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**At Cross Purposes:
Protestant Missionaries Among the Osage
Indians,
1820-1837**

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B.S., History, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, 2004

A Thesis Submitted to The Graduate School at the University of
Missouri -St. Louis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree Master of Arts in History.

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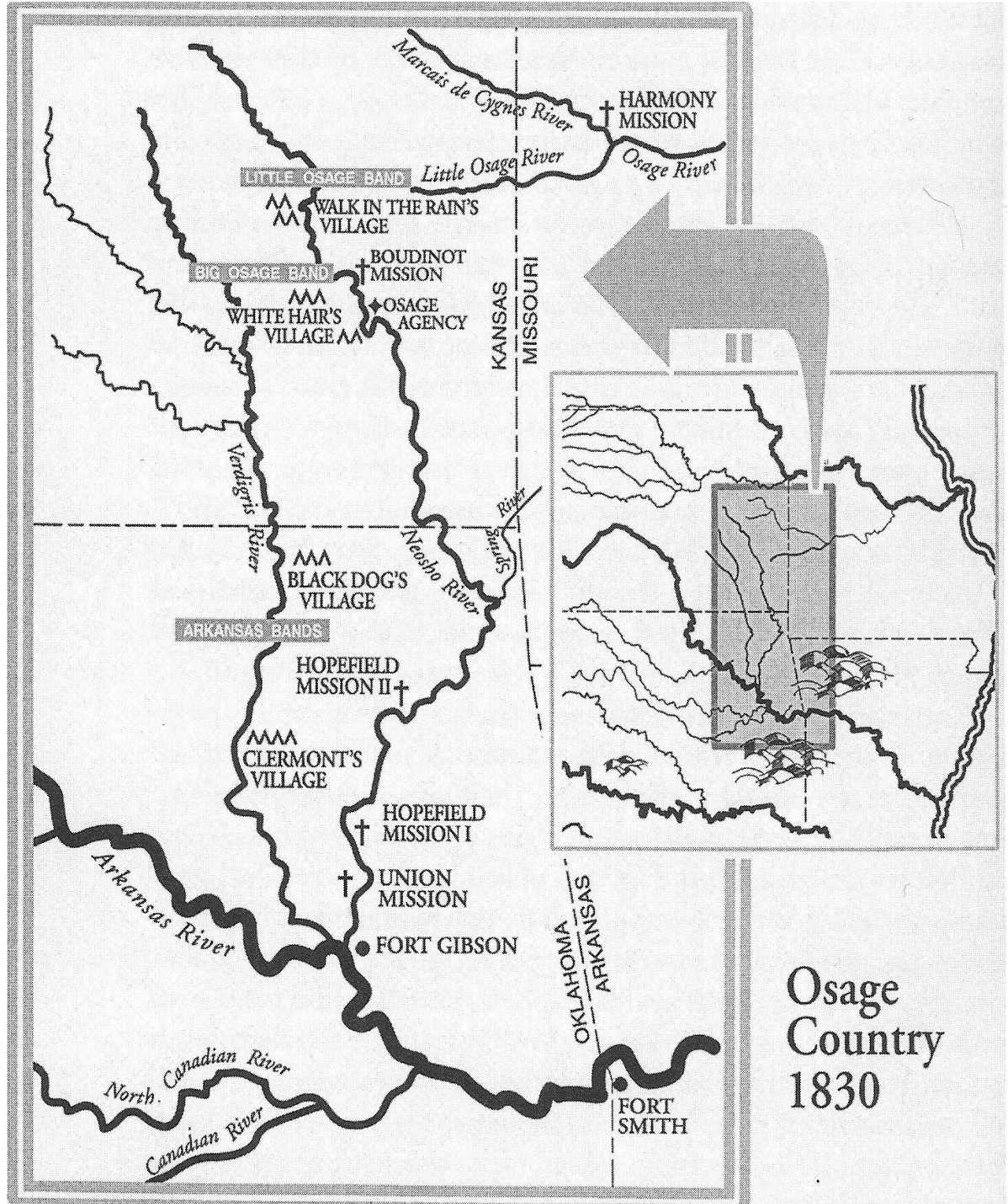


Figure 1: Osage Mission Country. From Willard Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel: Osage Resistance to the Christian Invasion, 1673-1906* (2004), 86.

“In the frontier context, Protestant missionaries hoped to build a particular kind of ‘home’ that both reinforced their own religious identity and distinguished them from the ‘irreligious’ others who also populated the landscape.”¹

Introduction

This thesis analyzes the objectives and activities that Congregational, Dutch Reform, and Presbyterian missionaries pursued among the Osage Indians in the 1820s and 1830s. My research challenges the conclusions of previous studies, which have consistently emphasized the “failure” of those Protestant missions. Evaluating the full range of Osage reactions and responses to *all* missionary activities, both secular and spiritual, I argue that the traditional diversity of individuals and groups in the loosely-structured Osage nation made *passive indifference*, not “*active resistance*,” the overwhelming response to conversion efforts, while scholastic and agricultural activities were surprisingly successful due to that same native adaptability.

An evaluation of Protestant missions would, ideally, require a thorough discussion of Osage beliefs; however, a complete and accurate comprehension of that native religion in the nineteenth century is impossible. The most significant Osage rituals were performed in secret,² and even the tribal holy men who survived epidemic European diseases did not share religious knowledge with Christian foreigners.³ But ignorance did not prevent generations of white Americans, who did not speak native languages or understand indigenous worldviews, from “explaining” and usually condemning Indian religions.⁴ The eyewitness missionary accounts of Osage beliefs and behaviors published in the *American Missionary Register* and the *Union Journal* provide raw data about

Indian relations, but only in the last few decades have scholars critiqued their Christian biases in the context of nineteenth-century ethnocentric ideologies.⁵

Previous studies of Protestant -Osage relations, however, have not critically evaluated those overly-negative accounts that blamed Christian “failures” on “miserable and hopeless” Osage “savages,” who allegedly sabotaged conversion efforts. William W. Graves’s 1949 book, *The First Protestant Osage Missions 1820-1837*, commended the “courageous missionary families, transplanted from cultured New England to a land of savagery,” and condemned “the stubborn *resistance* of the very people that they came to save” for the missionaries’ “failures.”⁶

The 2004 book by Osage historian Louis Burns, *A History of the Osage People*, stated that “neither the Osages nor the Protestant missionaries reached a comprehension of the others’ viewpoints.” But he only devoted eight pages to the Protestant missions and concentrated on explaining why they “failed.” Ignoring traditional Osage religious diversity that prevented a unified and consistent response to missionaries, Burns simplistically observed that it was “a shame that the missionaries were so self-righteous and placed such strong stress on buildings and fields and not on humanity.”⁷

The most comprehensive recent study of the Osage missions was *Unaffected by the Gospel: Osage Resistance to the Christian Invasion, 1673-1906: A Cultural Victory*, published in 2004 by the Cherokee historian, Willard H. Rollings. He suggested—but failed to prove--that a majority, or even a significant minority, of Osages “resisted” the Protestant missionaries. By distorting an accurate definition of “*invasion*,” he glorified Osage “resistance” as cultural warfare, celebrating the most conservative traditionalists as the noble protectors of native values. With few exceptions, however, the Osages

extended hospitality to the white strangers and continued to treat them courteously without overtly opposing conversion efforts.⁸ Rollings failed to acknowledge that the different groups of Osages were too diverse and physically separated to offer any unified “resistance” to the missionaries. Tribal traditions allowed individual Osages to compromise, adapt, or even convert⁹, rather than “resist.” In fact, several Osages successfully experimented with pragmatic, secular American lifestyles without accepting Christianity, since the former was more relevant than the latter in a changing world of countless crises.¹⁰

The missionaries’ obsession with spiritual salvation blinded them to the success they did achieve in educating Indian children and training adult males in new agricultural techniques. My research into all of the Protestants’ initiatives reveals that their “failures” were partial and relative but seemed far more serious because they were overly optimistic that “civilized, superior Christians” could easily mold “ignorant savages” in their religious image. Whether hospitable “progressives” or mildly hostile traditionalists, very few Osages were desperate enough to switch to a foreign religion focused on a strange new deity when their very survival was at stake. When the disheartened Protestants abruptly abandoned their missions, most Osages continued to embrace enduring, still-satisfying traditional patterns of life and adjusted to changing conditions without any “help” from cultural foreigners who doubted their competence and insulted their heritage.¹¹

“*Wah-kon-tah, thou holy one, permit us to cross this water, Permit us to cross.*”¹²

Chapter 1

Foundations of the Osage People

Division and diversity were built into the fabric of Osage culture. Rarely unified, and adaptable to changing times over several centuries, the Osages experimented with a variety of lifestyles in different lands and altered circumstances—referring metaphorically to such fluidity as “*moving to a new country.*”¹³ The Osages *actually* moved to a “new country” in the trans-Mississippi West during the seventeenth century, leaving an ancient homeland in the mound-building areas of the Ohio Valley.¹⁴ It was a massive migration along with other culturally similar peoples—Omahas, Poncas, Quapaws, and Kaws (Kansas)—that spoke the Dhegihan dialect of the Siouan language family. Nearing the end of their trek, those groups divided and carved out separate tribal territories in the present states of Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, and Nebraska to assure maximum subsistence potential on the prairie-plains.¹⁵

At some point prior to encountering Europeans, the Osages themselves divided into two separate and competitive groups in different locations.¹⁶ Some ten thousand Indians, known as the *Grand* (or “Big”) Osages, lived at Marias des Cygnes (“Marsh of Swans”) at the confluence of the Osage, Little Osage, and Marmaton rivers in southwestern Missouri and eastern Kansas, about 350 miles from St. Louis. A much smaller group, perhaps a third as large, were the *Petit* (or “Little”) Osages, who lived along the Missouri River to the north, some two hundred miles west of St. Louis. Those

groups did not share a single political structure with overall authority, preferring to divide power among a variety of leaders.¹⁷

What all Osages did share throughout the eighteenth century was subsistence diversity and sustainability based on adaptability. Arriving in their new homeland in the trans-Mississippi West, both groups of Osages converted to hunting on horses left by Spanish colonists and used that new “technology” to harvest unprecedented quantities of mammals throughout the prairie-plains. But unlike the Sioux and other nomadic western tribes, the Osages were not “roaming hunters.” They retained their eastern woodland tradition of living in large bark-and-reed longhouses in sedentary villages surrounded by flourishing riverside fields. Their well-defended permanent towns survived for decades, preserving a diversified economy that balanced vegetable farming and meat hunting as complementary sources of food. Females cultivated maize, beans, squash, and pumpkins in family plots and harvested 25-60 bushels of corn per acre. In a good year, Osage farming accounted for 75 percent of dietary needs.¹⁸ When droughts, floods, and insect infestations reduced vegetable supplies, hunting and the foraging of ample roots, nuts, berries, and water lilies prevented famine. Small game, such as turkeys, raccoons, rabbits, waterfowl, opossums, and squirrels, supplemented vegetables throughout the year, while annual mass hunts of large hoofed mammals provided huge amounts of meat, bear oil, and buffalo tongues, as well as hides for blankets, clothing, and wall coverings.¹⁹ Hunting also provided Osage men with “war practice” and upward social mobility that rewarded generosity in supplying meat to communal feasts.²⁰

The physical features of Osage villages reflected the belief in a split universe— with human life originating in “Father Sky” before descending to land and water areas of

“Mother Earth.”²¹ In the Osage creation story, when the “People of the Sky” arrived on earth, they accepted “savage” beings already there—providing a model for integrating other peoples while allowing them to retain their distinctive identities. That paradigm of adaptation permitted Osages to adopt different lifestyles during changing times.²² Both the Big and Little Osages had two “chiefs,” one from the *Honga* (Earth) moiety, having authority in wartime, and a peace chief from the *Tzi-shu* (Sky) moiety, who conducted diplomacy.²³ The Osages interpreted the human life cycle of birth, maturity, old age, and death in the daily movement of the Sun across the sky, from dawn in the east to dusk in the west, and they structured their habitations to reflect that. Every village had a central east-west pathway that divided the “Sky People” and the “Last to Come People” on the north side from the “Land People,” “Water People,” and “Isolated Earth People” on the south side. The lodges of the *Honga* and *Tzi-shu* chiefs faced each other on that pathway, and each of them had two entrances, one facing east and the other west. In the middle of each chief’s lodge was a fire representing the Sun and its life-giving powers.²⁴

While it is impossible for outsiders to fully grasp the deep and nuanced meanings of Osage spirituality, anthropologist Alice Marriott described their beliefs as a “well organized religion.”²⁵ The Osages saw themselves as a part of a complex cosmos created by a supreme, omnipresent “life force,” called *Wah-kon-tah*. That ubiquitous great power had both monotheistic and polytheistic, tangible and intangible, characteristics that inspired confidence, as well as fear.²⁶ The presence of *Wah-kon-tah* was manifested throughout the natural world,²⁷ so Osages understood the deity by astute observations of their environment²⁸—confirming their role as stewards of the Earth who lived in a land imbued with a special spiritual identity.²⁹ In the cohesively-ordered world that *Wah-kon-*

tah governed, “nothing moved backwards,”³⁰ which inspired the Osages to model their social and political institutions on the prospect of future changes and challenges.³¹ Guided by the perceived “rationality” of *Wah-kon-tah*’s universe, the Osages were particularly concerned with sharing power among several socio-political entities.³² Such thoughtful deliberations produced the Osage system of dual, divided chieftains, who were themselves subordinate to the *Non-hon-zhing-ga* (“Council of Little Old Men”)—distinguished veteran warriors from each of the 24 clans who rendered the most serious (and rare) decision to mobilize all Osages for war.³³

Osage religion was loosely structured and adaptable.³⁴ Osages believed that when their traditional world was dramatically changed, they could rely on *evolving* beliefs, given the adaptability and fluidity of tribal spirituality.³⁵ Patriarchal clans, in which every Osage had a common ancestor, were the “primary source of knowledge.”³⁶ Each of the 24 clans had a unique relationship to a particular part of the supernatural world, and their holy men performed specific rituals with different sacred objects,³⁷ such as ceremonial tobacco pipes associated with *Wah-kon-tah*.³⁸ Every clan had a unique name, symbol, and identity, with its own origin story, assigned ceremonial duties, designated space in national assemblies, and the obligation to preserve religious knowledge. Clan members had special body markings, such as tattoos or paint on face and/or torso.³⁹ Clan loyalty was so paramount that disputes were sometimes resolved by employing calumet (“peace pipe”) ceremonies, which were usually reserved for foreign diplomacy.⁴⁰

To maintain *Wah-kon-tah*’s “good will,”⁴¹ the Osages practiced “continuous” rituals of various kinds.⁴² Some were private and specific, while others were quite public as a part of tribal ceremonies that promoted social cohesiveness.⁴³ Many rituals were

performed at prescribed times on a cyclical basis, while others were necessitated only by extraordinary circumstances.⁴⁴ The most significant rituals were conducted by senior priests in secret ceremonies within a sacred “House of Mystery.”⁴⁵ Interpreting rituals individually, some Osages understood them to be literal, while others viewed such ceremonies as symbolic.⁴⁶ Rituals allowed the pre-literate Osages to preserve and transmit life lessons to future generations.⁴⁷

Each stage of an Osage’s life was marked by a ritual. When a child was born, a holy man greeted the infant with prayers and permitted nursing to begin by touching the mother’s nipple and placing that finger in the baby’s mouth. Similar rituals were conducted the first time a child drank water and ate solid food.⁴⁸ Ceremonial corn planting was an integral part of the child-naming ritual.⁴⁹ Painted with red and blue lines on their faces, women planters sang:

Footprints I make! Lo, I come to the sacred act...
Footprints I make! Lo, the tender stalk breaks the soil....
Footprints I make! Lo, the plant has blossomed...
Footprints I make! Lo, the ears branch from the stalk.
Footprints I make! Lo, I pluck the ears.
Footprints I make! Lo, there is joy in my house.
Footprints I make! Lo, the day of fulfillment.⁵⁰

Great Bundle rituals were designed to assure fertility and long life, while Medicine Bundle rituals focused on healing and health; both required the use of sacred pipes to receive the blessings of *Wah-kon-tah*.⁵¹ The Mourning Ritual was conducted for Osages killed by enemy warriors. Family members obtained the fresh scalp of a stranger; hosted a village dance and deer feast, where they related war stories; placed part of the scalp in a grave and attached the other part to the stem of a pipe.⁵² After that was done, the death was deemed to have been avenged.⁵³

“They sleep among dangers; but their senses . . . warn them in time. . . . If you disregard the extraordinary features of their customs, you will find the [Osages] . . . are great philosophers, who know how to control their needs and their most violent emotions.”⁵⁴

Chapter 2

Encountering White Worlds

Soon after the Jesuit priest, Jacques Marquette, first documented them on a European map in 1673, the adaptable Osages transformed themselves into successful, large-scale commercial hunters when French Canadian fur traders began visiting Missouri. As one of the earliest tribes on the prairie-plains to acquire both horses and guns, the Osages profited from a growing trade in meat and hides with European settlers between Spanish Santa Fe and French Illinois in the early decades of the eighteenth century. That booming business required “commuting” hunters to pursue distant herds for many months each year and to take additional wives. Since women were the experts in manufacturing profitable brain-tanned deer leather for export, polygamy enabled the Osages to increase the volume and value of their fur harvests. Polygamy also ensured stable extended families as warfare with rival Indians increased in frequency, intensity, and lethality as the eighteenth century progressed.⁵⁵ Those lifestyle changes brought the Osages a bounty in imported European products of metal, glass, and cloth—especially flintlock muskets. Mobile, gun-wielding warriors expanded and protected their productive hunting grounds, while keeping European weapons out of the hands of tribal rivals. Osage hegemony was depicted on eighteenth century European maps as a huge circular homeland without any nearby native neighbors.⁵⁶

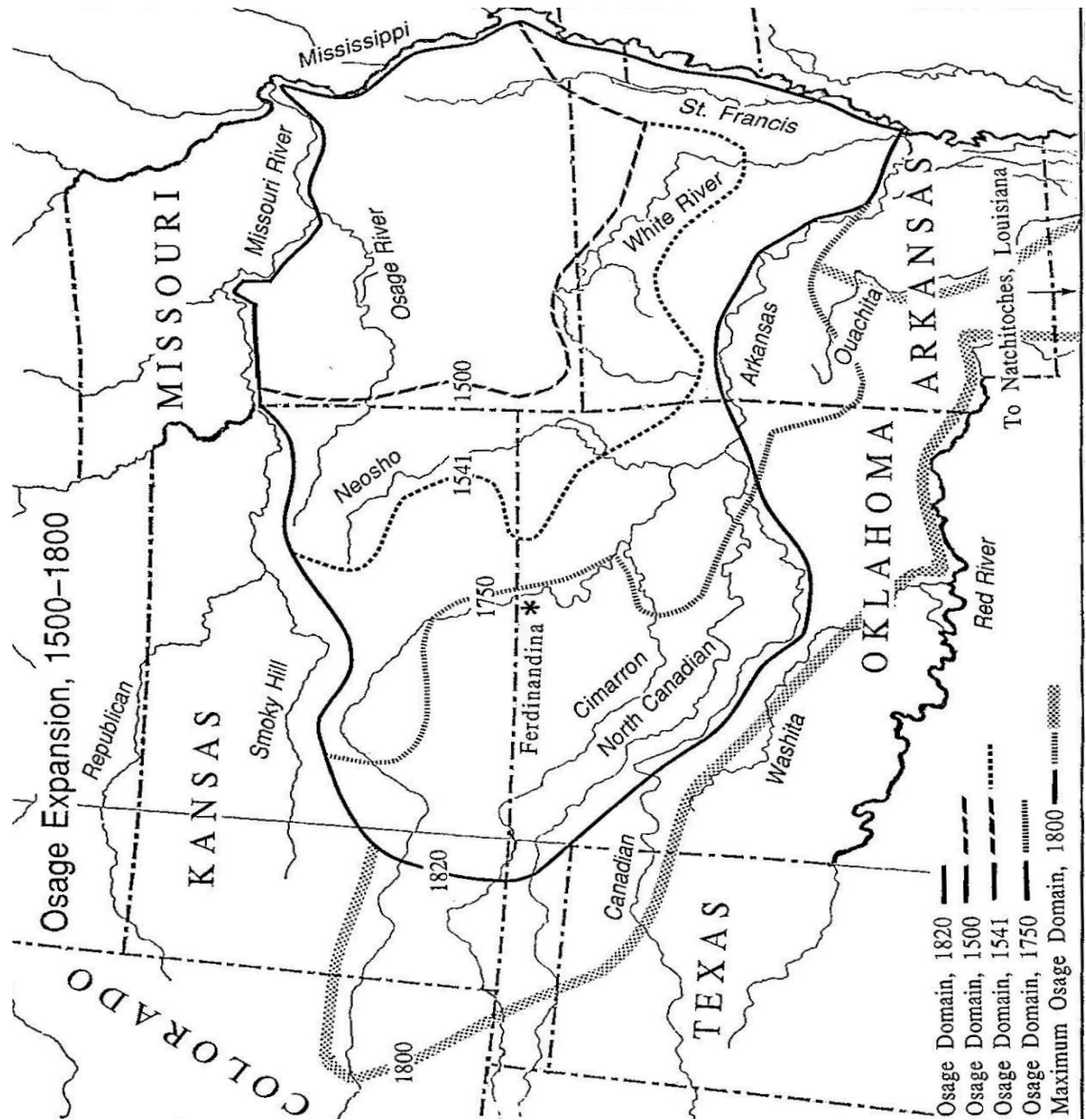


Figure 2: Osage Expansion, 1500-1800. From Louis Burns, *A History of the Osage People* (2004), p. 30.

The Osages also came into regular contact with French Catholics in the emerging multicultural settlements in the American Bottom on the east bank of the Mississippi River. The Jesuit “Black Robes”⁵⁷ had succeeded in converting large numbers of Kaskaskia Illini in the late seventeenth century, and in 1700, Father Gabriel Marest

started a mission for them near the mouth of the Des Peres River, south of present-day St. Louis, Missouri. When that community of Catholic Indians relocated to the Illinois town of Kaskaskia in 1703, Seminary priests from Quebec had already established the farming, trading, and missionary town of Cahokia, Illinois.⁵⁸ Osage fur and horse traders would have encountered Catholic priests and converted Algonquians at both settlements. Although there is no evidence that those missionaries produced any Osage converts, frequent visits at least exposed the Osages to French culture and Catholic rituals everywhere in the eighteenth-century “Creole Corridor.”⁵⁹ The Osages also traded regularly at the French Fort d’Orleans operated by Véniard Etienne, Sieur de Bourgmont, along the Missouri River. In 1723, an Osage chief named Boganinhin joined Bourgmont and other area Indian leaders on a diplomatic trip to France. At the Palace of Fontainebleau, Boganinhin allegedly asked King Louis XV-- *Onontio* (the French Father of the Indians)--not to abandon his Indian children and to “give us White Collars [priests], Chiefs of Prayer, to instruct us.”⁶⁰ While the king did not send men of the cloth to convert the Osages, legions of French fur traders—known as “cloth men”—interacted with that native nation for many decades to come.⁶¹

As historian Kathleen DuVal noted, “relative power often determines whose side of justice prevails,” and throughout most of eighteenth-century French Louisiana, *Osage* “justice prevailed.”⁶² In 1749, a Big Osage warrior killed two French *voyageurs*, but the governor of Louisiana in New Orleans told the Osages “that we will forget the past, and I would very much like to renew our friendship.” Since he did not wish to alienate them for “trifling reasons” that included murder, the Osages realized that fur profits were the

source of their hegemony in the extensive “native ground” that included the present states of Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma.⁶³

When the French Pyrenees aristocrat, Pierre Laclede, and his “stepson,” Auguste Chouteau, founded St. Louis in February 1764, the Big Osages became the essential commercial partners, military allies, and frequent visitors of that prosperous fur trading town—transforming it into a significant, peaceful “capital” of multitribal Indian diplomacy.⁶⁴ The French never had a large enough population to coerce the Osages into compliance, and St. Louisans rarely wanted to, since cordial relations and expensive gifts were essential to maintaining the annual profits from Osage furs. After Laclede’s untimely death in 1778, Auguste Chouteau administered the family business from St. Louis while his younger half-brother, Jean Pierre Chouteau, spent several years living with the Big Osages, learning their customs and language, and fathering several *metis* children.⁶⁵ In the late eighteenth century, Osage chiefs praised Pierre for his generous gifts and assistance in negotiating with government officials: “since a long time, [you have] fed our wives and children, and . . . have always assisted us with . . . advice.”⁶⁶

In the most productive and longest lasting family alliance with any native nation as powerful as the Osages, Laclede and his descendants adopted their tribal calendar and conducted trade on their terms, while the Osages modified their subsistence cycle only slightly. The Osage year, which began in April, featured these activities:

Spring {Dhegihan: *Be in* } Season of Sunrise/Dawn = Human Birth

April-May: planting fields; European traders arrive to purchase and transport furs to St. Louis and re-supply the Osages with necessities for their upcoming hunts.

Summer {*Do-gé*} Season of the High Midday Sun = Human Adulthood

Late June-Early August: Summer Plains Bison Hunt; Maize harvest in late August

Autumn { *Ton* } Season of the Lower Sun = Human Old Age

September-November: Fall Hunts for Deer, Bison

Winter { *Bá-the* } Season of Sunset/Night = Human Death

December-January: Osages in village before dispersing into family camps for hunting small game in February-March. Return to large villages in April.⁶⁷

The Chouteaus had traditional ties to the Catholic Church and, through them, the Osages became even more closely acquainted with the priests and practices of that religion.⁶⁸ Mutually-beneficial commerce over decades intertwined Osage Indians and French colonists in complex, multiethnic relationships of sex, marriage, friendship, kinship, and varying cultural loyalties. Sharon Person's recent research found that at least fifty Osages, including many *metis* with French fathers and/or trading partners, were baptized in Catholic ceremonies at St. Louis between 1766 and 1821. Those baptisms recognized all types of relationships (individual servants, business partners, mixed-race marriages, and *metis* children), but in every case, white "godparents" publicly proclaimed their spiritual affiliation with the Osages.⁶⁹

As a central sacrament of Catholicism, baptism in St. Louis had a secular, commercial function—creating extended, often merely fictive "families" of fur trade allies that linked European merchants with native or *metis* traders, voyageurs, hunters, and translators. True Christian conversion was probably incidental and rare in such baptisms, but Indians became aware of the powerful implications of that religious rite for whites with the capacity to favor "Catholic" Osage business partners. *Metis* may have sought baptism to enhance their status among Europeans when tribal support was compromised by "white blood," but given the generally positive Osage attitudes toward

the French, baptized *metis* became key cultural intermediaries who forged a spiritual pathway for later, more authentic, converts.⁷⁰

There were a number of reasons why the Osages responded positively to Catholics, even though the numbers of true converts remained small before 1800. Priests had entered the Osage empire very early, and, like French fur traders, they ingratiated themselves by presenting gifts to the Indians—ranging from cakes and crucifixes to medals and marbles. In addition, single, celibate Jesuits were willing and able to travel with the Osages and respected their need to migrate for mass hunting.⁷¹ Moreover, the ritualistic mysticism of Catholic worship—with its decorative icons, special vestments, and incense that resembled the sacred smoke of native calumets—had parallels with Osage ceremonies associated with *Wah-kon-tah*.⁷²

In 1762, France ceded western Louisiana to Spain in the secret Treaty of Fontainebleau. Despite the change in Bourbon administrations, the Osages maintained their regional hegemony. However, there were differences in how Spanish and French officials treated them. French St. Louisans, who never feared attacks by the Osages, continued to pursue policies of appeasement and allowed their powerful allies to raid other European settlements. But by the 1790s, royal officials of the Spanish Empire sought to end Osage depredations by military means. The Spanish commandant of St. Louis was convinced that white settlers would soon be numerous enough to provide “a strong hand to punish this tribe and any others which transgresses order.”⁷³ The Governor-General of Louisiana, François Luis Hector, Baron de Carondelet, planned to unleash Quapaw, Caddo, Chickasaw, and Choctaw warriors, along with Spanish soldiers,

in a genocidal war to “finish the Osage once and for all,” since they were “disturbing the prosperity of all the nations.”⁷⁴

In reality, the Spanish were unable to “humiliate and destroy those barbarians,”⁷⁵ since they lacked money and men to survive a war with some two thousand Big Osage warriors. Spain had fewer than one thousand troops in all of Louisiana (only about two dozen in St. Louis), and none of the Osages’ tribal enemies would attack without European assistance in the form of gifts, muskets, ammunition, and wages.⁷⁶ Those harsh realities—plus the guaranteed loss of lucrative fur revenues—convinced Baron Carondelet to let the Chouteau brothers build a private trading settlement (Fort Carondelet) near the Big Osage capital and to provide their Indian kin with expensive European imports from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes to limit future property raids on colonists.⁷⁷

Spanish commandants now joined French capitalists in catering to the Osages—not the other way around. The integrated economies of St. Louis and the Big Osages thrived during the 1790s, when the Chouteaus’ eight-year monopoly on the vast variety of furs collected at Fort Carondelet allowed them to make substantial profits by trading with British merchants in Montreal and Michilimackinac.⁷⁸ While St. Louisans developed a sophisticated consumer society that rivaled the affluence of seaport cities along the Atlantic coast, the loyal Big Osages had converted to capitalism—not Christianity—and seemed to be in control of their own destiny in a secure and prosperous homeland of one hundred thousand square miles.⁷⁹

But their hegemony over that impressive empire, supported by commerce and combat, began to unravel in the late 1790s. Chiefs Gratomohse (“Claremore” or

Clermont), Tallee, and others broke with the Big Osages under Chief Pawhuska over the Chouteaus' meddling into tribal leadership and established hostile settlements in present-day northeastern Oklahoma. That contentious secession of about one-third of the Missouri Osages produced the "Arkansas Osages," who were more culturally conservative and hostile to whites than the acculturated Big and Little Osage "progressives" who had long traded with French St. Louis. In addition, each branch of the Osages also included significant "mixed-blood" communities with multicultural kinship ties to white merchants, and those *métis* often competed with "full bloods" for power and prestige.⁸⁰ Internal factionalism and tribal splintering allowed ambitious members of the large Osage population to grasp new opportunities for wealth and influence outside of established communities, traditional social structures, and old leadership.⁸¹ The Arkansas diaspora exposed long-smoldering rivalries and exacerbated traditional divisions and diversity to a dangerous new level.

The disunity that severely damaged the dominance of Missouri's Big Osages could not have come at a worse time in their history. A powerful and land-greedy American "empire of liberty" had arisen on the east bank of the Mississippi since the Revolutionary War, and it would quickly and dramatically end Osage hegemony in the early nineteenth century. In 1800, a weak Spain returned the Louisiana Territory to a powerful France under Napoleon. Three years later, President Thomas Jefferson doubled the size of the United States when he purchased that territory from the French emperor. The Louisiana Purchase made the United States the first nation to coordinate simultaneous, interconnected policies for both sides of the Mississippi River, and Americans were determined to diminish Osage influence in *their* West. Some two

thousand Americans poured into Missouri every year between 1804 and 1810, raising the white population to 20,845 in that latter year.⁸²

When American military officials arrived at St. Louis in early 1804, President Jefferson's new "Sovereigns of the Country" eliminated Osage hegemony forever. The president still regarded the Osages as "the great nation south of the Missouri," just as "the Sioux are great North of that river," and he admitted that U.S. military forces in the West were "miserably weak" compared to those native warriors.⁸³ Instead of combat, Jefferson used duplicity to eliminate any Osage threat by employing intercultural commerce as a "form of war." Trading tribes that had long trusted the French and Spanish would now become indebted to Americans merchants; have to pay their debts by selling off their traditional territories; and then be forced to adopt farming in order to survive on far less land.⁸⁴ Not even the Osages' lucrative fur trade—which enjoyed one of its most profitable seasons in 1803—could preserve their homeland.⁸⁵ The Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1804-6 had discovered the first premium beaver pelts in U.S. territory, which made the less-desirable deerskin trade of the Osages expendable.⁸⁶ Osage territory was now more valuable than their trade.

The unprecedented invasion of white farmers brought epidemics of European diseases that killed off many Osages. With fewer warriors, Osages in both Missouri and Arkansas became more vulnerable to increasing raids from well-armed Indian enemies, long jealous of their prosperity and preferential treatment by the French and Spanish. In 1806, Potawatomes from Lake Michigan raided a Little Osage village while the men were away hunting—butchering 34 women and children and taking sixty captives. While it was an honored Osage custom to take immediate revenge, President Jefferson ordered

them not to retaliate for that massacre. In a surprising display of solicitous obedience that revealed their diminished power, the Osages did not go to war. It was U.S. Army Captain Zebulon Pike who secured the release of the prisoners and returned them to the Little Osages. Pike was amazed that the traditionally-bellicose Osages had not avenged those atrocities—referring to them as a subservient “nation of Quakers.”⁸⁷

By demonstrating too much deference to the U.S. government in trying to befriend Americans, overly cooperative Missouri Osage leaders were victimized by an expansionistic nation far more punitive and aggressive than the French and Spanish. Threatened by war with Americans and hostile tribes if they refused, 75 Big and Little Osage chiefs were coerced into signing a treaty with William Clark on September 12, 1808, which dispossessed them of fifty thousand square miles for 1/6th of a cent per acre and required them to relocate to the U.S. fur factory at Fort Osage under the watchful eyes of an army garrison. The Arkansas Osages were incensed, rejecting that treaty and denouncing the signers as illegitimate traitors. Those southern Osages signed a second treaty on September 9, 1809, at St. Louis, which reaffirmed the federal government’s territorial transfer of lands that did not directly impact them. Both Clark and the U.S. Senate regarded those twin treaties as a naked land grab, which forever tainted the old, compliant Big Osage Chief Pawhuska.⁸⁸

The Missouri Osages made Fort Osage one of the most profitable fur factories until it closed in 1822, under pressure from the Chouteau family and John Jacob Astor’s American Fur Company. Gone was federal protection from violence and the fair, subsidized prices paid for Osage furs. Now, unlicensed, predatory traders charged inflated prices and distributed alcohol to Indians in violation of U.S. laws. While the

Osages had been some of the “soberest” Indians in the colonial period, they increasingly succumbed to “fire water” in the nineteenth century.⁸⁹ George Sibley, who had been the U.S. fur factor at Fort Osage, denounced the “jealousies and Suspicions excited among these Indians by a few interested and unprincipled Traders.”⁹⁰ The artist George Catlin wrote that “it is my decided opinion, that so long as the fur traders and trappers are permitted to reside among the Indians, all the efforts of the government to better their condition will be fruitless. . . . [I]t is a curious and melancholy fact, that while the general government is using every means and expense to promote the advancement of those aboriginal people, it is at the same time suffering the traders to oppose and deviate [from] the very objects of its intentions.”⁹¹

With federal policies failing to ensure fair treatment of Indians, the Osages were forced to sign away another fifty thousand square miles in the Second Treaty of St. Louis in 1825. Negotiated at William Clark’s country home along Natural Bridge Road, that treaty completed the dispossession of the Osages’ once-huge homeland and ultimately thrust those last indigenous Indians in Missouri out of the state they were most responsible for creating.⁹² General William Henry Harrison, the famous Indian fighter and future U.S. president, gave full support to Indian removal in the national interest: “Is one of the fairest portions of the globe to remain . . . the haunt of a few wretched savages, when it seems destined by the Creator to support a large population and to be the seat of civilization?”⁹³

The Osages’ strategic location, formerly a key factor in maintaining their hegemony, had become a liability—a resource-rich territory targeted by militant white and Indian invaders.⁹⁴ Jefferson’s plans to create an “Indian preserve” beyond the

Mississippi for eastern tribes that had been defeated, dispossessed, and displaced by Americans was a reality by 1810, as a thousand Cherokees already occupied Osage lands in what is now Oklahoma.⁹⁵ In subsequent decades, many thousands of newly-dispossessed southeastern Indians would arrive via multiple “Trails of Tears” to overwhelm the once-dominant Osages, taking their lands, attacking their villages, killing their game, and infecting their people with lethal diseases.⁹⁶ By the late 1820s, the State of Missouri was an American paradise of fertile, never-plowed lands long nurtured by the Big Osages, who were now relocated to “Indian Territory,” then in eastern Kansas, joining other dispossessed native nations from as far away as New York State.⁹⁷

The Arkansas Osages under Chief Claremore resisted dispossession and relocation to Kansas, but they paid a terrible price for independence borne of disunity. U. S. officials did little to prevent the particularly vicious Osage-Cherokee warfare that soon erupted and lasted for several atrocity-ridden years. In the 1817 Battle of Claremore’s Mound, for instance, some six hundred Cherokee warriors massacred 83 Osages (almost all women and children) and captured sixty children before burning their village.⁹⁸

“We cannot too highly prize the influence of Christianity in promoting true civilization. We contend that a true Civilization cannot exist apart from Christianity.”⁹⁹

Chapter 3

American Missionaries Confront the Osages

The Protestant missionaries who arrived among the Osages in the early 1820s entered a war zone where bloody body parts of Indian children littered the land. Knowing few details about the lethal rivalries between Osages and Cherokees, those Christians mistakenly concluded that “this land of pagan darkness” was the fault of Osage “savagery,” since “at no time have the Osages been free from war, or the alarm of war, for more than half a year.”¹⁰⁰ Those Connecticut Protestants were perhaps just as ignorant about not being the first Christians to arrive in Osage Country. In fact, many Osages probably knew more about Catholic religious rituals on the frontier than those Protestants did, and the 1820s produced more Osage *Catholic* conversions than in the former century.

Although the Osages had a fulfilling traditional religion, their spirituality was neither exclusive nor uncompromising. Like many Native Americans, the Osages were willing to adopt selective, alien religious rituals—incorporating only a few aspects of Christianity without abandoning the core beliefs of their ancestors. Many Osages accepted Catholic baptism, as well as Catholic prayers for the dead, thinking that Christian beliefs might buttress indigenous rituals in assuring successful hunts, victorious battles, and fulfilling personal relationships.¹⁰¹ Familiarity with, if not a consistent practice of, Catholic beliefs may have enhanced social status for some Osages, much like

a knowledge of European languages. The Missouri Jesuit, John Ponziglione, observed that some Osage *metis* were similar to lower class “French who can treat the Priest very nicely, and profess to be . . . Catholics,” but really know “nothing of our Holy Religion.”¹⁰²

The Osages’ nostalgic feelings for their French “fathers”—both religious and secular, symbolic and literal—coupled with Catholic sensitivities to native traditions, had developed over many decades and created a daunting challenge for late-arriving Protestant missionaries. Those New England Christians wished to “reform” the Osages and make them “civilized” and “respectable” enough to be accepted by American society.¹⁰³ But many Osage “businessmen,” Osage women who married white traders, and their *metis* children had long ago achieved enough respectability to be accepted by the French residents and Spanish governors of St. Louis.¹⁰⁴

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Protestant missionary societies in northeastern U.S. cities became active, even fanatical, about saving souls here and abroad. Calvinistic denominations heralded their New England heritage, which had ravaged seventeenth-century native populations on the fraudulent claim that Indians had asked the Puritans to “Come Over and Help Us.” Over two centuries, little had changed, for Protestant Christians in the 1800s still believed that “savages” had to be “civilized” *culturally* before being converted spiritually. The energetic evangelical surges in the first and second “Great Awakenings” between the 1730s and 1830s, coupled with the “providential” success of the American Revolution and national survival in the War of 1812, created new mission fields around the world where ethnocentric spiritual colonization could flourish. There was no time to spare, for the committed Christians

who believed that the Second Coming of Jesus was imminent had to prepare all people on the planet by spreading the Gospel.¹⁰⁵

American religious prejudices about Christianity being the only “true” faith converged with nationalistic zeal that the United States was the zenith of “civilized” countries.¹⁰⁶ Inspired U.S. Christians responded enthusiastically with abundant donations for worldwide missions. Between 1787 and 1820, eleven American missionary societies were established to convert “uncivilized” peoples across the globe. The American Board of Commission for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was one such organization designed to spread the good news of old Judeo-Christian teachings and more recent U.S. patriotic propaganda.¹⁰⁷ Large missionary societies, such as the ABCFM, were led by boards made up of clergy, businessmen, and politicians. They were responsible for establishing agendas; raising funds; recruiting and training missionaries;¹⁰⁸ paying for mission buildings, supplies, and salaries; publicizing activities in their own publications;¹⁰⁹ and lobbying the U.S. government for administrative and financial support.¹¹⁰

In annual reports and frequent sermons, clergymen in the ABCFM, the American Home Missionary Society, various Bible clubs, and innumerable churches, stressed the need for “The Universal Extension of Messiah’s Kingdom.” That 1822 sermon by the aptly-named Alexander Proudfit reflected the deep cultural and racial prejudices of Protestants who were determined to transform “the obstinate and long infatuated Jew, the ruthless Siberian, the shivering Icelander, the sullen Hindoo, the sottish Hottentot, etc.” into “fellow [*Protestant*] worshipers.”¹¹¹ While the most publicized missionary activity was focused on “heathen nations . . . buried in darkness and delusion” in distant foreign lands, the lax morals and religious ignorance of non-Protestant Americans, ranging from

“barbarism” to “Romanism,” mobilized patriotic preachers and prosperous philanthropists to make the conversion of fellow citizens a national priority.

In an 1826 sermon delivered in Middletown, Connecticut, Edward Griffin argued that the Gospel was not only necessary for salvation but equally so “for civilization”—designed to reform the United States, as well as to elevate the rest of the world.¹¹² Ironically, before New England Protestant missionaries took on the challenge of converting Indians, they first addressed the “uncouth” white settlers in the Western Reserve (Ohio)—hoping to transform that “primitive frontier” into a “civilized,” progressive, and holy “New Connecticut” on the expansionistic model of seventeenth-century Puritan towns.¹¹³

Partly due to missionaries’ perceived conversion successes among the dark-skinned “heathens” and “infidels” in India, China, and Africa, Bible societies expanded their scope in supporting a new ambitious religious outreach to American Indians.¹¹⁴ From 1800 to 1860, there were more Protestant missionaries working with Native Americans than in any other period of United States history.¹¹⁵ Christian congregations and government officials agreed that something needed to be done to curtail Indian violence that threatened westward expansion and to save innocent Indians from extinction.¹¹⁶ Either way, Native Americans had to change both culturally and spiritually—adopting the white man’s path or “perish”—as a Protestant missionary among the Sioux phrased it in 1846.¹¹⁷

Native nations that were continuing to endure military defeats, territorial dispossessions, forced migrations, pandemics, and fraudulent treaties, now faced either the demise of their populations or the annihilation of their traditional cultures, as

Protestant policies targeted them with new assaults. In her book, *Moral Geography: Maps, Missionaries, and the American Frontier*, historian Amy DeRogatis observed that “Nineteenth-century . . . Americans typically vilified or idealized Native inhabitants in order to distance themselves from Natives on the genealogical chart.” That process “developed into a ‘taming’ of Natives through literary portraits showing them as innocents or as noble savages.”¹¹⁸

In 1817, the United Foreign Missionary Society sponsored Congregational, Dutch Reform, and Presbyterian missionaries in launching a new “crusade” to make Indians “happy in this world and . . . in the world to come.”¹¹⁹ Two centuries after moralistic Puritans arrived in America to spread the Gospel to “all nations,” their Protestant heirs, mostly from Connecticut, entered another “wilderness,” determined once again to save the souls of “heathen savages.”¹²⁰ The main difference in the nineteenth century was that a strong national government was equally determined to combat Indian “savagery” on expanding frontiers in pursuit of “progress” that would later be called “Manifest Destiny.”¹²¹

In 1819, the U.S. Congress passed the “Indian Civilization Act,” which established a “civilization fund” of \$10,000 per year to help educate and elevate Native Americans. The Congressional Committee on Indian Affairs stated that, by giving indigenous “children the primer and the hoe, . . . they will . . . in time take hold of the plow; and their minds become enlightened and expand. . . . [T]he Bible will be their book, and they will grow up in habits of morality and industry, leave the chase to those of mindless cultures, and become useful members of society.”¹²² Although U.S. officials often downplayed the religious conversion of Native Americans as a government goal,

missionaries could fulfill the political objectives of “civilizing the wild Indians and bringing peace among the tribes” by close personal contacts. Protestant pastors were specially equipped to instill the Christian concept of guilt, convincing Indians that it was sinful to murder settlers, steal horses, take multiple wives, and war with other tribes.¹²³ Federal officials and missionary societies agreed on the goal to transform American Indians into Indian Americans, but by accepting funds from a secular government,¹²⁴ religious field-workers faced pressures from Washington bureaucrats, who often decided on whether to renew financial support based on the number of Indian converts “produced.”¹²⁵

On May 3, 1820, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun announced to the Osages that Protestant missionaries would soon arrive with “benevolent intentions” for “the promotion of your welfare and happiness.”¹²⁶ The United Foreign Missionary Society of New York (UFMS), which sponsored the Osage missions, had the “confidence of the government” and received federal “financial aid and moral cooperation.” Calhoun informed William Clark, Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the West, that those missionaries had the “benevolent purpose of educating [Osage] children and introducing among them the acts of civilized life. The object of the society is approved by the president” and would continue to receive government funding as long as it produced “the best results.”¹²⁷ In addition, the head of the Indian Office in Washington, Thomas L. McKenney, directed all U.S. Indian agents in the present states of Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma to provide support for the “kind” Osage missionaries, because they pursued the “benevolent work” of “civilization and Christianity.”¹²⁸

Even before Calhoun's announcement, two UFMS ministers, Job Vinall and Epaphras Chapman, were guided to the Osage prairies near Fort Smith by Indian Agent Reuben Lewis, younger brother of the explorer, Meriwether Lewis. Chapman knew McKenney personally and had the confidence of President James Monroe as a Christian leader committed to "the amelioration of human misery." He and Vinall, who would soon die of "bilious fever," met with southern Osage leaders, including Chief Claremore to see if they wanted to have their own Protestant mission.¹²⁹ Claremore accepted that proposal enthusiastically and expressed gratitude to the "great Father at Washington for sending his white children to instruct them."¹³⁰ Guided by Nathaniel Pryor, a member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition long associated with the Osages, Chapman found an ideal site for the "Union Mission"--the first Protestant religious settlement among the Osages.¹³¹

Described as a "beautiful, fertile and healthy" site with an "excellent spring" and "rich soil,"¹³² the Union Mission was located on the west bank of the Neosho River, about twenty-five miles from the two Osage towns led by Chief Claremore and Chief Tallee.¹³³ The name "Union" referred to the three denominations (Congregational, Dutch Reform, and Presbyterian) of New England and New York Protestants that operated the mission. Superintendent Chapman, a native of East Haddam, Connecticut, along with blacksmith Alex Woodruff from Newark, New Jersey; Abraham Redfield, a farmer from Orange County, New York; and William Requa (1796-1886), a teacher and farmer from New York State, arrived at the site on November 15, 1820, and began constructing the mission buildings.¹³⁴

After an arduous, months-long journey over land and water from New York, the rest of the “missionary family” finally arrived in February 1821. They included Chapman’s wife, Hannah; Requa’s brother, George, also a New York farmer; the mission physician, Dr. Marcus Palmer, from Greenwich, Connecticut; farmer Stephen Fuller, also of East Haddam, Connecticut; farmer and stonecutter, John Milton, from Colchester, Connecticut; and six women school teachers: Eliza Cleaver (Litchfield, Connecticut), Susan Lines (Reading, Connecticut), Clarissa Johnson (Colchester, Connecticut), Mary Foster (New York), Dolly E. Holt (Danbury, Connecticut), and Phoebe Beach (Newburgh, New York). Chief among the new arrivals was the future Superintendent, the Reverend William Vaill (1783-1865), a Connecticut-born Yale graduate, who remained in Osage Country until 1834, when he went to work for the Home Missionary Service in Illinois.¹³⁵ He came with his wife, Asenath Selden, also from Connecticut, and their three children, aged three to ten (a fourth child was born at the mission).¹³⁶

The new arrivals had barely unpacked when Chief Tallee showed up to thank the “good white people” who came to “teach the Osages.”¹³⁷ Similarly, when the missionaries visited “principal chief” Claremore on March 7, he “expressed . . . satisfaction” with them and seemed willing to send his children to their school—if the Osages “do not go to war.”¹³⁸

As predictable as the polite greetings of southern Osage chiefs was the jealousy exposed among competing Indian leaders in a divided nation of diverse allegiances and objectives. The Big Osages of Missouri under Pawhuska III, who resented Claremore’s Arkansas band that had broken away and weakened the nation of his grandfather, requested their own mission so as not to lose prestige to the southern “rebels.” Sans Nerf,

a respected Big Osage warrior, traveled to Washington with Paul Chouteau and met with Thomas McKenney. Sans Nerf argued that White Hair's loyal and cooperative northern Osages were better "behaved" and more deserving than the Arkansas Osages, declaring that "our hands are white, their hands are bloody." McKenney promptly forwarded that message to the United Foreign Mission Society. Although those missionary "experts" had not anticipated the Big Osage response, they quickly organized and dispatched a second "mission family" to serve them.¹³⁹ Sans Nerf appreciated that decision and pledged to provide a building site wherever those new missionaries desired.¹⁴⁰

The new "Harmony Mission" that attempted to soothe the hurt feelings of the once-powerful and still proud Big Osages was, fittingly, twice as large as the Union Mission, housing 41 people. The old Chouteau allies of the Missouri Osages recommended that the new mission be placed near their trading post along the Marias des Cygnes River, near the present-day town of Trading Post, Kansas. Located fifteen miles from the Big Osage town led by Pawhuska III and a Little Osage town under Nezahmonee ("Walk in the Rain"),¹⁴¹ the new settlement was well provided with good soil, vast timber, and several potential mill sites.¹⁴²

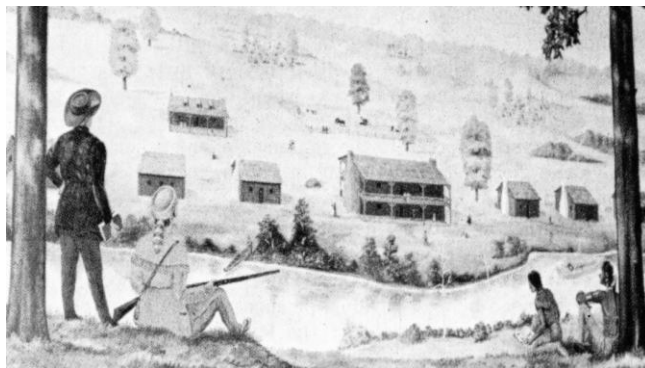


Figure 3: "Harmony Mission for the Osage Indians in Bates County, 1821." by William Knox, a lunette in the State Capitol. From Duane G. Meyer, *The Heritage of Missouri*, 3rd edition (St. Louis: River City Publishers Ltd., 1988), p. 139.

Staffing the Harmony Mission was the Reverend Nathaniel Dodge (1781-1848), who was the superintendent from 1821 to 1829 and also served at two other Osage mission sites before leaving the area in 1835. His wife, Sally, from Massachusetts, bore him eight children who survived to adulthood. Dodge died in Vernon County, Missouri, and was buried among the Little Osages.¹⁴³ Dodge had two assistant ministers—William Montgomery, helped by his wife, Jane, and Benton Pixley (1783-1835), a Massachusetts-born Congregational pastor, who left a congregation in Vermont to live among the Osages at Harmony and Neosho. He offended the Indians at both locations and was removed in 1829. Pixley and his wife, Lucia, produced six children, including the first white child born in the future State of Kansas.¹⁴⁴

Harmony's physician and surgeon was Dr. William Belcher, assisted by his wife, Emeline. "Farmers, mechanics, and teachers" included Daniel H. Austin, Samuel B. Bright, Otis Sprague, Amasa Jones, John Seely, and the recent widower, Samuel Newton, whose wife had died on the westward journey. The other five brought their wives, who served with six unmarried women--Charlotte Bright, Susan Comstock, Harriet Wooley, Mary Weller, Mary Etris, and Eliza Howell--as "teachers, housekeepers, and seamstresses." Harmony Mission was also home to sixteen children, with seven in the Dodge family and five in the Austin family.¹⁴⁵

As at Union, the Osages provided a warm welcome to the Harmony missionaries after their tragic trek from the East.¹⁴⁶ On, August 11, 1821, several northern Osage chiefs and seventy of their followers gathered along the Marias des Cygnes River to greet the Protestants "in a friendly manner." Since Pawhuska's band regarded the new Christian settlement as a diplomatic victory, they were "anxious to attend immediately to

the business of the establishment.” The Osages were well known for their diplomatic etiquette and politeness to strangers, but the initial candor of some tribesmen signaled the difficulties that the missionaries would encounter. The day after the grand reception, the famous Little Osage warrior, Big Soldier, told the Christians that he thought they “had bad hearts,” and he would need “about three years” to determine whether they “were good men.”¹⁴⁷

Big Soldier’s skepticism about missionary motives was valid, and the Protestants at both locations were incapable of addressing such suspicions because they neither spoke nor understood the Osage language. They would be unable to “hold a talk” with the Indians they hoped to impress until they located an interpreter—which took more than a year! Not even speaking French, which many Osages knew, the missionaries stated the obvious: the native language was “very barren of terms suited to explain . . . the meaning of many things connected with the [Christian] mission.” Chapman and William Requa at the Harmony Mission were “appointed” to study the Osage language, but they were “crossed and disappointed” in making progress.¹⁴⁸ The Christians wasted many months searching for a “person of learning and religion” who would support “the interest of the mission.” The Harmony Mission finally found, and hired, the perfect person--William Sherley Williams, a North Carolinian and self-taught Baptist preacher in Missouri, who was considered “the best interpreter of the Osage language.”¹⁴⁹ Williams had married an Osage wife and fathered several *metis* children, who were given prime land grants in Clark’s 1825 treaty. An official U.S. government interpreter, Williams helped the missionaries explain “the Saviors love” to the Osages, “to exhort them to submission,” and to “teach their children the rudiments of learning.”¹⁵⁰

At the Union Mission, meaningful verbal communication was delayed even longer. Eventually, four Protestants learned the Osage language, but by 1833, only two were left. The last and most accomplished Osage linguists among those resident Americans were William Requa and William Montgomery. In 1833, they produced the first book in the Osage language using the Roman alphabet: *Wabashe Wageressa Pahogreh Tse (The Osage First Book)*. Filled with political propaganda with a Protestant slant, the *First Book* presented American cultural prejudices as proven principles: agriculture was superior to hunting; men, not women, should be plow-farmers; land should be divided into units of private property; and married couples should live separately in log cabins equipped with fireplaces.¹⁵¹ Despite Requa's dedication to Osage education, having served in a variety of roles at several sites until 1834,¹⁵² his book took too long to complete and was issued far too late to make a difference in conversions.

The Protestants who operated the Union and Harmony missions were carefully chosen for their "piety,"¹⁵³ but they were not among the missionary elites in either background or education,¹⁵⁴ who received the prized postings in the exotic locales of Africa, India, and China.¹⁵⁵ Their agenda in teaching and preaching among the Osages was more predictable and traditional than progressive or innovative, and their personal passion for Christianity did not prove persuasive to illiterate Indians who found the Gospels incomprehensible when muttered in awkward Osage. Rejecting "mere baptism" long practiced by Catholic priests, the "superior" Calvinists¹⁵⁶ required a lengthy and laborious study of holy texts before the Osages realized their sinful ways and accepted Jesus Christ as the sole means to salvation.¹⁵⁷ Adult Indians would be taught in church,

while Osage children would receive thorough, rigorous, and somewhat more successful religious instruction in mission boarding schools. In addition, the many teachers and artisans in the mission settlements were there to impart the vocational skills of “civilization”—reading, farming, and other forms of “white” work—and instill a “Puritan work ethic” to “lazy” Indian males.¹⁵⁸

Ironically, it was the deep piety and uncompromising orthodoxy of the Protestants, so valued by the missionary societies they worked for, that prevented them from accommodating the puzzling and incompatible religion of the Osages. For Christians, belief in an immortal soul with a post-death destination in Heaven or Hell is the essence of their religion. It was the reason for rigid doctrines, holy texts, revered rituals, and authoritative teachings about the salvation offered by Jesus Christ. But the Osages did not even possess a universal or uniform belief in an afterlife. Two Big Osages from the same Missouri band, for example, expressed diametrically-opposed views about what happened to people when they died. Sans Nerf believed that when “a body was dead, that was the end,” whereas a tribal elder was convinced that after death, “different nations of people will go to different places.” Osages, he said, went to an “old town on the Missouri [River],” where “we shall have bodies,” enjoy “good hunting,” and “go to war as here.”¹⁵⁹

The missionaries quickly discovered that the “good news” of the Bible was baffling to the Osages, given the vast differences in the worldviews, daily habits, and spiritual beliefs of the two peoples. The Protestants worshipped a creator- and savior-god with human characteristics, while the Osages acknowledged a spiritual life force without form, as well as other spirits, found all around them.¹⁶⁰ The Judeo-Christian religion

taught Euro-Americans to dominate and subdue the natural world, while the Osages tried to live compatibly with everything in the environment so as not to offend *Wah-kon-tah*.¹⁶¹ Protestants grounded their understanding of the deity through “*sola scriptura*” and “*sola fide*” religious texts, while Indian cultures did not have such written documentation and remained suspicious of it.¹⁶² Upon hearing the story of Jonah and the whale, for instance, an old Osage man told a missionary that no one could believe such a tall tale, and he concluded that the Bible was filled with lies.¹⁶³ Native people who worshipped through songs, dances, and rituals possessed an “emotional [and] symbolic” spirituality that contrasted with the confusing academic sermons in rather sterile Protestant church services.¹⁶⁴

Perplexed and frightened by the “evil” beliefs of the Osages—an individualistic spirituality that defied uniformity--the Reverend Nathaniel Dodge at the Harmony Mission denounced their conceptions as “too vague to make any definite impressions on their minds, or to exert any influence on their conduct. . . . They are in general in the darkness on the point whether God has anything to do with the affairs of men; of course they have no notion of sin against God, and little or no consciousness of guilt.”¹⁶⁵ The missionaries had entered a strange and alien world of complex—and variable—Osage beliefs without a single, consistent orthodoxy that could be easily challenged. Osage ambivalence frustrated the Christians, who might make one step forward in reaching some Indians but two steps backward in being rejected by others. On successive days in December 1832, for instance, Harmony missionaries reported that,

On Wednesday we went to Bear’s town and spent the day in preaching the gospel to them. . . . [One young man] with tears in his eyes confessed the wickedness of his life and said he hoped he had now found a better way. . . . On Thursday we went to Wah-so-she’s town. . . .

We almost despaired of getting any [Osages] together; but at length a few came in, and we held a short exercise.¹⁶⁶

The Protestants were affronted by “inferior heathen savages” who remained proudly defensive about their cultural traditions. Feeling that the “superiority” of American civilization should have been *obvious* to the Osages, the missionaries became exasperated by “arrogant” Indians who lacked respectful gratitude for their sacrifices to “improve” native lives. When the Christians tried to make the Osages feel guilty about their “sins,” they alienated them, and the Indians avoided such nagging. The Osages remained convinced that there was “nothing wrong” with the spirituality that was integral to their ancient culture and present survival.¹⁶⁷

Most recent scholars have erred in assuming that the Osages “resisted” the missionaries in defense of a single, orthodox Osage “religion,” when, in fact, there was great diversity in the polytheistic practices within the three tribal divisions. Only one response would have reflected unified, traditional Osage resistance: *killing the missionaries*. By not slaughtering them, which warriors could have done at any time, the Osages denied the missionaries the “satisfaction” of holy martyrdom and sent a message that Christianity was irrelevant, unwanted, and not even worth the effort of raising a tomahawk to silence the insults of the Protestants. Non-aggressive, even polite, Osage responses to proselytizing reflected *apathetic and passive indifference* more than active resistance. The records reveal a lack of engagement by most Osages pro or con, and such indifference was hard for the ministers to overcome.

The desperation of the missionaries was revealed when they exaggerated the relevance of a single Osage custom. Some Protestants thought the Indians’ loud praying at the dawning of each day to express respect and longing for dead ancestors could be

adapted to Christian worship. The *Missionary Journal* found such native sincerity to be “a reproof to thousands who profess to worship God in spirit and in truth, [but] . . . are too indolent or too negligent to . . . pay their morning homage to Him whom they profess to love.”¹⁶⁸

Despite that scant and infrequent praise, the Protestants were never able to make Christianity relevant to, or helpful for, the frequent crises faced by the Osages. When Chief Tallee wanted to kill two Pawnees who had slain his daughter, the missionaries tried to explain that enemy Indians were also God’s children and that murder was evil. He answered, “*ako ako*,” which meant, “it is so,” but then he “smiled as he thought this doctrine would not do for Indians.”¹⁶⁹ Accepting the unconditional love and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the “white deity,” came with a high price—eternal punishments for the most cherished Osage traditions, now considered “sins,” including revenge killings. The constant wars that the Osages had long known made pacifism very dangerous, and they refused to be remorseful for slaughtering their many enemies before they could be slaughtered themselves. The unsettled period of multiple crises in the early nineteenth century was no time for Osages to alter their reliable, traditional religion in the face of potential catastrophe. As they had done for centuries, their warriors prepared for combat by smearing their faces with mud—a tangible symbol of the Earth—in seeking the assistance of *Wah-kon-tah* to escape death and to achieve victory.¹⁷⁰ The Osages could ill afford to lose confidence in their heritage of winning wars by switching to a god of peace worshipped by hypocritical American conquerors—their ultimate enemies.

What the Osages wanted from the Union and Harmony missionaries was help in practical matters related to earthly survival, not a religious revolution focused on the

afterlife. The Americans proved most valuable to the Osages in reading and writing English—translating treaties and government correspondence and composing letters. In addition, the missions became post offices, with Protestants delivering mail to the Osages. The missions also stored Osage possessions for safe-keeping when the Indians went on long hunts.¹⁷¹

Some of the most destitute Osages also used the missions as social services agencies. The missionaries provided clothes, medicine, food, and shelter to Indians in desperate circumstances. When game was scarce, even the proud, prominent leader, Sans Nerf, asked the missionaries for food, because the Osages could not survive on “roots and nuts”¹⁷² On July 4, 1822, a “poor” Osage man requested help so that “his family might have something to live upon.” The Christians sent him to the field “to hoe corn,” gave him a “hearty supper,” and even paid him for his work, but could not supply him with more food “on account of the scantiness of our stock.”¹⁷³ In October 1832, an Osage woman, suffering from a fever and incapable of nursing her infant, asked the Harmony missionaries to take the child, who “must remain here or die,” because she had been “cast away by her husband.”¹⁷⁴ The mission family accepted the child, but its fate was not recorded. On another occasion, the Christians supplied “an old gray garment” to a naked boy, who rejected the gift because it “was not blue”—the traditional color of trade blankets sold to the Osages.¹⁷⁵

Even warriors sought assistance from the missionaries. In May 1822, two “old” Osages arrived at Harmony and asked to borrow muskets for hunting, because their “children were starving.” Fearing that those weapons might be used to hunt enemies, the ministers refused and delivered a religious lesson about how “evil could be remedied in a

better way.” The Indians laughed and left the mission.¹⁷⁶ In August 1822, the surgeon at the Harmony Mission treated the wounds of two Osage warriors, and he was horrified to learn that they had been hurt during a raid on the Ioways. The missionaries noticed several captured horses and saw enemy body parts being carried as war trophies by Osage warriors—“some bearing a leg and others a hand, a scalp or an ear.” A minister reported in the *American Missionary Register* that “such are the scenes we are called to behold in this land of pagan darkness.”¹⁷⁷

Considering the massive amounts of assistance that the Osages needed, the Protestants were forced to reassess their theological priorities. The indifference of the Osages to preaching reminded the missionaries of the promises made by Secretary of War Calhoun in 1820 to impart *practical, secular skills* to the Indians:

[The missionaries] are friendly and benevolent and have the approval of your great father, the president of the United States. . . . Their object is to teach your children to read and write, your women to weave, and make clothes for you, and prepare your food like white people, to show your young men how to make axes, hoes, and ploughs, and how to use them in tilling your land and raising crops for the support of yourselves and your families, and to introduce among you the arts of civilized life.¹⁷⁸

As it turned out, the Osages admired and embraced the American Protestants for their technology.¹⁷⁹ Chief Claremore in 1823 was “pleased and surprised” by the Union Mission’s mill, spring house, and lime kiln, and told the Protestants that his “children should see and understand the use of these things.”¹⁸⁰ On a visit to the Harmony Mission in 1821, even the skeptical Big Soldier expressed his hope that the Protestants “would teach them how to make corn soft,”¹⁸¹ as well as other sophisticated, practical skills to help the Osages adjust to a changing world. On December 17, 1822, a group of Osage women brought corn to be ground at the Harmony mill. When the machine easily

crushed the corn, the amazed women called the apparatus “divine” (*Woh-cur-do-ka*). An Osage boy more familiar with the operation of the mill told them it was not divine, because it was constructed by “Mr. Austin,” and “water turned it.” Nevertheless, the marvelous mill attracted more Osage women, who, a week later, brought another ten to twelve bushels of corn to be ground—even if they had to endure an unwanted Bible lesson while they waited.¹⁸²

The universal human need for food allowed the missionaries to make positive, practical overtures to the Osages about advanced agricultural techniques. The most hopeful experiment was at “Hopefield,” established on December 1, 1823, as a separate, multiethnic farming community located four miles north of the Union Mission. Osage women had been successful farmers for many centuries, and Indian males were averse to changing gender roles as warriors and hunters to do “women’s work,” putting aside bows and spears to learn about soils and seeds. But the missionaries were surprised when, in April 1823, a young Osage chief named Moinehpersha, expressed interest in “changing his habits”—taking up farming and desiring an Indian wife with an American education, a “white” house, and clothes like the missionaries had.¹⁸³ He, with “a few other Osages” and some “mixed families” of Frenchmen with Indian wives, moved near the mission and asked for the Protestants’ assistance in building homes and growing crops. With the approval of Pastor Chapman and Brother William Requa, the Hopefield farming community was established to aid the missionary agenda “by kind influences and Christian example.”¹⁸⁴

In March 1824, Waushingahlegena (“Beautiful Bird”) and his brothers-in-law, Sesah-monia and Apesincheb, moved to Hopefield with their families. Although they

were mocked by other Osages for taking up “female” farming, they embraced U.S. agricultural methods, including the use of plows pulled by oxen. In 1826, each of the sixteen Osage families at Hopefield produced at least forty bushels of corn, and one harvested two hundred.¹⁸⁵ Six years later, all Hopefield farmers were on pace to produce two hundred bushels of corn in fenced fields, after finally receiving wagons, carts, harnesses, horses, and hoes. Stephen Fuller and William Requa also helped the Osages raise cows, fowls, and swine.¹⁸⁶ While some of the farmers continued to hunt buffalo, an encouraging number of Osage men “were more and more pleased with the idea of raising their domestic animals and . . . have given up their hunting excursions, saying that they would rather remain at home . . . [to] make their fields look thriving and in good order.”¹⁸⁷

In 1828, the Hopefield community was composed of sixteen families—a total of 115 people—and the missionaries’ desire to make the Osages self-sufficient in provisions seemed close to becoming a reality.¹⁸⁸ Those progressive Indian farmers had persevered despite ridicule and several disasters. At first, they had suffered “extreme poverty” and “subsisted on acorns,” and an 1826 flood “swept away in one night” growing crops, stored grain, fields, fences, and log homes. Although the Osages had “lost . . . all they had gained as the fruits of civilization,” the Indian farmers “had not become discouraged.”¹⁸⁹ The population at Hopefield began to decline, however, after an 1828 U.S. treaty placed that experimental farm within the boundaries of the Cherokee Reservation.¹⁹⁰ Requa and the Osages moved their settlement twenty miles to the north, “lying between the Osage reservation and the land belonging to the Creeks.”¹⁹¹

The Hopefield experiments were truly hopeful, since several Osage men increasingly found “it much less a disgrace to labor” in the fields and were pleased with the subsistence security provided by abundant crops and domestic animals. Although most of the Hopefield Osages continued to live in wigwams, one man built his own “comfortable log house,” which was probably the first of its kind constructed by an Osage Indian without American help. Most significantly, the two Hopefield settlements inspired similar efforts and changing attitudes. Even Chief Claremore brought tribesmen to visit the original experimental farm and encouraged others to be started elsewhere.¹⁹² Osage men from the Verdigris River were also impressed by Hopefield I and requested their own “tame cows” and plow-oxen. So many Osages wished to join the mission farms that Requa could not afford “suitable care” for such a large number of people.¹⁹³ Rejected, one group of Osages established their own farming community away from the main Verdigris village without missionary assistance.¹⁹⁴

Even influential men among the northern Osages--including Pawhuska III--briefly tried “white agriculture.”¹⁹⁵ However, he became disillusioned by failure and moved his people to a new town on the Neosho River, seventy miles from the Harmony Mission, in order to be closer to a Chouteau trading post and migrating buffalo herds.¹⁹⁶ In September 1824, the Reverend Benton Pixley and his wife, Lucia, established a new Neosho Mission (near present-day Chanute, Kansas) to “remain constantly with the Indians, . . . leading and assisting those poor people in forming fixed settlements and cultivation of the earth.”¹⁹⁷ With the assistance of Samuel Bright, the farmer formerly at Harmony, Osage men and missionaries worked side by side to produce a surplus of beans, watermelons, pumpkins, and 260 bushels of corn in 1825.¹⁹⁸ But the Osages grew

increasingly frustrated with the missionaries' uncompromising Christian prejudices and especially Pixley's abrasive personality. On August 25, 1828, Osage leaders requested President John Quincy Adams to remove that "bad man" from "our land," because he "quarrels with our men and women."¹⁹⁹ While Pawhuska III had been one of the most accommodating Osage leaders, by 1828, he became so disenchanted with the missionaries' constant nagging about Indian sins and Christian salvation, that he prevented his band from attending Protestant sermons.²⁰⁰

The missionaries should have rejoiced at the Osages' progress in experimental farming and the adoption of other practical life skills, but they rarely showed their pride in secular successes in the absence of religious conversions. To counter the apathetic indifference of most Osage adults, the missionaries decided to concentrate on changing cultural attitudes among Indian youths by educating them in mission schools. The United Foreign Missionary Society initially promised the Osages that "all young people might be taught to read and write," and many Indian leaders approved of English literacy so that they could comprehend American treaties and policy changes—but with as little religious instruction as possible. One chief was pleased that Osage "young men might be initiated in the mechanic arts, their young women in domestic economy, and all the young people might be taught to read and write."²⁰¹ The missionaries regarded *boarding* schools as "civilized" academic utopias separated from Indian settlements and thus insulated from the "savage influences" of families and friends.

The school at the Union Mission opened in 1821, and Harmony Mission enrolled students two years later. Neosho also had a school, but not much is known about it because the much-criticized teacher, Benton Pixley, kept few records. The farming

families at Hopefield probably sent their children to Union for classroom instruction. Each of the mission schools was organized on the “Lancaster system,” which used advanced, accomplished students to help teach their younger or less proficient peers. The curriculum consisted of spelling, reading, and writing in English, arithmetic, and instruction in Christianity.²⁰² The school day began at dawn with chores; boys fed livestock and cleaned stalls, while girls made breakfast and did some cleaning and sewing. After working for an hour, students ate breakfast, and did additional gender-specific tasks. Academic lessons lasted perhaps four or more hours, but after dinner and more chores, the focus was on religious instruction until bedtime.²⁰³

Several Osage students excelled in their school work and seemed truly enthusiastic about reading and acquiring practical skills. Osage girls learned how to “spin, sew, and wash,”²⁰⁴ and at the Harmony school, they “rendered considerable assistance in making articles of clothing.”²⁰⁵ Several students at the Union mission learned to read the “testament” in English, while those at Harmony memorized the alphabet and read complex words. The missionaries were impressed with the speed at which some Osage children were able to learn. A teacher at the Harmony Mission described “a little girl, twelve years old,” who had “learned all the letters and will write them very well” after only six days.²⁰⁶ The *Missionary Journal* stated that about half of the students had absorbed enough information for “the transaction of the common business of life, and as many as twelve in the common branch of knowledge, would make competent teachers.”²⁰⁷ At Union, an Osage named Stephen wished to travel to the East and become a blacksmith.²⁰⁸ When a young Osage girl was taken out of school, she cried until her mother borrowed a book for her to read during a buffalo hunt.²⁰⁹ Another child

could recite thirteen hundred Bible verses.²¹⁰ Even as secondary enterprises to religious conversion, the Union school had taught 71 Osage children by 1833,²¹¹ while the Harmony school usually had forty students enrolled each year for a decade.²¹²

Of course, some students hated scholastic work and dropped out or ran away, with a few persuading others to follow their example. But the greatest obstacle was, once again, adult Osages. Indian mothers, not accustomed to being so far from their children, went to the schools and brought students back home because they “missed them.”²¹³ Even when Osage students made impressive academic strides, their parents considered their new abilities as irrelevant to Indian life; boys who could read did not become good hunters, and girls with sewing skills failed to learn how to brain-tan a deerskin. Other parents objected to any religious instruction and/or harsh punishments, but most complaints were focused on having their children living in a strange environment some distance away, where they could not be protected by their families and an entire village of warriors.²¹⁴

Missionaries and Osage parents, alike, worried about the safety of boarding students at schools that enrolled children from tribes that were warring with one another. Claremore offered to send his own children to the Union Mission school, but he consistently found reasons not to. In 1821, he “wish[ed] the [Cherokee] war was over that I might send my children” to the missionaries, but five years later, he was still fearful of attacks.²¹⁵ The enmity between the Osages and the Cherokees increased dramatically the closer those populations resided and competed for game in the 1820s. Ironically, while the pacifistic missionaries could not have defended their Indian students from

hostile warriors, some Osage parents condemned the Christians' spankings of their children as a most distasteful form of violence.²¹⁶



Figure 4: Chief Tallee. From George Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, II, Plate 153.

Most Osages simply ignored the American schools, while a few critics said that the missionaries beat students and made child “slaves” do onerous chores. But prominent Osage chiefs supported Protestant education at the mission schools.²¹⁷ As with the agricultural experiments, progressive Osages were generally supportive, but they faced often withering criticism from conservatives, who described them as bad parents and traitors to tribal traditions. Chief Tallee faced considerable peer pressure when his son, Philip, like all Indian students, wore American clothes and took the Christian name of a prominent mission donor. Tallee lost face among the Arkansas Osages for having “no sense in giving his son to the missionaries” and allowing him to wear “white” clothes. But Tallee stood firm, telling the Protestants that Philip and his cousin “shall be your

sons. Take good care of them. Do not let them talk Osage but teach them English. Don't make them half Osage but make them white men wholly."²¹⁸ Moneypershee, a less prestigious Osage father, told his son to stay in the Harmony school, because the missionaries "had come a great way to teach his tribe good things." But he feared that low school attendance would cause the Christians to become "discouraged" and leave.²¹⁹ His concerns were soon justified.

The mission teachers had made a good beginning, unlike the preachers of the Gospel. Reading classes in the Harmony, Union, and Neosho schools and successful farming at the two Hopefield locations produced promising results, and they may have had lasting impressions on Osage lives—if the missionaries had done more teaching than preaching. Both experiments were "educational" for the Protestants, too, challenging their prejudices by demonstrating that Osages had the intelligence and diligence to master academic subjects and adapt to American agriculture.²²⁰ But instead of taking and giving credit for those achievements, the missionaries scapegoated the most accomplished Osages, lying about how they "cared little" for the "advantages" of cultural progress.²²¹

The Protestants felt defensive, because their main goal—religious conversion—was a great disappointment, with no evidence of a single Osage becoming a committed Christian after fifteen years of trying. Embittered by the lack of converts, the missionaries relied on rank prejudices about Osage "savagery" to hide their own deficiencies from superiors and sponsors. Revealing how little they had learned in direct contact with the Osages, ministers repeated old tales of native women being treated as "slaves"—"packing wood across the plains, or bringing water, or planting corn and the like," while their husbands did "no work" and were "lamentably destitute of ingenuity

and aptitude.”²²² Those ethnocentric Americans refused to acknowledge the arduous work of Indian hunter-warriors who ran so hard that they coughed up blood; rode through dangerous, thundering buffalo herds; and engaged in hand-to-hand combat with enemies to protect their families. In his criticisms of the Osages, minister Pixley failed to acknowledge the huge supplies of meat that “lazy” Indian hunters gave to the missions, while he was the laziest of men by accepting donated food from eastern donors, as well.²²³

The missionaries never appreciated the sensible symmetry of traditional Osage gender roles, with men providing protein from hunting, while their wives grew vegetables, prepared hides for trade, and cared for children back in the village. The Protestants condemned distant buffalo hunting in a selfish desire to keep the Osages nearby to hear their sermons and farm their fields. The missionaries complained that “game has been so abundant” that no Osage could afford to waste his time farming. Lacking true Christian compassion, they expressed satisfaction when “the want of game and the encroachment of other tribes upon their hunting ground will soon leave them [Osage men] no other alternative” than to farm--“or starve.”²²⁴

Despite all of their regrets, the personnel at the Protestant missions were less to blame for the lack of Osage converts than government policies and other *outside* influences. The missionaries felt doubly victimized. While they condemned Osages for rejecting salvation, the flawed policies of the United States government was the main culprit in ending the once-hopeful Osage missions. When Congress closed the official fur factories in 1822, the Osages were forced to increase their hunting on distant prairies far away from the missions. Private traders descended on them and “contrive[d] every

kind of artifice and intrigue to drive Indians away” from the missions.²²⁵ Rogue merchants challenged Christian sensibilities and objectives by purchasing literate, missionary-taught Osage women as wives. Thus, educated Indian females, whom the missionaries had hoped would reform their villages with the “benefits of civilization,” were taken from the area.²²⁶ More serious was the traders’ encouragement of “foreign” Indians to hunt on Osage lands, depleting their vital animal resources and instigating prolonged intertribal warfare.²²⁷

The Osages fought those enemies *out of necessity* in order to survive, and the missionaries were wrong to condemn them for being “chiefly intent on the chase;” for their “habitual” warfare; and for failing to “appreciate the importance of education” by taking their children out of school to keep them safe from enemy raids.²²⁸ The missionaries’ goals of turning Indians into “civilized” Christians and peaceful farmers were unrealistic in a war zone—especially after the U.S. government disrupted Osage lives by expelling them from their Missouri and Arkansas homelands between 1825 and 1830.²²⁹ William Clark’s Second Treaty of St. Louis, which placed the Union Mission within a new Cherokee reservation, proved to be an insurmountable obstacle for the missionaries to overcome and prevented even friendly, supportive Osages from visiting them. Within five years of the U.S. government’s encouragement and funding of Protestant missions among the Osages, other American officials ordered a series of dispossessions and forced migrations that altered their sedentary traditions and disrupted familiar community life.

Both the Osages and the missionaries were thus victimized by poor timing and were powerless in assuaging the official policies of an aggressively expansionistic nation.

The Protestants were almost as shocked by Washington's betrayal as were the Indians, and they spent most of their time with mere remnants of the Osage nation, disillusioned by their treatment, who lingered on their traditional lands the longest. The missionaries were unprepared for the broad sweep of the government's ethnic cleansing that proved so destructive to their goals, and they quickly lost faith in themselves, the Indians, their nation, and perhaps even their God.

The Osages felt short-changed by the unfulfilled Protestant promises to create a new and viable future for them in a changing world. Secular education and new methods of farming succeeded but never went far enough or lasted long enough. Even the most dedicated missionaries never appreciated the value of what they *had accomplished* among the Osages in building bridges with the white world. *Outside forces* made that bridge dangerous and unstable. The Protestants could translate treaties for the Osages but never alter their severity. After a decade-and-a-half of living near the missionaries, the Osages continued to lose territory and lives to other American Protestants.

Given such threatening and overwhelming external complications, the goals of the Protestant missionaries and the Osages rarely converged. The white Christians needed quantifiable religious converts to secure future funding, so they were too obsessed--by training, devotion, and self-interest--with spiritual objectives. They were the wrong messengers, with the wrong advice, at the wrong time in the history of the Osage nation. Despite missionary promises to remain with the Osages until they guided them to happiness and "civilization," it was the pious advocates of the "new hope" of Christ who lost hope and allowed disillusionment to cancel their commitment to the Indians. By focusing so much on spiritual salvation, the missionaries felt that they had failed their

God and made a hasty exit from promising, productive intercultural settlements, without acknowledging their secular successes.

In 1836, the 27th *Annual Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* wrote the obituary of the Osage missions: “Very few, if any, of the adults of the tribe have been induced to exchange their savage and migratory habits for a civilized and industrious life; or to substitute the Christian doctrines and practices for the[ir] ridiculous and absurd superstitions. . . . [H]aving labored with much fidelity and patience for nearly fifteen years, [our missionaries] have felt themselves compelled to abandon the work, leaving the Osages, with scarcely an exception, more miserable and hopeless, both as to condition and character, than they were when the mission was commenced.”²³⁰

*“We gather our past and present into the depths of our being and face tomorrow. We are still Osage. We live and we reach old age for our forefathers.”*²³¹

Conclusion

In 1837, soon after the Osage missions closed, white Missourians sought a genocidal solution to alleged, never-proven Indian “plots” against American settlers. Five hundred militiamen, mobilized by Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs, traveled to the Grand River to root out supposedly threatening “savages.” They found no warriors, but they pounced on a group of mixed-blood Osage women near the former Harmony Mission and took them captive. Although federal troops from Fort Leavenworth released the women, the Missouri militia continued its vicious human hunt. Those hostile whites who now lived on the bountiful former lands of the Osages’ eventually stumbled upon a few famished Indian families looking for food. The militiamen beat those people and chased them out of Missouri.²³²

Such predatory violence, before and after the tenure of Protestant missionaries, reflected the serious challenges that the Osages faced in merely staying alive. They had already endured several traumatic transformations that eroded their once-dominant empire before the missionaries arrived, but the Osages continued to adapt with their traditional diversity, as several leaders prudently created different routes to a “new country.” Wherever the Osages went and whatever they endured, however, they could never escape the ever-expanding “new country” of the United States, which manipulated the futures of all lands and peoples with tragic racist policies.

Christian missionaries in America from the colonial era to the mid-nineteenth century rarely agreed on what constituted “success” in Indian conversions. Comparing missionary experiences from denomination to denomination, and place to place, is both difficult and counter-productive, given the unique experiences in different areas and eras by a variety of missionaries dealing with unique Native American cultures and conditions. Catholics and Protestants approached conversion differently, and even Episcopalians, Baptists, and Congregationalists had varying views of what constituted “authentic” and permanent “success” in saving Indian souls.²³³

The lack of Protestant productivity in converting the Osages was magnified in the board rooms of the sponsoring missionary societies—considering the perceived successes in “saving” Africans, Chinese, and residents of India, *and* the better results among Native Americans by other denominations. For example, Methodists succeeded in converting elite Cherokees who lived near the Osages, including Chief John Ross, and trained Turtle Fields to be the first ordained Cherokee pastor in the Methodist Church.²³⁴ Galagina, another high-status Cherokee, was educated in mission schools and attended college in New England, returning to his people in 1823, now known as Elias Boudinot. He helped the Cherokees “identify the best parts” of Christianity and worked with missionary Samuel A. Worcester in establishing *The Cherokee Phoenix*, a famous bilingual tribal newspaper that used the syllabary developed by Sequoyah.²³⁵

Catholic missionaries out-performed the Protestants of Harmony and Union in securing Osage converts, because their methods of worship resonated with those Indians. Catholics used incense in the Mass, while Osages smoked ceremonial pipes. Both peoples smeared tangible earth elements on their skins--Catholics marking their

foreheads with ashes, while the Osages rubbed mud on their faces. Both Osages and Catholics believed that objects conveyed spiritual meaning associated with a divine presence,²³⁶ whether it was the Indians' medicine bundles or the Catholics' holy water, effigy medals, and transformed bread and wine in the Eucharist.²³⁷ Furthermore, Osages, like Euro-Americans, experienced spiritual stimulation in the visual, musical, symbolic, and mysterious elements of Catholic worship, without understanding a single word of Latin, English, or any other language.²³⁸ The long and tedious no-frills preaching of Protestant ministers could not compete with such exotic and satisfying ceremonialism.

Their fascination with colorful Catholic rituals inspired a number of Osages to ask for baptism.²³⁹ Priests readily allowed Indians to receive that sacrament as the beginning, not the end, of the conversion process, administered before they lost interest in Christianity. Catholic records reveal an impressive number of Osage baptisms compared with those by Protestants. Missouri Jesuits baptized twelve Osages in 1820, twelve in 1822, eighteen in 1827, and nine in 1830.²⁴⁰ After decades of associating with French Catholics in St. Louis, the Osages in 1820 asked the Right Reverend Louis Du Bourg, the new Bishop of Louisiana in that city, to send them priests.²⁴¹ Two years later, he appointed Father Charles de la Croix to serve the Osages, and soon after, nine European Jesuits from Maryland established a 212-acre farm near Florissant, where they ministered to Indians.²⁴² Dozens of Osages celebrated Mass “with as much regularity and devotion as the most fervent among the faithful,”²⁴³ and priests baptized and married Osages and *metis* on a regular basis. In 1851, Jesuit Father John Bax baptized the “oldest man in the [Osage] nation” and observed that “baptism is one of the sacraments of our holy religion that the Indians understand the best, and it is the one that they are most desirous of

receiving.”²⁴⁴ Furthermore, the Catholic Church did not seek to eradicate all native rituals²⁴⁵ and even allowed Osage burials in Catholic cemeteries.²⁴⁶

However, most Indians reacted to Protestant missionaries like the Osages did. After a half-century of exposure to such Christians, western Indians retained native traditions, continued to hunt, and rejected pleas to “become white.”²⁴⁷ No permanent Protestant churches survived to serve Indians exclusively until later in the nineteenth century.²⁴⁸ Eventually, frustrated missionary societies could no longer afford the expense of supporting Indian missions on the old U.S. government model.²⁴⁹ A converted Chippewa-turned-Christian missionary explained how peer pressure in close-knit tribal communities had stymied “civilization” campaigns: “the Devil employs most successfully his old weapon (ridicule) to prevent any complying with our positions. Those who settle by us and send their children to school are at once stigmatized with the name ‘praying Indians.’”²⁵⁰ Episcopal Bishop William Hobart Hare, founder of the Indian Rights Association, observed in 1883 that “the notion that all that is necessary to the conversion of the Indians is that an English-speaking, well-meaning white man should, for a year or two, take up his residence among them and preach the Gospel . . . is, of course, absurd.”²⁵¹

Native American author Willard Rollings argued in *Unaffected by the Gospel* that the Osages won a “cultural victory” by resisting a “Christian invasion.” But Osages who were intrigued by the secular innovations of American schools and agricultural technology were far from cultural “traitors.” They took the greatest personal risks in daring to experiment with new and diverse ways of coping amid cataclysmic changes. “Conservative” Osages had such an enduring faith in their familiar lifestyles that they

ignored the Protestants and went on with their lives. A smaller number of “progressives,” who realized that their world would be increasingly dominated by white Americans, hoped that learning new skills would give them greater options and more independence in shaping their lives. But they did *not* embrace the alien religion of the New England missionaries who were in league with hypocritical U.S. officials. The “cultural victory” of the Osages had less to do with clinging stubbornly to old traits than with making creative adaptations that allowed *individual Indians* to make their *own choices*--the most respected of all Osage traditions.

Over the centuries, the Osages “moved to many new countries,” leaving traditional rituals when they became irrelevant in evolving eras; experimenting with Big Moon Peyote ceremonies; adopting syncretism with mixed elements of various faiths; and joining mainstream Christian denominations—most frequently Catholicism—when spirituality provided satisfying answers to modern challenges in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Instead of labeling specific Osages as “heroes” or “villains,” scholars should honor every decision that allowed individual identities and core values in that native nation to survive until today—despite, or because of, Catholicism, Protestantism, Peyotism, and any other imported religion. That was, and is, the true “cultural victory” of the Osage people.

Endnotes

- ¹ Amy DeRogatis, *Moral Geography: Maps, Missionaries, and the American Frontier* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 183.
- ² Lee Irwin, "Native American Spirituality: History, Theory, and Reformation," in *A Companion to American History*, ed. Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 104-105.
- ³ Willard Hughes Rollings, "Indians and Christianity," in *A Companion to American History*, ed. Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 123.
- ⁴ Irwin, "Native American Spirituality," 103.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 104-105.
- ⁶ William W. Graves, *The First Protestant Osage Missions: 1820-1837* (Oswego, KS: The Carpenter Press, 1949), 7.
- ⁷ Louis F. Burns, *A History of the Osage People* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), 218.
- ⁸ Willard Hughes Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel: Osage Resistance to the Christian Invasion 1673-1906: A Cultural Victory* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 59.
- ⁹ Willard Hughes Rollings, *The Osage: An Ethnohistorical Study of Hegemony on the Prairie-Plaines* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 28.
- ¹⁰ Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 209-210.
- ¹¹ Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 113.
- ¹² Lines from "Songs of the Waters," which Osage war parties recited when they needed to cross a dangerous stream. In Garrick A. Bailey, *The Osage and the Invisible World: From the Works of Francis La Flesche* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 204.
- ¹³ Rollings, *Osage*, 28.
- ¹⁴ Tanis C. Thorne, *The Many Hands of My Relations* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 13-14.

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- ¹⁵ Gilbert C. Din and Abraham P. Nastir, *The Imperial Osages: Spanish-Indian Diplomacy in the Mississippi Valley* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 4-5. There is no concrete historical or archeological evidence that explains why the Dhegihans left the Ohio River region. Iroquois attacks and/or the need to find new food sources have been speculated.
- ¹⁶ Garrick A. Bailey, "Osage," in *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. William C. Sturtevant (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 13:476.
- ¹⁷ Rollings, *Osage*, 11.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.
- ²¹ Bailey, *Invisible World*, 31.
- ²² The Osages continued to make additions to their social organization. After the Osages arrived on the prairie-plains, they added yet another phratry to the *Tsi-shu* moiety, called the *Tsi-Hai-shi*, "Those Who Were the Last to Come." In that phratry there were two clans--the *Ni-ka Wa-kon-da-gi* (Men of Mystery or The Thunder People) and the *Tho-xe*, (The Buffalo Bull People.) The latter represented the emergence of the buffalo as a significant game animal. Rollings, *Osage*, 41.
- ²³ When Euro-Americans met with the Osages, they often confused the *Tzi-Shu* chief as the leader of the entire tribe because he was the diplomatic officer who had to meet with visitors. *Ibid.*, 49.
- ²⁴ The chiefs were not absolute rulers. Instead both chiefs had equal authority over the entire tribe. Their primary objective was to maintain peace and order in the village. Therefore, anyone who entered the chiefs' lodges, including enemy warriors, could not be harmed. Bailey, *Invisible World*, 42-43.
- ²⁵ Alice Marriott, *Osage Research Report and Bibliography of Basic Research References in Osage Indians* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1974), 89.
- ²⁶ Bailey, *Invisible World*, 10.
- ²⁷ Rollings, *Osage*, 29.
- ²⁸ Bailey, *Invisible World*, 31.

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- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Ibid., 30.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Ibid., 29.
- ³³ J. Frederick Fausz, *Founding St. Louis: First City of the New West* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2011), 109.
- ³⁴ Burns, *History of the Osage People*, 487.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Thorne, *Many Hands*, 21.
- ³⁷ Bailey, "Osage," 480.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Carl Chapman, *Origins of Osage Indians in Osage Indians* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1974), 63-67.
- ⁴⁰ Thorne, *Many Hands*, 46; Rollings, *Osage*, 22.
- ⁴¹ Mariott, *Osage*, 44.
- ⁴² Bailey, *Invisible World*, 53.
- ⁴³ Ibid., 55.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., 58.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 49.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 61.
- ⁴⁸ Mariott, *Osage*, 84 - 86.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., 69-70.
- ⁵⁰ Bailey, *Invisible World*, 187; John Joseph Matthews, *The Osages: Children of the Middle Waters*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 450.
- ⁵¹ Bailey, *Invisible World*, 52.
- ⁵² George A. Dorsey, "The Osage Mourning War Ceremony," *American Anthropologist* 4 (1902): 404.
- ⁵³ Ibid., 410-411.

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- ⁵⁴ Victor Trixier, *Trixier's Travels on the Osage Prairies*, ed. John Francis McDermott (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1940), 171-172.
- ⁵⁵ Rollings, *Osage*, 41-44; Fausz, *Founding St. Louis*, 100.
- ⁵⁶ Fausz, *Founding St. Louis*, 110.
- ⁵⁷ John Mack, "Osage Mission: The Story of Catholic Missionary Work in Southeast Kansas," *Catholic Historical Review* 96 (2010): 263.
- ⁵⁸ Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 130.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 131.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 130.
- ⁶¹ Louise Barry, *The Beginning of the West: Annals of the Kansas Gateway to the American West 1540-1854*, (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), 37-40.
- ⁶² Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 112.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, 112-113.
- ⁶⁴ Fausz, *Founding St. Louis*, 104.
- ⁶⁵ Stan Hoig, *The Chouteaus: First Family of the Fur Trade* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 12.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.
- ⁶⁷ Marriott, *Osage*, 207-208. The subsistence chart is adopted from Fausz, *Founding St. Louis*, 111, Table A.
- ⁶⁸ Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 11.
- ⁶⁹ Sharon Person, *Standing Up For Indians: Baptism Registers as an Untapped Source for Multicultural Relations in St. Louis, 1766-1821* (Naperville, IL: The Center for French Colonial Studies, 2010), 7-8.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.
- ⁷¹ William W. Graves, *Life and Letters of Fathers Ponziglione, Schoenmakers, and Other Early Jesuits at Osage Mission: Sketch of St. Francis' Church. Life of Mother Bridget*. (St. Paul, KS: William W. Graves, 1916), 242- 243.
- ⁷² Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 154-161.
- ⁷³ DuVal, *Native Ground*, 177.

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- ⁷⁴ Ibid., 165.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid. 165- 166.
- ⁷⁷ Fausz, *Founding St. Louis*, 172.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid., 172- 174.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid., 167.
- ⁸⁰ Thorne, *Many Hands*, 211.
- ⁸¹ Rollings, *Osage*, 178. Osage oral tradition traces fragmentation to a great flood.
- ⁸² Ibid., 375; Eugene Marrow, *A History of Missouri* (New York: D.C. Heath & Co Publishers, 1918), 39.
- ⁸³ Burns, *History of the Osage People*, 140.
- ⁸⁴ Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 37.
- ⁸⁵ Fausz, *Founding St. Louis*, 189.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid., 189.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid., 188.
- ⁸⁸ Kristie C. Wolferman, *The Osage in Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 67-71. Pawhuska, or White Hair, became a title taken by northern chiefs and relates to a white wig allegedly taken as a “scalp” from an American soldier killed in an Osage battle along the Wabash River on November 4, 1791—a devastating U.S. defeat. Pawhuska White Hair I died in 1808. Pawhuska/White Hair II was not considered a suitable chief by Osage warriors, so he was replaced with Pawhuska/White Hair III, the grandson of the first Pawhuska. It was White Hair III, who led the northern Osages during the Protestant missionary period. He died in 1833. Burns, *History of the Osage People*, 53-54.
- ⁸⁹ Burns, *History of the Osage People*, 366-367.
- ⁹⁰ George Sibley, *Seeing a Newer World: The Fort Osage Journals and Letters of George Sibley 1808-1811*, ed. Jeffery E. Smith (St. Charles, MO: Lindenwood University Press, 2003), 132.
- ⁹¹ George Catlin, *Illustrations of the Manners and Customs and Conditions of the North American Indians* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1876), 26.

⁹² Fausz, *Founding St. Louis*, 191.

⁹³ Henry Warner Bowden, *American Indians and Christian Missions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 165.

⁹⁴ Rollings, *Osage*, 284. Increasing white immigrants resulted in unprecedented Osage mortality from European diseases. In 1806, 200 Osages died of smallpox. In 1821, a “billious fever” took the lives of many Osages and kept killing them until 1825. In 1826, the Osages were hit with dysentery, followed by smallpox in 1827- 1828. There were also numerous cholera outbreaks from 1832 to 1834. *Ibid.*, 278.

⁹⁵ DuVal, *Native Ground*, 200.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Burns, *History of the Osage People*, 188.

⁹⁸ Grant Foreman, *Pioneer Days in the Early Southwest* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1926), 31; Grant Foreman, *Indians and Pioneers: The Story of the American Southwest Before 1830* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1930), 51.

⁹⁹ Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., *Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions and the American Indian Response: 1787-1862* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), 8.

¹⁰⁰ “Mission Among the Osages of the Neosho” in *Annual Report of the American Board for Commission of Foreign Missions*, (Boston: Cocker and Brewster, 1828), 91.

¹⁰¹ Person, *Standing Up for Indians*, 72.

¹⁰² Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 150.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

¹⁰⁴ Person, *Standing Up for Indians*, 6.

¹⁰⁵ Most Christians in this period believed that this process would take 20-30 years. See C.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), 17.

¹⁰⁶ Irwin, “Native American Spirituality,” 109.

¹⁰⁷ Bowden, *American Indians*, 168.

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- ¹⁰⁸ Higham, *Noble, Wretched, and Redeemable*, 16.; Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage*, 4.
- ¹⁰⁹ Higham, *Noble, Wretched, and Redeemable*, 17.
- ¹¹⁰ Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage*, 2.
- ¹¹¹ Alexander Proudfit, *Sermon, Delivered in the North Church, New Haven, Con. Sept 12, 1822 Before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions at their Thirteenth Annual Meeting* (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1822), 26.
- ¹¹² Edward Griffin, "A Sermon Preached September 14, 1826 before the American Board of Missions," ed. Austin Dickinson (New York J & J Harper, 1826), 1: 51.
- ¹¹³ DeRogatis, *Moral Geography*, 17.
- ¹¹⁴ Higham, *Noble, Wretched, and Redeemable*, 106.
- ¹¹⁵ Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage*, 1.
- ¹¹⁶ Higham, *Noble, Wretched, and Redeemable*, 20.
- ¹¹⁷ Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage*, 7.
- ¹¹⁸ DeRogatis, *Moral Geography*, 17.
- ¹¹⁹ Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 32.
- ¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.
- ¹²¹ Bowden, *American Indians*, 164-165.
- ¹²² *Ibid.*, 167.
- ¹²³ *Ibid.*
- ¹²⁴ Higham, *Noble, Wretched, and Redeemable*, 18.
- ¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 109.
- ¹²⁶ Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 34.
- ¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.
- ¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 36-37.
- ¹²⁹ Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 8.
- ¹³⁰ Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 28.
- ¹³¹ Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 52.
- ¹³² William F. Vaill, *Journal of Union Mission*, 39. The complete *Journal of Union Mission* is unpublished and is in the collections of the Oklahoma State Historical Society.

Mary D. Vaughn typed and bound the copy available in the Missouri Historical Society in 1975.

¹³³ Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 9.

¹³⁴ Lewis, ed., *American Missionary Register*, 2: 181-182.

¹³⁵ Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 243.

¹³⁶ Z. Lewis, ed., "Missionary Family," in *American Missionary Register* (New York: J & J Harper, 1821), 1: 20.

¹³⁷ Vaill, "Journal of Union Mission," 39.

¹³⁸ "Union Mission" in *The Missionary Herald for the Year of 1822* (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1822), 18: 148.

¹³⁹ Thomas McKenney to Secretary of Foreign Correspondence 1820, in *American Missionary Register*, ed. Z Lewis (New York: J & J Harper, 1821), 1: 29.

¹⁴⁰ Z. Lewis, ed., "To the Principal Chief, Counselor, and Warrior of the Great Osages" in *American Missionary Register* (New York: J & J Harper, 1821), 1: 31.

¹⁴¹ Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 9.

¹⁴² Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 112.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 244-245.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 243-244.

¹⁴⁵ Z. Lewis, ed., "General Commission" in *American Missionary Register* (New York: J & J Harper, 1821), 1: 349.

¹⁴⁶ Although still dangerous, the trip from the East to the Osage territory was probably not as difficult for the Harmony missionaries as it was for their Union brethren. But three died, including a hired boatman, Mrs. Sally Newton, and her new baby. The Harmony missionaries collected financial support during their journey. In Philadelphia they collected \$1,800; in Pittsburgh they were given \$700; but at St. Louis the missionaries only received \$25. Perhaps St. Louisans, with their long and intimate relationship with the Osages, were pessimistic about the Protestants' chances of converting those Indians. Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 61.; Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 104.

¹⁴⁷ Z Lewis, ed., "Journal of Harmony," in *American Missionary Register* (New York: J & J Harper, 1822), 2: 493.

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- ¹⁴⁸ Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 47-50.
- ¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 108.
- ¹⁵⁰ Z. Lewis, ed., "Journal of the Union Mission in 1821," in *American Missionary Register* (New York: J & J Harper, 1822), 2: 431.
- ¹⁵¹ Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 111- 112.
- ¹⁵² Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 246.
- ¹⁵³ Higham, *Noble, Wretched, and Redeemable*, 15.
- ¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.
- ¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 106. In the American West, there were also a number of female missionaries. While some followed their husbands into mission service, many single women worked among the Indians. They were often from affluent families and were better educated than male ministers. Female missionaries who worked among American Indians had few alternatives, because they were denied dangerous postings in Asia and Africa until later in the nineteenth century. *Ibid.*, 28.
- ¹⁵⁶ Bruce David Forbes, "Which Religion is Right? Five Answers in the Historical Encounters between Christianity and Traditional Native American Spiritualities," *Neihardt Journal* 2, (2000): 18.
- ¹⁵⁷ Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage*, 57.
- ¹⁵⁸ Niles, H., ed., "Mission to the Osages," in *Niles Weekly Register* (Baltimore: The Franklin Press, 1821), 19: 122-123.
- ¹⁵⁹ "Osages" in *The Missionary Herald* (Boston: Cocker & Brewster, 1829), 25: 123.
- ¹⁶⁰ Rollings, "Indians and Christianity," 121.
- ¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 121-122.
- ¹⁶² Irwin, "Native American Spirituality," 103.
- ¹⁶³ Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 23.
- ¹⁶⁴ Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 154-156.
- ¹⁶⁵ "Osages," *The Missionary Herald*, 25: 123.
- ¹⁶⁶ Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 215.
- ¹⁶⁷ Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 113.

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- ¹⁶⁸ Nathan Whiting, ed., "Osage Union Mission," in *Religious Intelligencer* (New Haven: Nathan Whiting, 1821), 6: 297.
- ¹⁶⁹ Vaill, "Journal of Union Mission," 210.
- ¹⁷⁰ Bailey, *Invisible World*, 145.
- ¹⁷¹ Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 108.
- ¹⁷² Z. Lewis, ed., "Great Osage Mission," in *American Missionary Register* (New York: J & J Harper, 1822), 2: 494.
- ¹⁷³ The missionary journal also noted a number of cases in which poor Osage women stopped by the mission for help. On August 31, 1822, a 30-year old woman asked if she could join the Union family. The family agreed, in the hopes that she could help the Union women. *Union Mission Journal*, quoted in Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 48.
- ¹⁷⁴ "Osages," in *The Missionary Herald* (Boston: Cocker & Brewster, 1833), 29: 63.
- ¹⁷⁵ "Osages," in *The Missionary Herald* (Boston: Cocker & Brewster, 1829), 24: 79.
- ¹⁷⁶ Z. Lewis, ed., "Great Osage Mission," in *American Missionary Register* (New York: J & J Harper, 1822), 3: 147.
- ¹⁷⁷ Z. Lewis, ed., "Journal of Harmony," in *American Missionary Register* (New York: J & J Harper, 1823), 4: 44.
- ¹⁷⁸ John C. Calhoun, "Talk to Indian Chiefs by Secretary of War" (1820), in *Niles Weekly Register*, ed. H. Niles (Baltimore: Franklin Press, 1821), 19: 122.
- ¹⁷⁹ Lewis, ed., *American Missionary Register*, 2: 351. Big Soldier sometimes spoke of his wish to own livestock.
- ¹⁸⁰ *Union Mission Journal* quoted in Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 254.
- ¹⁸¹ Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 114.
- ¹⁸² "Great Osage Mission" in *The Religious Miscellany* (Carlisle, PA: Fleming & Geddes, 1828), 2: 6.
- ¹⁸³ Vaill, "Journal of Union Mission," 162.
- ¹⁸⁴ Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 198.
- ¹⁸⁵ Nathan Whiting, ed., "United Foreign Mission Society," in *Religious Intelligencer* (New Haven: Nathan Whiting, 1824), 9: 173.

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- ¹⁸⁶ “Osages,” in *The Missionary Herald* (Boston: Cocker & Brewster, 1832), 28: 361.
- ¹⁸⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸⁸ Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 200-201.
- ¹⁸⁹ “Osage Indians,” in *The Missionary Herald* (Boston: Cocker & Brewster, 1833), 23: 312.
- ¹⁹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁹¹ Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 202.
- ¹⁹² “Osages,” *The Missionary Herald*, 28: 361.
- ¹⁹³ “Mission Among the Osages of the Neosho,” *Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1828,) 92.
- ¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 93.
- ¹⁹⁵ Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 89.
- ¹⁹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁹⁷ Z. Lewis, ed., “Harmony Mission Journal,” in *American Missionary Register* (New York: J & J Harper, 1824), 5: 309. White Hair’s men said that they were “pleased with the proposal [but] they were apprehensive that they could not restrain their young men from stealing or injuring the property of the missionaries.” *Annual A.B.C.F.M. Report* as quoted in Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 184. The first years at Neosho were so strenuous that even Pixley had to rely on hunting feed his family. Ibid., 183.
- ¹⁹⁸ Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 182.
- ¹⁹⁹ Osage Indians to John Quincy Adams, 25 Aug. 1828, in Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 192.
- ²⁰⁰ Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 148.
- ²⁰¹ John Edwards Caldwell, ed., “Summary of the Fourth Annual Report, May 20, 1820” in *The Christian Herald* (New York: John Gray, 1820), 7: 211.
- ²⁰² Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 93.
- ²⁰³ Ibid., 94.
- ²⁰⁴ Vaill, *Union Mission Journal*, 78.
- ²⁰⁵ Lewis, ed., *American Missionary Register*, 3: 211.
- ²⁰⁶ Vaill, *Union Mission Journal*, 78.

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- ²⁰⁷ “Mission to the Osages,” in *Twenty-fourth Annual Report for the American Board for Commissioners for Foreign Mission* (Boston: Cocker & Brewster, 1833), 24-26: 118.
- ²⁰⁸ Vaill, *Union Mission Journal*, 115.
- ²⁰⁹ Lewis, ed., *American Missionary Register*, 3: 211.
- ²¹⁰ Official report of the Rev. Dodge, to Secretary of War, quoted in Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 166.
- ²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 81.
- ²¹² *Ibid.*, 167-168.
- ²¹³ Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 93-94.
- ²¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²¹⁵ S. Converse, ed., “Union Mission” in *The Christian Spectator* (New Haven; Howe and Spalding, 1822), 4: 325.
- ²¹⁶ Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 95.
- ²¹⁷ Vaill, “Journal of Union Mission,” 101.
- ²¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ²¹⁹ Lewis, ed., *American Missionary Register*, 3: 48.
- ²²⁰ In 1824 Vaill wrote that “The Osages generally are not behind any other nation in regard to the powers of mind.” Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 79.
- ²²¹ “Mission to the Osages,” in *The Missionary Herald* (Boston: Cocker & Brewster, 1833), 29: 466.
- ²²² Z. Lewis, ed., “Union Mission,” in *American Missionary Register* (New York: J & J Harper, 1822), 2: 115.
- ²²³ Lewis, ed., *American Missionary Register*, 2: 330.
- ²²⁴ *Osage Mission Journal*, quoted in Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 135.
- ²²⁵ Lewis, ed., *American Missionary Register*, 3: 19.
- ²²⁶ Thorne, *Many Hands*, 145.
- ²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 100.
- ²²⁸ Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 92.
- ²²⁹ “Harmony” in *The Missionary Herald*, (Boston: Cocker & Brewster, 1833), 23: 150.

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- ²³⁰ “Mission to the Osages,” *Twenty-Seventh Annual Report for the American Board for Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston: Cocker & Brewster, 1836), 27-30: 96.
- ²³¹ Burns, *History of the Osage People*, 496.
- ²³² Rollings, *Osage*, 280.
- ²³³ Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage*, 157.
- ²³⁴ Bowden, *American Indians*, 175.
- ²³⁵ Ibid.
- ²³⁶ Paul O. Myhre, “Potawatomi Transformation: Potawatomi Responses to Catholic and Baptist Mission Strategy and Competition, 1822-1872” (PhD diss., Saint Louis University, 1998), 341.
- ²³⁷ Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel*, 157.
- ²³⁸ There were some rituals, such as receiving the Eucharist, which non-Catholic Osages were excluded from. However, they did witness Catholics partake in the sacrament. Ibid., 17-18.
- ²³⁹ Graves, *First Protestant Osage Missions*, 231.
- ²⁴⁰ Mack, “Osage Mission,” 266.
- ²⁴¹ Mary Paul Fitzgerald, *Beacon on the Plains* (Leavenworth, KS: The Saint Mary College Press, 1939), 33.
- ²⁴² Gilbert J. Garraghan, *The Jesuits of the Middle United States*, (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1983), 94.
- ²⁴³ Father John Bax to Father Peter John De Smet, 1850. In Graves, *Life and Letters*, 234.
- ²⁴⁴ Graves, *Life and Letters*, 237.
- ²⁴⁵ Myhre, “Potawatomi Transformation,” 90.
- ²⁴⁶ Ibid., 400.
- ²⁴⁷ That may have been both metaphorical, since many people in the nineteenth century believed that one’s skin color would actually change as they embraced “civilization;” Higham, *Noble, Wretched, and Redeemable*, 147.
- ²⁴⁸ Ibid., 106.
- ²⁴⁹ Ibid., 172.

²⁵⁰ Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage*, 119.

²⁵¹ Higham, *Noble, Wretched, and Redeemable*, 109.

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