Religion and Removal among the Shawnee from Ohio into Kansas

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Abstract

This article examines the removal of the Shawnee from their traditional homelands in Ohio and Indiana into "Indian Territory" (Kansas and Oklahoma) from 1824-1832. The displacement of the Shawnee caused them great hardship and exacerbated preexisting divisions within their community. These challenges impacted every facet of Shawnee life, but one overlooked theme has been the religious dimensions of their removal experiences. Those Shawnee factions that wished to maintain traditional ways of life resisted white encroachment into their homelands and opposed missionary attempts to convert them to Christianity. This conflict pitted so-called traditionalists against some leaders open to allowing Christian missionaries into Shawnee life, finding it a necessary part of adjusting to American civilization. Denominational rivalries also developed among the missionaries, as they vied for the most influence over the federal government's policy toward the Shawnee.

Key Words: Shawnee Indians; Indian Removal; Tenkswatawa, Kansas; Christian Missionaries; Methodists; Baptists; Quakers

1. Introduction

> *"Although the Shawnees lived in Kansas for a matter of about forty years, their stay here was uneventful."* - Grant Harrington, "The Shawnees In Kansas"

For the majority of the past five centuries of North American history, Native people have been the victims of colonization, whether by various European nations or after 1776, the United States. While many Europeans and Americans engaged in reciprocal trade relations with a wide and diverse array of Native societies, rapid population increase, settler demand for land, and market growth encouraged Indian removal and dispossession. Along with displacements west of the Mississippi, Native people became increasingly dependent on whites for basic materials. Due to devastatingly high casualties suffered in attempts to retain their independence, depleted game supplies, and spread of disease, Native people found themselves in bitter and endless contests for survival (White, 1983).

The historiography of Native American displacement westward is quite extensive. The horrendous tale of the devastating consequences white encroachment presented to southeastern tribes underpins the majority of studies of the removal experience. Usually, these renditions begin with a recounting of Andrew Jackson's coercive measures to remove the "Five Civilized Tribes" (Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, Seminoles), culminating in the Cherokee Nation's Trail of Tears (Denson, 2004). While these communities' experiences during this time period remains ripe for further exploration, the story of the tribes that resided in the Ohioan and Great Lakes regions suffers from neglect.

Even before the eastern nations were relocated under federal government removal programs, Native communities from both north and south of the Ohio River were pushed into the trans-Mississippi territory (Gibson, 1980, p. 293). Bands of Kickapoos, Delawares, Sac and Fox, Miamis, Ottawas, and Shawnees suffered relocation experiences from the 1790's well into the mid-nineteenth-century. While many of these incidents took place in a piecemeal fashion, the disruption to their societies was no less devastating than those suffered by southeastern tribes. Furthermore, if secular motivations more often than not dictated the federal government's removal policy toward Indian nations, religious rationales justified it. This was true for both regions affected by removal.

The Shawnee Indians present a perfect illustration of this feature of removal. The aim of this paper is two-fold: to trace the trajectory of the Shawnee's removal experience into Missouri and Kansas from 1824-1832, and to assess the religious dimension of that process both prior to removal and after arriving in Kansas. The religious dimension serves to show how the incursion of Christian missionaries into Shawnee life resulted in conflicts among missionaries and among the Shawnee over how the tribe would adjust to the encroachment of American civilization. However, before delving into these matters, some background about the ideologies that guided removal policy from secular and religious spheres is necessary.

Within the evolution of federal Indian policy, two men exercised the most influence: Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson (Gibson, 1980, p. 281). Jefferson's outlook did not reflect the popular view that indigenous peoples were an innately inferior race. Instead, he promoted a policy aimed at slowly accommodating Indians into Anglo-American lifestyle. This process sought to change Native communities through the transforming process of "civilization." Ultimately, this process was to culminate in Native Americans assimilating into dominant American society. Achieving success for this "civilizing process" required that Indians relinquish large tracts of land and give up their hunting/horticulture economies. By assimilating Indians to the idealized yeoman farmer style of Anglo-American life, Jefferson both assuaged his "enlightened" conscience and placated the voracious land needs of frontier settlers. However, while Jeffersonian policy attempted to meet expansion with Indian interests, it could not reconcile agrarian utopianism with Native people's desire to hold onto land (Prucha, 1962, p. 119). When tribes refused to go along with his plans, Jefferson directed traders to advance Natives large amounts of credit in order to build up debts that could only be paid through land cessions. Despite its naïve premise, parts of Jeffersonian Indian policy persisted into his successors—Presidents Madison, Monroe, and Adams (Prucha, 1962, p. 121).

Whereas Jeffersonians attempted to structure a policy that satisfied pioneer thirst for land with altruistic treatment of Native Americans, Andrew Jackson strove to satisfy settlers by the forced removal of tribes from their ancestral homes in the American Southeast into what became Oklahoma. Jackson's reputation as an Indian fighter and spokesman for American frontier settlers preceded his accession to the presidency. He and his fellow constituents looked forward to the day when Indians would ultimately disappear. They viewed Native Americans as "a degraded brutal race of savages, whom it was the will of God should perish at the approach of civilization" (Prucha, 1962, p. 225). With an inordinate amount of attention given to driving tribes into the country's frontier, Jackson eventually garnered congressional approval to legitimize Indian exile as well as federal appropriation of vacant tribal land with the passage of the Indian Removal Act of 1830.

Some years before implementation of Jackson's official removal policy, various members of Christian denominations encouraged setting up a separate country for Native Americans to inhabit. Much of this impetus derived from the persistent petitioning of Baptist missionary Isaac McCoy. Frequently addressing philanthropic organizations sympathetic to Native people, McCoy urged increased missionary attention in regards to the living conditions of tribes. He was particularly adept at presenting the relocation of Native Americans into "Indian Territory" as a pragmatic and charitable duty. However, unlike Jackson, McCoy advocated appealing to Native people's intelligence, striving to get them to see the futility of maintaining "countries within a country" (McCoy, 1831, p. 3).

By setting up an isolated territory, away from settler aggravations and chicanery, McCoy and other like-minded religious leaders hoped to stymie the lack of missionary success in stopping Native people from sliding back to their old "pagan lifestyles." He lamented the fact that Native Americans who had accepted the virtues of "Christian civilization" too often fell back under the sway of the beliefs and practices of their own people (McCoy, 1829, p. 22). Paradoxically, McCoy saw the creation of an Indian territory as the best method to prevent backsliding toward "paganism" among Native people. Given pervasive missionary oversight, they would be insulated from both the evils of white frontier society and the temptation to revert to Native religious traditions. With the creation of a specific area designated solely to instilling the rudiments of Euroamerican niceties, the missionaries would no longer have to see the fruits of their labors go to waste. With his appeals for increased funding and Christian zeal in educating Indians, McCoy shrewdly credited the success of Indian migrations that already had taken place to missionaries leading the way (McCoy, 1831, p. 1).

2. The Shawnee: Tribal Schisms and Native Prophecy

Known as "the Southerners" by other Algonquian-speaking peoples, the Shawnee's precise origin is uncertain. However, ethnographers are confident that the Shawnee occupied southern Ohio and northern Kentucky by 1650. Never content with staying in fixed locations, Shawnee bands at one time occupied parts of Georgia, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Illinois during the colonial period. However, by the time of the American Revolution, the majority were consolidated in the areas of Ohio and Indiana (James, 1981, p. 10).

As with many tribes located in and around the Ohio Valley, the Shawnee were active participants in the many imperialistic conflicts that erupted between Great Britain and France throughout the early eighteenth-century. When war broke out between Great Britain and the American colonists, the majority of the Shawnee, perceiving the British to be the lesser of two evils, sided with the British. A surprise raid into Ohio by two hundred American volunteers routed a band of Shawnees. Demoralized and left with no way to defend themselves, this band withdrew from the war and left Ohio. This group eventually descended the Ohio Valley and crossed the Mississippi and established new villages in Spanish territory, near Cape Girardeau, Missouri (James, 1981, p. 21-23).

The remaining Ohioan Shawnee, although diminished in numbers, constituted the most vehemently anti-American element of the tribe. England's surrender to the colonists had drastic consequences for the Ohioan Shawnees. With England relinquishing all claims to lands west of the Appalachians, American settlers began flooding into the Ohio Valley. Conflicts between settlers and various Native American nations rose, including with the Shawnee. A series of failed military excursions into the Ohio River Valley by General Josiah Harmer in 1790 followed by another in 1792 rallied the morale of the Shawnee. Unfortunately for this intertribal coalition of Shawnees, Miamis, Potawatomis, and Delawares, "Mad Anthony" Wayne proved to be a much worthier adversary than had Harmer (Gibson, 1980, p. 290). Following the tribes' disastrous defeat at the Battle of Fallen Timbers and the signing away of most of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois during the Treaty of Greenville in 1794, the Shawnee suffered tremendous hardships.

As had the raid that sent members of the Shawnee to Missouri, the Treaty of Greenville further divided groups of the Shawnee. Led by an old chief named Black Hoof, a regiment of Shawnees abandoned the warpath, opting instead to seek accommodation with the United States. Adopting Anglo-American agricultural techniques, Black Hoof's band settled at new villages at Hog Creek and Wapakoneta in Ohio (Edmunds, 1983, p. 16-18). This faction of the Ohioan Shawnee would be the last to endure removal but would suffer the greatest hardships throughout the process.

For the remainder of the Shawnee who refused to compromise their traditional ways, life became increasingly unbearable. Consistent pressure on tribes for land cession increased as the newly formed United States sought to further extend its claims to the fertile territory north of the Ohio. Between a crushing tide of settler invasion and a series of treaties of dubious validity, tribes lost access to their homes. Suffering to eke out an existence, demoralized by poverty and increasingly dependent on alcohol, all hope seemed lost. As a result of this state of affairs, multi-tribal cooperation increased in the realm of spirituality.

A Shawnee man named Lalawethika ("Noise Maker") gained prominence after undergoing a series of visions in which the Master of Life appeared to him. During these episodes, in which Lalawethika appeared to be dead, the Master of Life instructed him on how to end his people's suffering. He was taught that all Native people must abstain from the tainting influences of the Americans. This included eschewing Euroamerican clothing and other features associated with whites. Due to his reputation as a drunkard and braggart, Lalawethika was ridiculed at first. However, the complete alteration to his behavior bestowed by his meeting with the Master of Life, which included abstaining from alcohol, and the intensity of his visions convinced many of his fellow tribesmen. From then on, Lalawethika was known as Tenkswatawa ("The Open Door").

Tenkswatawa was not the originator of such prophetic lamentations though. According to Gregory Evans Dowd, such religious-inspired intertribal movements were prevalent throughout the Great Lakes territory (Dowd, 1993). Leaders such as the Delaware prophet Neolin and Pontiac of the Ottawas influenced later leaders like Tenskswatawa through the shared inheritance of prophecy. This particular prophetically inspired discourse was transmitted orally. These movements appealed across tribal boundaries.

Prophets achieved success by broadening the definition of tribal identity outside of rigid clan and kinship orientations to include Native people outside of one's own community. Prophets successfully encouraged the forging of a new identity of commonality among Great Lakes and Ohio regions based on facing the common threat posed by non-Indians. At the heart of such resistive movements lay an urgent preoccupation with reconstituting proper rituals to maintain cosmological balance. Through the guidance of prophets, indigenous communities sought to retrieve much of their cultural traditions lost during the long decades of contact with Europeans. Only through the wielding of sacred manifestations of power could the forces of European colonialism be met and defeated.

Tenkswatawa inherited this complex tradition. Also, akin to other leaders, far from advocating a complete return to an unchanged cultural past, he incorporated ceremonial innovation into his teachings. Relying on vibrant Shawnee spiritual traditions, he adapted many of them to fit new circumstances, incorporating new ideas into a corpus of beliefs accustomed to adaptation. Certainly Tenkswatawa's conception of a place of turmoil for whites and Indian accommodationists was more than likely taken from Christian conceptions of hell However, while these and other ideas could be appropriated, they were often times reformulated to admonish against Christianity and assimilation. Tenkswatawa's message was not accepted by all of the Shawnee. Both he and his brother's message met with resistance from Black Hoof and his community.

3. Conflict, Reorganization, and Removal to Kansas

Tenkswatawa's older brother Tecumseh served to organize the Shawnee politically and forged alliances with neighboring tribes. With Tenkswatawa preaching his messages to a wide array of Native pilgrims at the Tippecanoe prophet settlement in Indiana and Tecumseh striving to garner military alliances from around the region, Indiana Governor William Henry Harrison saw reason for concern. In 1811, while Tecumseh was away politicking to the Creeks, Harrison led an attack on Prophetstown. The Indians' defeat at the Battle of Tippecanoe assured the Shawnee alliance with Great Britain during the War of 1812.

At War's end, with Tecumseh having been killed at the Battle of Thames in 1813, Tenkswatawa's dream of a united Native front against white expansion was shattered. Under the treaty terms imposed, Tenkswatawa's coalition chose exile in Canada rather than unification with either the Americans, or more importantly, Black Hoof's band still in Ohio. Increasingly frustrated with British Indian Department officials in Canada, Tenkswatawa negotiated with Michigan governor Lewis Cass concerning his return to the States. The Prophet and Cass struck a deal whereby Tenskwatawa could return to the United States provide he convinced Black Hoof's band to remove from Ohio west of Missouri. Concurrently, negotiations were underway between General William Clark and the Cape Girardeau settlement for their removal to Kansas to a reservation along the Kansas River. The ultimate goal consisted of consolidating the bulk of the Shawnee Nation into Indian Territory (Edmunds, 1983). One can only speculate why Tenskwatawa agreed to such a condition, since it seemingly contradicted his previous stance against working with Americans. However, perhaps The Prophet, cognizant of his diminished reputation as a religious leader due to the disaster of The War of 1812, sought to reestablish himself in other ways. Apparently, he was willing to adopt the role of a political leader in lieu of a religious one, at least temporarily.

The Prophet's initial attempts to persuade the Wapaughkonnetta band of Ohioan Shawnee to remove to Kansas, however, met with failure. A great many Shawnee, while perhaps not entirely opposed to the removal, refused on grounds of not wanting to offend the aging Black Hoof. Those that adamantly refused relocation shared Black Hoof's outlook on the circumstances. Why should they have to leave their homes behind? They cited their willingness to attempt to walk the white man's road by giving up hunting and adopting agriculture. As further proof of their willingness to assimilate, the Wapaughkonnetta band had accepted Quaker missionaries into their settlements**.** Through persistent efforts, however, Tenskwatawa's labors started to show results. By early 1826, enough Shawnee were persuaded to move that plans for removal were undertaken. In fact, by April, Indian Agent John Johnston urged Secretary of War James Barbour "to take an early opportunity of having the necessary means provided…None of the Indians can move without the assistance of the government and I think it would have a bad effect if any would damp the ardor of those who are now willing to go. The Prophet is at the head of the emigrating party" (Edmunds, 1983, p. 175).

When William Clark wrapped up negotiations with the Missourian Shawnee for their removal into Kansas, Indian agents scheduled the removal of Ohioan Shawnees for the fall of 1826. Minus Black Hoof and his followers, the Indians started out for Kansas on September 30, 1826. Unfortunately, the trip did not go as planned. Instead of leading the party across the prairies of northern Indiana, agents led them through hilly forestland. Between crossing rough terrain and an outbreak of dysentery among the Indians, the Shawnee's arrival into Illinois was delayed. In fact, the trip crawled along so slowly that two of the agents deserted the party due to their daily fees expiring. Without removal officials and adequate provisions, the Shawnees trudged into an uncertain future. At one point during their exodus from Ohio, they had to sell much of their clothing just to purchase small amounts of food. Finally, destitute and seemingly with all hope lost, the Shawnee arrived in Kaskaskia in Illinois in December of 1826 (Edmunds, 1983). The Shawnees spent the winter of 1827 in Illinois, subsisting on a paucity of leftover rations supplemented by hunting in the forests. While most of the tribe survived the winter, many of their horses expired. The deplorable conditions eroded the Shawnee's confidence in the Prophet and the relocation plan itself. If circumstances did not improve, the party agreed to turn back Ohio.

The Shawnee's fortunes slightly improved in the spring when William Clark sent out Indian Agent Richard Graham to inquire why they had arrived in Illinois. Apparently, Clark was as surprised by the Shawnee's route as they were. At a meeting, several Shawnee elders recounted to Graham their misadventures and hardships incurred along the way. In urging Clark to provide for the Shawnee until they reached Kansas, Graham reported on the Indians that "they are in a wretched state and really require the aid of the Government" (Edmunds, 1983, p. 176). Clark agreed to do what he could for the beleaguered Shawnees. In the meantime, he requested that they stay put until the summer when travel would be easier and new horses could be provided. During an interlude, Clark petitioned the government to allocate sufficient funding to support the Shawnee for the rest of the trip. In a shocking display of miscommunication and dereliction of duty, federal officials claimed ignorance of the migration of the Ohioan Shawnee. Lamenting this fact, Secretary of War James Barbour admitted that "the unfortunate situation of the Shawnees" was "much to be regretted" (Edmunds, 1983, p. 178). However, due to the fact that the government had not been privy to the actions of emigrating Shawnees, Congress had not set aside any provisional appropriations for the trek. Washington simply asked Clark to help the Shawnee as best he could by using the funds available at the Indian agency in St. Louis, Missouri.

Sensing the potentially volatile situation facing Tenkswatawa's group, Clark interceded. He was worried that the distraught Shawnee would simply refuse to continue on into Kansas, opting instead to settle with the Cape Girardeau band. In order to ward off any developments that would potentially prove fatal to the Shawnee's removal, both Ohioan and Missourian, Clark arranged for an exploratory party to show a small Shawnee group their new lands along the Kansas River. As it turned out, Clark's strategy paid off. Shawnee delegates returned from their trip pleased with their new lands, which offered encouragement to their kinsmen.

The Shawnee spent the following winter in St. Louis. They subsisted quite well under Clark's supervision, considering all that they had been through up to that point. In the spring, they resumed their journey, finally arriving to their reservation on May 14, 1828 (Barry, 1948, 33-34). The trip had taken two full years, filled with numerous hardships. These new Shawnee arrivals established settlements along the south bank of the Kansas River, only twenty miles from the Missouri state line. The remaining Shawnee of Ohio, Black Hoof's Wapaughkonnetta band and the Hog Creek band, would undertake their own winding journey in 1831.

According to Quaker missionary Henry Harvey, shortly before Black Hoof died in 1831, the Wapaughkonnetta band was visited by Indian Agent James Gardner. The burgeoning American settler population increasingly demanded access to the remaining Shawnee's land in Ohio. When Gardner met with the tribal council, he attempted to encourage them to cede their lands in Ohio and join their relatives in Kansas by stressing the practicality of removal. He pointed to white depredations against the tribe and their "deplorable conditions." This last point was utterly false. The Wapaughkonnetta and Hog Creek bands excelled at farming and had constructed several grist and saw mills overseen by the Quakers.

When officials failed to elicit from the Hog Creek band the desired response, Gardner resorted to more forceful measures. He warned the Shawnee that failure to move to Indian Territory would bring disaster upon them. Threats of Ohio extending its jurisdiction over the Shawnee and simultaneously prohibiting their protection under state law seemed to break down the tribe's resolve.

However, Gardner effectively sealed the deal by promising the Shawnee that the federal government would pay off all of their debts and fund the construction of new saw and grist mills in their new homes Harvey, 1855, p. 201). Furthermore, they were told that they would receive annual annuities in exchange for their Ohioan lands.

While Harvey urged Black Hoof and his followers to reject any governmental overtures to abrogate their 1817 treaty, the Shawnee decided that their migration was inevitable and decided to make arrangements for the trip to Kansas. Unfortunately for the Shawnee, Gardner refused to allow the treaty terms to be examined, stating that the document was very long and that his word could be taken as sincere in all matters. When it was later found that the treaty stipulations did not include the above agreements, Henry Harvey and a delegation of Quaker leaders traveled to Washington to petition on behalf of the Shawnees. A unidentified Shawnee man, expressing he and his community's gratitude for the Quaker's assistance stated, "Many people will talk from their teeth out, but the manner the Quakers have always acted toward us shows plainly that they are our real friends" (Harvey, 1855, p. 297).

Gardner informed the Shawnee that he would lead them into Kansas in early spring of 1832, and that they should make arrangements to sell off their livestock and other furnishings. They were to keep only the minimum necessary to sustain themselves for the winter. He promised them that they would also receive money for their lands to supplement their retained food supply. However, the tribe not only never received their payment, but Gardner refused to make the arrangements for their exodus at the promised time. Harvey (1855) recounted in a letter to Secretary of War Lewis Cass that "No money, their provision all gone, and no credit. Nothing for them but suffering, and that brought on them by that man [Gardner], who, after cheating them out of their land, now, to complete the business, is starving them for daring to complain against his fraudulent treaty, and starve they will, unless the government shall relieve them soon" (p. 218). Fortunately, the government did help out, but the vast majority of the aid actually came from the Society of Friends.

When the Wapaughkonnetta finally set out for Kansas, they did so ill prepared and without proper supplies. Their 800 mile journey contained similar setbacks that had plagued the Shawnee's earlier departure from Ohio. They arrived at their new homes in Kansas around Christmas of 1833. The Hog Creek faction did not leave Ohio until 1833. Their journey under a different agent was said to be without incident.

4. The Shawnee in Kansas: Missionary Squabbles and Tribal Adaptations

All of the Ohioan and Cape Girardeau Shawnee were in Kansas by 1834. While they remained in Kansas for forty years, the tribe's experience contradicts Grant Harrington's assertion that it was "uneventful" (Harrington, 1937, p. 6). On the contrary, the Shawnee's arduous migration experiences into Kansas severely disrupted their infrastructure. Lack of supplies, exhausted horses, and white depredations left them economically debilitated and vulnerable to disruptions. In particular, now that the tribe was centrally located, it forced them to grapple with increased attempts by Christian missionaries to intensify their "civilizing" process.

The three most prevalent denominations active in Kansas territory included the Baptists, Methodists, and Society of Friends. Differences over the issue of slavery, opposed by the Quakers but condoned by most Baptists and Methodists, illustrate the divisiveness among Christian missionary groups. When Quaker missionary Henry Harvey arrived in Kansas from Ohio to minister to the Waukoponeata band, he was incensed at the practice of chattel slavery within a small segment of the Shawnee nation. The introduction of slavery into Indian Territory (Kansas) stemmed from Methodist minister Thomas Johnson. However, part of the Baptist missionary enterprise represented by Jotham Meeker and Benjamin Pratt were supporters of the "peculiar institution" as well. Harvey (1855), expressing his disgust towards Johnson, stated:

Some of the Shawnees have already got slaves, but are mostly those white men who have married into the nation; but as some of their teachers have them, who can wonder if more of these confiding people go and do likewise. It is to be apprehended that there will be much difficulty among the Shawnees on that subject, as many of them do not believe in the system at all, and as the subject is agitating every section of the country, what a picture one of these Missions would present to the world! And there are just such pictures here among the Indians. What a stumbling block this is! Such inconsistencies as are now to be seen here as some of these places! How infidels can retort on professing Christians on account of such conduct! (p. 279).

When a missionary from another denomination (either the Methodists or the Baptists) approached Quaker-trained Shawnees in Kansas, they were bombarded with questions pertaining to race. In one instance, a northern Methodist argued with a Shawnee man about the subjugation of African Americans. When the missionary answered that it was due to a punishment meted out to them long ago in Canaan, the Indian responded with the following:

> Well—this happened many years ago, did it not, nearly four thousand years back? But did there not a circumstance take place since that to bring about a change in the order of things? What did Jesus Christ come into the world for, but to put an end to all such things, and to establish righteousness, peace, and justice on the earth, and to do away that of one race of men being punished for the sins of another, and that of people oppressing one another? What does the Testament say about that? (Harvey, 1855, p. 297-300).

For roughly forty years, these three groups waged concerted battles against Shawnee traditions in an attempt to eradicate tribalism and replace it with American culture. Not only did this process exacerbate preexisting divisions within the Shawnee tribe itself, it pitted Christian sects against one another in a showdown for theological supremacy. In a real sense, this inter-denominational rivalry almost supersedes the agency the Shawnee exhibited by attempting to make sense of a world thrown into chaos by removal. The issue of slavery would remain the Quakers' main bone of contention with other Christian missionary groups throughout the Shawnee's stay in Kansas. The Baptists and Methodists, however, maintained a fierce rivalry between themselves in missionizing efforts.

The trouble between the Methodists and Baptists over Shawnee souls began in 1830. A white Shawnee chief of the Missourian band named Fish had requested the development of a Methodist mission house in order to help with education (Lutz, 1905, p. 165-166). More than likely, Fish requested the school's construction to curry favor from white society**,** hoping that doing so would alleviate his people's poverty stricken condition. However, Baptist minister Isaac McCoy beat the Methodists to the punch. While passing through the Shawnee's reservation, he met with Fish's band. When Fish repeated his desire for a mission, McCoy reassured him that one would be provided for his group despite hesitancy from other Shawnees. McCoy simply ignored the prior jurisdictional claim by the Methodists (McCoy, 1840, p. 404-405). When the Methodist Council sent Thomas Johnson to establish a mission, he was notified of the Baptist's plans. McCoy returned to the reservation in November 1830 only to learn that Fish's band had agreed to the Methodists' proposition under Johnson. Prompted by Fish's agreement with the Methodists, Tenkswatawa's Ohio band ultimately accepted the implementation of a Baptist mission in present-day Wyandotte County. According to McCoy, the Ohioan band accepted his own offer more "through courtesy, than on account of a desire really to enjoy the advantage of education. Like most Indians, not much advanced in civilization, they felt little desire for schools, and still less to hear preaching." However, concerning Fish's group, McCoy (1840) felt that they "appreciated in a good degree the former, and were favorably inclined to the latter, and through them he'd hoped that access could be successfully obtained to the main body of the nation" (p. 404). Not too long after this, Indian Agent John Campbell, who was a Baptist himself, attempted to stop Johnson from setting up shop amongst the Shawnee. Despite staying the course, Johnson nonetheless intensified the conflict by attempting to have Campbell removed from his duties. Soon thereafter, he succeeded in convincing Campbell's boss, who was Methodist, to remove him (Warren, 1994, p. 153-155).

Aside from individual aggrandizing efforts on the parts of McCoy and Johnson, the two Protestant denominations contested over the best way to indoctrinate Shawnee children. Both parties believed that intense instruction into the finer points of Christian doctrine met with the best success when focused intensely on Native youth. While the Baptists decided to only fund a small day school, the Methodists opted to use boarding schools. The rationale for the Baptists stemmed from a belief that boarding schools not only cost too much to maintain, but that maintenance itself detracted attention from spiritual matters. On the other hand, Johnson and the Methodists favored the boarding school method because they insulated Indian children away from the "corrupting influences of their parents." Furthermore, they offered a chance to instill Anglo ideas of labor division between the sexes. Analyzing this Methodist point, Baptist missionary Jotham Meeker wrote that boarding schools promoted the instruction of the manual arts necessary to each gender. Girls, he boasted, learned the virtues of Victorian housekeeping and boys experienced the joys of farming (Journal of Jotham Meeker, 1836).

The Shawnees themselves seem to have preferred boarding schools to day schools. According to missionary John Pratt, Shawnee parents insisted that their children be provided for while attending school. Pratt stated that "parents sent their children to boarding schools professedly for the purpose of obtaining for them an education, but really to rid themselves of the burden of maintaining them" (McCoy, 1840, p. 488). While this may be partially true, more than likely it was due to the uncertain future Shawnee Indians faced in a new land. Many parents remained economically unable to support their families, and knowing that their children at least received a few meals a day while attending boarding school helped ease their anxieties.

While the many of the Shawnee had taken up farming in Ohio and Missouri, they did not entirely do away with old labor divisions even while in Kansas. Like numerous other Eastern Woodlands peoples, Shawnee subsistence strategies consisted of men hunting and women maintaining both the home and crop fields. Through 1837, Shawnee were reported to go hunting in the fall through December (Letter from Thomas Johnson, 1835). But with so many tribes located in Kansas encroaching on one another, it is doubtful that even miniscule hunting practices persisted much past this time. Competition between tribes, coupled with increased white settler demand for land, led to severe shortages of wild game.

The issue over utilizing the boarding school method eventually planted seeds of dissension within the Baptist ranks. In 1839, Thomas Johnson decided to expand the Methodist Mission endeavor by establishing the Shawnee Manual Labor School (Caldwell, 1977, p. 29-30). In an effort to save money by consolidating Methodist schools in one location, Johnson also hoped its construction would benefit tribes besides the Shawnee, such as the Delaware and Kanzas. After much deliberation, Johnson decided on a site six miles south of the Kansas River to locate his manual labor school (Caldwell, 1977, p. 33). The fact that the Manual Labor School enjoyed success in attracting large numbers of Indians to its facilities, several constituencies of the Baptist denomination contemplated building their own mission school in lieu of day institutions. The sentiments of the status-quo camp favoring perpetuating day schools were summed up by John G. Pratt: "All that I have ever expected from Boarding schools I see developed in the school at Shawanoe…idleness, ingratitude, heathenism, and all the evils that might be expected from congregating such little nonconformists"(John G. Pratt, 1842). On the other hand, Isaac McCoy and his son-in law Johnston Lykins favored a mission school to expedite the "civilizing" process of indigenous children (McCoy, 1840, p. 459). This inner quarrel placed at risk the always-fragile condition of retaining Shawnee allegiance. In fact, so divided did the Baptist become that Shawnee loyalties split between the opposing factions. According to Johnston Lykins (1843), at one point the majority of the Shawnee allied with he and McCoy, and that Pratt's group often felt threatened by the Indians.

Within the midst of the Methodist and Baptist conflict, the Shawnee responded in various ways and for a variety of purposes. Some readily embraced Christianity and the religious doctrines promulgated by its white spokespersons. Others saw incorporating elements of Christianity into traditional belief systems as a means of making sense of a vastly changed world. Some also viewed acculturation in moderation as a way of safeguarding Shawnee culture. Still, a small number of Shawnee continued to follow the teachings of Tenkswatawa despite the majority having rejected the Prophet as a failure. The dialogue between missionaries and the Shawnee fluctuated between stressing Christianity to the "heathens" and/or the sanctity of an agrarian lifestyle predicated on white American customs.

Isaac McCoy first made the acquaintance of the Prophet in 1830 while traveling through the Shawnee reservation in an attempt to win their approval for a mission. Surprisingly, while many Shawnee seemed indifferent to Christianity, McCoy expressed shock when Tenskswatawa seemed amenable to a Baptist mission. While this may seem to contradict his prior prohibitions against accommodating to white customs and beliefs, it is more likely that Tenkswatawa was only trying to curry favor with someone he believed to be influential. The Prophet was very much aware of his decreased influence amongst his people; perhaps by cementing a relationship with important whites, Tenkswatawa could provide rations and influence governmental policy towards his people, thus gaining back some of his lost credibility. However, with the Prophet's reputation having preceded him, McCoy rejected the sincerity of Tenkswatawa, commenting that he had "no doubt that {Tenkswatawa} secretly was opposed to [every thing] like education or religion" (Barnes, 1936, p. 343; McCoy, 1840, p. 405).

McCoy's assumptions apparently proved true. There is evidence that Tenkswatawa played a leading role in a Shawnee witch scare while in Kansas. According to Quaker missionary Isaac Harvey, the Prophet instigated a religious fervor over a man's illness and spread accusations that witchcraft was to blame.

Harvey recounted that while setting out to visit an old Shawnee man one day, he noticed that the man's door was fastened shut. After finally opening the door, Harvey noticed the man lying prostrate on his stomach with gaping incisions in his back. The man had apparently been suffering from pulmonary consumption. According to Harvey, stepping out of the backroom "was our old friend Tenkswatawa." The Prophet explained that the man had been bewitched, and that he had cut the man's back open to "extract the combustible matter, which the witch had thrown into him." Upon hearing this, Harvey states that he threw Tenkswatawa out of the home and dressed the man's wounds (Eggleston & Seelve, 1878, p. 321-325; Harvey, 1855, p. 170-175). Later on, Tenkswatawa placed blame for the man's illness on a Shawnee woman who had converted to Christianity. Harvey went on to discuss how he interceded on the woman's behalf, saving her from the Prophet's persecution of tribal members who had acculturated to white culture. This testimony certainly fit's the modus operandi of Tenkswatawa's earlier revitalization movement in Ohio and Indiana. Part of his message had been imbued with a distrust of pro-American Indians, believed to be responsible for unbalancing Shawnee cosmological equilibrium (Edmunds, 1983, p. 199).

The Prophet's death put to rest completely his prophetic movement amongst the Shawnee. In reality, Tenkswatawa's influence and prestige never recovered from the Native coalition's defeat during the War of 1812. Despite the above incident, he is said to have lived a rather mundane and trivial life while in Kansas. According to a Dr. Chute, who attempted to treat the Prophet on his deathbed, Tenkswatawa refused medical treatment because he was "in contemplation." Chute recorded that Tenkswatawa was "a hater of civilization" and hostile to Christianity. Apparently, the Prophet was notorious around the various Protestant groups for disrupting services and was guilty of insistently "annoying those Indians who had decided to become civilized men and women" (McCoy, 1837, p. 367). Tenkswatawa died in November 1836, and is buried in Wyandotte County (McCoy, 1837).

While not as militantly against acculturation as the Prophet and his followers, a sizeable amount of the Shawnee actively resisted white cultural encroachments. Oddly enough, many of these Shawnee did so while simultaneously encouraging their children to pursue white education. Perhaps the best example of this sentimentality and rationale for doing so comes from Black Hoof's youngest son, also named Black Hoof. Methodist Lorenzo Waugh (1896), quoting Black Hoof, noted that "education was a trouble brought on them by the savage encroachment of the white faces. It contradicted the original and wise arrangement of the Great Spirit, which allowed their children to grow up free, like the young deer and elk of the forest" (p. 121). Black Hoof continued that allowing missionaries' access to their Shawnee children served to make them "to learn the cunning of the white faces, and thus be able to compete successfully with them" (Waugh, 1896, p. 121). This provoked at least some missionaries to engage in a bit of introspection. Black Hoof, and those that held similar views apparently did not view Christianity and white education as superior to their own traditions, but as offering a way to prevent the complete dissolution of their own culture.

For many Christian missionaries, the fact that the majority of the Shawnees eventually embraced agriculture and aspects of Anglo lifestyles yet still maintained tribal customs and beliefs posed a contradiction. Consider Indian Agent Richard Cummins' observations of the Shawnee in 1846: "Of all the tribes on the borders, the Shawnee have made the greatest progress, and some of their farms will compare with many of the best within the state line; and in very many instances, they are superior, both as regards to management and culture" (Francis Barker to Solomon Peck, 1848). And while this notion was pervasive throughout much of the consciousness of the missionary field, admiration was tempered by outrage at many instances of refusal by these same Shawnee to convert to Christianity. To many Baptists and Methodists, the tenets of Christianity were innately conflated with Anglo-American civilization. Confusing themselves with their religion, they were unable to make sense of the Shawnee's ability to adapt to changing circumstances without necessarily abandoning their religious beliefs.

As happened with the various Protestant sects, schisms occurred among the Shawnee during their stay in Kansas. The most crucial point of conflict pitted those Shawnee loyal to their own tribal beliefs ("conservatives") and those that ascribed to one of the various Christian denominations ("progressives"). Much of this conflict was just a factional feud carryover from prior to removal. However, internal dissentions increased in their intensity in the wake Christian missionizing efforts. Those Shawnee who adamantly followed Christian theology, taking a cue from their white overlords, attempted to convert their brethren away from their traditional belief system.

The situation became so divisive that a group of traditional Ohioan Shawnee refused to share their rations and annuities with Christian Shawnee. It is not clear how pervasive this kind of hostility was, but the few references to it demonstrate the intensity of differing ideologies that existed amongst various groups of the Shawnee nation (Thomas Johnson to the Corresponding Secretary, 1837). However, conflict was not only confined between conservative and "progressive" Shawnee ideologies. Feuds erupted between Shawnee that adhered to different Christian denominations. Within one of the Shawnee settlements, this conflict at times pitted family members against one another. Accounts range from a mother beating her daughter for joining the Methodists to a son threatening to kill his father for converting to Catholicism (Thomas Johnson to E.R. James, 1841).

How extensive the divisiveness Christianity caused within Shawnee families is hard to say. To what extent the entire Christianizing efforts were successful in making converts of the Shawnee is debatable as well. Conversion to any religion is a very personal process, making it impossible to adequately gauge a precise number of actual believers. However, by the late 1840's, the perception amongst some of the missions was that the goal of eradicating traditional Shawnee spirituality had been a failure. According to Agent Richard Cummins, by 1846, at least 75% of the Shawnee continued to adhere to their traditional practices (Francis Barker to Solomon Peck, 1850). In letter to a friend in 1840 one missionary spoke of conversion rates among the tribe, questioning "whether, for the last four or five years there has been any apparent increase. Most of the old members continue firm, and there are every year conversions and additions to the church; but it is likely we have done little more than hold our own" (Andrew, 1855, p. 164). At most, it appears that the Shawnee's religious experiences in Kansas constituted a mixture of conversion to Christianity tempered with perpetuation of traditional Shawnee rites and practices.

5. Concluding Observations

The displacement of Native people from the southeastern United States into what eventually became the state of Oklahoma has long informed the scholarship of historians on removal. However, by fixing so much attention on these community's experiences before and after their emigrations, the other journeys made by people from the Great Lakes and Ohioan regions into Kansas suffers neglect. The Shawnee, while only one example, provide a suitable window into many Indian community's removal experiences. Facing seemingly insurmountable odds, the Shawnee contested the encroachments of white civilization from the first instances of European imperialism through the colonizing efforts of the United States.

Throughout the Shawnee's removal odyssey into Kansas, they experienced the magnitude of the American desire for land and cultural homogeneity. In terms of missionary Christianizing efforts, the Shawnee exhibited a multiplicity of responses. Some made honest and sincere efforts to assimilate into white culture, others tenaciously held to the traditions of their forefathers. A third group attempted to construct a kind of "middle ground" in regards to Christianity, with some incorporating elements they deemed useful while retaining the bulk of their traditional traditions. Perhaps the one constant theme underlying the Shawnee's removal and religious experiences was that of constant change. No matter what one makes of removal's adverse or positive results, change came to the Shawnee with all of the finality of forever.

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