

HISTORY
OF
BAPTIST INDIAN MISSIONS

By ISAAC McCOY

IN AMERICAN STUDIES

Editor-in-Chief: Joseph J. Kwiat
JOURNAL OF AMERICAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

With a New Introduction by
ROBERT F. BERKHOFER, JR.

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

P. 319-320
#100

JOHNSON REPRINT CORPORATION

NEW YORK AND LONDON

1970

live with us; we are happy to hear that he is a speaker of things that are good. It is difficult for us to pronounce his English name, and we therefore desire to give him an Indian name. We have decided that his name shall be Mânó-kéké-tóh [He that speaks good words, or, a preacher of righteousness.] We have given him a good name; we hope he will remain with us, to teach us and our children good things, so that our children will be benefited, and be worthy of good names which you will give them." He concluded by giving Mr. Meeker the hand, addressing him by his new name. I made a brief response, and also gave Mr. Meeker the hand, under address of his new name. On similar occasions of conferring a name among themselves, the recipient, or one of his friends, is expected to give a feast; we were happy that this part of the ceremony could be dispensed with upon the present occasion.

We had no physicians near us, which often occasioned great anxiety. In August, Mrs. Simerwell made a visit to Thomas, on account of the indisposition of Mrs. Slater, from which she returned, in the company of her husband, in September. Mrs. Simerwell and her infant both came home sick of fever; they had been much exposed to rains on the way, and were sometimes thoroughly drenched. One day the poor child had its paroxysm of ague and fever in the woods, when its clothes were thoroughly wetted with rains. They also brought the unpleasant intelligence that a diarrhoea, which existed in that country when I was last there, and of which I had suffered, had increased to an epidemic. Several deaths had occurred; Mr. Slater and six of the pupils were sick, and studies in school had been suspended. During these afflictions, Noonday invited the missionaries to visit the sick, and converse and pray. He also lectured his people himself, on the propriety of forsaking wicked ways, which gave offence to the Great Spirit, and of attending to the instructions of the missionaries. We were frequently called upon for medicine, and we knew that it was necessary to administer it with great caution. We could not depend upon their fidelity in following a prescription; and if the patient should die, we were liable to be blamed. Their own conjuring physicians frequently forfeited their lives by an unsuccessful case. In the time of this general sickness at Grand river, Mr. Meeker gave an emetic to a child, which died while under the influence of the medicine. When he issued the medicine, he was not aware that the child was so near its end. Notwithstanding no blame ought to have been attached to Mr. Meeker, the Indians felt unpleasant, and on that account the missionaries felt more

so; they could not tell how far these ignorant people would be influenced by their superstition. The parents of the child claimed of the missionaries burying clothes, with as much confidence as if the child had been destroyed by design. In these requests the missionaries gratified them, and, by a steady and prudent course, nothing prejudicial to the mission ensued.

On the 17th of September, 1827, his Excellency Lewis Cass and suit arrived at Carey, for the purpose of holding a treaty with our Putawatomie neighbours, whom, by runners sent before him, he had assembled at our house. At this treaty, several small reservations, on the north side of the St. Joseph's, were consolidated in one; five hundred dollars worth of goods were paid them, and an annuity of twenty-five hundred dollars. About half a dozen traders, and some others who had nothing to sell except whiskey, placed themselves, for the time, near the Indians' encampment, and not much more than a mile from us. In about twenty-four hours after the Indians had received their money, the dealers had relieved them of it, and broken up their temporary store encampments, and left the place. Such is the facility with which an Indian can rid himself of the burden of carrying his money.

By personal services and the sale of some of the products of our farm, &c., this treaty was made to benefit the mission more than four hundred dollars, which our pressing want of funds, for the purpose of paying debts, made very acceptable. But we believed that the greatest benefits to the mission on account of the treaty arose from the opportunity afforded us of making known our plans and wishes fully to Governor Cass, and to General Tipton, United States' Indian agent. The United States' agent for the examination of Indian schools, J. L. Lieb, Esq., was secretary to the commissioner at the treaty, and took this opportunity of making his annual examination of the establishment. All three of these gentlemen tendered their services in future, in the promotion of our views.

We were much gratified with the privilege of seeing in our house Governor Cass, who had been a kind of patron of our institution from its origin, and to whom we felt under great obligations for many attentions and positive favours. The female department of the school was at that time taught by my eldest daughter, scarcely grown. His Excellency visited both departments, and made himself acquainted with our whole routine of business; and the interest which he evidently took in these examinations, and his readiness to promote the interests of the institution, were very flattering.

From him we ascertained that at the late treaty at Green Bay, which I had desired to attend, a provision had been made for educational purposes. We immediately conceived the design of availing ourselves of the application of this annuity, by establishing a mission on Fox river, about eighty miles west of Green Bay. In effecting this object, we were assured of the co-operation of Governor Cass. We hoped that we should be able to procure missionaries, and the means of support were already provided for. The measure we thought might facilitate the formation of a missionary establishment at Sault de St. Marie, as we had for some time desired. But if a preference ought to be given to one of the two sites proposed, we believed that that on Fox river was entitled to it. Sanguine as were our hopes of success at this time, we never found missionaries to improve the opening, and our plans failed for want of men to carry them into operation.

While I had resided at Grand river, measures had covertly been taken, by some of our white neighbours, to obtain an order from Governor Cass to remove the public smithery from under our charge. Without our knowledge, a communication had been made to him on the subject, to which he had paid no attention, so that our enemies effected nothing more than an expression of their malicious feelings.

Mr. Simerwell was by trade a cutler. Soon after he arrived at Carey, he had the magnanimity to consent to be the superintendent of our public smithery, for which he was eminently qualified. We obtained for him a commission as United States' blacksmith, on account of which he received a salary of three hundred and sixty five dollars per annum, all of which he, like those of the other missionaries who received salaries from the Government, threw into the common missionary account, as money belonging to the board, and to be accounted for by a report of our common expenditures. We commonly kept another smith, hired by ourselves, to labour in the shop, for the relief of Mr. Simerwell. This hired man we obtained for less than Mr. Simerwell's salary; so that there was a positive saving of upwards of one hundred dollars a year from this source, which constituted one of the items of income by which the mission was supported. When we had not a hired smith in the shop, Mr. Simerwell laboured in it himself, and, in very pressing times for smith work, by the necessities of the people of our charge, he laboured in conjunction with the hired smith. Some other insidious attempts had been made to deprive our mission of some streams of support for which we had laboured

at the treaty of 1826. In conference on these things with Governor Cass and J. L. Leib, Esq., at the late treaty, they both advised that I should visit Washington during the next session of Congress, and endeavour to make such arrangements with the Department of Indian Affairs as the circumstances of the mission called for.

Our expenses were heavy. Besides the seventy Indian children to be supported and educated at Carey, we had to contrive to meet the expenses of the Thomas station. All supplies for that place, except what they could make on the ground, were sent from Carey, usually in perigues or a barge, by water. Accidents by winds and water sometimes befel them, and occasioned great loss, and added distressingly to the expense.

About the time of the late treaty we received in charge fifteen valuable cattle, sent to us by order of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, to distribute to the Ottawas, in further fulfilment of the treaty of 1821.

Feeling it to be a duty we owed to our children to send them a portion of the time to school in the white settlements, and without a settled home ourselves, my wife and I had been much deprived of their society. In the mission journals the following note in reference to our family appears for September 21st, 1827: "This evening arrived my three sons, on a visit from Lexington, Kentucky, where they have been pursuing their studies. It has been years since I and my poor wife have had all our children together. This afternoon we have the satisfaction of seeing all our living children present. For this great favour, after years of anxious separation, we record our gratitude to God, our heavenly father."

On the 11th of October Mr. Lykins had an alarming attack of inflammation in the ear, attended with excruciating pain and delirium. For a few days we had reason to fear that his labours were ended; but the Lord had mercy on him, and on us, and on those for whom he has since been allowed to labour.

The time now drew near when, according to our own views of expediency, and the advice of our friends, Governor Cass and Judge Leib, I should take my journey to the eastern States. I had written what would make about fifty large octavo pages, entitled "Remarks on Indian Reform," the principal design of which was to show the practicability of Indian reform, the obligations which devolved upon us to carry it forward, and the measures which ought to be adopted for its accomplishment. In this, the location of the tribes in a permanent home west of the State of Missouri, was particularly urged as a measure essential to suc-