference, nothing has survived about Lalime.[49]

Noaquett, or Luther Rice (who was named for the denominational leader), was a full-blooded Ojibwe, who had been found among the Potawatomi. He had come to the mission on May 24, 1821, and had since come to serve as McCoy's interpreter because he spoke Potawatomi, Odawa, and Ojibwe. He was now fifteen years old, could read and write "pretty correctly," and had "some knowledge of arithmetic." He had been baptized on January 17,

[47] Mark Bourassa to Simerwell, April 12, 1832; Joseph Bourassa to Robert Simerwell, August 21, 1832; Joseph Bourassa to Simerwell, May 7, 1833, Simerwell Papers; see also, Reynolds, "Carey Mission," 123-124.
[48] Reynolds, "Carey Mission," 222-223.
[49] McCoy to William Staughton, July 11, 1825, McCoy Papers.

1825.[50] Rice probably fulfilled the missionaries' hopes more than any other student. After McCoy first took Noaquett along as his interpreter when he preached in a village in July 1824, he wrote, "It gave me much satisfaction to find that one of our pupils, who was wholly ignorant of the English language when taken into our family, was at this time, capable of interpreting satisfactorily, a religious discourse."[51] Rice spent four years at Hamilton and did not make satisfactory progress in his own eyes; therefore, he asked to return to Michigan. By 1832, he was teaching and preaching at Carey and also helping Simerwell with a Potawatomi hymnbook. He became a government interpreter in Kansas and continued to preach, working alongside Simerwell in the temperance cause.[52]

John Tecumseh Jones, 19, was the son of an Ojibwe mother and a Canadian father. In July 1825, when McCoy was preparing the group to go to Hamilton, he could read and write "imperfectly" as well as speak English, French, Potawatomi, and Odawa. He had been at the mission since April 10, 1823, and had been baptized with Peter Langlois and Joseph Bourassa.[53] While he was at Hamilton, he penned several letters to McCoy, informing him of the routine business of the school and also thanking him for the kindness he had shown toward the Indians. He once wrote of his gratitude to "the great omnipotent Jehovah" who had made McCoy "instrumental in his hands to pluck my soul from the everlasting burning, from that bottomless pit" and continued by begging the students remaining at Carey "to leave all your wickedness; and love the precious Jesus" and also to "mind your teachers all of them…that come to teach you

[50] McCoy to William Staughton, July 11, 1825, McCoy Papers.

[51] "Carey Station: Letter of Mr. M'Coy," *ABM*, September 1824, 426; see also "Carey Station: Letter from Mr. M'Coy to One of the Editors," *ABM*, April 1825, 119, and Reynolds, "Carey Mission," 140.

[52] Rice to Simerwell, June 27, 1830; Simerwell to Lucius Bolles, January 6, 1832; Simerwell to Heman Lincoln, January 6, 1832, Simerwell Papers; Simerwell to McCoy, April 12, 1832, McCoy Papers; Jotham Meeker, *Journal* (July 4, 1839), Jotham Meeker Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka; Reynolds, "Carey Mission," 160, 210, 221. One letter from Rice to Simerwell is extant, dated June 24, 1826, in the Simerwell Papers.

[53] McCoy to William Staughton, July 11, 1825, McCoy Papers.

to know him [and] to read the good book."[54] Jones, too, could speak orthodox Christian language with apparent conviction, and he remained in the Baptist faith for his lifetime. His career path, however, did not always adhere to the missionaries' high moral standards.

A letter he wrote to McCoy in May 1829 reveals that Jones considered moving to Upper Canada to teach among the Ojibwe there, which was an ideal career for a former student in McCoy's eyes. By June 1831, however, he was back at Carey, and from there, he continued his education at the Choctaw Academy in 1832. While at the Choctaw Academy, he served as an assistant teacher and also liaison for Simerwell with Colonel Richard Mentor Johnson as he was attempting to get more boys admitted to the academy.[55] Jones served as an interpreter for the Sault Ste. Marie Indian Agency after he completed his studies at Choctaw; when he moved to Kansas in 1836, he interpreted for the Osage River Subagency. After being expelled by the Potawatomis for misuse of treaty funds, he became a member of the Odawa Nation in 1847. He was as a successful businessman, operating a large farm and hotel near present-day Ottawa, Kansas, while also preaching at the Shawnee Baptist Mission. In June 1856, his hotel served as the neutral site for a prisoner-of-war exchange, which included the sons of the infamous John Brown, before it was burned by pro-slavery guerillas two months later. During the 1860s, he was instrumental in the establishment of Ottawa University, a Baptist institution for Indians that became mired in fraud and corruption. He also assisted with the treaty of June 29, 1862, which gave severalty and citizenship to the Odawa Bands of Kansas. Likewise, he signed the treaty of February 23, 1867, that provided for their removal to Oklahoma. For his part in this treaty and in

[54] John Tecumseh Jones to McCoy, May 29, 1827, McCoy Papers; see also Jones to McCoy, March 4, 1829, McCoy Papers, and "Letter from Two Indians to McCoy," *ABM*, January 1828, 19-20.

[55] Jones to McCoy, May 23, 1829; Simerwell to McCoy, April 12, 1832, McCoy Papers; Simerwell to Thomas Owen, June 14, 1831; Simerwell to John Tipton, June 22, 1831; Tipton to Simerwell, July 3, 1831, and April 17, 1832; Jones to Simerwell, November 10, 1832, and March 23, 1833, Simerwell Papers. At least five students from Carey, and probably more, attended the Academy in the early 1830s in addition Joseph and Mark Bourassa and John Tecumseh Jones. Reynolds names Peter Moose, Schmoque (Joel Wallingford), and Schotmanah (John Leib), although his source for these names is unclear (123).

the land fraud at Ottawa University, the Odawas, too, expelled him. Jones therefore cooperated with whites and adopted their ways. The missionaries wanted their students to do this; however, his career as a trader would have confirmed all their moral reservations about the profession. Jones also capitalized on his native identity when that proved beneficial to himself. William E. Unrau and H. Craig Miner's evaluation of his career would not have pleased his father in the faith, McCoy; they write that "he had a shrewd awareness of what Indian acculturation and intertribal politics might mean in the economic development of the frontier. He mixed personal piety, individual gain, and government subsidy with impunity." He died on August 16, 1872.[56]

Nuko was fourteen in 1825 and a full-blooded Potawatomi, known in Baptist correspondence only as A. Fuller. He had come to the mission on July 30, 1823, and had since learned to read and write in English, although, in McCoy's estimation, imperfectly. He had been baptized with Luther Rice on January 17, 1825.[57] After spending two years at Hamilton, his teachers deemed his progress inadequate (although his character remained good) and made plans to send him back to his homeland to learn a trade. McCoy protested these plans in a letter dated August 7, 1828. He reminded Daniel Hascall, president of Hamilton, of the reasons for sending the boys there in the first place: "by enjoying good society and being kept apart from their depraved countrymen they might be preserved [illegible] until a suitable situation for them and others might be provided." Nuko would not have any opportunity to learn a trade in the environs of Carey; rather, he would visit his family and "fall into habits which would be a grief to his benefactors & a discredit to the work of Indian reform." Nuko's case says more about McCoy's assumptions as it does Nuko himself. On one level, it speaks to how the missionaries did not

[56] William Unrau and H. Craig Miner, *Tribal Dispossession and the Ottawa Indian University Land Fraud* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 69-77, 122; Reynolds, "Carey Mission," 219-220; Paul O. Myhre, "Potawatomi Transformation: Potawatomi Responses to Catholic and Baptist Mission Strategy and Competition, 1822-1872" (Ph.D. diss., Saint Louis University, 1998), 55-56.

[57] McCoy to William Staughton, July 11, 1825, McCoy Papers.

trust traders in Indian country and did not want their students to follow a profession marked by, in their eyes, greed and corruption.[58]

On a deeper level, however, this incident reveals the racist paternalism behind the Indian reform experiment, even among those whose motives were benevolent. The native children who were educated at mission schools were the only hope for the Indian race, according to the missionaries. They were also a very fragile hope, especially if they, like Nuko, did not excel in the courses that whites laid out for them. They could just as easily be corrupted by their fellow Indians as they could lead their fellow Indians into the habits of civilization. By corruption, of course, the missionaries did not simply mean alcoholism or non-Christian religious practices; they meant that the entirety of Indian culture was corrupt, and these Indian children must completely repudiate the traditions of their ancestors. To ensure this outcome, the whites had to provide for them: that is, to keep former students under white supervision either at eastern schools or in the new Indian homeland for which McCoy was surveying that very autumn. He therefore begged the trustees at Hamilton to keep Nuko there until all was arranged for the proposed Indian Territory. Once there, McCoy assumed, whites could better provide for their Indian neighbors—that is, ensure the desired outcome in these students' lives.[59]

Madore Beaubein was the final member of the group sent to Hamilton. He was sixteen when McCoy first mentioned him, the son of a Potawatomi woman and French trader, J. B. Beaubein. He could speak French, Potawatomi, and English "plainly" as well as read and write "tolerably." He was baptized with Luther Rice and Nuko.[60] While he studied at Hamilton, his brother, Charles, studied at Woodbridge Seminary under the sponsorship of J. F. Halsey in Princeton, New Jersey. Both boys returned to their father in September 1828, apparently without

[58] Simerwell to McCoy, July 17, 1828; McCoy to Daniel Hascall, August 7, 1828, McCoy Papers.
[59] McCoy to Daniel Hascall, August 7, 1828, McCoy Papers.
[60] McCoy to William Staughton, July 11, 1825, McCoy Papers.

completing their courses of study. They preferred to become traders like their father, viewing that profession as more of a benefit to their fellow Indians—or perhaps simply an easier way to make money. McCoy wrote to Daniel Hascall that he was not surprised by this outcome.[61] Indeed, Madore lived in Chicago until 1840. He served in a militia company during the Black Hawk War, most likely guarding white settlements. He received payments from the 1833 Treaty of Chicago, both as a Potawatomi and as a creditor. He moved west to Kansas, where he was a successful businessman. He served as an interpreter in the treaties that united the Potawatomis in Kansas onto a single reservation and then as one of the six men on the council that conducted business between the tribe and the federal government. He died in Kansas in 1883.[62]

Soswa and Conauda were both about sixteen years of age in 1826 and had served as interpreters at the mission. According to the missionaries, they began to pray of their own initiative, and, because they could not pray well in English, they decided that God could surely hear them in their native language. Their innovation in praying pleased the missionaries, who had already made attempts to translate the Bible into and write hymns in the native languages around them. One of the young men even requested to be baptized, but McCoy "feared that he was not prepared" and decided on a longer trial period (a prime example of the missionaries not being hasty to declare the Indians Christians).[63] In the meantime, the Indians would need the benefits of modern medicine to be civilized, and Soswa and Conauda were good candidates for a medical education. Having given them the English names Francis Barrow and Thomas Baldwin,

[61] Simerwell to McCoy, July 17, 1828; McCoy to Daniel Hascall, August 7, 1828, McCoy Papers. See J. F. Halsey to McCoy, March 28, 1826, and September 1, 1827, McCoy Papers. A letter from J. B. Beaubein to McCoy about horses for their journey eastward, dated November 24, 1825, has survived in the McCoy Papers. See also brief letters from Charles to McCoy, dated April 29, 1826, in the McCoy Papers, and to Robert Simerwell, dated July 1, 1826, in the Simerwell Papers. For more on Charles' situation, see the discussion of his relationship with Halsey in chapter 4.

[62] Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians*, 175-177.

[63] "Carey Station: Extracts from the Journal at Carey," *ABM*, September 1826, 275-276; McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 282.

Johnston Lykins took them eastward to medical school in Castleton, Vermont, in January 1827. Both boys progressed in their studies at Castleton and wrote back to the missionaries that they aroused much curiosity among the inhabitants of Castleton and the surrounding towns.[64] Unfortunately, pulmonary consumption claimed their lives before they could complete their studies. Of Baldwin at least, Robert Simerwell wrote that he died a Christian death, telling the missionaries that he loved them and saying, "I long to be with my saviour."[65] Baldwin thus expressed the hope of the Christian faith that at death the believer is welcomed into Heaven and the presence of God. He, too, grasped Christian doctrine and made it his own. Nevertheless, the two men's deaths were a bitter blow to McCoy, who continued to insist that natives trained to be doctors would do more good than white doctors.[66] By their early deaths, however, they were able to remain in the canon of Baptist Indian saints, perhaps with more justification in the eyes of whites than some of their peers.

The missionaries at Carey were not only interested in educating Indian men in far-off institutions; they recognized a need for women to be educated, also. As McCoy was planning to send the boys east in late 1825, he also requested that the Board find a place for two eighteen-year-old Indian girls, "one of them religious, and the other not."[67] They could only get as far with this proposal as sending the two girls to Ohio to study for a few weeks. McCoy later wrote that the plan of sending female students to the east was "not much favoured" by the Board and

[64] Pharcellus Church to McCoy, August 12, 1826; McCoy to Bolles, September 11, 1826; Johnston Lykins to Bolles, January 10, 1827; Pharcellus Church to McCoy, July 2, 1827; Thomas Baldwin to McCoy, July 23, 1827, McCoy Papers; Francis Barrow to Simerwell, May 9, 1827, and May 27, 1828, Simerwell Papers; "Carey Station: Extracts from the Journal at Carey," *ABM*, September 1826, 275-276. See also letters from Lykins to McCoy between late January and March 1827, McCoy Papers; McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 301-302.

[65] E. B. Smith to Simerwell, August 13, 1831; Simerwell to Bolles, September 1, 1831; E. B. Smith to Simerwell, September 25, 1831; Simerwell Papers.

[66] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 301-302.

[67] McCoy to Staughton, November 21, 1825, McCoy Papers.

the general public.[68] In 1827, two couples in Poultney, Vermont, (near Castleton) offered to take in a girl each and give her an education. They wanted girls of "good personal appearance" and "tractable mind" to whom they would give "the opportunities enjoyed by our females generally in this country," that is, they would learn to teach school and do domestic work.[69] McCoy apparently never took these couples up on their offer, as by that point he was thoroughly involved in his efforts for removal. He concluded of his efforts to train Indian students in the east, "We have always found it difficult to persuade our correspondents among the white people, that the Indians were naturally like all other human beings, and that the same means which were necessary to improve society among the whites, were necessary among the Indians."[70]

McCoy's students, particularly these nine discussed in detail, surely grasped this reality that whites did not treat them like other human beings. The missionaries expected them to become like whites, but often did not treat them as such, no matter how much they acted like white Americans. These so-called converts therefore used what the missionaries taught them—the varying elements of Christianity and American civilization—to attempt to craft a future for themselves and their tribesmen as they sought best. For most of them, this did include removal to Kansas, according to the missionaries' plans. The missionaries also planned to make their students teachers, lawyers, doctors, and preachers to be at the head of a society of farmers. In the end, only one became a teacher and preacher; only one became a lawyer. The rest (for whom records exist) became traders and businessmen, a hated profession for the missionaries but an ideal way to acculturate for the Indians. Some did remain true to the Baptist faith at least nominally, but others embraced a faith that the Baptists disdained, Roman Catholicism. In the end, even the most acculturated of them did not reject their identity as Indians; in the words of R.

[68] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 272.
[69] Pharcellus Church to McCoy, July 2, 1827, McCoy Papers.
[70] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 272; Reynolds, "Carey Mission," 117-118.

David Edmunds, "Their experience among the whites equipped them to meet the Americans on white terms, yet adherence to Indian ways enabled them to maintain their tribal identity."[71]

McCoy had no way of knowing what would become of his students in the late 1820s. What he saw—or rather what he chose to see—was discouraging and alarming. In October 1827, he wrote, "But let it not be supposed that the Putawatomie, Ottawa, Miami, or any other tribe of Indians on our frontiers, or on small reservations is in reality improving as a tribe or nation; on the contrary, we reiterate the cry, *They are perishing*."[72] Again in August 1828, McCoy reported that the schools were progressing but the whites were encroaching, leading to "an almost total destruction of the hopes" of the Indians. He narrated the story of an Indian town overtaken by whites illegally before the terms of the treaty were fulfilled. He reported several deaths, noting that death rates were high among the tribes in his vicinity. The missionaries benefitted a few, he lamented, but as a people, the Indians were still perishing.[73] Of course, McCoy needed them to be perishing in order to give his mission a sense of purpose, and no doubt the tribes around him had problems in which he could assist. Nevertheless, he could not grasp—indeed, did not want to grasp—the qualified, nuanced ways in which the Potawatomis, Odawas, and others around him were adapting to new realities by utilizing ideas and skills they learned at the Baptist missions.

[71] Edmunds, *Potawatomis*, 226-228; Reynolds, "Carey Mission," 144-146.

[72] "Joint Letter by Missionaries at Carey Station, to the Corresponding Secretary," *ABM*, October 1827, 301.

[73] "Mr. M'Coy's Journal," *ABM*, August 1828, 238-239.

Chapter 4: Imaginary Indians

Okeetcheeh' was a four-year-old Potawatomi girl. Nothing certain is known of her life before this age, but perhaps it was typical of other Potawatomi girls. She spent the first year of her life wrapped in blankets of rabbit's fur and buckskin and fastened to a cradle board. Having outgrown this arrangement around the age of one, her mother allowed her to romp and play, and after she was able to walk, she began to help with her mother's chores in preparation for her role as a woman of the village. Tragedy struck soon, however. Her father died at some point during her first four years (perhaps even before her birth), and her mother became unable to provide for her. The Americans had a school not far from Okeetcheeh''s village, and her two older brothers were already students there. Eventually, her mother sent her there, as well. These Americans, though they were kind, had other visions for her future.[1]

Meanwhile, nearly a thousand miles away, a group of girls in Beverly, Massachusetts, organized a juvenile benevolent society to help educate an Indian child at Carey Mission. They wrote to McCoy in November 1825, enclosing $5 and some clothing for a girl that they asked to be named Harriet Emma Ober, the surname of the society's secretary. They expected "by our continual industry to get enough to mantain [sic] her untill by your good example and instruction she is capable of getting a living."[2] McCoy chose Okeetcheeh' to become Harriet Emma, and the girls had his reply published in the *American Baptist Magazine*: "We are deeply affected and

[1] For a description of Potawatomi childhood, see R. David Edmunds, *The Potawatomis: Keepers of the Fire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 18-19.

[2] Eliza Ann Ober to Isaac McCoy, November 1825, McCoy Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

much pleased with the fact, that females, mostly under the age of 12 years, should begin thus early, these acts of kindness to poor Indian girls, who are less fortunate than yourselves." The missionary reminded the girls how fortunate they were to have Christian parents, churches, and Sunday Schools to teach them God's way, while Okeetcheeh' had none of that. That dire situation had changed because of their benevolence, however: "But now she finds a home, and teachers in our house; now she finds friends, who though a thousand miles off do 'heartily remember her still;' yes, she is no longer Okeetcheeh' but Harriet Emma Ober."[3]

Historians have investigated the relationship of naming and power in slavery. In *Generations of Captivity*, Ira Berlin described how changing a newly arrived slave's name stripped him or her of dignity and former identity—and signified the master's complete ownership. Masters would choose whimsical names such as King Cole, Zeus, Othello, or Pondicherry to demonstrate their disdain for their slaves, and slaves seldom had surnames. Of course, when slaves escaped or obtained their freedom, they would take on a new name that symbolized their newly-acquired liberty. In *Education for Extinction*, David Wallace Adams likewise explores the renaming of Indian children in government boarding schools later in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Renaming children was, of course, an attack on tribal identity, but the teaching staff at schools also did so to avoid difficulty in pronouncing Indian names. Adams notes that giving the Indians surnames helped to move them toward possessive individualism, as surnames were necessary to fix lines of inheritance. Adams also traces the patterns in the renaming process. School officials often tried to use as much of the native name as possible—in its translated and even untranslated form. When a complete rename did occur,

[3] "Carey Station: Letter from Mr. M'Coy," *American Baptist Magazine*, October 1826, 303.

the children themselves chose from a list of options (which, of course, they probably did not understand).[4] The renaming of children at Carey Station probably followed similar patterns.

The evidence at Carey also presents historians with a completely new scenario: the renaming of children from a distance by eastern benefactors. This phenomenon likewise signified the erasure of past identity, but it was intended to bestow dignity (according to the whites' understanding) rather than to erase it. Regardless, it was still an act of power over the Indian. The renamed children provided living and breathing examples of the contrast between how white Americans imagined the Indians at the time and what they wanted them to be in the future. Renaming drew the sponsors directly to the newly missionized tribes, providing a theoretical connection between patron and pupil and putting the patrons themselves theoretically on the frontier mission field.

During the 1820s, numerous other white, Christian Americans collected money to send to Carey Station (and others like it) and viewed their actions as doing their part in the nation's effort to civilize and Christianize the Indians of the western frontier. They were convinced that the Indians needed their help—indeed, that they *owed* the Indians their help. Without it, the Indians would perish in this life and suffer eternally in the one to come. Heaven and Hell were on the line. Civilization and barbarity hung in the balance. To whom much was given, much was required. With their help, many more native girls like Okeetcheeh' could become a Harriet Emma Ober. The Indian-ness of the Indians could be transformed into the image of white Americans, those white Americans could obtain vast quantities of cheap land, and everyone could feel good about themselves. On these hopes, Baptist laypeople became a part of Isaac McCoy's donor networks.

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[4] Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2003), 32, 57, 73, 85-86, 105-106, 121; David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 108-112.

An investigation of McCoy's donor networks within the Baptist denomination is worthwhile because the letters that accompany these donations reveal how Baptist laypeople imagined the Indians and the outcome of the Indian reform project; they also reveal individuals' motives for participating in the endeavor. Indian reform was not simply a social engineering scheme dictated by the top levels of the United States government and from the boards of managers and missionaries of various denominations. Indian reform was embraced by thousands of ordinary Americans. Baptist laypeople often expressed their confidence in Indian reform to McCoy with language that was laced with biblical imagery. They shared the millennial hope that the Indians would become Christians and assimilate into the American populace. In addition, donating to a mission was the key way for Baptists not only to support global missionary efforts but also to express their fidelity to their denomination—as a set of doctrines and increasingly as an institution. After all, the missionaries spread not only Christianity but specifically the *Baptist* brand of Christianity. These missions were furthermore a cooperative effort of Baptists across the nation, the very reason for the Triennial Convention's existence. Donors became a part of the Triennial Convention, even if they were never able to attend the convention itself.

McCoy received donations from societies and individuals across the country. His vast correspondence contains letters from at least 96 different societies and individuals who contacted him directly about donations during the 1820s. (Many donors gave through one of McCoy's several traveling agents, and there was usually no letter accompanying these donations. When societies sent donations via the Board, there may or may not have been an accompanying letter.) Many of these societies were composed of women, fitting them within the tradition of benevolent and reform societies that were active all over the United States, but especially in New England, during the time. There were the Xenia Female Benevolent Society (Ohio), the Female

Industrious Society of the Third Baptist Church of Boston (Massachusetts), the Female Charitable Society of Bridgeport (Connecticut), and many others bearing similar names. The Windom and Hampton Female Mite Society (Connecticut) and the Mite Society of the Second Baptist Sunday School of Boston (Massachusetts) held a name inspired by the story of a widow who put two her last two coins, called mites in the King James Version, into the temple treasury in the Gospel of Luke.[5] At least two societies in Massachusetts took the name the Baptist Dorcas Society, a biblical reference to the heroine in the book of Acts who was "full of good works and almsdeeds."[6] Members of churches and associations organized mission societies that bore the name of that church or association with "Mission Society" attached; there were, for example, the Missionary Society of the Salem Baptist Church of Massachusetts and the Baptist Missionary Society of the Dublin Baptist Association of New Hampshire. Carey also received donations from juvenile societies, which were usually organized by the children of the Sunday Schools within a church; the Juvenile Benevolent Society of Beverly, Massachusetts, that adopted Okeetcheeh' is one example. Baptists also formed societies specifically aimed at helping the Indians; there was a Female Indian Society of West Townsend, Vermont, and a Female Aboriginal Relief Society of Newton, Massachusetts. There was even a Carey Society at First Baptist Church of Boston, Massachusetts, organized specifically to help Carey. Most of the societies in connection with McCoy were associated with the Baptist denomination, but a few were non-denominational and community-based.

Most donations for Carey came from the northern and northwestern states, especially New England, and within New England, especially Massachusetts. This fact is not surprising given that New England saw the greatest growth of benevolence and reform societies during the

[5] Luke 21:1-4, King James Version.
[6] Acts 9:36, King James Version.

first half of the nineteenth century and that the American mission movement began there, as well. These donations came in many forms. Cash often posed complications, as it proved difficult to convert paper from a bank in one state into paper that McCoy could use in Michigan Territory. Specie was not always an available option. Many people preferred donating items that could be used directly. Registers of gifts in the McCoy Papers from May 1823 (one of many like it) show that people had given socks, stockings, shoes, coats, several frocks, a petticoat, yarn, linen, thread, blankets, bedcovers, spelling books, and songbooks in addition to specie, paper, and coin. The frequent donation lists throughout McCoy's correspondence show similar items. Bibles and books came in occasionally, as well. Merchants in Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan with whom McCoy did business would also provide supplies free of charge from time to time. Especially in the early 1820s, farmers in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky would donate a sheep or a cow or a pig; McCoy's agent in that area or some other volunteer would gather these animals together and drive them to Fort Wayne (initially) and Carey (later). Clearly, McCoy's operation (and other Indian mission stations like it) was a complex and expensive proposition.[7]

Letters from donors not surprisingly reflected much of the language that McCoy used in his reports to describe the Indians. Laypeople played variations on the same theme, and indeed,

[7] On benevolence and reform, see Anne M. Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism: New York and Boston, 1797-1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); Steven Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers: America's Pre-Civil War Reformers* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1995). Note inquiries about exchanging bills in George Evans to McCoy, August 28, 1820, and John Bemiss to McCoy, June 5, 1821, McCoy Papers. For an example of the lack of specie, see John Mason to McCoy, April 12, 1822, McCoy Papers. The "registers of gifts" referred to above are invoices dated May 3 and 5, 1823, McCoy Papers. For donations of books and Bibles, see George Townsley to McCoy, May 25, 1821; Martha Galloway to McCoy, November 8, 1821; Dorothea D. Fishback to McCoy, July 25, 1822, McCoy Papers. Joseph R. John, a merchant in Troy, Ohio, provided sugar at cost to McCoy in June 1822; see John to McCoy, June 12, 1822, McCoy Papers; John frequently helped convey donations and supplies to the station; there was a regular correspondence between him and McCoy on these matters. See the numerous letters from George Evans and Corbly Martin to McCoy about gathering donations in 1822-1823. Note also the following letters from other individuals pertaining to the logistics of getting supplies and donations to the station: R. Montgomery to McCoy, May 5, 1821; James McAboy to McCoy, May 7, 1822; Jeremiah Luce to McCoy, February 26, April 2, June 3, September 16, and December 2, 1822; Henry Miller to McCoy, August 7, 1822, and April 21, 1823; L. J. Morris to McCoy, February 11, 1823; John P. Heagis to McCoy, July 16, 1823; Henry I. Hunt to McCoy, September 25, 1823, McCoy Papers. Letters of this nature continue in the McCoy Papers beyond 1823.

theirs was language common across the nation at the time. The Indians were poor, benighted, destitute, distressed, uncivilized, rude, savage, depraved, degraded, wretched, and friendless. They were "the red man of the forest," "our Red brethren," "our tawny neighbors," and "the houseless wanderers of the western wilderness."[8] Baptist language emphasized both difference and consanguinity. Calling them brethren softened their racial otherness to a degree and added the familial touch to otherwise standard stereotypes. At the same time, the Indians could become members of the American or Christian family only to the degree that they conformed to white standards. They were illegitimate step-brothers at best, but step-brothers that benevolent whites might be able to make worthy of the family. In short, the picture of the Indians in donor letters was overwhelmingly negative, a fact that only magnified Christian benevolence in trying to change them.

The majority of letters from donors consisted of essentially table talk about the mission and the logistics of donations, thus utilizing this language about the Indians without much elaboration. Other writers, however, went to some lengths in their theological musings about the depravity and salvation of the Indians. Perhaps the most powerful image in donors' minds was that of native violence, and this history of violence contrasted sharply with the peaceful future they imagined for the tribes. Prudence Dodge of Claremont, New Hampshire, wrote McCoy on behalf of her society, "Great no doubt are your difficulties & trials, labouring among men, who in addition to the hardness of their hearts common to the sons & daughters [of] Adam are united the wandering ferocity of the savage."[9] Here was the Christian doctrine of original sin combined with the racial stereotype of the Indians as vicious and heartless murderers. In the biblical book of Genesis, the first humans, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God, and their descendants—that is, all

[8] N. P. Williams to McCoy, July 1, 1825; James McCain to McCoy, June 4, 1821; Rebekah Pinkham to McCoy, September 15, 1824; Emily Hill to McCoy, January 1, 1826, McCoy Papers.
[9] Prudence Dodge to McCoy, December 10, 1823, McCoy Papers.

of humanity—have done the same ever since. From the perspective of original sin, then, the Indians were no different from whites; yet, in Dodge's mind, the Indians' "ferocity" was an extra, racial impediment to their progress toward Christianity (and civilization), a problem that whites clearly did not have.

The reason why such ferocity was an extra impediment to Christianity in Dodge's mind was that she and her fellow Baptists saw Christianity as a religion of peace. A donation of $63.99 from Harvard, Massachusetts, expressed the contrast well with its wish that "the natives of our western wilds will forsake their barbarous rites and rally around the standard of the cross…with the pleasing intelligence of 'peace on earth and good will to men.' Instead of the war hoop and the death song, may the Lion and the Lamb lay down together; may every hill and every valley echo with the high praises of Emanuel."[10] Dodge herself ended her letter by picturing "the little aborigines of the forest coming & throwing down their war clubs & pleading for assistance & instruction from the mission family & O may they soon lisp forth the praises of Jesus & hundreds, yea, thousands, descending down the Bank of the river St Joseph in obedience to the Saviours commands."[11] As long as the Indians were (supposedly) ferocious, then, they could not be Christians (and they obviously would not be civilized, either). In theological terms, what these writers were describing is called repentance: that is, acknowledging that one's deeds deserved God's punishment and accepting his forgiveness by ceasing to do them. The Indians would need to repent to be saved, and so did anyone else. Nevertheless, these writers saw the Indians' sin (violence) as particularly egregious and racial in character; it was part of their disposition as a race of people. The Baptists were therefore hoping for the Indians to be

[10] M. Haskell to McCoy, April 16, 1823, McCoy Correspondence.
[11] Dodge to McCoy, December 10, 1823, McCoy Papers.

redeemed from their sins, redeemed from their culture, and redeemed from their race—to become, of course, like peaceful, white, American Christians.

Baptist hopes for the future lay clearly in the context of recent violence between white Americans and native tribes. Thomas Bentley, the treasurer of a society in Westford, New York, founded specifically to aid Carey, wrote of that group's "wish to have the wild men of the forest become civilized and that they may know that their white brethren has good will towards them, and that we wish to have them fed and clothed." Because of the work McCoy and his associates were doing, the members expected "that the tomahawk and scalping knife shall be buried forever and that white men and red shall be of one heart and one soul, no longer feeling those jealousies which hath heretofore so much disturbed the peace."[12] After years of violence on the frontier, and particularly the horrors of the War of 1812, Baptist donors saw themselves as now holding out an olive branch to the Indians.

They often spoke of this olive branch as an obligation. Jonathan Going of Worcester, Massachusetts wrote, "We owe the natives much; and [our donation] is the most eligible, the most grateful, and, I believe, the most beneficial method of cancelling some part of the obligation."[13] Betsey O. Lane of Charles Street Female Industrious Society in Boston added that Americans in general had done very little for the "children of the forest"; they "have so high a claim upon our benevolence."[14] "We feel for the western natives of this country, that we are indebt to them, and ought to labour to civilize and christianize them," sighed John Paine of Hampton, Connecticut.[15] This belief in a debt to the Indians indeed arose out of an understanding of the injustices that whites had committed against them. Many writers could thus

[12] Thomas Bentley to McCoy, July 1826, McCoy Papers.
[13] "Letter from J. Going to Cor. Sec.," *Latter Day Luminary*, July 1822, 217.
[14] Betsey O. Lane to McCoy, February 21, 1825, McCoy Papers.
[15] John Paine to McCoy, May 13, 1823, McCoy Papers.

acknowledge white injustices, but that did not excuse Indian violence. Benevolence was therefore a matter of justice and the pathway to peace. Martha Shields of Christiana, Delaware, lamented that the government's $10,000 per year was not enough for Indian reform, given "the great injuries they have received at our hands as a nation. [With a few exceptions] we have robbed this people of their soil, we have introduced among them our vices, and our diseases, we have abridged their liberties, and cut off to an alarming degree their means of subsistence."[16] Elizabeth Groves of the Charles Street Female Industrious Society of Boston, Massachusetts, argued, "The aborigines of our own country have claims not only on our benevolence but justice, exiled by us from their original habitations, they are doomed to a life of wretchedness and misery without the blessings of civilized society; and shall we withhold from them the only return we can make that, of endeavouring to alleviate their condition?"[17] American settlement had caused the Indians' problems, and some Americans felt it their benevolent obligation to fix them.

Of course, they approached this obligation from a position of power over the Indians, expecting to fix these so-called problems on their terms (which they believed were also God's) and not the Indians'. In fact, their position of power had been ordained by God's providence, according to at least one writer: "when we reflect on the providence of God in driving them out before us, and causing us to possess the land with all the goodly privileges of a religious nature, that we enjoy we are ready to exclaim Great and marvelous are thy ways Lord God Almighty," wrote Rebekah Pinkham of Sedgwick, Maine. (Although only one writer in McCoy's correspondence expressed this idea explicitly, it is not hard to imagine that it was a common one.) Now that God had given them the power as well as the land, they felt compelled to use that power to help those who needed it. Pinkham recounted how troubled she and her friends were

[16] Martha Shields to McCoy, February 16, 1823, McCoy Papers.
[17] Elizabeth Groves to McCoy, December 28, 1825, McCoy Papers.

by the condition of the Indians and "rejoiced that God had raised up an instrument of good to the poor Indians."[18] There was truly a divided heart to Indian reform: a complex mixture of benevolence and selfishness, a Christian impulse to help those in need along with willingness to justify very unchristian actions with biblical-sounding platitudes.

It is no wonder, then, that the Indians did not see white efforts as an olive branch; they viewed them as a rod of iron labeled "federal policy." McCoy and the benevolent of his denomination were a key component of that rod. Yes, the white man now wanted peace. Yes, he now wanted to feed and clothe the poor Indians. In return, however, the Indians would now have to transform every aspect of their way of life. The white man and red man could become of one heart and one soul only if that soul looked, thought, and believed like a white man. These Baptist donors were probably not able to foresee all the implications of their efforts in the mid-1820s, nor could many of them have imagined how hard the federal rod of iron would strike. The Indians, of course, harbored no delusions: they would indeed bury their tomahawks and scalping knives—and be forced to lie prone in the path of the American juggernaut as the Americans loudly proclaimed that it was for their own good. The Indians saw themselves as being sinned against, not as sinners.

Furthermore, not all Baptists felt this spirit of obligation to hold out an olive branch. They would not acknowledge white injustices and preferred to punish the Indians for their violence. McCoy, his fellow missionaries, and his agents in the field often met hostility to the Indians, Indian reform, denominations, and missions in general. L. J. Morris of Mays Lick, Kentucky, volunteered with another man to help raise money for Carey during the winter of 1822 and 1823 and encountered "considerable opposition" to Indian reform. He explained to McCoy that some Kentuckians were "not yet willing to forgive the Indians on account of the massacre at

[18] Rebekah Pinkham to McCoy, September 15, 1824, McCoy Papers.

River Raisin."[19] After the British had defeated American forces under General James Winchester at the Battle of Frenchtown in January 1813, their Indian allies had slaughtered the prisoners of war, many of them wounded, many of them from Kentucky.[20] These memories had clearly not faded with time. Not long thereafter, Corbly Martin, McCoy's agent in Ohio and Kentucky, wrote to make arrangements for driving donations of cattle to the mission. He, too, described the opposition he had faced while traveling to collect this cattle: "I have been persecuted by many worldlings (not to say brethren) as though I were an evil gen[i]us immediately from the nether regions. … Some profane men have threatened to scalp me—many have wished the Indians might serve you and me both so. Some have proffered giving all their flocks if it would send the Indians and Missionaries both to the Devil."[21] Tales of Indian atrocities—real, embellish, or imagined—settled over the frontier like a fog and caused many frontier whites to oppose Indian reform with cries that the Indians should be left to perish. Like the biblical prophet Jonah, who preached grudgingly to Israel's enemy Nineveh and then sat back to watch God's judgement upon the city, they wanted to see the Indians pay for their crimes. They were not about to give money or clothing or cattle to help their mortal enemies, and, ironically, they were even willing to use methods that the Indians had notoriously used against them in order to stop the missionaries.

Even back east, Martha Shields reported that many Americans did not hold the Indians in high esteem: "The cause of the Indians is not popular among us. Those who possess the land of which the aborigines were the rightful proprietors generally care not what becomes of their

[19] James Morris to McCoy, February 11, 1823, McCoy Papers.

[20] See David Curtis Skaggs, *William Henry Harrison and the Conquest of the Ohio Country: Frontier Fighting in the War of 1812* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 140-154.

[21] Corbly Martin to McCoy, March 2, 1823, McCoy Papers.

injured posterity."[22] Shields sensed the mood of the times, especially as the 1820s progressed. As Andrew Jackson's campaign brought attention to the possibility of removal in 1828 and stirred deep-seated hostilities toward the Indians, an alarmed Shields prophesied, "Most certainly divine vengeance will not always sleep. Most certainly the cry of the oppressed ones, will be heard at some future day, and then there must be a terrible reckoning with us as a Nation,…for the inhumanity and fraud, which we are extending to the miserable Indians."[23] Despite the evident passion of some Baptists for civilizing and Christianizing the Indians, other Baptists preferred to punish them. Their God was not angry at whites for their mistreatment of the Indians; rather, he was angry at the Indians for their mistreatment of the whites and using the United States as his instrument of just retribution.

The nay-sayers notwithstanding, most Baptists foresaw an end to native violence—not simply as an olive branch but as entire fields of agricultural produce. Inducing the Indians to accept an agricultural way of life was a key component of the Christianization and civilization program, and McCoy's correspondents also played with agricultural imagery as they expressed their hopes for the future. Jemimah Parker of Vermont wrote, "Yea soon may our western forests become a fruitfull field, and the chiefs in all their tribes become as valiant leaders under Christ as they have been in their contests attended with carnage and blood."[24] Edward Siter of Great Valley Baptist Church in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, imagined that "where the rude and ruged [sic] trees of the forest are now,…the gospel axes may bring them down and in their place may be seen the corn growing up and fully ripening to the honor of our Lord's cause and to the great joy of you all."[25] The writers of these letters were not simply describing the felling of

[22] Shields to McCoy, June 28, 1825, McCoy Papers.
[23] Shields to McCoy, January 11, 1828, McCoy Papers.
[24] Jemimah Parker to McCoy, September 27, 1825, McCoy Papers.
[25] Edward Siter to McCoy, January 31, 1826, McCoy Papers.

literal forests followed by the planting and harvesting of literal fields, which, of course, *was* happening at Carey and Thomas stations. They were describing a transformation in the hearts and minds of the Indians, as well. They expected that the "trees" of Indian culture and religion would fall as the missionaries applied the "axe" of the Christian gospel through preaching and teaching. Prudence Dodge expressed the sentiment, "We pray that the wilderness place that has already been changed by the hands of industry into fruitfull fields & gardens, may be a true representation of what you shall see in the moral wilderness."[26] The transformation of the Indians themselves would in effect mirror what had happened on the landscape.

A prime way to effect this transformation from the perspective of an eastern donor was to sponsor and rename a child. At least twenty children were sponsored at Carey Station over the course of its existence, and the words of the men, women, and societies who sponsored them personify the ideology behind Indian reform. The children they sponsored provide living and breathing examples of the contrast between how white Americans imagined the Indians at the time and what they wanted them to be in the future, between what whites imagined and what the Indians might have wanted. The former name, representing Indian culture, was erased, and the children were given new, Christian names. Baptists had precedent for this practice in the Bible, as key heroes of the faith received new names when they became believers: God had called the Patriarch Abram and said, "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham"; likewise, Saul, the persecutor of the early church, became Paul the Apostle after the risen Lord appeared to him on the Damascus Road.[27] In the case of the Indians, sponsors gave them names—taking on a Divine role—in the hopes that they would likewise become something new and often talked at length about what that should be. (All the children at Carey

[26] Prudence Dodge to McCoy, December 10, 1823, McCoy Papers.
[27] Genesis 17:5, King James Version; Acts 9, 13:1-12.

were probably renamed even if they were not sponsored, but only a few instances of renaming without a sponsor survive in the records.) In most cases, one knows very little about these children and their background, only that someone was providing for them, but in a few cases the correspondence provides more details about their lives before coming to the mission and their families. These cases deserve a closer investigation before moving to investigate what the sponsors expected out of these relationships. These cases offer a brief opportunity to imagine what the native parents might have hoped for their children in the school at Carey in contrast to what whites wanted.

The earliest children to be sponsored were a brother and sister from the Miami tribe. The Female Benevolent Society of Xenia, Ohio, appears to have taken the initiative in deciding to sponsor the children. They then contacted McCoy with instructions to pick two of them to be named Francis Pringle, after their former pastor, and Martha Galloway, after the society's president.[28] McCoy responded with effusive gratitude and told the women a little about the children he had chosen to be theirs. Francis Pringle's former name was Muhquahkononggg, which meant painter, McCoy explained. He was about ten years old, "somewhat slender, sprightly in appearance, & cheerful in his manner. His skin of the true indian [sic] red, but his hair (at this time) not perfectly black like the adults." His sister was about seven, and "[h]er skin is a little darker than that of her brother, her hair a little lighter. She is not quite so handsomely featured as he, but is remarkably cheerful and promising." Her Indian name, Kielsahquah, meant the sun. Their father was an impoverished alcoholic. McCoy noted to the sponsors that the children had arrived at the mission "almost naked," dressed in rags which were "foul beyond

[28] James Galloway to McCoy, January 2, 1821, McCoy Papers.

description." The father initially tried to keep the boy dressed "in the Indian style," but later relented when the boy requested English clothes.[29]

The father's actions here need not be interpreted in way the missionaries did: that is, as total cultural capitulation. The father was nearby and appeared to be somewhat involved in his children's lives, a situation that was quite common at Carey. The father's efforts to keep the boy in native clothing would have provided for the missionaries another example of how families could hold the children back; for the father, however, it would have been an attempt to maintain cultural identity through his son, for whom he felt especially responsible in a way that he apparently did not for his daughter. That he relented to his son's request to wear English clothes may be an example of a more permissive approach to childrearing common among native tribes (of which the missionaries often complained).[30] It seems to be at the least an acknowledgment that the benefits of the school outweighed the cultural sacrifices—or that he was simply too poor to feed and clothe the boy when the missionaries could do that for him.

Of course, all of these nuances of cross-cultural parental decision-making would have been lost on the ladies in Xenia, who would have rejoiced in McCoy's news that Francis Pringle was well on his way to becoming like white children. To donors like them, this goal was what mattered, and because of that goal, they had not taken on the sponsor relationship without first setting some conditions on their charity. To ensure this desired outcome, they had requested "[c]hildren of sprightly appearance and promising talents."[31] Two random children from Carey Station were not as good as any other in their eyes; they wanted children who already showed some promise. The child as an individual with its unique needs and personality was irrelevant;

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[29] McCoy to Galloway, February 7, 1821, McCoy Papers.

[30] For an excellent discussion of childrearing practices among the Seneca tribe of New York see Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 34-39. One example of McCoy complaining about native childrearing is in a letter to Lucius Bolles, April 16, 1827, McCoy Papers.

[31] Galloway to McCoy, January 2, 1821, McCoy Papers.

what mattered was whether or not he or she could carry the torch of civilization that the Americans wanted to foist upon the Indians. Donors were dealing in ideas more than people, in imaginary Indians more than real ones. At any rate, the Female Benevolent Society of Xenia sent clothing at least once each year—possibly even seasonally—until 1825 in pursuit of this goal. Whether Francis Pringle and Martha Galloway lived up to their sponsors' ideals is unknown, however.

The Potawatomi child Agat became Ann Sharp following a donation of the Female Industrious Society of the Third Baptist Church of Boston. They sent $20 in April 1824 with the request to name a girl after the wife of prominent Boston pastor, Daniel Sharp. In June, no doubt not long after McCoy received their letter, a Potawatomi woman brought her nine-year-old daughter, Agat, to the mission. McCoy reported that the woman said, "The Indians die very fast so that it seems they will soon all be gone. I have brought my daughter hither in hopes that she will learn something good before her death." Agat thus became Ann Sharp. The story appeared in the *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer* that September.[32] McCoy wrote the women in Boston, "Permit me…in behalf of this little girl, and of her mother, who wished her daughter to learn 'something good before her death,' to repeat sincere thanks to your Society for their kindness. While your prayers and munificence shall be offered for the relief of this object of your care, we shall feel it our duty to leave nothing undone within the limits of our ability, that may contribute to the realizing of your hopes."[33] Ann Sharp now held a place in someone else's imagination. Someone else had hopes and dreams for her.

[32] Female Industrious Society to McCoy, April 22, 1824; McCoy to Francis Wayland, July 14, 1824, McCoy Papers; "Letter from the Rev. J. [sic] M'Coy to one of the Editors," *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer*, September 1824, 425-427.

[33] "Letter from Mr. M'Coy," *ABM*, February 1825, 53-54.

The hopes of Agat's mother deserve commentary first, however, as expressed in her haunting words: "The Indians die very fast so that it seems they will soon all be gone. I have brought my daughter hither in hopes that she will learn something good before her death." Like the women of Boston, she had hopes for her daughter, but compared to them, she had fewer means to express them and have them honored. Perhaps she did accept the notion that the only way her daughter could survive was to take advantage of what the missionaries offered and to become like them. Survival may have been her only hope, and indeed the missionaries and donors interpreted her actions as total despair. Perhaps, however, she had other hopes. Perhaps she was not in despair. Perhaps she brought her daughter as part of a calculated plan. If Agat could learn from the missionaries, she could put that knowledge to good use in helping her people maintain their cultural autonomy (as opposed to helping them assimilate into white culture, as the whites expected). In this case, the mother's speech may have only consisted of what she thought the white men wanted to hear; after all, many of them told the Indians that they were dying out and that Christian teaching was the highest good. One cannot know with certainty.

Regardless, her daughter now fit into the imagination of a new mother—indeed, a group of mothers. The ladies in Boston wrote relatively frequently until 1826, inquiring about Ann Sharp and expressing their hopes that God would "raise up and qualify [her] to be…useful in her day among her people…to remove that moral darkness of mind and illuminate with the light of truth."[34] She was thus the means to a theological and social end in their imagination, the first fruits of the evangelization and civilization of the American Indians. In January 1826, McCoy sent the society a present: a sample of Ann's work. The women had it framed and displayed as

[34] Betsey O. Lane to McCoy, February 21, 1825, McCoy Papers.

"additional evidence that the Indians are capable of improvement."[35] McCoy described her as "an improving, fine girl" in the fall of 1827, meaning that she was a good student, learning her feminine duties well, and on her way to becoming like any other white, Christian girl and thus a leader for the other Indians—and fulfilling the hopes placed upon her.[36] Ann Sharp remained as much of an idea and a goal as a real person for the members of the society in Boston. They were teaching her by proxy to be like them, and that did not require hearing her hopes and dreams on her terms (even though she probably did write to them). Although the correspondence trail of the Third Baptist Church Society disappears in the mission's records after 1826, the financial tables published in the annual reports of the Board show that the society continued to donate to Ann Sharp until 1832, when Carey was closed for good. As with Francis Pringle and Martha Galloway, the record leaves no indication of what became of Ann Sharp.

For most children who were sponsored, there is no surviving evidence of how they got to Carey or any trace of their former lives. What has survived, however, is what the sponsors wanted from their children. The Male Sabbath School of Oliver Street Baptist Church in New York City had their boy renamed John Williams, after their late pastor, with a prayer that God would "make him like that man of God whose name he bears." They wanted the new John Williams to "be made a blessing to his nation," helping to evangelize them "until all the tribes of poor Indians throughout our extensive country shall be made savingly acquainted with him whom to know is life eternal."[37] Sponsoring an Indian child was an act of benevolence, to be sure, but it was also an investment. It would have been the maximum return on Oliver Street Baptist Church's investment if John Williams became a preacher himself. The money sponsors sent no doubt kept some Indian children from starvation, but with that money the sponsors also

[35] Elizabeth Groves to McCoy, June 25, 1826, McCoy Papers.
[36] McCoy to Lucius Bolles, September 24, 1827, McCoy Papers.
[37] Charles Roberts to McCoy, March 10, 1826, McCoy Papers.

made a down payment on the future that whites imagined for the natives. Of course, one cannot escape the observation that the Indian children were mere bystanders in these proceedings intended to determine their future. The ideas mattered more than the children.

Martha Shields' correspondence with Carey Station was the most extended of that of all sponsors, and her visions for the Indian children were most grand indeed. She was the spokeswoman for a group of women in Christiana, Delaware, who sponsored four children beginning in February 1825 and was apparently well-educated and of some means, if her near-flawless penmanship and eloquence are any indication. She demanded "children of application, and modest demeanor, such as possess solid, rather than brilliant talents": again, traits that made a positive outcome more favorable in the long term. In her letters, she also richly expressed what they hoped would become of their sponsored children. One girl was to be named Susan James, for which she gave no explanation. A boy was to be called Gideon Ferrel, "the name of our late and much beloved pastor; like him, [Shields' sister] hopes he may, at no distant period, be distinguished for his piety, humility, meekness, and conciliating deportment."[38] These were key character traits in the Christian church, but they could also be civic virtues in the national polity of which the Indians in theory were to be a part. Piety, meekness, humility, and a conciliating deportment were likely a far cry from what these women imagined was characteristic of the Indians. They wanted their children to be different: again, to be the beginnings of the transformation of an entire culture. By sponsoring a child and naming him after their pastors, they were paying to insert themselves into the Potawatomi or Odawa nation and change it.

Shields' own child was to be named Joseph, "as I admire exceedingly the perfect character of the patriarch Joseph, I would like him to bear the same name. May the innumerable blessings, which descended on the honoured patriarch, in like manner fall on the head of our

[38] Martha Shields to McCoy, February 16, 1825, McCoy Papers.

youthful Joseph. Should 'the archers sorely grieve him, and hate him, yet may his bow abide in strength, and the arms of his hands be made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob.'"[39] His surname, Wolf, was that of one of her favorite missionaries, in the hopes that "my Joseph shall some future day tread in the footsteps of this missionary, and be endued like him with pure apostolic piety and untiring zeal."[40] Shields' plans for Joseph Wolf were of biblical proportions. God had blessed Joseph the Patriarch and caused him to increase in a foreign land; indeed, he had gone on to become the grand vizier of all Egypt and save the lives of his family. God could likewise bless Joseph Wolf (Shields anticipated) through his time with the whites at Carey and cause him to become a new chief who would guide his people in the ways of the true God and of the superior civilization, likewise preserving their lives. God's providence would be with him as it was with his namesake. The Indians would ultimately accept Christianity. It was inevitable.

McCoy, impressed by Shields' letter, decided to name an extra student at the school for her, whom he described to Shields as an eighteen-year-old Odawa girl, "modest in her manner, and graceful in her appearance." He noted that she was eager "to learn letters and labor." He also reported that when she came to the station, apparently on her own initiative, she said she wanted "<u>to hear me preach the gospel</u>."[41] Shields, likewise flattered, responded with typical eloquence, expressing her hopes for her namesake: "I hope she may continue desirous to improve and not be satisfied with low attainments in any laudable pursuit; above all, I hope she may obtain the knowledge of her deeply depraved nature, and lost condition as a sinner, then will she feel her need of the cleansing streams of 'the Fountain, which was opened to the house of David,' and be enabled to form some small estimate of the <u>value</u> of the <u>great</u> <u>atonement</u>."[42]

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[39] Shields to McCoy, February 16, 1825, McCoy Papers.
[40] Shields to McCoy, November 1, 1825, McCoy Papers.
[41] McCoy to Shields, March 12, 1825, McCoy Papers.
[42] Shields to McCoy, June 28, 1825, McCoy Papers.

Shields' hopeful musings have a double meaning. Coming to a knowledge of one's "deeply depraved nature" and "lost condition" is basic Christian theology, the doctrine of original sin, and Shields certainly wanted her adopted daughter to become a Christian—to be saved spiritually. Yet the word depraved was also used to describe the physical and cultural state of the Indians, the condition from which the missionaries were to lift them—to be saved culturally. Christianity and civilization went hand in hand, even when writers emphasized one element over the other. These were typical of the hopes that all donors expressed, whether they sponsored a child or not.

Shields later revealed more of her motivations for sponsoring Joseph Wolf, particularly her motivations as a Christian woman. She wrote in 1827, "The sphere of female usefulness is so circumscribed, that my hopes are chiefly placed on him." Very much aware that her culture limited women's influence to the private sphere of the home and family, an intelligent, idealistic woman like Martha Shields had to look for ways around those restrictions. Sponsoring an Indian child created a cross-cultural, extended family of sorts with Shields as the matriarch, as it did for the women of the Third Baptist Church of Boston. Shields could not be accused of leaving her proper sphere. Benevolence and reform work of this nature was, in fact, an acceptable realm for nineteenth-century women, but that work inevitably propeled them into the public sphere. It was no different for Martha Shields, as she continued, "I must indulge the hope, that Joseph Wolff will be the honored instrument of <u>much good</u> to his degraded brethren."[43] Her hopes for her beneficiary were indeed very public: because of her help, Wolf would be nothing less than an inside solution to the Indian problem, a major political issue of the era. For $10 annually, then, Shields was becoming a nationally-influential woman. Little Joseph was almost obligated to her to turn out well. He was an ideal in her mind in more ways than he was a living, breathing child.

[43] Shields to McCoy, January 23, 1827, McCoy Papers.

The obvious expectation of sponsorship is that one received frequent updates from the mission about one's child. McCoy likely obliged sponsors with updates in far more instances than those for which his outgoing letters have survived. An update on Prudence Farwell, sponsored by Levi Farwell, a deacon in Boston, is one that has survived (even though Farwell's original letter has not). McCoy's reply to Farwell was reprinted in the *American Baptist Magazine* in August 1825, in which he described the native girl he chose to become Prudence Farwell and how she had progressed in her studies. She had become a part of the mission family in 1822, at the age of eight, when her mother brought her to McCoy at Fort Wayne while running from her ill-natured, murderous husband. Although the little girl, whose Indian name was Sheshho (Muskrat), could speak no English then, McCoy reported that she could now speak English fluently and read the New Testament "with ease." She could write some and knit and sew "with much dexterity."[44] Whenever McCoy gave a progress report, whether to beneficiaries of specific children or to the general public for the school as a whole, it usually focused on the children's abilities to read, write, and do gender-specific tasks (that is, farm work for boys and knitting or sewing for girls)—as noted in an earlier chapter. These were the key components of becoming civilized, and Prudence was well on her way.

The sponsor-beneficiary relationship did *not* always go as hoped. One Carey student, Charles Beaubein, went to New Jersey to live with J. F. Halsey of Princeton after Halsey volunteered to sponsor his education in the spring of 1826. By September 1827, Halsey was writing to McCoy complaining that endeavor had proven more expensive than he expected: over $200 per month. Expense was not the only consideration, however. Halsey wrote that he could no longer abide the attitude of his beneficiary, which he described as "extremely indolent tho' quite kind & obliging." Neither could he support the young man's aspirations; he could not veil

[44] "Carey Station: Mr. M'Coy to Dea. Farwell," *ABM*, August 1825, 247.

his disdain as he told McCoy that Charles was "extremely anxious to go into a Store" with his father. In light of this development, Halsey gave the missionary his ultimatum: "I am unwilling to support him any longer for that would defeat the intention I had in taking him, or any other Indian youth. My object was, & still is, to benefit his people & I conceive the course he now wishes to take would not in the least further my intention."[45]

Halsey's letter is obviously useful for what it says about white understandings of Indian reform, but it also provides a brief—albeit unintentional—glimpse of how the Indian students reacted to white efforts to educate them into being whites. After a year in the east, Charles had decided that he did not like the life the whites had chosen for him. He believed he would be of better help to his people by running a store than by becoming a teacher, doctor, or minister. This was not an unreasonable conclusion. McCoy and numerous other observers constantly wrote of how traders cheated the Indians out of their annuities and left them destitute. If educated Indians ran their own stores, however, the tribes would have an alternative means of getting the goods and services they needed as well as protection against being cheated by whites. The fact that white traders often opposed Indian education only reinforces the validity of Charles' desire to use his education to run a store. The missionaries and benevolent easterners failed to grasp this point, of course. They saw no nobility in operating a store, viewing it as an endeavor marked by filthy lucre, not uplifting, and encouraged their students to pursue higher callings such as farmers, teachers, preachers, and doctors. To be fair, the missionaries had often faced stiff opposition from white traders, so one can partially forgive them for assuming the worst of the profession and steering their students away from it.[46]

[45] J. F. Halsey to McCoy, September 1, 1827, McCoy Papers.

[46] Jack Reynolds, "Carey Mission: Protestant Missionaries and Native Americans on the Indiana-Michigan Frontier" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1998), 88, 103.

For his part, Halsey labeled Charles as indolent, prideful, and fickle-minded for his choice, and deemed the investment not worth the expense. Acknowledging Charles' prerogative to determine his own future would have undermined Halsey's intention—along with that of his denomination and the entire nation—to turn the Indians into farmers, missionaries, and teachers like white Americans. Furthermore, allowing Charles to choose his own course would have also robbed Halsey of a paternalistic sense of benevolence: the good feeling he got when he thought he was helping the Indians, the thrill of power that came from the suggestion that an entire race of people depended upon him. He confided to McCoy that he had taken Charles in the first place to "set my own people an example of [Christian] liberality." He wanted to set the bar for his fellow Americans; if they did like he did, the Indians would be assimilated in no time and, of course, God would be pleased with the church for how it had helped the poor and needy. Because he was the great and noble benefactor, Halsey had to criticize Charles' unwillingness to "be dependent upon charity or <u>others</u> for support."[47] Halsey himself would have never abided being dependent on someone else to the point of letting them determine his entire future, but he could not grasp why Charles would not abide that same situation. Halsey's Christian liberality was just as much about himself, his people, and their ideas about the Indians as it was about Charles and his people. For all the scripture that donors like Halsey could quote in their letters to McCoy, not one of them ever referenced Jesus' command to avoid doing good deeds to be seen by others.

Halsey's attitudes reveal more of the divided heart of America's Indian reform project. The thousands of ordinary Americans who donated—and even many of the politicians and denominational bureaucrats who guided the process from the East Coast—did so out of a sincere desire to help the Indians. Despite their good intentions, however, their efforts were

[47] Halsey to McCoy, September 1, 1827, McCoy Papers.

fundamentally flawed by a determination to decide the best way to help the Indians with as little input from the Indians themselves as possible. National self-interest (or, as it was later called, manifest destiny) dictated this course of action and derailed many good intentions. Manifest destiny could not have abided giving the Indians what they wanted, and in fact, Americans convinced themselves that the Indians were *incapable* of even making those choices. In the final analysis, Indian reform became more about white people and their wants than the Indians and their needs. The mix of ethnocentrism, paternalism, and objectification on display in many donor letters differs only in degree, not in kind, from that of slaveholders discussing their slaves.

Not surprisingly, white Baptists did not see their Indian reform efforts in this light, and it is worth examining their motives—their good intentions—in their own words. Their first and foremost motivation was theological: they believed God had commanded it, and they took pleasure in obeying that command. In the Gospel of Matthew, after Jesus had been crucified and raised from the dead, he told his disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you."[48] Compelled thus by this text (which they called the Great Commission) and many other biblical passages, Baptists and other Christians in the nineteenth century sent missionaries around the world, including to the natives of North America, to make more disciples of Jesus. Benjamin Archer of Montgomery County, Ohio, echoed the international scope of the Great Commission when he expressed his "fervent desire that the Missionary Cause may be blest that it may be the means of carrying good news and glad tidings of Salvation into every corner of the inhabited world and that the Lord may bless all his servants that has gon fourth to declare his truths to poor perishing sinners that they

[48] Matthew 28:19-20, New Revised Standard Version.

may be a means of contributing many souls unto God."[49] Converting the Indians had to be done because Baptists also believed that the "heathen" (non-Christians) would suffer eternally if they did not convert. God took no pleasure in that prospect (hence he ordained missions), and neither did they. Mary Daily of Denmark, Maine, hoped "that by the means of many small contributions the missionary cause may still be supported and the savage of the forest may hear the sound of the Gospel and so hear that their souls may live."[50] Ann Richardson of the Newton (Massachusetts) Baptist Society wrote of the Christian belief in the immortality of the soul in either "perfect happiness or misery" (that is, Heaven or Hell), and expressed the desire that the Indians, "these precious souls," may "be washed in the blood of the Lamb; and may we be so happy as to meet you with them around the throne of God to sing praises forever and ever."[51]

Indeed, many donors wrote of the joys of sharing in the missionary cause. Dorothea D. Fishback of the Lexington (Kentucky) Baptist Female Charitable Society accompanied her society's donation with the sentiment that "the members of this female society esteem it a great privilige to contribute their pittance, though comparatively but little more than the widow's mite for promoting the cause of God the Saviour among the Savages of the Western Wild."[52] Many correspondents expressed joy at hearing stories of conversion—or even at the potential for conversion. "When we hear of the success of your labours among the aborigines of our country and of others in similar situations our hearts glow with love and zeal for this glorious cause," exclaimed Ann Richardson of Newton, Massachusetts.[53] "Tell [the natives] I greatly want them to believe in Christ, for I shall have great joy in hearing of it," wrote Russell Falby of

[49] Benjamin Archer to McCoy, April 21, 1824, McCoy Papers.
[50] Mary Daily to McCoy, May 24, 1828, McCoy Papers.
[51] Ann Richardson to McCoy, September 1, 1824, McCoy Papers.
[52] Dorothea D. Fishback to McCoy, July 25, 1822, McCoy Papers.
[53] Ann Richardson to McCoy, September 1, 1824, McCoy Papers.

Worthington, Ohio.[54] Writing on behalf of the Baptist Dorcas Society of Holden, Massachusetts, Hannah Fuller summed up this sentiment by echoing Jesus' parable of the shepherd who rejoiced at finding one lost sheep: "We think that what [God] has already done is enough to recompense us an hundred fold for our feeble exertions…, yes we feel that the conversion of one sinner does doubly reward us for a whole life spent in this service."[55] They were genuinely happy because they believed that other human beings were escaping the fires of eternal Hell and that God was pleased with their efforts. Of course, their imaginary Indians accepted Christianity wholesale in the way in which the American church understood it, not adapted to native needs, as actual native converts did.

Alma B. Hubbard of the Baptist Dorcas Society of Holden, Massachusetts, sensed the command to support missions and shared in the pleasure of doing so. She also wrote of it as an obligation, as if the lives of the Indians were in her society's hands: "We do hope that we are not altogether insensible of our obligation to the heathen, but that we feel in some measure the command of God binding upon us to make known to them the way of salvation." If they did not heed the command of God, Hubbard continued, "we realize…the account we shall have to render at the bar of God, if the blood of the heathen should be found in the skirts of our garments."[56] Converting the Indians had to be done because the "heathen" (non-Christians) would perish eternally if they did not convert, and Christians would be held responsible for their negligence in telling them the good news about Jesus. This was a biblical urge for white American Christians, to be sure, but it was more. They also spoke of an obligation when referring to the political issues of justice for the Indians and the power that the United States now had over the tribes. Baptist donors believed that they were obliged to take advantage of America's power for the

[54] Russell Falby to McCoy, September 26, 1826, McCoy Papers.
[55] Hannah Fuller to McCoy, August 10, 1825, McCoy Papers.
[56] Alma B. Hubbard to McCoy, August 30, 1824, McCoy Papers.

good of the Indians—as they defined and imagined it. Indeed, the mission movement of the nineteenth century would not likely have been possible on such a large scale had it not been for the power of the United States and European countries extended around the globe.

It was therefore not only the Kingdom of God that motivated their donations but also the kingdoms of this world. Baptists also understood their efforts for Indian reform as part of a national project. Jesse L. Holman of Aurora, Indiana, told McCoy, "The subject of Indian reform is a matter of high importance, and rests on my mind with particular interest; and would gladly exert any influence in my power for its promotion." He continued by offering both material and intellectual support if McCoy would keep him informed of his progress: "The probability of Reforming the Indians is a subject of much contest among us, and every fact, which, would favor its practicability, might be of particular advantage."[57] Mrs. N. D. Read of Woburn, Massachusetts wrote, "Our prayer is that Almighty God will not suffer the cause of Indian reform to decline. I trust the Lord will stretch out his arm to save these depraved people."[58] Holman and Read grasped that this national project had its skeptics and opponents (and perhaps had even encountered them personally): those that did not believe the Indians could assimilate or those that hated them enough to want them extinct. For these two, donating to McCoy amounted to taking sides in that debate, casting their lot in favor of reform. Most donors thus understood Indian missions and reform as both a command of God and an imperative in the national interest.

Donors were indeed optimistic about their prospects of success, for the Bible promised the Christian message would spread to the entire world before the return of Jesus: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then

[57] Jesse L. Holman to McCoy, February 7, 1821, McCoy Papers.
[58] Mrs. N. D. Read to McCoy, January 19, 1830, McCoy Papers.

shall the end come."[59] In sending missionaries around the world, Baptists therefore believed not only that they were being obedient to a command from their lord and savior but that they were hastening his return, the glorious culmination of human history. (Of course, they were drinking from the well of an optimistic age in which millennial hopes of all stripes abounded.) One member of the Washington County (Kentucky) Missionary Society described his faith in this biblical promise, "I am persuaded that the world is to enjoy the benefits of the Gospel, that the wilderness and solitary place shall be glad and the desert blossom as the rose and that the Redeemed are to come from all nations kindreds and tongues."[60] "We do believe the time is not far distant when the Burmans, the Hindoos, the Hottentots, & Indians, also the lost sheep of the house of Israel will be brought to believe in a risen & exalted redeemer," echoed Prudence Dodge.[61] In contrast to the unbelievers who would perish, those who believed the preaching of the missionaries, regardless of ethnicity, would be glad for all eternity. The present life looked glorious, as well, under the guidance of Christian missions and benevolent empires.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of ordinary Baptists indeed shared Isaac McCoy's millennial hope that the Indians would become Christians and assimilate into the American populace. Laypeople considered it both an obligation and an honor to be a part of that effort; it glorified both their God and their country. By the end of the 1820s, however, they faced a crossroads. Indian reform had proven expensive, and their denominational leaders were questioning that expense. Their nation demanded native lands faster than the tribes could assimilate. Neither McCoy nor his donors modified their language to indicate that they saw a wholesale change in the natives. By 1828, cries for new methods to achieve Indian reform—or simply to get them

[59] Matthew 24:14, King James Version.

[60] [Walter Warder?] to McCoy, July 17, 1822, McCoy Papers. The signature on this letter is partially obscured.

[61] Dodge to McCoy, December 10, 1823, McCoy Papers.

out of the way—reached a fever pitch. McCoy joined in, arguing that removing the tribes to the west and giving them a state there would lead to the fulfillment of everyone's benevolent hopes. As the nation debated removal, so did the Baptists. What the denomination would do with its own missionary's proposal would further reveal the divided heart of the Indian reform project and the flaws in their imaginations of the Indians, of their nation, and of their denomination.

Chapter 5: McCoy's Indian Canaan[1]

The picture was bleak on June 4, 1823, as McCoy returned from a scouting trip among the Odawas. Over the past week, he had encountered numerous drunken villagers, some who even stole his food. Many families he visited were impoverished to the point of having little to eat themselves, but they shared what they could. McCoy witnessed traditional religious beliefs and practices that he understood as pagan and hopeless; yet informers told him that many of these were disappearing as the tribes descended into poverty, drunkenness, and social chaos. These sins of the Indians—in McCoy's mind—would continue reaping a harvest of death. Most of the Odawas were suspicious of the missionaries and their motives, making it very difficult for McCoy to arrange for a mission among them. Contemplating how the presence of white men had caused all this social and cultural devastation, McCoy concluded that the Indians would never survive in their traditional territories. To add insult to injury, the mission itself was facing a shortage of bread at the time in addition to the constant struggles against the prejudices of the Indians and unfavorable rumors circulating in the white community—all problems that would continue throughout the decade. McCoy feared that "after all our labours to put our missions into operation, we shall in a few years be driven away, to encounter new hardships in another part of the wilderness, or if we remain here, it will be only to witness the decline and ultimate ruin of the people of our charge, for no band of Indians has ever thriven when crowded by white

[1] The title of this chapter and the next refers to George A. Schultz's *An Indian Canaan: Isaac McCoy and the Vision of an Indian State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972).

population." The missionary decided that day on an alternative solution to the problems of the Odawas, Potawatomis, and other tribes of the northwest. They needed a state.[2]

The solution, as McCoy envisioned it, was to provide for the Indians what he described as an asylum beyond the reach of land-hungry American settlers in some territory west of the Mississippi River. Individual tribes could sign treaties exchanging their lands in the east for equivalent lands in the west. Each individual who then came to the territory would receive a tract of land where he and his family could establish a farm. Missionaries would be welcome in the territory to teach the Indians about Christianity and to help with their farms. McCoy predicted that the arts and sciences would flourish and that eventually the Indians would establish a central pan-tribal government with a constitution, a written legal system, and a representative legislature on par with the other states in the union. The Indians themselves would become American citizens. He saw this territory as the only way to buy the Indians the time they needed to assimilate into American ways before being destroyed by the crush of white settlers. For McCoy, then, this proposed Indian territory was destined to become the master plan, the only way to achieve his visions for the Indians' future. The territory provided the space and security he needed to transform the Indians into Christians and Americans. This territory under the aegis of the federal government also ensured better sponsorship for his work, sponsorship that had proven unreliable in the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions. It was an audacious plan, to be sure, but given his experiences in the previous decade, such an audacious plan made perfect sense.

[2] Isaac McCoy, *History of Baptist Indian Missions* (Washington, DC: William M. Morrison, 1840), 196-97. See also George Melvyn Ella, *Isaac McCoy: Apostle of the Western Trail* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2003), 180-182, and George A. Schultz, *Indian Canaan: Isaac McCoy and the Vision of an Indian State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 67-70.

Early letters on the subject indicate that McCoy had this colony in mind especially for his former students and those of other missionaries, who often found themselves caught between two cultures. They had learned how to live like white men, he assumed, but white men would seldom accept Indians on equal terms no matter how much they acted like them. The students had learned how to live like white men, and this also made them outcasts among their own people. Having nowhere else to go, McCoy lamented, they "have wandered on the frontiers like sheep without a shepherd, have disgraced their profession of Christianity and ultimately have taken shelter in the forests with their barbarous countrymen."[3] In short, they were backsliders, a serious offense in Baptist thinking.

The Indian Territory provided a third place that would prevent such a disastrous end to their Christian profession. Eventually, Christianized and civilized Indians living peacefully and profitably in their new land would be an invitation to other natives to migrate westward and accept white ways. McCoy also anticipated that other missionaries and mission agencies would support the plan and encourage the Indians in their charge to emigrate. The use of force would not be required. Andrew Jackson would also speak of Indian removal in terms of providing a third place for the Indians to escape utter ruin, but his primary concerns were to remove the impediment the natives posed to the nation's expansion and to prevent the establishment of states within existing states.[4]

Within a month after deciding on the plan for colonization, the missionary began to lobby influential men in the United States government and the Baptist denomination. He wrote to

[3] Isaac McCoy to Luther Rice, July 10, 1823, McCoy Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

[4] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 200-201; Andrew Jackson, "First Annual Message" (December 8, 1829), *The American Presidency Project*, July 18, 2017, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29471. See also Ronald N. Satz, *American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 9; William E. Unrau and H. Craig Miner, *Tribal Dispossession and the Ottawa Indian University Fraud* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 36.

Lewis Cass, governor of Michigan Territory; Richard Mentor Johnson, U.S. Senator from Kentucky; John T. Johnson, U.S. Representative from Kentucky; John Johnston, Indian agent at Piqua, Ohio; William Polke, his brother-in-law and a circuit judge in southern Indiana; and Luther Rice, the treasurer of the Triennial Convention. He recommended that they organize a society to petition Congress on behalf of the plan because it would be Congress' duty to appoint an agent who could survey the potential territory and make treaties exchanging tribal lands in the east for new lands in the west.[5] In his letter introducing the subject to Luther Rice, he argued that if his plan were put into motion "the material salvation of the Indians will from that time cease to be problematical." He envisioned "the approaching jubilee of the despairing natives, so long scattered and peeled." Americans had pictured the Indians as impoverished barbarians wandering on and terrorizing the western frontier—an image McCoy had cultivated in his reports—but McCoy was certain that his plan would redeem that image, giving the natives a permanent home and assimilating them into American society and state. At that point, "a general impression favorable to the Indians will be realized from Maine to Florida," McCoy prophesied.[6]

McCoy was not the first person to advocate a home for the Indians west of the Mississippi River. Neither was Andrew Jackson the first president to consider Indian removal. In fact, Europeans had been relocating native tribes since their first arrival in the New World, both by war and (more frequently) by land purchases and treaties. Removals and relocations in New England and New York had taken place to such an extent by the 1820s that the tribes in that region were confined to reservations or encampments on the margins of society, leaving the whites of the area to bemoan and romanticize the disappearing Indian. The image of the noble savage is a reflection of the historical reality of removals, and it no doubt helped McCoy's

[5] McCoy to the aforementioned men, June 23, 1823, McCoy Papers.
[6] McCoy to Rice, July 10, 1823, McCoy Papers.

missions tremendously. Americans saw the Indians as noble and used their supposed purity and connection to nature to critique white's society excesses or their supposed helplessness to justify white benevolence. On the other hand, Americans saw the Indians as savage, cruel killers who could be dispossessed at will.[7] Of McCoy's donors quoted in the last chapter, Rebekah Pinkham of Sedgwick, Maine, reflects this contradictory thinking. Her letter accompanying her society's 1824 donation claimed that "we reflect on the providence of God in driving [our tawny neighbors] out before us, and causing us to possess the land with all the goodly privileges of a religious nature." She did not mention so-called Indian savagery, but the expressed belief that God had driven them out assumed moral deficiency of another kind: as she put it, "strict adherence to their deluded Priest" (that is, idolatry). Now that the Indians were gone, however, and were neither a threat nor an obstacle, "our minds has been considerably exercised with respect to the Penobscot and Pasammaquody Indians such is their wondering unsettled situation." Because of their wondering, unsettled situation the Indians needed help, and Pinkham, who perhaps beheld a certain nobility in them, "rejoiced that God had raised up an instrument of good to the poor Indians"—that is, McCoy.[8] (Of course, the Penobscot and Passamaquody were in Maine, and McCoy was in Michigan. Pinkham's conception of McCoy's Indians was based on the small tribes remaining in her region. McCoy's Indians in Michigan were far more numerous and had relatively more autonomy. They could put up far greater resistance to Christianity and civilization.)

Some of the tribes in the Great Lakes region where McCoy ministered had already relocated from lands in the east, however; the Shawnees and Delawares, for example, had ceded

[7] John Demos, *The Heathen School: A Story of Hope and Betrayal in the Age of the Early Republic* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 139-142, 209-211; Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 4.

[8] Rebekah Pinkham to McCoy, September 15, 1824, McCoy Papers.

their lands in Pennsylvania and moved into the Ohio Country before the American Revolution. After the Revolution and the War of 1812, the tribes of the Northwest continued to surrender their lands and be pushed onto small townships. A few began to move west of the Mississippi River and into Missouri, even as members of the Cherokee tribe in the south began to immigrate to Arkansas. Thomas Jefferson, one of the architects of the government's civilization policy, advocated allowing tribes to exchange their lands in the east for lands west of the Mississippi after he had purchased Louisiana. Meanwhile, hordes of white speculators clamored for removal of their Indian neighbors.[9]

With this pressure building, James Monroe made Indian removal an official government policy in the last year of his presidency. On March 30, 1824, he wrote to Congress about Georgia's claims to Cherokee lands. Under an agreement with the federal government in 1802, the state had ceded its western lands to the Mississippi River in exchange for the promise that the federal government would extinguish the Cherokees' title to the lands within its remaining boundaries. Georgia was now pressing for the federal government to make good on this promise, while Cherokee leaders were refusing to accept a land exchange and move west. Monroe declared that "there [was] no obligation on the United States to remove the Indians by force" and that "[a]n attempt to remove them by force would…be unjust." At the same time, the president expressed the "impression" that "it would promote essentially the security and happiness of the tribes within our limits, if they could be prevailed upon to retire west and north." He argued that "[s]urrounded as they are, and pressed as they will be, on every side, by the white population, it will be difficult, if not impossible for them…to sustain order." They

[9] Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), ch. 7; Robert J. Miller, *Native America, Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, and Manifest Destiny* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), 90-91; Mary Stockwell, *The Other Trail of Tears: The Removal of the Ohio Indians* (Yardley, PN: Westholme Press, 2016), chs. 3, 5.

would ultimately be annihilated. The United States could, however, give them "[l]ands equally good, and perhaps more fertile." In this new territory, they could learn the arts of civilization. The United States, too, would be "[p]laced at ease," and "every portion of our Union would then take an equal interest" in the process of civilizing them. The *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer* reprinted this particular letter in its May edition, hoping that the message would be gratifying to its readers who longed to evangelize and civilize the Indians.[10]

During the final months of his administration, Monroe continued to make concrete recommendations for gradual, voluntary removal west of the Mississippi and included the proposal as part of his annual message to Congress that December. Arguing that the Indians' situation would continue to be dire within the boundaries of current states and that they could never be incorporated into the American system without first being civilized (the standard assumption of the day), the president proposed to create a territory for them "[b]etween the limits of our present States and Territories, and the Rocky mountains and Mexico." There, the Indians could establish a civil government and learn the arts of civilization in mission schools. Eventually, the United States could draw all the tribes east of the Mississippi there, Monroe expected. Secretary of War John C. Calhoun proposed the area west of Lake Michigan (present-day Wisconsin) as a more ideal location for northern tribes, while southern tribes could go west of Missouri and Arkansas. Most members of Congress balked at this change in policy, calling it a hypocritical land grab. McCoy, however, rejoiced that the executive branch was on the same page as he and copied the section proposing the territory into his journal (which later made it into his memoirs, *History of Baptist Indian Missions*). The incoming John Quincy Adams Administration pressed forward with Monroe's proposals, negotiating in June 1825 with the

[10] James Monroe, "Indian Reservations in Georgia," *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer* (May 1824), 341-43; Schultz, *Indian Canaan*, 78-80.

Osage and Kansa tribes to surrender land for the Indian Territory and pressuring eastern tribes to remove.[11]

Adams' Secretary of War, James Barbour, disagreed that removal was the only solution to the plight of the tribes east of the Mississippi. With his proposals to the House Committee on Indian Affairs in January 1826, Barbour tried to work out a compromise that would both enable individual Indians who wanted to go west to go and also support those Indians who had adopted American ways and wanted to stay in the east. He was particularly concerned that a removal-only policy would be a betrayal of the government's promises to those Indians who had adopted civilized ways and were expecting to stay on their traditional lands. If the Americans reneged on this promise, he argued, the Indians would have no reason to trust them when they promised a permanent home. Barbour honestly evaluated American Indian policy as operating on the principle of "power as the only standard of right." Nevertheless, whether the Indians went west or stayed in the east, Barbour's plan still resulted in the eventual dissolution of their tribal governments and their wholesale adoption of American ways. Congress rejected Barbour's proposals, as well, and continued to adhere to the civilization policy.[12]

As the politicians debated civilization and removal, American racial attitudes toward the Indians were becoming more rigid. After the American Revolution, they celebrated their superior political *institutions*, believing that they were destined to change the world for the better because of them. During the first half of the nineteenth century, however, they came to celebrate in addition that they were members of a superior, Anglo-Saxon *race*, which was destined to raise the other, inferior races of the North American continent from barbarity into civilization—that is, assuming they believed those races were capable of receiving the blessings of civilization. By

[11] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 256-258; Schultz, *Indian Canaan*, 78-80, 85-88; Stockwell, *Other Trail of Tears*, ch. 6.

[12] Stockwell, *Other Trail of Tears*, ch. 6.

the 1830s and 1840s, (so-called) science dedicated itself to explaining with elaborate anatomical evaluations why these other races were inferior and debating whether they could, in fact, be civilized. The emphasis on emotion and imagination in the Romantic Movement and an upsurge of nationalism in both Europe and America contributed to this ethnocentric thinking. The momentum for these trends was already building in the 1820s as Americans began to debate Indian removal. The Enlightenment environmentalism of the eighteenth century had claimed that the defect was in the Indians' environment; if Americans changed the environment by introducing farms, schools, and so on, they could civilize the Indians. The Baptist Board of Foreign Mission's report for 1821 expressed this ideology well when it said, "Never, since the first settlement of America, has the condition of our Aborigines presented a prospect of melioration equal to the present" and went on to praise the missionaries and the government for helping to change the Indians' environment with schools and farms. This optimism soon morphed into a romantic racism that claimed the defect was in the Indians themselves. Not even so-called civilized Indians could withstand this change. Whites increasingly saw the Indians as an inferior *race* that could not be civilized. They would perish before the oncoming onslaught of Anglo-Saxon American progress. McCoy encountered this idea frequently, including at meetings of the Triennial Convention and even in the halls of Congress. During interviews with the House Committee on Indian Affairs in December 1829, several members whom he described as helpful "frankly told me that they believed the Indian race was destined to become extinct. It was our duty to adopt all feasible measures for their preservation, but all would fail."[13]

[13] "Report of the Baptist Board for Foreign and Domestic Missions," *ABM&MI*, September 1821, 180; McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 323, 382-383. See Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981) and Bernard W. Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), ch. 1. Of course, the evolution of racial understandings and scientific racism was a long process, and historians debate precise dates. Peter Silver, for example, posits that white settlers on the frontiers of the Middle Atlantic colonies hardened their views of themselves as "white people" versus "red people" during the Indians wars of the mid-1700s; however, he does not

As federal authorities discussed and debated colonization and removal, McCoy also promoted and defended his plan. The civilization policy that Congress continued to pursue would not work without giving the Indians a permanent territory, he insisted. Removal would be an unavoidable means to that end, of course, but it was to be strictly voluntary: the Indians would go west on their own accord. Whites might have to persuade them, but they should not use—indeed, would not need to use—force. In August 1826, McCoy even began to discuss establishing a mission in the west before the Indians began to emigrate there. He confided in Thomas L. McKinney, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, that a government-sponsored educational institution would alleviate a lot of distress about removal, motivate other Indians to emigrate, and serve as a rallying point when they did. If the government built it, they would come, he argued.[14]

McCoy's desire for the government to sponsor a school in the new territory no doubt reflected in part the grief of his experience with an unreliable denominational board. He did not have enough confidence in his own church agency, so he reasoned that it and other church agencies like it would not inspire the Indians with as much confidence as the United States

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deem these ideas worth calling racism until the end of the American Revolution (*Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* [New York: W. W. Norton, 2008], note p. xxi of the Introduction). John Wood Sweet's study of race and citizenship in New England covers the years 1730 to 1830 and concludes that "white claims to racial preeminence became more urgent, rigid, and consistent in the 1820s and 1830s" (*Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730-1830* [Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003], 11). Of course, these views were the product of complex interactions between English settlers, native Indians, and enslaved Africans dating back to the colonial period. Sweet argues that Indians becoming Christians and worshiping with English colonists actually helped to harden racial lines in the mid-eighteenth century: as cultures mingled, worshippers began to see their differences in more essential terms (108). Alden T. Vaughan traces how the Indians went from being culturally different to racially different in European eyes and argues that the change happened over the course of the entire eighteenth century in "From White Man to Red Skin: Changing Anglo-American Perceptions of the American Indian," in Vaughan, ed., *Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995): 3-33. Helpful studies of racial ideas in relation to slavery are Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, & Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) and Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" in New England, 1780-1860* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

[14] McCoy to Thomas L. McKinney, August 21, 1826, McCoy Papers.

government could. Of course, he continued to desire the cooperation of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions and kept urging them to present a memorial to Congress in favor of colonization, something they neglected to do until November 1827. Despite the Board's delay with the memorial, its members did appoint McCoy as their agent to find a country for the Indians in June 1826. This appointment enabled McCoy in turn to seek out an position as a government surveyor in the west, although that assignment was two years in coming. McCoy depended upon the government to enact his vision by late decade, but the Baptist denomination still remained an important participant.[15]

Meanwhile, Carey Station, which had once been one hundred miles from the nearest post office, was becoming less isolated by 1827.[16] Settlers began trickling into the region as Detroit newspapers began to advertise the lands of the St. Joseph River Valley. Congress authorized a new Detroit-to-Chicago highway that would follow the Great Sauk Trail, which passed by the mission. Federal troops also moved along the trail that summer headed toward northwestern Illinois to quell the hostilities of a group of Ho-Chunks (Winnebagoes) led by Chief Red Bird (Waunigsootshkau) in what has become known as the Winnebago War. Angered by white encroachment on their lead mines and the violence committed by rogue miners, Red Bird and his warriors struck back in late June by killing a métis family, terrorizing the white inhabitants of the region, and attacking an army vessel on the Mississippi River. The white inhabitants stockaded

[15] Baptist Board of Foreign Missions Records (June 1, 1826), typewritten MS, American Baptist Historical Society, Atlanta. The cooperation between Baptist missionaries and the government in promoting removal in the Old Northwest stands in stark contrast to the active resistance to government policies by missionaries such as Samuel Worcester in Georgia (see Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, *The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears* [New York: Viking Press, 2007], ch. 4).

[16] McCoy to Luther Rice, May 21, 1823, McCoy Papers.

themselves in Fort Crawford for fear, as the army sent more troops and militiamen into the region to prevent a general Indian uprising.[17]

The missionaries at Carey worried that the Sauks who regularly traveled the road outside their establishment would be belligerent, too. McCoy was able to speak to some of those who were returning from Canada in July 1827. This group agreed with his advice to remain neutral, and he allayed their fears of being attacked by whites along the trail by giving them a white flag. The Potawatomis were also inclined to remain neutral and refused a war club sent by the Ho-Chunks. McCoy held a council with sixteen of their chiefs likewise to encourage their neutrality. Saugana, their speaker for the occasion, responded, "We are sorry to hear that some Indians have been fighting with the whites. This is not good, and we do not intend to join them. We will remain peaceable. We are happy that you have come to live among us, that you are our friend, and as one of us." He asked McCoy to keep the tribe informed of any activity among the whites so "that our women and children may not be alarmed" and promised to keep McCoy abreast of developments among the Indians. McCoy concluded his analysis of the war by telling his readers, "The conduct of our Potawatomi neighbours on this occasion, has been very creditable to them, and satisfactory to us." By the time McCoy's report was printed in the *American Baptist Magazine* in March 1828, the crisis had passed; Red Bird had surrendered to American authorities in September 1827. The Winnebago War was neither long nor costly. The potential for even worse violence remained, however, and the incident highlighted the need for better security on the frontier.[18]

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[17] Schultz, *Indian Canaan*, 92-94; John W. Hall, *Uncommon Defense: Indian Allies in the Black Hawk War* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2010), ch. 3; Patrick J. Jung, *The Black Hawk War of 1832* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), ch. 2.

[18] "Carey and Thomas Stations: Mr. M'Coy's Journal, Addressed to the Corresponding Secretary," *American Baptist Magazine*, March 1828, 69-70.

McCoy was convinced that his colonization plan met that need. He decided to present his ideas to the general populace in a manuscript entitled *Remarks on the Practicability of Indian Reform*. The foundational premise of the pamphlet was that the Indians did have a title to their lands, and McCoy defended this title in his first chapter. European settlers had denied this right and left the Indians with "a limited ownership right" only "to occupy and use their land." The colonizers had justified this action by declaring that they had discovered an entirely uninhabited land or a land populated with savages who were at a lower level of civilization.[19] McCoy dispatched the notion that the land was uninhabited with the simple fact that the Indians had been on the continent since time immemorial. He likewise posited that the term *savage* was an arbitrary title that signified nothing more than the perception that native customs were different and, in American eyes, undesirable. The fact that the Indians were hunters did not deny them their right to the land any more than someone would deny a frontiersman the right to his land because he only hunted on it. Neither did the fact that many tribes were migratory deny them their right; Americans migrated, too. Furthermore, the reality that the Indians were thinly scattered over their lands did not mean that the laws of nature demanded them to be confined to smaller and smaller sections, as many Americans claimed. McCoy argued that the Indians did, in fact, have understandings of land titles, but they were not able to write them down. One could see their understanding demonstrated most clearly in their grief over giving up their land. Lest anyone doubt his authority on the subject, McCoy remarked, "Indians are actually sitting by me while I pen this paragraph: I cannot be mistaken."[20]

By granting the Indians full property rights, McCoy rejected the colonial concept of *terra nullius*, which established that if the inhabitants of a land were not using that land in a fashion

[19] Miller, *Native America*, 4.

[20] Isaac McCoy, *Remarks on the Practicability of Indian Reform Embracing, Their Colonization; with an Appendix* (New York: Gray and Bunce, 1829), 3-7.

that European legal systems approved, that land was considered empty and open for claim by Europeans.[21] With *terra nullius* debunked, then, McCoy was left with the conclusion that whites had been unjust in taking Indian lands. He reinforced the point with an illustration in which Chinese ships arrived at Jamestown having been previously ignorant of America. These Chinese invaders then proceeded to wrest control of the continent from its white inhabitants on the same grounds that the whites had used to take it from the Indians: their culture was different, they were hunters, they were migratory, and they possessed much more land than they occupied. Having put the proverbial shoe on the other foot, McCoy did not stop there. He drove the point home, exclaiming, "To what a pitch of vainness must men have arrived, when they could fit out ships and men to take possession of an entire country, regardless of the rights of the Aborigines, and then teach their children to laud the innocence of such a transaction!"[22] Such a line of reasoning may seem unexpected from one who was arguing for removal, but one must remember that righting an injustice was the point of removal for McCoy.

The application of this principle of native rights to the land was not as broad as it might seem at first, however; it was intended specifically for the context of the debates over removal. Although the natives had a right to their lands, McCoy continued, they had no *capacity* to exercise that right. The United States was therefore the guardian of their rights. In its role as protector, it could not *force* the Indians to give up their lands, but it could *purchase* the lands it wanted (McCoy's word was "needed") at a fair price.[23] In effect, then, McCoy did not roll back the relentless stream of settlers across Indian lands since the early seventeenth century or nullify the numerous treaties that forced the natives onto smaller and smaller reservations; he merely answered men like Andrew Jackson, who argued that the United States had defeated the Indians

[21] Miller, *Native America*, 4.
[22] McCoy, *Remarks*, 3-7.
[23] Ibid., 8-9.

in the War of 1812 and should therefore treat them as subject peoples, taking their lands by eminent domain. He also refuted others like John Quincy Adams, who, expressing the common assumption of many Americans, once said (but later regretted), "What is the right of a huntsman to the forest of a thousand miles over which he has accidentally ranged in the quest of prey?"[24]

The claim that the Indians lacked capacity and were effectively minors in the care of the federal government is not surprising given that McCoy did uphold one of the fundamental premises of European and American thought regarding the Indians: they were "sunk to the level of nature," degraded, and "destitute of national character."[25] He made little effort to define these terms, assuming that his readers were familiar with the vocabulary. Indeed, Europeans had usually judged the Indians to be in a state of nature, fulfilling their basic needs by hunting and gathering and likewise exercising very little restraint of their passions. They had not in consequence developed any of the accoutrements of what whites considered civilization: artistic expression, literary masterpieces, philosophical pursuits, scientific exploration, and technological advancement. Because whites had all these things, they considered themselves to be the epitome of civilization, at the top of the hierarchy of humanity. Because the Indians lacked them (or rather because whites chose not to see that they had them), they were degraded and lacking in national character, lower down on the hierarchy. Whether it was the Spanish, the French, the British, or the Americans, the Indians were always deficient and needed to be reformed along white lines. McCoy obviously shared that assumption.[26]

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[24] Stockwell, *Other Trail of Tears*, 144-145; Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 138. See also Lynn Hudson Parsons, "'A Perpetual Harrow on My Feelings': John Quincy Adams and the American Indian," *New England Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (September 1973): 339-379.

[25] McCoy, *Remarks*, 3.

[26] Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction*, chs. 1, 4 (esp. pp. 23-26, 90, 96-97); Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 113-114.

Nevertheless, he acknowledged that Europeans and Americans had treated the natives unequally and denied them their rights. Americans now needed to give the Indians a reason to trust them, to mend the years of broken promises and injustices. Whites had taken and continued to take Indian lands, the only home the natives had ever known. Whites had put a "*mark of infamy*" on them, making them fair game for all manner of abuses. The Indians lacked the initiative to civilize and improve because of this mistreatment, and they were perishing, retreating into alcoholism, wracked by diseases, and living in poverty on reservations. With every succeeding generation, the Indians' situation got worse, and their children were in despair, having no prospects for the future. They had come to mistrust the Americans and suspect that, even if they improved like the whites demanded, the whites would still mistreat them. "What, let me ask the reader, could you hope for from your own sons and daughters, were they destined to be brought up in similar circumstances?" McCoy rhetorically inquired. Nevertheless, the case was not hopeless. The Indians were not inflexibly attached to their wild customs; they would civilize if they could trust Americans that it was a better option, McCoy asserted. The means to restore the broken trust was relatively simple. "Give them a country as their own…, where they can hope to enjoy, unmolested, the fruits of their labours, and their national recovery need not be doubted," the missionary proposed.[27]

While it makes sense that McCoy would argue for whites to clean up a mess he believed they were largely responsible for, his line of thought is nevertheless ironic. He insisted that the attitudes of white Americans toward the Indians was the problem and supposedly set out to change those attitudes, but he himself could not escape—and indeed reaffirmed—the fundamental racial assumptions underneath those attitudes: namely, that the Indians were degraded, like children, and incapable of making the best decisions. He could critique the effects

[27] McCoy, *Remarks*, 9-18.

of the fundamental racial assumptions of his day, but he could not critique the assumptions themselves because he shared them. As a result, he had to entrust the solutions to the problems into the hands of the very people he blamed for those problems in the first place. He concluded, "[The Indians] will inevitably be extirminated [sic], unless we rescue them." The whites had to be the savior, and the Indians ought to do it the whites' way for their own good. No one could blame the Indians for being wary of the outcome in this bargain. No one could blame them for not trusting their white neighbors.[28]

One way for the government to act responsibly as the guardian of the Indians' rights was to apply to the civilization program the profits from the sale of lands that the Indians had surrendered. McCoy's third chapter contained several pages of calculations proving that these millions of dollars would be a great boon to Indian reform and also make good on the debt Americans owed the Indians. The present system of paying the Indians annuities as they surrendered lands was failing, he argued, because the Indians most often wasted their money on whiskey as soon as they got it. Whites were more capable of deciding how to distribute these funds, McCoy asserted (providing a prime example of how the assumption that the Indians lacked capacity absolved even high-minded whites of asking their opinions). As evidence for this contention, he reminded his readers that the President of the United States already decided on how to divide the $10,000 Indian Civilization Fund, and the mission agencies to which he gave that money were well run. A system in which ever larger amounts of money were distributed by benevolent American leaders through compassionate mission agencies was bound to produce much good for the perishing Indians; the plan was as foolproof as one could make it. Of course, the United States would lose the revenue it currently enjoyed from the sale of public

[28] Ibid.

lands under McCoy's proposal, but that would be a noble sacrifice for the country to make.[29] (Upon his ascension to the presidency, Andrew Jackson would have no intention of losing the profits from the sale of Indian lands, applying them instead to the national debt.[30])

The missionary-turned-political-activist now proposed what he believed to be the best and only way to reform the Indians: "the concentration of all the tribes in some suitable portion of country, under such guardianship of our Government as shall be found conducive to their permanent improvement; together with the guaranty, on the faith of the United States, of said country to them and to their posterity *for ever*." Even the proposal to spend unprecedented amounts of public funds on Indian reform would fail unless the United States implemented McCoy's grand colonization scheme, he argued. The current American policy that penned the Indians up on small reservations surrounded by whites did not result in their becoming civilized by example; it resulted in their decline and death.[31]

McCoy's prime example was the Cherokees—the very people threatened by Georgia and the Jacksonians. They "owned a tract of country, sufficiently large, to allow them to feel their importance as a people." Within the previous three decades, they had established a constitution with a legislative body that had begun to pass laws and even impose taxes. Citizens of the nation had enclosed fields for growing crops. They owned cattle, sheep, horses, and pigs. They had numerous grist mills in operation. McCoy gave lengthy statistics to demonstrate how the Cherokees had adopted white ways. He made clear that they had done this on their own initiative without the help of white men, as many of these improvements had begun before the first missionaries arrived. Having sufficient land of their own had made the difference; indeed, giving the Indians land was the key to their entire dilemma. Denying the Indians the title to their

[29] Ibid., 19-25.
[30] Stockwell, *Other Trail of Tears*, 190.
[31] McCoy, *Remarks*, 25.

land had been the original sin; giving them a permanent home would atone for that sin. After that—and *only* after that—they would become civilized like the whites.[32]

The concepts of space, self-importance, and Christianity were connected for McCoy in this plan. Providing a space—a land designated solely for the Indians—was the only way to erase the degradations of the past and restore the Indians' sense of pride and dignity. Interestingly enough, this self-importance would not lead to a revitalization of native cultures, a desire to recapture what they had lost; rather, it would lead to them adopting Christianity in McCoy's thinking. They would see the land around them, land that was now undeniably theirs, and they would imitate their white neighbors by starting farms, schools, and constitutional government on it. This adoption of (so-called) civilization would prepare them to receive Christianity—really, the two would go hand-in-hand. Such appeared to be happening among the Cherokees; he noted that "Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and Moravians, are the most numerous [religious] sects [in the nation]." McCoy was attempting to craft a Christianity for other people, using his own culture as a model, and he needed space to do that. Space was thus a critical tool for missionizing. As long as there was no space, any missionizing would ultimately fail.[33]

The consequences McCoy envisioned for giving the Indians adequate land were grand, both for the Indians and for white Americans. The "miserable Indians" would, of course, be "removed from all the baleful causes of their former calamities," "placed in…a land acknowledged to be *their own*," and "lifted up from the dust, to the enjoyment of comforts similar to those possessed by ourselves." Americans would also benefit from this arrangement, McCoy argued, because all of the security threats that they perceived the Indians to pose had

[32] Ibid., 26-29.
[33] Ibid., 28.

been neutralized by colonization. There would be no more Indian wars, for the Indians were in their new home and pacified. Foreign powers would no longer attempt to infiltrate the United States through frontier tribes, for those tribes were now insulated in the center of the continent. Impoverished natives on scattered reservations would no longer be a thorn in the side of civilized society, for they were now living on their own land and thriving. Eloquent Indians could no longer hold the injustice of the situation over the head of the American government, for justice had been done. Above all, the whites could feel good that *they* had saved the Indians, McCoy concluded. They had done the right thing at last, and the Indians could "call those blessed who wiped away their tears." One cannot resist the conclusion that the Americans were to get more out of this deal than the Indians. What McCoy was proposing was great because it offered the Indians self-rule (of sorts), but it was horrible because it required removal (and more tears).[34]

McCoy suggested the area west of Arkansas and Missouri, southwest of the Missouri River, a territory 600 miles long by 200 miles wide, as the best place for this new Indian Territory. Most importantly, it was outside the boundary of any current state or territory, and McCoy anticipated that whites would never want or need the land in what was sometimes called the Great American Desert. The lack of desirability for white settlers was a crucial selling point. Although McCoy had earlier been open to the possibility of giving the area west of Lake Michigan to the Indians, he now argued that that location was not practical because whites would need it soon.[35] In lieu of obstacles preventing the Indians from having the land west of Missouri and Arkansas, McCoy anticipated that they could be easily overcome. The United States could conciliate the current inhabitants of the territory, he said. These tribes would not fear more Indians coming in; in fact, the new inhabitants would help them civilize, as well. The Indians

[34] Ibid., 25-32.
[35] See McCoy to William Staughton, August 26, 1824, McCoy Correspondence.

would not be any more crowded in the new territory than they were in their present locales. Missionaries in the territory and the rule of American laws would restrain the Indians' passions, preventing them from going to war with one another or with the United States and thus ending the fear of Indian wars. They would also be out of reach of foreign interlopers who had often enticed Indians to fight the Americans. Settlers in the Northwest—to say nothing of their politicians—had feared that the British would incite the neighboring tribes against the Americans, especially in the years before the War of 1812, but moving the Indians to the center of the continent would resolve that security problem, as well. This new, secure Indian colony would become a territory like Arkansas or Michigan with the same rights and privileges, McCoy proclaimed.[36]

McCoy had established that the Indians deserved America's compassion; now, he essentially argued that they deserved America's leftovers. This was nevertheless a better deal than many other Americans were willing to give them. Recognizing, like Andrew Jackson, that the Indians could not have their own tribal entities within other American states and that those states would eventually destroy them, McCoy wanted to give them a state of their own. In this land that no whites wanted, they could have their own territory and presumably be on their way to becoming their own state of the union. This was indeed the logical conclusion of all that McCoy was saying. He confirmed this by arguing that if the United States had spent just a tenth of the money it had spent on Indian wars on civilization instead, Americans would have already "ornamented our happy land with another *state*, connected with those which do exist, by such ties as would sit easily and advantageously upon both [whites and Indians], embracing hundreds

[36] McCoy, *Remarks*, 32-37. On the fear of the Indians as British agents, see John P. Bowes, *Land too Good for Indians: Northern Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), ch. 1.

of thousands of happy people."[37] Of course, the question of what would "sit easily" remained unanswered, and most whites would never think it advantageous to give the Indians their own state. McCoy was creating a utopia out of leftovers.

McCoy was planning to give the Indians political equality (at least in a distant future), but it is worthy of note that he planned to do this for them as Indians, as an ethnic group, not as individual tribes. This element of the plan is not surprising given that from the beginning Europeans had applied the blanket term "Indian" to a diverse range of cultures and societies in the Americas, and the Romantic emphasis on ethnic peoples having their own land during the nineteenth century reinforced this trend.[38] Consolidating numerous tribal governments into one pan-tribal government would streamline the way in which the federal government dealt with them; in fact, it was an essential part of the natives becoming their own state. Up to that point, American officials had to treat with whomever claimed to be (or could be appointed) a leader in a loose, adaptable tribal and kinship structure. Nativist leaders such as Tecumseh had attempted to unite tribes into one, pan-Indian confederation in order to fight the Americans. Bernard Sheehan thus rightly observes of McCoy's plan that it dissolved tribal identities but conceded pan-Indianism. Of course, McCoy's pan-Indianism was the exact opposite of Tecumseh's. Whereas Tecumseh's pan-Indian vision united the Indians to prevent them from becoming like Americans, McCoy's united the Indians in order to make them like Americans.[39] As for individual Indians and American citizenship, McCoy left the question open-ended in the pamphlet. That they would become citizens he strongly implied: after all, states of the union were made up of citizens, and he insisted that inhabitants' rights to their land would be protected. He did not dwell on the details in 1827. Writing in 1840, however, he did make the point clear:

[37] McCoy, *Remarks*, 47.
[38] Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, part 1.
[39] Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction*, 270.

"There, it was hoped, the Indians might become organized into a civil community, and ultimately become citizens of the United States."[40]

The question remained of whether individuals and tribes could be persuaded to move to the new colony. McCoy answered with a resounding yes. In recent years, the United States had presented removal as an option to various tribes; those who had refused it, he asserted, did so because they were either influenced by white traders, did not know the land, or believed that where they were being sent would not be permanent. On the other hand, those who had gone west to see the land liked the land: "a few Puttawatomies, under authority of Government, have explored a portion of that country. The result is, a considerable number of them…wish to remove thither." Once the Indians saw the precise location and other Indians living there, they would also realize that "the measure was very unlike the ordinary affair of removing back the Indians, merely for the sake of ridding [Americans] of their trouble." At that point, "the majority of the tribes would readily accept the offers of our Government." McCoy expected that even those who wanted to remain in the east and become civilized American citizens—and he did leave that as a remote possibility—would push their uncivilized countrymen to go west, because with them would go the stigma of their presence. The missionaries, whom McCoy claimed that most Indians liked, would also be a lure to the west, as would the ongoing wretchedness of life in the east. Those for whom even these arguments were not convincing would be convinced and remove after most of their families had gone and were happily settled. McCoy also noted that the Cherokees had even more reasons to compel them to go west. They could not last as a state of their own within the state of Georgia. "They can perceive the obstacles to their becoming citizens" of Georgia, he wrote; and they could not "indulge the most distant hope that we will

[40] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 200-201.

curtail any state…for the purpose of making room for them." The only option was to remove, and if they did they would be the elites of the new land due to their advanced condition.[41]

The next chapter briefly previewed the type of government that McCoy envisioned for this new Indian Territory, making clear that American law would replace the laws of the various tribes at some point in the future. Nevertheless, he deemed it unwise to impose complex American legal codes upon them at first. They would only need the Americans to provide the most basic territorial laws and only a few government officers initially. As native society advanced upon the road to civilization, their legal system would expand accordingly. The Indians would largely be capable managing this process themselves, however, and the United States would not find itself having to pay a large bill for it. In short, what the Cherokee had done on their lands in Georgia, writing a constitution and establishing a legislature, McCoy wanted all the tribes to do in concert in the Indian Territory—only in submission to the United States government. There would be legal assimilation as well as cultural assimilation.[42]

The emphasis of this chapter was not on the details of how all of this would take place, of course, but on the fact that the Indians were capable of doing it themselves and thus it could be done cheaply from the Americans' perspective. McCoy's experience had convinced him of the truth of his prediction, and he presented the twelve Carey pupils who were studying at schools in the east as proof. If Americans neglected to establish the Indian colony, they would be denying these men a place in the world, he added in a footnote. Whites would never accept them on equal terms, and as it then stood, they could only return to their uncivilized fellow tribesmen and regress into barbarity. The ideal place for them was in a new colony in the west, where they could use their talents to help their kinsmen. Although the scope of McCoy's vision for this

[41] McCoy, *Remarks*, 37-43.

[42] Ibid., 43-45. There is no evidence that McCoy had met the Cherokee at this point; he was going simply on what he had read about them.

Indian Territory had broadened by the time he wrote *Remarks*, he still retained in it the concern for his students that he had at first. They had been raised from their so-called degraded condition but could not remain in that elevated state without a home. The Indian Territory was thus the only place for them. In the end, moving the Indians around was easier than changing the prejudices of an entire nation—not that anyone considered the latter as an option.[43]

In the conclusion of *Remarks*, McCoy made it clear that all things were ready. There were civilized Indians already in the territory and others who would go who could lead it. He claimed that many Indians were already so under the control of the United States government that they could be persuaded to go even without any colonizing measures. It only remained for the government to delineate and establish the territory. Perhaps in anticipation of the penny-pinching Jackson administration, McCoy added that the colony would save the United States money: both the money that it was now spending on salaries in the Indian Department as well as the money and lives it had spent on Indian wars. He described the Indians as starving and naked. Indian students were asking missionaries what they would do when they left their schools. Missionaries were discouraged because their charges are being repeatedly pushed back by state laws. The United States had the means to save them. There was no alternative. They would perish otherwise. He pled with his readers: "*Shall we save them or not?* HEAVEN AND HUMANITY DIRECT THE ANSWER!"[44]

Having thus written his magnum opus, McCoy headed east in October 1827 to present it to the Board in Boston for publication and also in the hopes of persuading them at last to present a memorial in favor of colonization to Congress. They agreed to do both at their meeting on November 13, 1827. McCoy then headed to Washington with the memorial and with copies of

[43] Ibid., 43-45.
[44] Ibid., 45-49.

Remarks for every member of Congress and the head of each executive department.[45] He intended for his ideas to disseminate through the public, not just the halls of government, and his family and friends helped him achieve that end. McCoy's son, Rice, noted in a letter to his father that one of his professors in Lexington, Kentucky, called it "a great composition." Dr. Richardson, Rice said, had become "quite indignant at the wrongs which the Indians have had heaped upon them" and was now "a very zealous friend and advocate of [the pamphlet's] doctrines" if not a convert.[46] Rice wrote in a later letter that he had loaned the pamphlet to another professor but had not heard his opinion on the subject.[47] McCoy's brother, James, also reported loaning out his copy of the pamphlet to members of the community around Lexington and receiving favorable responses. A local judge had given "negative answers" on the subject, but James dismissed them without any detail.[48] It is also not hard to imagine that many of those who responded favorably to the pamphlet did so not out of compassion for the Indians but because it gave them a compassionate cover under which to argue for removal.

On June 30, 1828, McCoy received the long-awaited word that the government had appointed him to explore the proposed Indian Territory, and he set out for St. Louis on July 2. From there, he made two expeditions into what is now east central Kansas over the next six months. On August 21, he left St. Louis with a delegation of eleven Odawas and Potawatomis and for fifty days explored the boundaries of a territory 150 miles east-west and 80 miles north-south. The second expedition began on October 22 with a delegation of 42 from the Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Creek tribes and ended on December 24. McCoy later remembered that he was very anxious for the mission to succeed, because the House of Representatives had only

[45] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 322-324. See also Board of Foreign Missions Records (November 13, 1827).
[46] Rice McCoy to McCoy, December 28, 1827, McCoy Papers.
[47] Rice McCoy to McCoy, January 7, 1828, McCoy Papers.
[48] James McCoy to McCoy, November 25, 1828, McCoy Papers.

authorized the journey by a margin of ten votes.[49] When the expeditions had ended, he was very pleased with the country he had seen and was all the more anxious to get the colony underway; he wrote an eighteen-page report to the Secretary of War, although he was not required to do so, to ensure that the government knew how pleasing the land was. The Indians, for their part, were pleased but reserved about the country. One of the Odawa chiefs, Noonday, did not want to return there to live at all; another, Chandonois, questioned why the whites would not soon drive the Indians from there, too.[50]

Despite their outward optimism, the Indians perceived a dark reality: when Americans wanted something, they took it, prior promises notwithstanding. McCoy, on the other hand, simply assumed this dark reality away in his utopian enthusiasm. The signs of trouble were there, however. Thomas Jefferson had purchased Louisiana with the goal of expanding white America into that region, even as he considered removing the Indians there, too. By definition, then, the Indians who moved would not be safe west of the Mississippi or anywhere.[51] One did not even need to reach back into history to see signs of trouble. On this first exploring expedition, McCoy encountered the Ohio Shawnees, who had arrived in the region earlier in the spring. (He mentioned in passing that "the old prophet" called on him. One can assume this was Tenskwatawa, but McCoy passed over the visit in his journal with no further comment.) The missionary-turned-explorer said they seemed content, but either they did not tell him or he

[49] See Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, 280-283 for the possible reasons for this slight margin, including opposition from anti-missionary politicians, representatives who thought the exploration was a waste of money, and fear of slave-owning Indians creating new slave states.

[50] Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, ch. 10; McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, chs. 13-14; Schultz, *Indian Canaan*, ch. 6. For the Indians' response to the land, see McCoy, Journal (October 7, 1828), Isaac McCoy Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

[51] Miller, *Native America*, 90-91.

ignored their harrowing journey westward, which was marked by government miscommunication, insufficient funds, starvation, delays, and death.[52]

Having temporarily finished his duties in the west and now convinced of the propriety of his colonization plan, McCoy returned east at the end of December. His family, along with Johnston Lykins' family, had already left Carey and was staying in Lexington, Kentucky. McCoy stopped there to help prepare them for the eventual move to Fayette, Missouri, which they planned to make their base for mission work in the Indian Territory. The decision of the McCoys and Lykinses to leave Carey had left Robert Simerwell, the blacksmith, to manage the station on his own, even as the Potawatomis had signed away all but two small reserves, including the land on which Carey sat, at a treaty held there in September. Whites would soon begin to pour into the St. Joseph's River Valley, further endangering the security of the Indians in the vicinity of Carey. This increasingly fragile security at the mission only hardened McCoy's resolve as he headed on to Washington to lobby all the harder for removal.[53]

James Monroe and John Quincy Adams had agreed that removing Indians beyond the Mississippi was the best policy for both the Indians and white Americans. Andrew Jackson promised to make it happen once and for all. In light of his election in the fall of 1828, McCoy thought it prudent to print a second edition of *Remarks* in the spring of 1829. "More than ordinary interest has recently been manifested on this subject," he wrote, and "every grain which can be cast into the scale of information, is at this time particularly called for, and every correct thought disclosed may contribute somewhat to a favourable influence on the beam." He made

[52] McCoy, Journal (September 24-26, 1828). See also R. David Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 174-183; Schultz, *Indian Canaan*, 108-9; Stockwell, *Other Trail of Tears*, ch. 8.

[53] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 370-371; Schultz, *Indian Canaan*, 117-122. Lucius Bolles in Boston was furious that McCoy and Lykins had left without the Board's permission. Simerwell, for his part, was now caught between McCoy, who was anxious to close affairs at Carey, and Bolles, who wanted to keep the station going and micromanage it in the process.

clear that errors in Indian reform had been and would be errors of the *people*, not just the government, due to the nature of the United States as a government of the people.[54] The benevolence of the American people had to be properly channeled if it was to achieve the desired end. McCoy also added an extensive appendix to the second edition, laying out his vision for Indian missions once the colony had been established. He presented this new pamphlet to the Board in Boston on April 16, which declined to authorize the reprint with the appendix. Undeterred, he edited the appendix after the Board meeting to make the language less objectionable while still retaining the principles and then had 1,750 copies printed at his own expense.[55]

This controversial appendix laid out McCoy's vision for what Christian missions should look like in the new Indian Territory. It is clearly the result of his experience with the Board of Missions in the latter half of the 1820s, and it is also quickly clear why the Board objected to publishing it. The first section described the nature of the work itself, which McCoy made clear was different from missions to any other group. Secular anxieties constantly distracted from the sacred. The missionary had to do more than simply preach to the Indians; he could not just learn the language and teach the scriptures. He could not be indolent, because the Indians themselves could be indolent. They were illiterate. They were dirty. They drank heavily. (All as defined by McCoy, of course.) The tribes moved around from season to season. The missionary's job was to render them stationary by education. He was to engage them with agricultural, mechanical, and domestic pursuits. He was to raise the level of their culture, because Christian piety could not abound in a society as poorly organized as that of the Indians (or so McCoy claimed). The missionary to the Indians needed to be bivocational, McCoy concluded: "If the

[54] McCoy, *Remarks*, 50.

[55] Board of Foreign Missions Records (April 16, 1829); McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 381-382; Spencer H. Cone to McCoy, March 16, 1829, McCoy Papers; McCoy to Cone, May 10, 1829, McCoy Papers.

minister has not both capacity and disposition to be either a book-keeper, school-teacher, farmer, or mechanic, or a business-man in some line, I fully believe he does not possess the requisite qualifications of *a missionary to the Indians*." McCoy's comments here were aimed at those in his denomination who were no longer willing to fund an expensive civilization program, who thought an itinerant preacher in Indian Territory would suffice while the government bore the cost of civilization. Ministers who were able to do more than preach and denominations that backed them financially were still essential to his vision for the Indian state, especially if it was to serve the purpose of civilizing as well as Christianizing the Indians.[56]

These missionaries would need their denomination's financial support because they would need to live in voluntary poverty, seeking the good of the Indians, not their own private gain. McCoy in the next section of the appendix rehashed for a wider audience his earlier arguments to the Board against providing a salary for missionaries (while paying for their children's education). He wrote, "the chief excellence of a missionary consists in voluntarily doing, and enduring things not to be explained in public journals; feeling anxieties, and performing services of the most unwelcome character, and which he is sure will never be understood by any besides himself and his God."[57] He finally turned to address potential missionaries to warn them about how hard the work of converting and civilizing the Indians actually was. Nevertheless, McCoy rhapsodized, "The Gospel never appears more precious than when preached in the smoky wigwam of an Indian. To aid in taming the wild-man, and in leading his sons and his daughters to the elevation of civilized life, and to an equality in the scale of being with neighbouring nations, afford pleasures which do not grow spontaneously in earth." McCoy insisted that the missionaries to the Indians were God's agents for benefitting an entire

[56] McCoy, *Remarks*, 51-59.
[57] Ibid., 59-65.

race of people.[58] McCoy's vision not only included removal and colonization, the political means of saving the Indians—the best and, indeed, only means. It also included Christian missions run according to the model that he had established at Carey, where the Indians could learn about God as well as the arts of civilization. McCoy's Indian state—or as George Schultz called it, his *Indian Canaan*—was therefore a legal and political way for missionaries like McCoy to continue their work.

Isaac McCoy's activism on behalf of colonization demonstrates how Indian reform and Indian removal were one and the same impulse, as historian Bernard Sheehan observed. The policy of Indian reform in the early republic was based on the assumption that Europe (and white America) represented the epitome of human civilization and therefore the Indians had to become like it—indeed, the progress of nature dictated that they *would* inevitably become like it or perish. The architects of Indian reform, the philanthropists of the day, deemed it their benevolent responsibility to help the Indians make this transition into white society. In exchange for this help, enlightened policy-makers mused, the Indians would hand over the land Americans wanted, and American expansion—another event everyone deemed inevitable—could happen with honor. What the philanthropists, the Indian reformers, and the honorable expansionists could not account for was Indians who did not want to become like the whites, a growing white racism that would not accept even civilized Indians, and the American hunger for land that outpaced Indian reform. Enter McCoy, Adams, Monroe, and others who insisted that removing the Indians to a colony west of the Mississippi would resolve the tension, giving whites the lands they needed to flourish and the Indians the time they needed to civilize. It was the same goal of Indian reform in a new, improved location. Of course, removal was also a useful tool in the hands of those whites who simply wanted to get rid of the Indians and take their lands.

[58] Ibid., 65-71.

Ironically, the goal for both groups, the Indian-hater and the Indian-helper, was to destroy the Indian as an Indian.[59]

Other colonization plans were underway during the 1820s. The American Colonization Society had been founded in 1816 to promote the emigration of free blacks to a colony that it hoped to establish in Africa. The membership, mostly southerners, hoped that removing free blacks, whom they viewed as responsible for slave insurrections, would safeguard the institution of slavery in the United States. Removing free blacks to Africa would also give this so-called degraded race a chance to civilize and Christianize, something the society assumed they could never do in the United States. Congress approved this effort in March 1819 with a bill setting aside $100,000 to aid the relocation of smuggled slaves back to Africa, and in 1822 the colony of Liberia was established.[60] Likewise, a short-lived American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews existed to evangelize Jews during the 1820s. It also advocated the creation of a colony (and leased land in New York) for converted Jews to help them assimilate to American society. Christians who joined this society acknowledged the persecution that Jews had often faced, but they considered them, too, a degraded and desolate nation that needed to be raised to the level of American society.[61] Colonization schemes such as these thus promised to let Americans have their cake and eat it, too: to remedy the injustices of the day and ease the consciences of the benevolent, to give whites what they wanted and get unwanted groups out the way. Europeans and Americans were paternalistically remaking the world in their own image.

By the time he wrote *Remarks*, McCoy had struggled to implement his vision for the Indians as Christians and Americans for nearly a decade. The Baptist Board of Foreign Missions

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[59] Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction*, introduction, ch. 1, 274-275; Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 144.

[60] Amos J. Beyan, *The American Colonization Society and the Creation of the Liberian State: A Historical Perspective, 1822-1900* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), ch. 1.

[61] Susanna Linsley, "Saving the Jews: Religious Toleration and the American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews," *Journal of the Early Republic* 34 (Winter 2014): 625-651.

had not lived up to his expectations. The security situation in the Northwest was deteriorating; the Indians were running out of the space they needed to thrive. Only decisive action by the United States government with cooperation from Christian denominations would save the Indians and help them become what he wanted them to be. By writing *Remarks*, McCoy made that vision clear for the American public. By writing *Remarks*, he also drew a line in the sand through his denomination. The issue of Indian removal would divide the Baptists just as it would divide the nation. These divisions would have little meaning for whites beyond an intellectual and political exercise, but they would mean the difference between life and death for the Indians.

Chapter 6: No Indian Canaan

The theory behind Indian removal was quite simple: "It will separate the Indians from immediate contact with settlements of whites; free them from the power of the States; enable them to pursue happiness in their own way and under their own rude institutions; will retard the progress of decay, which is lessening their numbers, and perhaps cause them gradually, under the protection of the Government and through the influence of good counsels, to cast off their savage habits and become an interesting, civilized, and Christian community." Removal, then, was a key component of helping the Potawatomis and Odawas among whom Isaac McCoy labored survive and become like white citizens of the United States. The words above, however, came from Andrew Jackson in his second annual message to Congress on December 6, 1830.[1] McCoy's motivations for advocating colonization and removal were arguably nobler than Jackson's, but the similarities—and McCoy's support of Jackson—proved too controversial for his denomination.

McCoy was able to convince the Board and the Convention to present memorials in Washington in favor of Indian colonization in 1827 and 1830. A closer examination of these memorials and the process by which they were created, however, reveals a growing division within the Convention that reflects the divisions in the nation itself over Indian removal. The years between the 1829 and the 1832 Triennial Convention meetings not only determined the course that the United States would take toward the Indians; it also determined the course the

[1] Andrew Jackson, "Second Annual Message" (December 6, 1830), *The American Presidency Project,* August 6, 2017, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29472%20.

Baptist denomination would take. As events in the nation unfolded, the Baptist Board became less willing to support McCoy's plan. The 1832 convention proved to be the decisive moment. Whereas the quest to save Indian souls had up to that point allowed for a degree of often-cautious involvement in public policy in support of McCoy's vision for the Indians, after that year they chose to remain silent on Indian matters except to ask for permission and funds to start schools. In an effort to maintain unity and sidestep partisan politics, the Baptist leadership ultimately rejected the removal element of McCoy's vision for the Indians' future. Nevertheless, the Board was still unable to avoid contention.

Historians have frequently focused on evangelical denominations in New England and their opposition to Indian removal. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, for example, led by its director, Jeremiah Evarts, vigorously opposed removal as an unconscionable stain on the nation's honor. Thousands of women likewise flooded Washington with anti-removal petitions under the auspices of their benevolent and reform organizations. Their story is well known. The Baptists add complexity to the narrative of the debates over removal. Isaac McCoy is well-known in the historiography as an evangelical proponent of removal, and he had many followers in the Baptist denomination who likewise believed in removal.[2] The Baptist Board of Foreign Missions offered official statements that were in favor of Indian removal initially—that is, voluntary and gradual removal. The Baptist General Convention followed suite. As events unfolded in the nation at large, the reality behind the official statements increasingly became heated debate between those who favored forced

[2] For a detailed analysis of Evarts, see John A. Andrew, *From Revivals to Removal: Jeremiah Evarts, the Cherokee Nation, and the Search for the Soul of America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992); for a brief synopsis of his involvement see Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), vol. 1, ch. 7. On women's opposition to removal, see Mary Hershberger, "Mobilizing Women, Anticipating Abolition: The Struggle against Indian Removal in the 1830s," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 1 (June 1999): 15-40. On McCoy's support of removal, George A. Schultz, *An Indian Canaan: Isaac McCoy and the Vision of an Indian State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1972); note also that McCoy is discussed in each of the sources previously mentioned.

removal as it was taking shape and those who opposed it. This chapter thus reveals how McCoy's denomination followed his leadership on the issue of Indian removal—or more often than not, did not follow his leadership.

For this chapter, it will be helpful again to remember that the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions consisted of representatives, mostly clergy, from all across the country, and it met only once each year. In the meantime, the handful of Board members who lived in the Boston area conducted the Board's day-to-day affairs, usually meeting on a monthly basis. These men were officially known as the Acting Board. McCoy seldom made the distinction between this Acting Board and the entire Board, especially in his correspondence, because it was understood that the Acting Board spoke for the Board as a whole. His griefs tended to be with the Boston-based members of this Acting Board. Except where a distinction is drawn, one can assume the author means this small Boston circle when the term Board is used.

The first mention of McCoy's plan for Indian colonization in the Board of Foreign Missions' records is a passing reference to "an Asylum for educated Indians" in August 1823, only two months after McCoy said he first had the idea.[3] The Board mulled over the issue until its annual meeting in late April and early May 1824, when it agreed to promote the plan. In its defense of colonization, the Board essentially echoed McCoy: "That it is the opinion of brother M'Coy, and of the Board, it is expedient to make application to Congress, to obtain some section of the West, where civilized and converted Indians may find a home, alike remote from the neglect and prejudices of white persons…; where agriculture and the arts may be cultivated, and

[3] Schultz, *Indian Canaan*, 22; Isaac McCoy, *History of Baptist Indian Missions* (Washington, DC: William M. Morrison, 1840), 196-97; Baptist Board of Foreign Missions Records (August 1823), typewritten MS, American Baptist Historical Society, Atlanta.

the great truths of the gospel made known."[4] The Board agreed with McCoy that this would be a continuation—one might say even the fulfillment—of its efforts to Christianize and civilize the tribes to prevent their extinction. Baptists had already availed themselves of federal funds for schools, blacksmiths, and agriculture under the Indian Civilization Fund. Colonization would be an even better means to the same end of reform, as the natives would then be free from white interference in their own land.

In October 1824, the Board appointed three of its members as a committee to research the subject and prepare a memorial that they could present to Congress "as early as practicable."[5] It was November 13, 1827, however, before they finally authorized the corresponding secretary to go to Washington with such a memorial. This 1827 memorial began by describing the condition of the Indians as Baptist missionaries had experienced and reported it: "[T]he Indians who remain on small reservations…bordering on the frontier white settlements are rapidly decreasing in numbers, and as a people perishing." The solution to this condition was "locating these unfortunate people in some suitable section of the country," which "would not only rescue them from extinction but elevate them in social life to happiness and prosperity." The Board then asked the government to grant permission for it to establish a settlement much like the ones Baptists already had in Michigan Territory: that is, a tract of land about a mile square with houses, a school, a blacksmith shop, and farmland to teach the Indians "science, morals, husbandry, and mechanic arts." The memorial stated the intention to invite pupils of Baptist schools as well as individuals and families of the various tribes in the Old Northwest and New

[4] Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, *Report* (1824), 423. The Annual Report was published in the September 1824 issue of the *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer* (vol. 4, no. 11).

[5] Board of Foreign Missions Records (October 29, 1824).

York who would be inclined to emigrate.[6] A small-scale settlement under Baptist supervision west of the Mississippi would be the start of something bigger, the Board perhaps hoped. McCoy had begun thinking on a small scale like this, but he was moving on to bigger plans—potentially well ahead of where the Board was willing to go.

The Board updated Baptist laypeople the following April in its annual report.[7] After giving the yearly update on Carey and Thomas Stations, the report justified the Board's position by explaining how unprincipled traders cheated the Indians out of their annuities and how students who left the mission schools often drifted back into their former uncivilized habits. The remedy to this problem, the report argued, could be found in finding for the Indians a "permanent residence, remote from white men. If this could be obtained, and the first settlement of it commenced by such of them as were already instructed in husbandry and the arts of life, and who had the improvement of their race at heart, there would be no reasonable doubt of ultimate success." Indeed, the small-scale settlement that the Board had asked for that winter was only the beginning. The native children that they trained in their schools would be the leaders in this new Indian territory. The report concluded that only government could provide the solutions that they were hoping for, and therefore they had appealed to Congress to that end.[8] A careful reader would therefore have thought at that point that the Board was in step with McCoy, but that was about to change.

In late 1827 and early 1828, as the Baptist Board was presenting its memorial and McCoy was printing his *Remarks*, events in the state of Georgia gripped the attention of the nation. The Cherokee tribe had adopted a written constitution on July 26, 1827, a move that angered the state

[6] Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, "To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives in Congress Assembled" (November 26, 1827), McCoy Papers.

[7] See the Board of Foreign Missions Records (November 13, 1827, and January 2, 1828) for the details of transacting the memorial.

[8] Board of Foreign Missions, *Report* (1828), 11.

because it believed the Indians had created an inacceptable state within a state. Furthermore, the federal government had yet fulfilled its promise, dating from 1802, to extinguish remaining Indian land titles within Georgia's boundaries. On December 27, therefore, a committee of the Georgia General Assembly approved resolutions that would extend state authority into Cherokee country. President John Quincy Adams had previously advocated colonization, and in light of this growing crisis, he now reiterated his support of the measure—although still not at the expense of the Indians' treaty rights (in other words, he would not force the Indians out against their will). The election of 1828 took place before Congress could pass the measure, however. The victorious Andrew Jackson would have his own plans for removal, plans that treated the Indians as subjected peoples and questioned the wisdom of signing treaties with them. His approach to Indian removal would have serious implications for how the Baptists would approach it. Meanwhile, the Georgia General Assembly, emboldened by his election, finally voted in December to extend state authority over the Cherokee Nation, effective June 1, 1830. The act added Cherokee lands to five northwestern counties of the state, denationalized the tribe, and made its members second-class citizens in an attempt to ensure that the Indians would leave.[9]

With Jackson in the White House and as the 1829 Triennial Convention approached in late April, the Board reported that Congress was sympathetic to its entreaties for colonization but had not taken any action on them yet. The report lamented that the amount of success at Indian stations in North America had not been great despite the amount of money and effort expended on them. It then discussed McCoy's surveying expedition in the territory west of the state of Missouri during the fall of 1828. The Board praised him as a highly qualified person for this job

[9] William G. McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789-1839* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 239-240, 246; Prucha, *The Great Father*, 189-192.

due to his long tenure among the Indians. They concluded with the hope that in this new territory the Indians could settle down and learn agriculture; at that point, the missionaries would be able to devote more time to spiritual things.[10] This final point reminded readers that the Board's primary purpose and first priority was to make converts to Christianity; in the case of the Indians, running boarding schools to civilize the Indians was a means to that end—or perhaps in their eyes more of a necessary evil. Bolles and McCoy had already discussed whether it would be more economical to establish itinerant ministers among Indian villages rather than boarding schools and farms, and this line in the official report again betrays a hope to dispense with McCoy's expensive model of civilizing the Indians in the near future. The division over Indian removal in the Baptist denomination would therefore be tied to other pragmatic considerations about mission work.

The Triennial Convention met April 29 through May 7, 1829, in Philadelphia. In his journal, McCoy confided that the body appointed a committee to report on expanding missions in general, and this committee omitted Indian missions entirely. When McCoy complained, this apparent oversight was corrected. Nevertheless, McCoy was annoyed, and he also complained about his financial dealings with the Board on the floor of the convention (a display that probably did not help his cause).[11] What the missionary would see as leadership lacking in zeal for the Indians was most likely leadership attempting to prevent a split by finding a least common denominator around which everyone could rally. They realized that the nation was divided between those who supported Andrew Jackson and removal and those who opposed

[10] General Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions, *Report* (1829), 15-16.

[11] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 382; McCoy, *Journal* (May 10, 1829), McCoy Papers.

removal and Andrew Jackson; they did not want the same to happen in the Baptist denomination.[12]

The 1829 Convention did, in fact, authorize another memorial to Congress, and it was in favor of "granting to the Indians, as a permanent possession, a portion of our western lands." The body selected Heman Lincoln, the treasurer of the Board, and Lucius Bolles to join McCoy in presenting the Convention's views on Indian reform to Congress, the Secretary of War, and the President. McCoy complained that he had trouble preventing the Board from putting men who did not share "our goals" on this delegation, and subsequent events would indeed show how these two men and their allies did not share McCoy's views.[13] The Convention's Committee on Indian Missions, on the other hand, praised the proposed Indian Territory in its report, saying, "no measure, which has yet been proposed, is so likely to accomplish these objects [of elevating the Indian character] as the settling of the Indians in a permanent home upon our western lands, connected with a prosecution of missionary labors among them. Under this conviction, we contemplate with pleasure the movement which the Government of our country appears to be making towards this object." The committee thus concurred with McCoy's opinion of the new land as a space for missionizing. It also urged Baptists to keep alive the sense of obligation to this "injured people, whose homes and country we possess" so that they could adopt "measures as will tend to redress the wrongs we have committed." The members also stated that since the Indians needed both civilization and the Gospel, their labors among them were not just religious—that is, simply preaching and planting churches. They countered those who believed

[12] Note McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries*, 272.
[13] Baptist General Convention, *Report* (1829), 25, 32; McCoy, *Journal* (May 10, 1829), McCoy Papers.

that running schools and farms was a distraction from preaching the Gospel, siding with McCoy on that issue.[14]

The Board did not draft the memorial the Convention had authorized until the following November. In the meantime, McCoy and Lincoln corresponded on the subject, discussing the rising feelings in the nation surrounding Indian removal. Georgia had already sent surveyors into Cherokee territory in preparation for white settlers to move in, and the discovery of gold in the mountains near what become Dahlonega ensured they would come by the hundreds to the detriment of the tribe. Articles in defense of the Cherokees had begun to appear in the *National Intelligencer* on August 5, 1829; the author, William Penn, proved to be none other than the influential secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Jeremiah Evarts.[15] On September 4, Lincoln wrote to McCoy, who by then was back in Missouri and away from the fierce debate breaking out in the east, "The subject of the removal of the Indians excites great attention in the public mind at the present [moment]. I think this great subject will receive the deliberate attention of Congress at the next session. Let it be our prayer that wisdom from above may be granted."[16] McCoy was preparing to go on another exploring expedition, and he asked the Board to continue the course on colonization if he did not return.[17] The missionary must have had doubts that his fellow members of the delegation would actually do what the Convention had authorized and what he believed was best, because he insisted on the same thing to Bolles.

As the summer of 1829 turned into fall, he continued his regular correspondence with the corresponding secretary about financial problems, personnel issues, and logistics related to the

[14] Baptist General Convention, *Report* (1829), 31-32.
[15] Prucha, *Great Father*, 195, 202; Hershberger, "Mobilizing Women, Anticipating Abolition," 21; Andrew, *Revivals to Removal*, 184ff.
[16] Heman Lincoln to McCoy, September 4, 1829, McCoy Papers.
[17] McCoy to Lincoln, September 11, 1829, McCoy Papers.

relinquishing of Carey and Thomas stations because of removal. On September 12, he reminded Bolles of the utmost importance of having the delegation with the memorial present in Washington at the opening of the next Congressional session in December. The delegation needed some discretionary powers to adapt their memorial and their methods to the situation in Congress, McCoy argued, as that could change rapidly.[18]

On November 16, the Board met to consider a memorial as they had been authorized by the Convention to do. The process turned out to be less than straightforward. Members read a proposal from McCoy as well as one from their own committee and then sent both back to the committee, giving it the authority to prepare yet another one. Although the committee's first memorial has apparently not survived, examining McCoy's memorial and the final one in brief detail sheds some light on this less-than-straightforward process.[19]

McCoy's memorial was five pages long and incredibly detailed, a fact that probably gave the Board pause in and of itself. On many levels, it is a summary and application of the ideas in his pamphlet *Remarks on the Practicability of Indian Reform* in light of his explorations of the territory. After fourteen years of acquaintance with the woes of the Indians, it began, the Baptists were "fully convinced that, to preserve that unfortunate race of men from extinction, and to elevate them to the blessings of civilization, it is necessary to collocate them in some suitable section of country made <u>secure</u> to them." Now having surveyed the territory west of Missouri and Arkansas, McCoy could speak confidently that the land was suitable for this purpose, even though he admitted that much was still unknown about the region. No other course could save the Indians from extermination, the memorial emphatically stated. Here, the Indians would be under the authority of the United States yet outside the territory of any specific state, avoiding

[18] McCoy to Lucius Bolles, September 12, 1829, McCoy Papers.
[19] Board of Foreign Missions Records (November 16, 1829).

the thorny issues that had arisen in Georgia. McCoy talked at some length about the rights of the Indians to the land and how colonization would solve that quandary. His memorial argued that force would not be necessary to get the Indians west of the Mississippi; they could be convinced to move, it said, when they see they will no longer be harassed and will have "the prospect ultimately of entire equality with citizens of the most free and happy government on earth." In keeping with previous Baptist concerns about their former students and the critical roles they would play in this territory, McCoy posited that Indians who had received education and other training would be leaders and would help elevate their kinsmen. He even asked for a tract of land for his former students. Although McCoy stated that he ultimately wanted to leave the administrative details of this Indian Territory to Congress, he did make some policy suggestions in the memorial. He proposed a government appropriation for removal, arguing that it would not cost the government much more than it was already spending on Indian reform. He recommended putting each tribe in a central location from which they could move out. This central location would also be the center of government and federal authority. As for the tribes that were already there, such as the Pawnees and the Comanches (whom he called marauders), McCoy argued that an embassy from the government could bring them under United States protection fairly easily. In the cover letter to which he attached this memorial, McCoy begged Bolles' and the Board's indulgence for going ahead and writing a memorial. He acknowledged that he expected them to hesitate to embrace all the ideas in it, but he wrote it because he wanted them to know his views.[20]

Indeed, the Board's memorial was quite simple next to McCoy's. It began in the same way, briefly explaining the work that Baptists had done among the Indians and the "large sums

[20] McCoy to Bolles, October 21, 1829, American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society Missionary Correspondence, American Baptist Historical Society, Atlanta.

of money" they had expended on the Indians—a line that surely made McCoy wince given his constant battle with the Board over money. Their efforts had been hampered by "the unsettled state of the Indians." Because of this, they had appointed McCoy as their agent, and he had visited the west in search of a country for them. Now that his surveying was completed, they petitioned for three things "[s]hould the Congress determine on the removal of certain tribes, without the States and Territories westward." The first was that "provision be made for those who have been under [the Baptists'] care, of the Putawattimies, Miamies, Otawas, Chipewas, and Creeks, and such others as may be disposed to join them." They next asked for an agent to superintend removal and "watch over [the Indians'] interests." They finally requested "[t]hat means be provided to sustain such instructers in schools, and the mechanick arts among them, as may be essential to their well being, and comport with the enlightened views and purposes of the Government."[21] Here, then, was the difference between McCoy and his Board. In McCoy's mind, removal *must* happen. It should be mandatory for the uncivilized Indians' own good, although only persuasion would be needed to get them to leave. The missionary was willing to ask for it. He was willing to align himself with Jackson if that would serve his ends. The Board was not. Members seemed content to let removal happen if and when it happened, but they were not prepared to ask for it or to force the issue. Their main goal was to open up a land for the Indians to go to, and the more voluntarily they went the better. The less the Board members, who were most likely Whigs, had to align themselves with Jackson the better.

Indeed, less than a month after the Board prepared its memorial, Andrew Jackson addressed Congress for the first time on December 8, 1829, and officially presented his plan for Indian removal. He informed Congress that an advanced southern tribe (not named but obviously the Cherokees) had set up its own constitution and government within the boundaries

[21] Bolles to McCoy, March 2, 1830, McCoy Papers.

of the states of Georgia and Alabama. The Constitution protected a state from the establishment of another state within its jurisdiction, and Georgia had justly extended its laws over the Indians in an effort to nullify their new government. The Cherokees, in turn, had looked to the federal government for protection. Jackson told Congress that he had informed the Indians "that their attempt to establish an independent government would not be countenanced by the Executive of the United States." Instead, he had advised them "to emigrate beyond the Mississippi or submit to the laws of those States." If the federal government were to set apart "an ample district west of the Mississippi…to be guaranteed to the Indian tribes as long as they shall occupy it," these conflicting claims could be resolved, the Indians saved, and the national character preserved. Jackson made clear that such a removal would be voluntary, "for it would be as cruel as unjust to compel the aborigines to abandon the graves of their fathers and seek a home in a distant land."[22] All of the talk about national character, saving the Indians, and voluntary emigration sounded nice enough. Most observers, however, knew beyond the shadow of any doubt that Jackson would do all in his power to move all Indian tribes to the west whether they volunteered to go or not. Certainly, Georgia had made its intentions clear: the Indians had to go. The opponents of removal were likewise preparing for a fight.

With the pressure building, Lincoln met McCoy in Washington later in December to present to Congress this memorial. McCoy indeed found it too cautious, as it "did not present a prayer in favour of settling the Indians in the West, but merely asked the Government, in event of Indian removal, to provide for them in the future."[23] McCoy nearly presented his own memorial instead of the Board's, telling Lincoln that if the Board would not do what he thought they should he would go on without them. A strongly-worded warning from the Board

[22] Andrew Jackson, "First Annual Message" (December 8, 1829), *The American Presidency Project*, July 18, 2017, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29471.

[23] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 395-96.

threatened his dismissal if he did, and only the entreaties of his sympathetic friend and Board member Spencer H. Cone of New York prevented him from doing so. Bolles and Lincoln were determined not to let him dictate to the denomination, regardless of how much of an expert he thought he was. The Board did not necessarily oppose Jackson's plan, but members did not wish to support it as McCoy did, either.[24]

McCoy did not drop the issue. With Cone's help, he sent a letter to prominent Baptists complaining that the Board had not done its job as directed by the Convention. (This letter has not survived.) In March, the Acting Board issued its own circular letter explaining the course it had taken in regard to the memorials. The Acting Board reminded their fellow Baptists that they had a necessary degree of discretion in carrying out the will of the Convention. After all, the Convention met only once every three years, Board members were scattered across the country, and events could dictate a change of course before their fellow Baptists could be consulted. (McCoy had argued for a similar exercise of discretion, only toward different ends.) They had exercised their discretion in this case, as "they have felt that the providence of God, the state of publick feeling, and numberless other considerations" had to be consulted. Furthermore, they argued, the Convention technically did not ask them to present a memorial to remove the Indians—and they quoted in full the resolution from the minutes as proof—but merely to provide a permanent home for them. Then, they reprinted the memorial they gave to Congress, as discussed above, and retorted, "We leave it to your own mind, dear brother, to determine, whether this memorial is not '*in favour of*' granting to the Indians a permanent home."[25]

The Acting Board continued their explanation of events by saying that they had in fact expected McCoy to present his own memorial; after all, since memorials were read in committee

[24] Board of Foreign Missions, *Records* (December 23, 1829); McCoy to Rice McCoy, December 21, 1829; Spencer H. Cone to McCoy, December 29, 1829, McCoy Papers; McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries*, 274.
[25] Bolles to McCoy, March 2, 1830, McCoy Papers.

and not before the entire House or Senate, this was the perfect opportunity to let everyone have their say. They claimed to have given Lincoln the authority to cooperate "in the fullest manner" with McCoy but only as far as the aims they had already expressed in their 1827 memorial. If one takes what the Acting Board is saying here as fact, it seems that, although both McCoy and the Board were doing a lot of talking, they were not *communicating* well at all—and the rift between their positions was growing quickly. For his part, McCoy assumed that because the Convention had authorized a memorial there would be only one memorial and hoped—even demanded—that it would conform as much as possible to his (self-perceived) expert opinions on the issue. On the other hand, the Board assumed that Lincoln would present their memorial on behalf of the Convention (on the debatable assumption that they spoke for the Convention), while McCoy could do as he pleased.[26]

The circular concluded by referencing the strong feelings in the country on the subject of Indian removal. It said, "The President of the United States has stated officially, that the Indians must be removed, or become subject to the state laws. Many of the friends and supporters of our Convention are apprehensive of wrong to the Indians." President Jackson had indeed fired off his ultimatum: the Indians could not stay where they were (particularly in the South) unless they submitted to the laws of the states, and of course, those states were designing laws to rid themselves of the Indians. Within in the nation and within the Convention there were strong differences of opinion on how best to help the Indians in this situation, and because of that, the Board argued that it essentially had to find the lowest common denominator and shape its petitions around that to avoid division. Furthermore, the circular noted that "large and powerful bodies of Christians are petitioning Congress against the removal of the Indians. This made it the more necessary to be cautious, lest our Memorial should furnish occasion for placing our

[26] Ibid.

denomination in array against other Christians, on a question of the utmost importance, whether viewed as a measure of Christian benevolence, or of national policy."[27] Board members, who no doubt had personal connections to the leadership of these other denominations, were not willing to put themselves in opposition to them on such a critical issue.

Indeed, the Board had rightly judged the feeling in the nation. Even before the Senate and the House of Representatives began debating removal bills, the opponents of removal had been vocal (note Evarts' *"William Penn" essays*). Now that the bill was on the table in the spring of 1830, the opposition had come out in force all around the country, even in Georgia itself. College presidents, students, lawyers, pastors, women's benevolent groups, and religious newspapers all cried out against the bill, organizing public meetings, signing petitions, and printing pamphlets by the score. Catharine Beecher, the director of the Hartford (Connecticut) Female Seminary, organized the first national women's petition drive in an attempt to stop removal. The *Christian Watchman*, another Baptist publication in Boston, came out in opposition to the bill, as did newspapers in both the Methodist and Presbyterian denominations. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, which was likewise headquartered in Boston and under the leadership of Evarts, naturally opposed it, as well. Even Evan Jones, a Baptist missionary to the Cherokee, joined his fellow American Board and Moravian missionaries in signing a manifesto against removal. (Here, then, was another reason the Board was hesitant to support McCoy's version of removal: it might alienate them from the Cherokee among whom they were working.) These opponents argued that the nation had made a promise to the Indians: if they adopted civilized ways they could stay in their land. Removal broke that promise and compromised the nation's moral integrity. Vice-President Martin Van Buren would

[27] Ibid.

later write of the opponents of removal, "[A] more persevering opposition to a public measure had scarcely ever been made."[28]

Baptist laity, too, held differing opinions about removal. In February 1830, McCoy received a letter from Lexington, Kentucky, from a man who urged against compelling the Indians to remove. Later in 1830, McCoy's brother wrote him from their home region in southern Indiana explaining that he could not get a memorial to Congress in favor of removal from that neighborhood because it was apparently too divisive. On the other hand, McCoy noted that throughout the crisis he was receiving petitions in favor of removal from Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania. Congressman Wilson Lumpkin of Georgia, one of McCoy's primary allies and not unexpectedly a vocal proponent of removal, warned that the Baptists must be united if they were to achieve the best for the Indians—to no avail. These differences of opinion would come to have consequences beyond the mere raising of voices at business meetings.[29]

Congress narrowly passed what became known in history as the Indian Removal Act, and President Jackson signed it on May 28, 1830. The law provided "for an exchange of lands with the Indians residing in any of the states or territories, and for their removal west of the Mississippi." It ordered that districts be laid out in the west and appropriated $500,000 to help the Indians remove.[30] It did not mention the possibility of using force to make the Indians go, but few people had any doubts that such would be the result. This was precisely the result that members of the Board feared but McCoy accepted as part of the bigger plan to save the Indians.

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[28] Hershberger, "Mobilizing Women, Anticipating Abolition," 15; McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries*, 256.

[29] R. Best [?] to McCoy, February 2, 1830; Lincoln to McCoy, March 1, 1830; John McCoy to McCoy, July 8, 1830, McCoy Papers.

[30] "Primary Documents in American History: Indian Removal Act," *Library of Congress*, accessed August 8, 2017, http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Indian.html.

For the next two years, he spent his summers surveying the proposed Indian Territory and working with his fellow missionaries along the western borders of Missouri and Arkansas. He spent the winter months in Washington, lobbying for various Indian-related causes, both in the Board's name and on his own. He watched in dismay as the multitude of anti-removal memorials flooded Congress. Back in Boston, however, the Board became increasingly fearful that "Jackson's and Georgia's treatment of the Cherokees was unconstitutional and inhumane." It also "feared that it might lose the goodwill of the Cherokees."[31] McCoy was also becoming a liability.

The nation's attention, meanwhile, was riveted on the fight between the Cherokee Nation and Georgia, as the state tried to extend its jurisdiction over the tribe and force the tribe out. Since neither the President nor Congress seemed sympathetic to their plight, the Cherokees turned to the Supreme Court. Chief Justice John Marshall issued his decision in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* on March 18, 1831, ruling that the Indians were "domestic dependent nations" and therefore the court did not have jurisdiction. Jackson considered this a victory, when in reality the court had sidestepped the issue altogether.[32]

In the meantime, white intrusions into Cherokee lands led to all manner of violations of property rights as well as violence. In addition to the execution of a Cherokee man in defiance of a federal order, the state also hauled eleven missionaries to jail in July 1831 for refusing to swear an oath of obedience to Georgia. Of the eleven tried and convicted, Samuel Worcester and Elizur Butler refused to accept a pardon or sign the oath. This incident outraged the nation and resulted in a second Supreme Court decision, *Worcester v. Georgia*. On March 3, 1832, Chief Justice Marshall ruled that the legislation under which Georgia had convicted the missionaries

[31] McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries*, 278.
[32] Prucha, *Great Father*, 208-210.

was unconstitutional; furthermore, the laws of Georgia had no authority in Cherokee Country, because that nation was a distinct entity (even if a "domestic dependent" one). The federal government, not the states, had the final say in matters related to the Indians. Of course, this judicial victory for the Cherokees was hollow, as the nation's chief executive was determined to see removal through. Furthermore, Georgia completely ignored the court's order to release the missionaries and reverse their convictions.[33]

In November 1831, as these events were unfolding, McCoy discussed in his journal the efforts of Georgia to take sovereignty over Cherokee lands and the resulting Supreme Court cases. He practically seethed that New Englanders had sided with the Cherokee against Georgia when all other states had exercised sovereignty within their borders just as Georgia was trying to do at that time (a fact that Jackson had also pointed out). He speculated that people opposed removal now, even though Presidents Monroe and Adams had also proposed it, because of regional and partisan politics—not out of conviction. He could not sympathize with missionaries Worcester and Butler, because they had deliberately disobeyed the laws of Georgia when they should have simply sworn the oath and gone about their business; they could not claim that they were being persecuted. McCoy comes across in this entry as ironic at best, hypocritical at worst. After all, both he *and* his opponents were trying to influence the political situation, and he could not legitimately deny his opponents' rights to do so, no matter how much he disagreed with them. McCoy had passion and single-mindedness, no doubt, but he could not acknowledge that there might possibly be more than one way to help the Indians. Those who opposed him were

[33] McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries*, 257-265; Prucha, *Great Father*, 210-212; Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, *The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears* (New York: Viking, 2007), chs. 4-5. During the height of the nullification crisis later that year, Jackson would quietly arrange for Worcester and Butler's release while still supporting Georgia's efforts to remove the Indians (in the hope that Georgia would not join South Carolina). The anti-removal camp would also grow increasingly quiet out of the need to support Jackson and national unity in the face of South Carolina's threats to secede.

therefore wrong and/or had ulterior motives. Furthermore, he relayed the story of eight Presbyterian missionaries who had concurred in the government's removal plans but were silenced by their Board, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.[34]

In this heated environment, delegates to the 1832 Triennial Convention gathered in New York City in late April. The minutes of the Convention show that the report of the Committee on Indian Missions sparked intense debate on the floor; however, they provide few details of that debate, which is typical of Baptist records. These minutes tell that discussion on the report took up a significant portion of the Saturday afternoon (April 28), Monday morning, and Monday afternoon sessions (April 30). They note that the discussion continued on Monday afternoon until "[t]he embarrassments of the subject seeming to multiply, an interval of devotion was agreed upon," where convention-goers prayed for wisdom. The report was then returned to an enlarged committee, and it was finally read and adopted the next morning (Tuesday, May 1).[35]

What were these apparently acrimonious debates about? Were it not for the disgruntled McCoy, no one would probably know anything but that they were about Indian missions. He wrote a fairly detailed account of the debates in his journal (and published an only slightly sanitized version later in his autobiographical *History of Baptist Indian Missions*). Obviously, McCoy is not an unbiased and disinterested party in the goings-on; nevertheless, for the bare facts of the matter, he is all the historian has. He recounted that Spencer H. Cone, now the president of the Convention, was "the substantial friend of our missions," appointed a "sensible" Committee on Indian Affairs made up of David Jones, Elon Galusha, Adiel Sherwood, J. L. Dagg, and Levi Farwell. These men conferred with McCoy and "made an able report, which set the affairs of the Indian Territory in a clear light, which affairs had so long, (and on all occasions

[34] McCoy, *Journal* (November 12, 1831), McCoy Papers.
[35] Baptist General Convention, *Report* (1832), 12-13.

where it could be done) been concealed by the acting Board. The report excelled any thing [sic] of the kind that had ever appeared in the Convention."[36]

McCoy's frequent complaints—similar to the one above—that the Board had concealed the affairs of the proposed Indian Territory deserve qualification before proceeding. Anyone who read the minutes of the Board's meetings and its annual reports would have known that members were discussing how best to approach Indian missions in the new territory to which the natives were moving. Indeed, the Board put in writing that it was planning to transfer its Potawatomi and Odawa missions west with those tribes and to open new missions among the Cherokees, Kansas, and Shawnees in the west as early as 1830—before the Indian Removal Act became law. Board reports prior to 1832 had even made mention of McCoy's surveying efforts and the place of this new territory in the grand scheme of Indian improvement.[37] To a large degree, then, McCoy's complaints stem from that fact that the Board was not supporting *his* version of removal—at that point, mandatory removal. Nevertheless, one does not need to have the passion of Isaac McCoy to question what happened next at the Convention.

It is worth analyzing the draft report of the Committee on Indian Missions in detail, because it was an attempt to fashion a party line both on how Baptists viewed their past missionary efforts to the Indians as well as the course they wanted to pursue in the hotly-debated future. That this report caused such controversy reveals that the question of Indian removal had divided them as deeply as it had the nation, despite the Board's efforts to prevent such division. The members of the committee began their report by saying that Indian reform aroused both gratitude and regret in their hearts. They were grateful, on the one hand, for "the generous sympathies of the benevolent for the overwhelming sufferings of the aborigines of our country"

[36] McCoy, *Journal* (May 9, 1832), McCoy Papers.
[37] Board of Foreign Missions, *Report* (1830), 2.

and for "the untiring perseverance of your board and their missionaries in the prosecution of their humane plans, though constantly beset with difficulties and surrounded by discouragements." Their regret, on the other hand, stemmed from the fact that "our laborious and expensive operations in behalf of this unhappy people have been attended with so limited success."[38] As has been shown, the Baptists had invested thousands of dollars in Carey and Thomas stations (not to mention their missions among the southern tribes), and the government had also channeled thousands of dollars into Indian reform through the Baptist denomination (leaving aside questions of mismanagement). More than a handful of missionaries had quickly come and gone at Carey and Thomas, the hardships quickly getting the best of them. McCoy and Company had been there for ten years, struggling to establish schools and farms as well as churches on the edge of the frontier. The Board expected results, particularly in terms of converts, and the missionaries could present very few—not none, of course, but few. The government likewise expected the Potawatomis and Odawas to be living like white men, and this, too, was not happening with enough regularity. The missionaries had sown the seeds, but there had been no harvest.

The report went on to state that the problem did not lie with the missionaries. The Indians were in a peculiar situation "to which the world affords no parallel." They were "deprived of their ancient inheritance—remote from the settlements of their fathers—cut off from their chosen employments—abased by dependence—denied a rank among nations—slighted by their neighbours—irritated by frequent insults—wounded by repeated injuries" and as a result "an unbroken cloud of impenetrable darkness has rested upon all their prospects." The committee proclaimed that the missionaries "possessed no moral fulcrum by which to effect [the Indians'] elevation" in this condition, and they had determined that nothing could be done

[38] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 595.

until the Indians were settled in a country all their own.[39] Missionaries had regaled readers of Baptist magazines for years with story after story of impoverished, drunken tribesmen who occasionally attacked the very missionaries themselves. A few native villagers had turned to Christ and farming, but most remained in cultural and spiritual darkness (according to the missionaries). Everyone admitted that this situation was the result of contact with wicked white men: traders who sold whiskey, government agents who took bribes, and settlers who moved into Indian lands illegally. These wicked white men had caused the problem, and now benevolent white men had to fix the problem. It is worth observing yet again that there could be no solutions from the Indians themselves on their own terms; indeed, they were not capable of providing solutions in the Baptists' worldview. What the Indians needed now was for the good white men to remove them from the company of bad white men so that they could learn to be more like good white men.

To that point the committee turned next. They said that they were cheered that the government was preparing to give the Indians a permanent home west of Arkansas Territory and Missouri. The report described this territory as "an extent of country six hundred by two hundred miles, fertile and adapted to the production of all the necessaries and most of the comforts of life—where their title to the soil is to be secured by the same tenure that gives security to the possessions of white citizens of the United States, and where no collision will exist between State and national claims."[40] Jackson frequently referred to this collision between state and national claims and used it to further his plans for the Indians; in fact, the debate over the Indians was for him more about conflicting white claims than Indian claims. The committee thus utilized the President's language. Furthermore, citizenship was certainly one implication of

[39] Ibid., 596.
[40] Ibid.

the committee's statement that the Indians would have the same security in their land that white citizens had (although the committee may not have taken it that far when pressed). The committee's language also loudly echoed McCoy's. Perhaps without intending to, they had opened themselves up to the charge of being Jacksonian.

The report continued that having the Indians united in this territory would give the missionaries the "moral fulcrum" they needed to save them both physically and spiritually. Of course, the denomination needed missionaries to achieve this goal, and it was to such a plea the writers of the report turned next. They proclaimed that the denomination was soliciting the government to establish missions in nine tribes and that they needed thirteen missionaries immediately. They made clear their belief that this was a prime opportunity for Christian ministry—perhaps the last one they would have for the Indians: "Such an opportunity for benefiting this long neglected and deeply afflicted race has never before been presented to our view, and if neglected may never recur." It was also potentially the last chance to make the Indians Americans: "the fond expectation is cherished of their being consolidated into one friendly community, and ultimately becoming a representative part of our great Republic." If one were to answer this call to become a missionary to the Indians, he or she would thus work toward a grand, historic task.[41]

On the other hand, if too few Baptists heeded this call to missions, the consequences would be grave. The committee warned, "But if the fact be considered that these tribes numbered millions while in the peaceful occupation of the land we now inhabit, and that by our injustice they have been almost extirpated, it would appear that for us to neglect them at this critical moment, when their preservation or total extinction seems, under God, to depend on the part we shall act towards them, would be to fill up the measure of our iniquity, and to provoke

[41] Ibid., 596-97.

the judgment of Heaven upon us!"[42] McCoy, who had an incredible penchant for the dramatic, must have relished this statement—in fact, he may have written it himself. It certainly echoed what he had written in his *Remarks* about the injustices whites had committed against the Indians. Now, a committee of the Baptist convention was saying the same thing. It was now or never. Justice demanded it. God demanded it. Isaac McCoy demanded it.

The leadership of the Convention would have none of it. According to McCoy, Francis Wayland, an influential pastor, member of the Board from Massachusetts, and occasional correspondent of McCoy's, along with other members of the Board objected to it. They then proceeded to examine the report sentence by sentence and "whittle it down" with Dr. Wayland proposing substitutions. Committee members "manfully" defended what they had written. The objectors then called for a vote on the report, which spurred further debate on the propriety of such a measure. Lunchtime intervened before the vote could take place, which according to McCoy, "gave time for the minority to rally some additional force from among the Massachusetts delegates."[43] After lunch, the opposition tried other parliamentary tactics to stifle the report, eventually settling on sending it back to the committee. The committee objected, saying, "They were not convinced of any error in the report they had made, & therefore could not prepare another." To no avail. The report was sent back to the committee, and the committee was enlarged.[44]

McCoy explained that the main objection of those who did not like the report was that "to state the condition of the Indians, and their prospects in the Territory would be construed to be a political measure." "Political" in this context, of course, meant partisan politics. Some members

[42] Ibid., 596-97.

[43] McCoy calls this meal dinner in his journal, but if his description of events is correlated with the Convention minutes, one concludes that he means the noontime meal.

[44] McCoy, Journal (May 9, 1832), McCoy Papers.

of the Board from Massachusetts no longer wanted even to come close to the subject of Jackson's Indian policy in an election year (or any other time, for that matter). They were convinced that it was wrong and that McCoy was wrong for advocating it. McCoy's response was, "Some of us thought it exceedingly strange that those brethren should think that for the Convention to pursue its straight forward course, which it had followed for six or eight years in relation to the Indian Territory would now be considered as a political affair, and therefore we ought to be silent."[45] His point was valid. The Baptists had already stepped into policy debates; it was too late to step away from those statements, even though some were trying to do just that. McCoy was not about to let them do so without a fight. Though the Board was trying to prevent division, everyone could clearly see that there were Baptists on both sides of the issue.

A new report came to the convention floor the next day; it was read and adopted without debate. McCoy was annoyed by these shenanigans yet composed enough to ask for a copy of the unedited committee report, and he included it as an appendix in his *History of Baptist Indian Missions*.[46] McCoy's goal in publishing this original version was, of course, to vindicate himself, his friends, and his position. Although the veteran missionary and political activist never said specifically which changes were the most objectionable to him personally, it is not hard to guess.

The general structure of the final report remained the same. Some changes were simply minor edits: a change in wording here, a rearranged paragraph there, and an extraneous phrase deleted elsewhere. Other changes, however, were glaring. The Wayland faction succeeded in removing the statement that the missionaries "perceived that little hope remained of missionary operations conferring extensive and lasting benefits on the Indians" east of the Mississippi.

[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

Obviously, the anti-removal camp held firm to the belief that they could help the Indians east of the Mississippi. The final version of the report contained no geographical description of the proposed Indian Territory, except that it was west of Arkansas and Missouri. The convention also erased the committee's statement that "no collision will exist between State and national claims" once they arrive in their new territory, probably to avoid Jackson's political buzzwords. That the Indians' "title to the soil is to be secured by the same tenure that gives security to the possessions of white citizens of the United States" likewise failed to appear in the final draft. Also stricken from record was "the fond expectation is cherished of their being consolidated into one friendly community, and ultimately becoming a representative part of our great Republic."[47]

The finished report still placed great hope that the new territory would work for the salvation of the Indians. Indeed, it was a great opportunity, but it was not the *only* hope for them. By removing the suggestion that nothing could be done for the Indians as long as they lived east of the Mississippi, the Convention in theory left open the possibility of some tribes actually staying east of the Mississippi and mission work continuing among them (even as that prospect was diminishing by the minute in the political arena). If and when the Indians wanted to remove to this new home, they could do so voluntarily, the Board thought. The original committee report had been closer to McCoy's position that removal *must* happen to save the Indians. The final report was in line with the Acting Board's position that it may be the *best* option but it was not the only option, and it certainly should not be forced. If one takes McCoy's word for it, an influential minority within the Convention had defeated the majority. Regardless of the numbers, the Convention had made a decision not to go forward in supporting colonization and removal as McCoy envisioned it when that option had been presented. It had made a policy choice. In the years that followed this uproar, the Board and Convention never again issued a

[47] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 595-98.

memorial to Congress in an attempt to shape government Indian policy; they would avoid further policy choices.

Yet this is not the only observation one can make about the 1832 controversy. The final version of the committee's report still noted that the Indians were gathering west of the Mississippi, but this was now simply a fact that presented new opportunities for missions, not possibilities for the Indians to have a clear title to the soil or to become an equal part of the republic. This editorial move speaks volumes. It taxes the imagination to believe that the opponents of the original committee report removed the exact phrases they removed only because they were afraid of being seen as favorable to a President. The phrases they removed raise the questions: was the suggestion that the Indians would become an equal part of the republic simply too provocative for their assumptions of white racial superiority? Did they even believe that assimilation and equality were possible? McCoy's plan and the original committee's report brought those possibilities into focus—at least on paper. That the Convention removed them suggests, among other things, that they were not willing to countenance that possibility. Even the anti-removal crowd could defend the Indians' rights as long as the Indians were their inferiors. The Indians could simply not become their equals, regardless of their location in relation to the Mississippi River.[48]

Thus the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions dealt a death blow to McCoy's vision for the Indians' future. When the potential for division became too great and when the missionary's agenda proved too controversial, the Baptist leadership changed course and attempted to find a passive least common denominator to save the Indians. It failed both in maintaining peace in the denomination and saving the Indians from the horrors of removal. Likewise, McCoy failed to

[48] Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions and American Indian Response, 1787-1862* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), 158-160.

get his Indian state. He was too controversial a figure. His ideas of Indian equality were too radical (even if vague), his methods too abrasive. The allies he chose—indeed, needed—to create his state did not have the Indians' best interest at heart (e.g., Andrew Jackson and Wilson Lumpkin). In the end, his idea for an Indian colony that would become a territory that would become a state of the union was a utopia, impossible in its day in the face of American racism and greed for expansion.

Conclusion

"We are now to assign them a country, and say to them in the language of truth, never to be revoked, *this is yours—yours forever*."[1] To save the Indians both in this life and in the one to come, Isaac McCoy believed they needed land, a state, and self-government. He proposed to give them those things and ensured his fellow Americans that once they had them, they would become civilized Christians. Turning this proposal into reality would involve uprooting the tribes from their ancestral homelands, he admitted, but such was a necessary evil that would work for the greater good. His denomination failed to unite behind his vision. The land hunger and racism of white Americans ensured that nothing the Indians had or were given would be theirs forever.

After the 1832 Convention, McCoy firmly established himself, his family, and his mission in what he hoped would become Indian Territory. The Shawnee Baptist Mission sat seven miles south of the Missouri River, just west of the state of Missouri in present-day Kansas City, Kansas. It served as a staging ground for other missionaries heading to work among other tribes in the new Indian territory. Largely because of McCoy's influence, the Baptists received permission and funds from the government to undertake education work among numerous tribes in the region: among the Otoes, the Delawares, the Odawas, the Potawatomis, the Omahas, the Stockbridges, the Kickapoos, the Creeks, the Cherokees, and the Choctaws. Some of these missions were short lived (the Kickapoos, for example, were steadfast in their allegiance to

[1] Issac McCoy, *Remarks on the Practicability of Indian Reform, Embracing Their Colonization* (New York: Gray and Bunce, 1829), 30.

Kenekuk to the dismay of the Baptists), while others outlasted the Triennial Convention itself. Jotham Meeker, McCoy's associate, helped to set the Shawnee, Delaware, and Choctaw languages to writing and ran a printing press that produced scripture translations, newspapers, hymnbooks, and grammars in several Indian languages. McCoy also attempted two periodicals designed to inform the public about the affairs of Indian Territory, the *Annual Register of Affairs within the Indian Territory* and the *Periodical Account of Baptist Missions in the Indian Territory*; the *Annual Register* only survived for four years, and there was only one issue of the *Periodical Account*.[2]

The relationship between McCoy and Baptist Board of Foreign Missions was not surprisingly as troubled during the 1830s as it had been in the 1820s. The financial situation never improved. The Board continued to look for ways to run Indian missions on the cheap, relying as much as possible on government funding and maintaining an ambivalent attitude to McCoy's boarding school model until the last. They did not even allow McCoy and his fellow missionaries to solicit funds from the Baptist public by traveling through the country and informing churches of their needs. Questions about their management of the government funds they received haunted the Board, especially in the latter part of the decade.[3] Another particularly thorny problem was McCoy's status as a missionary, given the fact that he also worked as a government surveyor periodically and was heavily involved in lobbying for Indian causes, going to Washington nearly every winter for that purpose. In both their 1833 and 1841 reports, the Board disavowed him as their missionary, writing that he was "not now engaged in the service of

[2] To follow the creation and extinction of missions, see the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions and Baptist General Convention *Reports* during the 1830s, as well as McCoy's correspondence with Lucius Bolles about them in the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society Missionary Correspondence (American Baptist Historical Society, Atlanta). On printing endeavors in the Indian territory, see Joseph Pettie Grant, "Jotham Meeker: Orthographer, Pioneer Printer and Missionary" (Th.D. diss., Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1952), as well as George Melvyn Ella, *Isaac McCoy: Apostle of the Western Trail* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2002), 397-398, 400, 420.

[3] Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, 405, 443-445.

this Board" and had not been so since 1830.[4] Finally giving up on the Boston-based Board, McCoy and his supporters formed their own board in 1842, the American Indian Mission Association, to promote the cause of Indian missions. McCoy moved to Louisville, Kentucky, and led it until his death in 1846.[5]

As McCoy and his fellow missionaries established their work in the west and fought the Board, removal of the eastern tribes proceeded apace. The Baptists established their first mission among the Shawnees who had removed between 1826 and 1828. Another group of Shawnees and Odawas from Ohio arrived in the territory in November 1832; though they had numbered 540 when they left in September, only 406 arrived safely. A group of Delawares had settled along the Kansas River west of Missouri in 1829; the Baptist mission among them began in 1834. Bands of Potawatomis from the Great Lakes region began to move into the territory beginning after the Treaty of Chicago in 1833 and continued until 1840. The most infamous Potawatomi removal was that of Menominee's band, which became known as the Trail of Death and took place between September 4 and November 4, 1838; forty-three people perished en route, and many more had fled the camp or been left behind due to sickness. William Polke, McCoy's brother-in-law who had served at Carey in the mid-1820s, supervised this removal and several others. Robert Simerwell supervised the Baptists' mission to the Potawatomi in the west, beginning in 1837. The Odawas of Ohio managed to avoid removal until August 1837, when 174 of their number departed for the west; another band of 108 removed in 1839. These Odawa removals were not marked by as much death as numerous other removals were; only five lives

[4] Board of Missions, *Report* (1833), 26; McCoy to Bolles, July 20, 1841, ABFMS Correspondence; Isaac McCoy, *History of Baptist Indian Missions* (Washington: William M. Morrison, 1840), 459-460; Ella, *Isaac McCoy*, 465.

[5] Albert H. Fauth, "A History of the American Indian Mission Association and Its Contributions to Baptist Indian Missions" (Th.D. diss., Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1953), ch. 2. Note also a 37-page letter from McCoy to Bolles explaining his griefs with the Boston Board, January 6, 1842, ABFMS Correspondence.

were lost. McCoy surely was aware of the fraud, penny-pinching, and abuse that marred many removals and naturally did not approve of it, but for the most part he remained quiet about it, viewing it as a necessary evil to achieve the best outcome for the Indians. Other Odawas in Michigan avoided removal entirely, however. Missionary Leonard Slater, the former associate of McCoy, stayed at Thomas Station with the Grand River band of Odawa, helped them sign a treaty that avoided removal, and later bought land and built a community with some of them at Richland, where he remained until the 1850s.[6]

McCoy continued to advocate for the official establishment of Indian Territory and for other elements of Indian policy during the 1830s. He was delighted when the Indian Trade and Intercourse Act, which provided for the control of trade to the Indians, passed in 1834 along with the Indian Reorganization Act, which created the office of Commissioner of Indian Affairs and brought order to the federal government's administration of Indian issues. Congress never created McCoy's proposed Indian Territory, however. Bills to that end came before Congress in 1834, 1836, and 1838, but they never passed. McCoy went to Washington during each session of Congress and even lived with Senator John Tipton of Indiana for a year and a half, helping him guide the bill through the Senate during the Twenty-Fourth Congress (1836). Wars with the Seminoles in Florida and the continuing struggles to remove the Cherokee hampered the bill's progress, however, and sectional questions regarding slavery (since the Southern tribes owned slaves) did not help matters. When McCoy returned to the west, he presented the substance of

[6] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 404-405; Mary Stockwell, *The Other Trail of Tears: The Removal of the Ohio Indians* (Yardley, PN: Westholme Publishing, 2014), 173-179, 236-250, ch. 9; John P. Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians: Northern Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), chs. 3-4, 6; George A. Schultz, *An Indian Canaan: Isaac McCoy and the Vision of an Indian State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 141. The Board of Missions *Reports* during the 1830s provide brief descriptions of each mission station in the west each year. Schultz notes that, despite his general silence on abuse, McCoy encouraged the Cherokee to seek a better removal treaty than the controversial one they got at New Echota (179). One of the buildings of Simerwell's mission still stands on the grounds of the Kansas State Historical Society Museum and Archives in Topeka.

his plan to individual tribes, and twelve of them signed petitions in its favor. Tipton again introduced the territorial bill in the Twenty-Fifth Congress; it now included a plan for a general tribal council for the territory in which each tribe would have between two and five representatives. The Senate passed the bill, but the House of Representatives did not discuss it. The Board and Convention apparently did not get involved in any of these efforts, as they had initially with colonization.[7]

The issue of slavery had helped to kill McCoy's Indian Territory bills, and it also single-handedly split the Triennial Convention. Sectional differences had always been marked within the Convention (and was a factor in the events of 1832), but only slavery brought those differences to an irreconcilable head. By the 1840s, Southerners were increasingly defending slavery as many Northerners increasingly pressed for abolition. Abolitionist Baptists in New York met to form the American Baptist Anti-Slavery Society in 1840 and proclaimed that they would no longer consider slaveholding Baptists as Christians. The Georgia Baptist Convention refused to send funds to the Board until they heard the Board's opinion in the matter. The Board responded by remaining neutral on the subject, and the 1841 Convention tried to calm matters by emphatically stating that neither slavery nor abolition were tests for Christian fellowship. The neutrality could not last. In 1844, Georgia Baptists put forward James Reeves, a slaveholding preacher, to the American Baptist Home Mission Society as a missionary to western Georgia. The society refused to consider the application. The Alabama Baptist Convention meanwhile demanded assurance from the Board of Foreign Missions that it would, in fact, appoint slaveholders as missionaries; the response returned in the negative. Baptists in the south therefore gathered in Augusta, Georgia, on May 8, 1845, to form the Southern Baptist

[7] Schultz, *Indian Canaan*, 173-191. See also McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 501-502, 516, 526-529, 542, 556.

Convention. The split was now final. The Methodist and Presbyterian denominations would likewise divide over the slavery issue, as would eventually the nation itself.[8]

As a result of the failure to create Indian Territory, the Indians were vulnerable to removal once again. (Of course, even if it had passed, they would still have likely been vulnerable.) By the 1850s, the lands west of Missouri were no longer considered a "Great American Desert" in the white imagination. The Oregon Treaty of 1846 and the Treaty of Guadeloupe-Hidalgo at the conclusion of the Mexican War in 1848 added new territories to the United States for settlement. As settlers passed along the Oregon and Santa Fe trails, they began to desire the lands that McCoy had said they never would. An 1853 Indian appropriation bill allowed the president to negotiate with tribes to extinguish their land titles yet again. What was supposed to be Indian Territory instead became Kansas Territory with the passing of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, and white settlers flooded into the region. Popular sovereignty allowed the people of the territory to determine whether slavery would be allowed, and the last half of the decade was a violent one as pro- and anti-slavery forces fought for control. The territory earned its nickname Bleeding Kansas, and the nation moved closer and closer to civil war. The questions about slavery, however, disguised the rampant speculation that was robbing the Indians of their land that they had been promised in perpetuity. As a result, the Indians had to leave once again, moving south of Kansas to what eventually did become Indian Territory and finally Oklahoma. What had once been a potential Indian Territory had less than 1,000 native inhabitants by 1875.[9]

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[8] Earl Eugene Eminhizer, "The Rise and Fall of the Triennial Convention" (M.A. thesis, Crozer Theological Seminary, 1956), ch. 11; Robert G. Gardner, *A Decade of Debate and Division: Georgia Baptists and the Formation of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1995), chs. 1 and 3.

[9] H. Craig Miner and William E. Unrau, *The End of Indian Kansas: A Study in Cultural Revolution, 1854-1871* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1978), ch. 1.

What was left of McCoy's dream of a self-governing Indian Territory ended in 1907 when Indian Territory was merged with the white-dominated Oklahoma Territory to become the state of Oklahoma.[10] The contingencies in the story raise an interesting question, however: if the Baptist denomination had steadily backed McCoy's vision in 1832 and throughout the 1830s, what might have happened? Could they have somehow tempered the harsh effects of removal? Would the Indian Territory have come into being? How might a functioning Indian Territory in the place of Kansas have altered the course of American history? The odds are admittedly slim (to none) given the evidence at hand, but the possibility—however remote—reminds us that little in history is predetermined. People make choices. Those choices may be influenced by a cultural, political, religious, and social milieu, but they are choices nonetheless. Those choices have consequences. The Baptist Committee on Indian Missions had written in 1832, "by our injustice [the Indians] have been almost extirpated."[11] The Convention deemed this line too controversial, too prophetic, too radical—and chose to strike it from the record. Not surprisingly, more injustice followed.

Thus Baptist missionary efforts to Native Americans were misguided and mismanaged. This reality provides yet another piece in understanding the growth and influence of the Baptist denomination in the early American republic. Baptists both united around and divided because of their efforts to convert and civilize the American Indians. They formed societies to collect donations for Indian missions and handed those donations over to appointed denominational officials, all the while celebrating and cementing their identity as Baptists. In their public

[10] For a succinct summary of federal policy toward Native Americans in the ensuing years, see Robert J. Miller, *Native America, Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, and Manifest Destiny* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), 168-172. See also Robert A. Trennert, *Alternative to Extinction: Federal Indian Policy and the Beginnings of the Reservation System, 1846-1851* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1975); David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995).

[11] McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, 597.

gatherings, they debated the meaning of Indian removal and the proper course toward the same Indians to which they had given money. Through their writings, the missionaries influenced what laypeople thought about the Indians and how they responded to Indian issues both socially and politically. What the missionaries were doing on the frontier and reporting in the denominational press influenced the halls of denominational power and the sanctuaries of local churches in the east. What laypeople and denominational bureaucrats in the east did in turn shaped the work the missionaries were able to do. As Baptists did all these things, they helped the American republic (re)make the continent in its own image.

What the missionaries were able to do likewise affected the Native Americans in their charge. The writings of Isaac McCoy and his Baptist compatriots reveal how the Indians talked to the missionaries, adapted their teachings, rejected their overtures, and even attacked them on occasion. McCoy's interpretations of these interactions with the tribes around him became the narratives that his fellow Baptists enlisted to support their religious and political causes, whether they were in agreement with McCoy or not. McCoy's native neighbors meanwhile enlisted the aid of the Baptist denomination for their own ends. Though Native Americans were dramatically shaped by the Americans through policies such as reform and removal, they also shaped the Americans.

That Indian reform had religious overtones is not a historiographic revelation: the federal government relied on Christian missionaries to civilize the Indians. That Indian removal was fraught with religious meaning—for its supporters as well as its opponents—has been less well understood. Setting the stage for all of this, however, was a giant web of Baptist evangelism that linked the frontier and the eastern seaboard during the 1820s. Baptists imagined, organized, donated, strategized, and bickered in an attempt to convert and civilize the Indians, even as how

the Indians responded (or were reported as responding) changed the methods that the Baptists chose. Indians had been shaping Baptists—even those who had never met an Indian—for years before the Age of Jackson. As Baptists entered the world of removal, their long strands of connections to Indians shaped their response.

McCoy's opponents pleaded that forcing removal was an unchristian, cruel act that would stain the nation's moral character. McCoy, on the other hand, sincerely advocated removal as an act of Christian benevolence—indeed, the *only* benevolent course—and insisted that failure to do so would be an equally disgusting stain. He turned the perceived threat of native extinction into a prime moment for their conversion to Christianity, as well as their acceptance into the American republic on whites' terms. His fellow Baptists did not rally around his interpretation of the issue in the end; neither did a number of his fellow Christians. His visions for the Indians' future thus remained unfulfilled. That vision had been born—and it ultimately perished—in a web that brought together frontier Indians, white northern Baptists, missionaries, native schoolchildren, and denominational bureaucrats. All in the web were actors; none were passive. The Baptists changed the Indians, to be sure, but the Indians changed the Baptists. As Baptists chose, Baptists changed.

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