

HISTORY
OF
BAPTIST INDIAN MISSIONS

By ISAAC McCOY

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With a New Introduction by
ROBERT F. BERKHOFER, Jr.
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

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INTRODUCTION

Few missionaries ever dreamed of a task so large or a position so powerful in American Indian affairs as did Isaac McCoy. He sought nothing less than a portion of the trans-Mississippi West as a permanent Indian state with himself as ruler. In his mind, the welfare of the Indians was intimately bound up with the propagation of the Baptist religion, the establishment of a new country for them, and his own advancement. Church, state, and self were fused into one grand plan for Indian salvation through colonization. To achieve his scheme, he used whatever means came to hand, whether it was his Baptist mission patrons, the political furor over Indian removal, or the establishment of a new missionary society. All of these activities were but successive steps to his ultimate aim of power over Indian affairs for their and his own good.

His writing was naturally harnessed to his goals. Though his most famous work purports in its title, *History of Baptist Indian Missions*, to be a general story of his denomination's missionary efforts among the American aborigines, it is really *his* story of *his* struggle with the forces of apathy and evil to propagate *his* truth to Indians, government officials, missionary managers, and the American people in general. His message was simple: the only way to save the American Indians from extinction was to resettle them away from the blighting influence of bad white frontiersmen. Remove them westward to their own land isolated from whites in order to refine them in white civilization and Christianity. The paradox never seemed to bother him.

The form of the book results from his limited time and his sources. He could only steal spare moments now and then from a very active life surveying and politicking to write the six hundred pages of chronicle. Thus his text

stuck closely to his missionary journal and large file of letters received and copies of letters sent. A comparison, however, of these documents (now deposited in the Kansas State Historical Society in Topeka) with the book reveals a significant discrepancy in perspective and, more importantly, in facts omitted from the published work. To enable the reader to form some opinion of this difference, I shall recapitulate McCoy's history from these sources as I see it.

From the very beginning of his appointment as a missionary in 1817 by the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, McCoy constantly urged his patrons to expand their Indian operations beyond their desires and their financial means. During the year following his appointment, McCoy unsuccessfully pleaded with various tribes in Indiana to accept a mission. Fearing that the Board would not renew his twelve-month appointment, he decided in desperation to settle on white land as near the Weas as possible. By the time he moved to the site at Raccoon Creek, Indiana, his commission had expired but he hoped to force the board to continue the work already begun. His devious presumption proved correct. McCoy wrote later of his effort: "It has been my design from the first to give our business with the natives such a permanent character, that it *would live*, even contrary to the wish of its patrons. . . ."¹ Even before moving to the station, he envisaged it merely as a stepping-stone to a whole network of missions across the nation.²

Since he obtained few children for the school, he feared the Baptist Board would close the mission; so he continued to search for a location in the Indian country. To the Board he proposed the Baptists work with all the tribes not yet claimed by other missionary societies,³ but he, more practically, selected Fort Wayne, where he obtained free

¹ McCoy Journal, May 26, 1821, Kansas State Historical Society. Hereafter referred to as Journal.

² I. McCoy to L. Rice, October 1, 1818, McCoy Correspondence, Kansas State Historical Society, Vol. I. Hereafter referred to as Correspondence.

³ McCoy to W. Staughton, November 8, 1819, Correspondence, I.

quarters,⁴ and moved there in May, 1820. Even though McCoy had been frugal, the moving and the mission cost the Board more than it thought should be spent on the Indians. Furthermore, the Board was irked at McCoy's acting constantly without its consent, writing circulars pleading for funds to different churches without its knowledge, and sending agents out to solicit for his mission without its permission.⁵ Still the Board did not dismiss him.

Since the Board never supported him as liberally as he desired, McCoy despaired of Baptist aid and looked to the federal government.⁶ At the 1821 treaty with the Ottawas and Pottawatomies, he succeeded in gaining a new station site, funds to sustain a school, and appointments of teacher and blacksmith for mission personnel.⁷ As a result of his success McCoy proposed to move the mission again, but the Board opposed such frequent migrations and demanded that he appear before it to explain his actions. He relieved the Board of any doubts about his plans, and it enthusiastically authorized the new location, appointed a commissioner to obtain more government funds for the mission, and permitted McCoy to raise funds for his work on a begging junket.⁸ Even with this favorable outcome, McCoy still suspected some Board members intended to discontinue the mission, so he determined to defeat such plans "by putting the mission as extensively in operation as possible" before the next meeting of the Triennial Convention.⁹ In accordance with his decision, he, upon his return, removed to present-day Niles, Michigan, in late 1822 on land donated

⁴ McCoy to Staughton, April 3, 1820, Correspondence, II.

⁵ W. Staughton to McCoy, June 9, 1820, Correspondence, II; Baptist Board Minutes, September 28, 1820.

⁶ Journal, April 13, 1821. However, the Board had appointed an agent to collect money for his mission and praised his frugality. *Ibid.*, April 28, 1821.

⁷ Lela Barnes, "Isaac McCoy and the Treaty of 1821," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, V (May 1936), 122-142.

⁸ Baptist Board Minutes, October 16, 1821, January 7, 17, 18, 1822; Journal, January 7, 10, 17, 1822.

⁹ Journal, August 16, 1822.

by the Potawatomes, and his personnel was expanded to operate a full-scale manual labor boarding school, which the Board named Carey in honor of the first Baptist missionary to India.¹⁰ Even though the Board approved of its missionary's efforts, financial distress in mid-1823 forced it to halt all funds for missionary work.¹¹ Immediately the bold McCoy circularized on his own behalf,¹² sent out a trusted friend as a fund-raising agent,¹³ and decided to open a station among the Ottawas in order to obtain the tribe's blacksmith's and farmer's salaries.¹⁴ With his customary energy he built a smithy about sixty miles from Carey in the Ottawa country, which was the nucleus for later Thomas Station.¹⁵

By this time McCoy's missionary dream had expanded to relocating the Indians east of the Mississippi to a colony west of that river, and he hoped to play a leading role in accomplishing the migration. He had long recognized the deleterious influence of neighboring lower-class whites upon his mission activities, but it was not until early June, 1823, that he thought of a solution.¹⁶ While visiting his charges one day, he suddenly "formed the resolution" that he would, "Providence permitting, thenceforward keep steadily in view, and endeavor to promote a plan for colonizing the natives in a country to be made forever theirs, west of the State of Missouri . . ." and as he wrote in his *History*, "from that time until the present [1840] I have considered the promotion of this design as the most important business of my life."¹⁷

Never one to dawdle, McCoy immediately dispatched

¹⁰ McCoy to Staughton, December 19, 1822, Correspondence, IV.

¹¹ Journal, August 27, 1823.

¹² "Address to the Friends of Christianity and Civilization," September 10, 1823, Correspondence, VI.

¹³ C. Martin to McCoy, November 1, 1823; McCoy to L. Rice, November 3, 1823, Correspondence, VI.

¹⁴ McCoy Journal, September 19, 1823.

¹⁵ McCoy Journal, October 2, 3, December 20, 1823.

¹⁶ Journal, June 4, 1823.

¹⁷ *History*, p. 197. Compare Journal, June 18, 1831.

letters containing his idea to Lewis Cass,¹⁸ Governor of Michigan territory and therefore in charge of Indian Affairs for that district, to Richard Johnson,¹⁹ Senator from Kentucky who had been prominent in Baptist missionary efforts, and to two other influential politicians for their advice on its feasibility. At this time, he hoped only to establish a colony where Indians, civilized by the benevolent efforts of church and government, might enjoy the "privileges of *men*, and the prospects of a settled home," in which they would not be disturbed or tempted by bad whites or heathen Indians. Under his plan the federal government was to provide suitable land far beyond the white frontier on which each Indian received a plantation. To this colony, mission societies of all denominations were to send their finished products so they could encourage each other to persist on the road to Christian civilization, for McCoy rightly believed that the graduates of mission schools suffered under white contempt for their race, and so

for want of a circle of friends, with whom they may be on an equality, they often become profligate and wretched, or wander back into the forests, and mingle with their barbarous kindred, to the grief of their benefactors, and the disparagement of the schools.²⁰

A man of action, McCoy journeyed to Washington in early 1824 to present personally his plan to the Baptist Board of Missions and to the Secretary of War. This trip marked the beginning of his career as a political lobbyist. Henceforth, his subordinates managed the missions he nominally headed, while he pushed his plans before Congress and the President, before the Baptist Board of Missions, and before

¹⁸ For this politician's role in Indian affairs, see Francis Paul Prucha, *Lewis Cass and American Indian Policy* (Detroit, 1967).

¹⁹ This politician would frequently try to acquire all the government annuities for Baptist work for his own Choctaw Academy to the chagrin of McCoy. Shelly D. Rouse, "Colonel Dick Johnson's Choctaw Academy: A Forgotten Educational Experiment," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly*, XXV (January 1916), 87-117.

²⁰ McCoy to L. Cass *et al.*, June 23, 1823, Correspondence, V.

the public in general. The Board had rejected a similar idea five years earlier because it believed the rapid progress of white settlement soon reached any colony placed beyond the frontier and destroyed the solution's effectiveness,²¹ but the persuasive McCoy convinced the Board to recommend his plan to the federal government anyway.²² McCoy outlined his ideas to Secretary of War John Calhoun, who endorsed the scheme and urged the missionary to memorialize Congress.²³ After this favorable interview, the Baptist Board's committee to consider McCoy's scheme recommended the Board publicize the plan to the public and memorialize Congress to provide land for the colony.²⁴

Since the Board worked too slowly for McCoy's desires, he took action on his own. When President Monroe included a removal plan in his annual message, he felt he was riding the wave of the future. Immediately anticipating the future, he rushed eight Indian boys from his school eastward for an advanced education to prepare them for leading roles in the new colony, much against the wishes of the Baptist Board.²⁵ He also attempted to secure a government position in the emigration program. As soon as he learned of the President's message, he wrote Senator Johnson to procure an agency for him in the proposed enterprise.²⁶ Months later he wrote another senator to seek an appointment as an agent to select a western home for the Miamies and Potawatomes and to establish the advance base for a civilized community of Indians.²⁷ In the winter of 1826-1827 he went to Washington again to push such an agency for himself before government and church officials. The

²¹ Baptist Board Minutes, September 15, 1819.

²² Baptist Board Minutes, February 4, 9, 17, 1824.

²³ Journal, February 21, 1824. Compare *History*, pp. 217-218.

²⁴ Baptist Board Minutes, February 23, 1824; "Extracts from the proceedings of the Board while I was in Washington, February, 1824," Correspondence, VII.

²⁵ McCoy to W. Staughton, July 11, 1825, Correspondence, X. Compare *History*, pp. 265-271.

²⁶ McCoy to R. M. Johnson, January 15, 1825, Correspondence, IX.

²⁷ McCoy to W. Hendricks, October 2, 1825, Correspondence, X.

Board appointed him its agent to select a spot for the colony,²⁸ and the Triennial Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States unanimously resolved that Congress be memorialized in favor of locating the Indians west of the Mississippi, for by now McCoy's project had been absorbed into the general removal plan advocated by the politicians.²⁹

To get public support for his scheme, McCoy wrote a fifty-page pamphlet entitled "Remarks on the Practicability of Indian Reform, Embracing Their Colonization," in which he presented his latest arguments.³⁰ Not their character but their condition determined the extinction of all Indians. The bad example of frontier whites, insecurity of land tenure, and lack of other civilized Indians accounted for the ill-success of previous missionary efforts. The only hope for the perishing aborigines was their concentration on land guaranteed to them forever. On private property with certain restrictions on alienation, under laws provided by the federal government for the regulation of the community, and with schools and churches established by benevolent institutions, the Indians would flourish. According to the earnest Baptist, the best site for the colony was on the "wide desert" west of the Missouri River, where decent grazing land which no whites would presumably ever want was available. With such inducement, McCoy maintained the Eastern Indians would be only too glad to remove. Financing the project would cost the government nothing, for funds obtained by the sale of the lands vacated by the Indians would cover all expenses.

McCoy again journeyed to the capital in the fall of 1827 to prod the Board into action and urge it to publish his manuscript. The Board financed the pamphlet's publication,

²⁸ Baptist Board Minutes, June 1, 1826.

²⁹ Of the many books on removal policy, see especially Annie H. Abel, "The History of Events Resulting in Indian Consolidation West of the Mississippi," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1906* (Washington, D.C., 1908), I, 233-450.

³⁰ Boston, first edition, 1827.

and a copy was sent to every congressman and head of every executive department. In further pursuit of his object, he personally visited over thirty congressmen as well as the President, the Secretary of War, and the head of the Indian Office. He spoke twice to the House of Representatives' Indian Affairs Committee.³¹ When he wasn't personally lobbying, he drafted letters in the name of the Baptist Board to the Secretary of War and to Congress for permission for him to establish an institution immediately for the reception of the first Indians to emigrate west.³²

In actuality, McCoy and the Baptist Board needed government money to carry out any explorations, and the now well-known lobbyist bent his efforts to this task at the next session of Congress. First, the Baptist Board assured the Indian Office that their views on Indian welfare were the same as the government's.³³ Then McCoy rallied fifteen congressmen to support his petition to accompany the Southern Tribes delegation on an exploratory trip west of the Mississippi.³⁴ These congressmen undoubtedly agreed with McCoy that these explorations be accomplished in time for a full report to the next session of Congress, and that McCoy should lead such a tour because his dedication to removal assured a favorable report.³⁵ Congress appropriated fifteen thousand dollars for the tour and the Indian Office appointed the missionary as one of the leaders of the trip. So eager was he for the removal of all the Indians, he sought and obtained permission to include three Potawatomes in the caravan.³⁶ As he did so frequently with the

³¹ Reported in *History*, pp. 321-323.

³² L. Bolles to Congress, November 26, 1827 and L. Bolles to James Barbour, November 26, 1827, Correspondence, XIV. These are in McCoy's hand.

³³ L. Bolles to McCoy, December 20, 1827, Correspondence, XIV.

³⁴ "Memorandum of Commendations of McCoy to Secretary of War, to be appointed to accompany the Chickesaws and others, to explore the country west of the Mississippi," December 19, 1827 - January 14, 1828, Correspondence, XV.

³⁵ McCoy to James Noble, February 2, 1828, Correspondence, XV.

³⁶ T. McKinney to McCoy, June 10, 1828, Correspondence, XV.

Board, he exceeded his official instructions by also taking three Ottawas with him.³⁷ McCoy felt he had to make this tour himself, for, as he explained, "I want to be able to say something to propose to government *myself* - from my own doings and observation, in hope of receiving patronage in future, and again I want the wages which of course will be increased with length of service." The salary was necessary because the Baptist Board could not support his lobbying activities.³⁸

Upon returning from the tour, he feared the army officer in charge of the expedition would not write a report suitable as removal propaganda, so McCoy composed one himself.³⁹ His report was printed by the House of Representatives,⁴⁰ and he purchased an additional thousand copies to distribute to influential people.⁴¹ At the same time he directed his co-missionaries at the Baptist mission stations to engineer Ottawa and Potawatomi consent to removal.⁴² Since the House bill to collect the tribes west of the Mississippi failed, McCoy determined upon another western tour in order to gather even more favorable evidence in support of such a policy. As McCoy phrased it in his *History*.

the objects of this tour were to acquire definite knowledge of a portion of the Indian territory, which information might be used at the next session of Congress for promoting such proper action in reference to the permanent location of the Indians; and more particularly to be able to name a

³⁷ McCoy to R. and J. McCoy, June 18, 1828, Correspondence, XV.

³⁸ McCoy to J. Lykins, August 18, 1828, Correspondence, XVI.

³⁹ For the journals of the Western trip, see Lela Barnes (ed.), "Journal of Isaac McCoy for the Exploring Expedition of 1828," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, V (August 1936), 227-277; John F. McDermott (ed.), "Isaac McCoy's Second Exploring Tour in 1828," *Ibid.*, XIII (August 1945), 400-405. The report is *Ibid.*, pp. 405-435. Also see *History*, pp. 332-376.

⁴⁰ *House Doc.* No. 87, 20th Cong., 2d Sess. (1829-1830).

⁴¹ *History*, p. 376.

⁴² J. Lykins to McCoy, February 11, 1829, Correspondence, XVII; Gosa *et al.* to the President, February 17, 1829, *Ibid.*; J. Lykins to McCoy, February 18, 1829, *Ibid.*

suitable region in which to locate the seat of government for the proposed territory.⁴³

After his failure to obtain funds from the Secretary of War to finance this trip⁴⁴ and because of other bad luck with politicians, he cried all afternoon and evening of March 22, 1829.⁴⁵

McCoy also urged the Baptist Board to enter more strongly into the struggle for removal. He wrote an appendix to his *Remarks on the Practicability of Indian Reform* and asked the Board to finance its republication. Since a good part of the appendix rebuked the missionary society for its lukewarm support of Indian relocation, the Board naturally refused his request. That evening McCoy recorded in his diary, "this is a dark and discouraging night to my soul." He felt alone in God's work for the aborigine.⁴⁶ The next morning he awakened determined to publish the pamphlet on his own.⁴⁷ He also decided to appeal for support to the Board's parental body, the Triennial Convention. There he obtained a most favorable hearing from the Committee on Indian Missions, and the Convention instructed the Board to memorialize Congress in favor of removal and forced the Board to instruct him to explore the areas west of the Mississippi for lands suitable to the proposed Indian colony as well as permit him and his son-in-law, Johnston Lykins, to accept any government appointments that would facilitate this mission.⁴⁸

⁴³ *History*, p. 393.

⁴⁴ McCoy to J. H. Eaton, March 6, 1829, Correspondence, XVII.

⁴⁵ Journal, March 22, 1829.

⁴⁶ Journal, April 19, 1829; April 21, 1829.

⁴⁷ It appeared as *Remarks on the Practicability of Indian Reform, Embracing Their Colonization; with an Appendix* (New York, 2d ed., 1829).

⁴⁸ "The following Resolutions were submitted by McCoy, accompanied by remarks to the Board of Missions in Philadelphia, May 6, 1829, and with the exception noticed, adopted by that body." Correspondence, XVII; "Indian Missions" in Annual Report of Baptist Board in 1829, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, IX (June 1929), pp. 210-211.

During that Spring McCoy met another man as concerned about Indian removal as he was, but on the other side. Although Jeremiah Evarts, the Corresponding Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, had originally favored removal if done slowly and with proper safeguards for Indian feelings, the plans of Andrew Jackson for forced migration changed his mind. He wrote a series of essays arguing against removal and organized a campaign, opposing the President's plans, among congressmen, the general public, and the Cherokees.⁴⁹ McCoy returned to Washington from an exploring tour in late 1829 to campaign in favor of the removal bill against Evarts and his missionary following. He again visited Jackson, Secretary of War Eaton, and many congressmen to present his views and like Evarts entreated influential men to forward memorials to Congress.⁵⁰

Once again the indefatigable Baptist manifested impatience with his Board. In line with the resolution of the last Triennial Convention, it had drafted a memorial on the subject of Indian relocation and dispatched its treasurer to the capital to present the document with the aid of McCoy. To the great disappointment of McCoy, the memorial did not flatly ask for removal but merely requested a home for the Indians in the West if they were relocated. The Chairman of the House Indian Affairs Committee finally presented the memorial early in the new year. McCoy threatened to offer a stronger memorial but the Board in turn threatened to dismiss him. In order to protest the Board's neutral attitude in the controversy, he rushed to the Boston headquarters. After a long delay due to a stagecoach accident, he laid his case before the Board. Since it and he differed so much on Indian affairs, he proffered his resignation. The Board neither accepted his resignation nor

⁴⁹ See on this important figure, Ebenezer C. Tracy, *Memoir of the Life of Jeremiah Evarts, Esq.* (Boston, 1845); J. Orin Oliphant, *Through the South and West with Jeremiah Evarts in 1826* (Lewisburg, Pa., 1956), pp. 1-62.

⁵⁰ Summarized in *History*, pp. 393-397.

changed its policy.⁵¹ Upon his return to Washington, he advised the House Indian Affairs Committee on the location of tribes in the proposed Indian Territory.⁵²

Factors far more powerful than the lobbying efforts of McCoy determined the result of the removal debates in Congress, but the eager Baptist hoped to ride the wave of pro-removal sentiment in the administration and Congress to the position of power he sought in the Indian territory. As a reward for his efforts on behalf of the removal bill, he was offered a government post among the Choctaws. He rejected this offer, because, as he confided to his journal, "my labours would have been limited to a little spot, and to one tribe only." Rather, he preferred surveying, for he would then "have an opportunity of exerting an influ[ence] on the main subject of giving all the tribes a suitable home, and on the measures necessary to be adopted for the improvement of their condition subsequently."⁵³ He prayed for such a post, and soon afterward the Secretary of War answered his prayers with the first of many commissions for surveying and relocating Indians in the trans-Mississippi West.⁵⁴ With this commission, he felt that he was in an advantageous position from which to oversee the general placement of the tribes, to obtain the patronage of the government, and at the same time to expand the number of Baptist missions.^{54a} In conjunction with his government tasks with their necessary remuneration, the Baptist Board appointed him, at his request and through the influence of his firm supporter Spencer Cone, its general agent, to secure

⁵¹ Baptist Board Minutes, December 23, 1829, April 29, 1830; D. Sharp and L. Bolles to ———, March 2, 1830, Correspondence, XVIII; McCoy to R. Simerswell and J. Meeker, March 11, 1830, *Ibid.*; Compare *History*, pp. 395–398.

⁵² "Quantities of Land to Each Indian [tribe] in the Indian Territory + c[.], April 29, 1830," Correspondence, XVIII.

⁵³ Journal, May 6, 1831.

⁵⁴ McCoy to L. Bolles, May 12, 1831, Correspondence, XIX. A portion of his journal on such an exploring expedition has been edited by Lela Barnes in *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, V (November 1936), pp. 339–377.

^{54a} Journal, May 12, 1831.

more tribes and their annuities for Baptist stations and operations among the relocated Indians. In McCoy's eyes, sacred and secular labors fit together, and all for the greater glory of God and McCoy.

McCoy assumed his new tasks with his customary eagerness and hard work. Anticipating the successful passage of the removal bill, he had earlier moved westward in 1829 to Westport Landing, near present-day Kansas City, Kansas, to prepare a station for the reception of Indian emigrants and a headquarters for his operations on behalf of the Indian colony.⁵⁵ From here he journeyed still farther westward with his sons and others to survey or have surveyed most of the reservations in Kansas and the Cherokee Outlet during the 1830s. From here he also left for his usual winter sojourn in Washington to advise and cajole congressmen and cabinet members in accordance with his solution to the Indian problems. Thus his career during the decade of the 1830s alternated mainly between surveying for or relocating tribes in the West and politicking in the East, with no time left for actual missionary work among the Indians.

Even though he did no active missionary work, he did not forget the cause of Baptist missions during the decade. From the beginning of his career, McCoy had sought government aid for the support of Baptist missions. Indeed, from 1824 to the time of removal, all the money for his and his colleagues' work among the Ottawas and the Potawatomes had come from government sources.⁵⁶ The relocation of tribes necessitated new treaties, which opened new opportunities for gaining education annuities to finance Baptist missions. When Lewis Cass, his old acquaintance from Michigan, became Secretary of War, McCoy applied for the educational funds of nine tribes.⁵⁷ Though he never obtained all these funds, he still found more openings than his Board ever supplied. As McCoy makes plain in his *His-*

⁵⁵ McCoy to L. Farwell, August 26, 1829, Correspondence, XVII.

⁵⁶ Journal, May 4, 1831.

⁵⁷ McCoy to L. Cass, April 10, 1832, Correspondence, XX.

tory, he thought the board deliberately sacrificed Indian missions for the more glamorous overseas efforts.

McCoy, in an attempt to remedy this neglect, decided to publish his own magazine to inform the public of the truth and the merits of his course as opposed to the Board's silence. Initially, he hoped to edit a weekly or bi-weekly magazine on a press located in Indian territory, but the Board vetoed this scheme.⁵⁸ Once again he forged ahead without his patrons' approbation or financing by publishing on his own the *Annual Register of Indian Affairs*. The first issue of one thousand copies appeared in 1835 with the usual statistics on tribes and missions in the Indian territory and propaganda for McCoy's pet projects. He distributed copies gratuitously to the President of the United States, heads of executive departments, members of Congress, and editors of Baptist periodicals.⁵⁹ To finance the new project, he had to seek another government appointment. All this effort he hoped would be mere prelude to a magazine, *The Indian Advocate*, to be published more frequently.⁶⁰ Until this dream was realized, he published⁶¹ a *Periodical Account of Baptist Missions within the Indian Territory, for the Year Ending December 31, 1836* to supplement the Baptist Board's official magazine. By 1835 he had begun work upon his *History of Baptist Indian Missions*, which was obviously meant to propagandize for Indian colonization, to obtain better support for Baptist missions, and, incidentally, to reveal his leading role in these endeavors.

That role had been an active, if not leading, one during the decade of 1830s. Just as McCoy had not invented the idea of removal but only added to its demand, neither did he originate the idea of an Indian state in the West. But just as with the project for removal, he joined the move-

⁵⁸ McCoy to L. Bolles, March 25, 1833 and McCoy to S. H. Cone, October 26, 1833, Correspondence, XXI.

⁵⁹ Journal, December 18, 1833, January 19, February 5, 1835. Three additional issues of the *Register* appeared annually through 1838.

⁶⁰ McCoy to S. H. Cone, January 19, 1835, Correspondence, XXII.

⁶¹ Shawnee Baptist Mission, Indian territory, 1837.

ment for an Indian state with great enthusiasm.⁶² His early thoughts upon colonization had not embraced the possibility of a separate Indian state with an independent government, but in his second 1828 report he definitely adopted this solution to the Indian problem. He argued such a development should take place under the direction of a superintendent separate from other Indian agents.⁶³ His plans for such a state were fully developed in early 1832 in a report for Secretary of War Lewis Cass published by Congress⁶⁴ and in an "Address to Philanthropists" to rally public opinion.⁶⁵ When John Bell, Representative from Tennessee, introduced a bill providing for the appointment of three commissioners to manage the affairs of the Western Indian Country, McCoy drew up amendments at the representative's request.⁶⁶ Although he eagerly sought one of these positions through the influence of his friends in and out of Congress, Secretary Cass disappointed him.⁶⁷ He still hoped to turn adversity to advantage by drafting a lengthy letter to the three commissioners advising them upon what they should recommend about an Indian government. This time he proposed that the Indians be governed under a plan similar to the usual territorial system with a governor and three judges appointed by the President.⁶⁸ According to him, his ideas influenced Secretary Cass's recommendations for organizing an Indian territory, because the commissioners' report was not ready in time for the next session

⁶² The general history of the movement is Annie H. Abel, "Proposals for an Indian State, 1778-1878," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1907* (Washington, 1908), I, pp. 87-104.

⁶³ The report is published in *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, XIII (August 1945), pp. 405-435.

⁶⁴ *House Doc.* No. 172, 22d Cong., 1st Sess. (1831-1832).

⁶⁵ Though published separately, it is most conveniently found in *History*, pp. 431-438. That the two publications were seen as part of a single cause by McCoy can be seen in Journal, March 28, 1832.

⁶⁶ Journal, March 28, 1832.

⁶⁷ Journal, August 27, 1832.

⁶⁸ McCoy to Commissioners, October 15, 1832, Correspondence, XX, printed as *Senate Doc.* No. 512, 24th Cong., 1st Sess. (1835-1836), III, pp. 486-498.

of Congress.⁶⁹ He probably hoped to be appointed governor under this scheme.

The more active McCoy became in promoting an Indian territorial government of some kind, the less he mentions it in his *History*. During the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth Congresses, he even became a ghost-writer, so-to-speak, for congressmen, particularly Senator John Tipton of Tennessee on the Indian Affairs Committee. In 1836, he drafted Tipton's report and the speech introducing the bill proposing a government for the Western Indians.⁷⁰ In his *History*, he neglects to mention his role in this process but states that Tipton's report was believed by many to advance "the soundest doctrine, and the most rational argument in favour of ameliorating the condition of the Indians, of any thing of the kind that had emanated from a member of our national legislature."⁷¹ The height of his influence was probably reached in the winter and spring of 1838. He stayed at the same boardinghouse as Tipton, was frequently consulted by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and prepared several speeches for congressmen. Besides writing for Tipton, he drafted arguments for Senators Wilson Lumpkin of Georgia and Ambrose Sevier of Arkansas.⁷² Perhaps McCoy's unusual modesty is due to his secrecy in the whole affair, for he wrote his wife in 1836 that only a confidential circle knew he was acting for the passage of the bill.⁷³

⁶⁹ McCoy to wife, March 16, 1834, Correspondence, XXII.

⁷⁰ In Correspondence, XXIII, are drafts in his hand of the report and the "Remarks," dated March 3 and 30, 1836, respectively. Compare *Senate Doc.* No. 246, 24th Cong., 1st Sess. (1835-1836).

⁷¹ *History*, p. 502. For Tipton's biography by Paul W. Gates and his correspondence, see *Indiana Historical Collections*, XXIV-XXVI (1942).

⁷² See Journal for period, especially January 28, March 6, 7, 16, April 21, 27, 30, May 2, 12, 14, 1838. Drafts of speeches in Correspondence, XXV and XXVI under dates March 28, 1838, and January 30, February 9, 1839. For example, Sevier's speech reprinted in the appendix of the *History*, pp. 598-611, was one outlined, if not drafted, by McCoy. Compare the *History*, pp. 542, 556, for how little credit McCoy claims in this business.

⁷³ McCoy to wife, March 26, 1836, Correspondence, XXIII.

Although the Senate passed bills twice to organize the Indian territory of McCoy's dreams, in both instances they failed in the House. Each time success of the bills looked imminent to McCoy, he applied for the Superintendency of Indian Affairs for the whole territory. He also rallied his influential friends in and out of Congress to support his request.⁷⁴ Naturally, the failure of the bills to pass meant the failure of his and his friends' efforts to secure him the powerful position of his dreams.

In spite of, or maybe because of, this political activity, McCoy published *The History of Baptist Indian Missions* in 1840, when his star, despite his failure to achieve an Indian state, seemed ascendant. The next year McCoy's dream began to fall apart. Early in 1841, he realized that advancing white settlement was already beginning to doom his work among the relocated Indians, and he vowed to redouble his efforts to secure a permanent home for Western Indians free of baleful white influence.⁷⁵ Though the Whig administration of William Henry Harrison replaced the previously friendly Van Buren officials in that year, McCoy still hoped for political favors because his friend, John Bell of Tennessee, had become Secretary of War.⁷⁶ But heaven seemed to intervene with Harrison's death soon after inauguration. His successor, Vice President Tyler, was thought to betray the principles of Whiggism in the eyes of the cabinet, so they resigned *en masse*. The new Secretary of War relieved McCoy of all government duties and, what

⁷⁴ McCoy to S. H. Cone, March 12, 1836, Correspondence, XXIII; McCoy to Lewis Cass, March 14, 1836, *Ibid.*; McCoy to President Jackson, March 14, 1836; McCoy to wife, May 9, 1836, *Ibid.*; William L. Marcy to President Jackson, June 2, 1836, *Ibid.*; John Tipton and eleven others to President Jackson, June 15, 1836, *Ibid.*; Lucius Boles, S. H. Cone, and others to ———, April 26, 1838, Correspondence, XXV (in McCoy's handwriting); Wilson Lumpkin and fifteen others to President Van Buren, May 4, 1838, *Ibid.* Among the signers of the latter was his old rival for government annuities for Baptist schools, Richard M. Johnson, now vice-president of the United States.

⁷⁵ Journal, February 27, 1841.

⁷⁶ Journal, March 6, 9, 1841.

was worse, all hope of such employment in the future.⁷⁷

At the same time, he was dismissed as missionary by the Baptist Board. From the beginning of his labors in the aboriginal vineyard, McCoy had thought the Board only half-hearted in its efforts for Indian missions. He had offered his resignation in 1830 because of this feeling, and for this reason he had pursued his many personal projects to publicize and increase the interest in aboriginal salvation. In order to finance these activities, which the board could not and would not support, he had acted as a government agent during the removal decade. Finally, in a footnote to the *Annual Report* for 1841, the Baptist Board stated that McCoy and his wife had not been considered missionaries of the society since 1830 because of his government employment.⁷⁸ The missionary was deeply hurt and protested such a furtive dismissal.⁷⁹ A similar note had appeared in the 1833 *Report* and McCoy probably expected to be reinstated on the roster of missionaries now as he had been then.⁸⁰ The Board, however, feared his nominal relationship would harm the society and informed him the connection was definitely dissolved.⁸¹

In his protests against Baptist policy, McCoy had always identified all his Shawnee mission colleagues with his cause, but long smoldering unrest against his dictatorship erupted at this moment in a challenge to his authority.⁸² In order to reduce McCoy to a level equal with themselves in the conduct of the mission, the brethren formed a conference in which all actions had to be approved by a joint vote. McCoy and his son-in-law, Johnston Lykins, opposed this maneuver and for a brief while the Board heeded his objec-

⁷⁷ T. H. Crawford to McCoy, February 17, 1842, Correspondence, XXVIII.

⁷⁸ Annual Report for 1841, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, XXI (June 1841), 177 n.

⁷⁹ McCoy to L. Bolles, July 20, 1841, Correspondence, XXVII.

⁸⁰ McCoy to L. Bolles, July 23, 1833, Correspondence, XXI.

⁸¹ S. Peck to McCoy, November 1, 1841, John G. Pratt Papers in the Kansas State Historical Society.

⁸² S. Peck to J. G. Pratt, August 4, 1841, Pratt Papers.

tions and disallowed the conference. Soon the other missionaries informed the Board about the selfish basis of McCoy's opposition and exposed him and his son-in-law as not acting in a missionary capacity for years, for both lived outside Indian country, seldom visited the mission church, and mainly performed government business.⁸³ To reduce further the old missionary's authority, the other missionaries separated the branch church from the main church and established a new church for the Delawares so that all the missionaries would be on an equal plane.⁸⁴ McCoy and Lykins protested this scheme and the Board ordered the churches to disband, to the disgust of the other missionaries.⁸⁵ Again they presented the Board with the facts,⁸⁶ and again won a reversal of its decision.⁸⁷

For some time McCoy had contemplated the organization of a separate society solely devoted to Indian affairs.⁸⁸ The revolt within his mission and his dismissal crystallized this impulse at the beginning of 1842. No doubt this decision was reinforced by the government's dismissal of him as its agent thereby cutting off his funds. Immediately he commenced correspondence with leading Baptists about the Board's slighting of the aborigine.⁸⁹ Before founding such a new society, McCoy appealed for a last time to the annual spring meeting of the entire Board for reinstatement and the creation of a separate agency for Indian work.

⁸³ J. G. Pratt to L. Bolles, January 15, 1841, Pratt Papers.

⁸⁴ Extracts from Church Books, Osage River, May 2, 1840 and August 1, 1840, Correspondence, XXVII.

⁸⁵ L. Bolles to Baptist Missionaries, November 4, 1841, Correspondence, XVII.

⁸⁶ J. G. Pratt to L. Bolles, December 3, 1841, Pratt Papers.

⁸⁷ Baptist Board Minutes, January 31, 1842; S. Peck to Shawnee Mission, February 1, 1842, Francis Barker Correspondence in the Kansas State Historical Society.

⁸⁸ He had advocated the formation of a separate Baptist board for Indian affairs, and he urged his good friend Spencer Cone to be its secretary: McCoy to S. H. Cone, January 15, 1838, Correspondence, XXV; McCoy to President of Baptist General Convention, April 21, 1838, *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ For example, McCoy to D. Benedict, February 11, 1842, Correspondence, XXVIII; T. Shields to McCoy, February 15, 1842, *Ibid.*

He failed in both.⁹⁰ He launched the drive for a new missionary society in June, 1842, at a special meeting of the Western Baptist Publication and Sabbath School Society in Louisville, Kentucky.⁹¹ The usual constitution and address to the public was framed, and McCoy was selected as agent to rally support for such an organization in the West.⁹² At a meeting of the "Western Baptists" in Cincinnati in October, the constitution was formally adopted and McCoy was elected corresponding secretary.⁹³ At last McCoy had a job again and a position of power he had long sought. Even the journal of the new society was the realization of long cherished dream of McCoy's, for it was named the *Indian Advocate*.⁹⁴

Now the American Indian Mission Association, as the new society called itself, needed stations and missionaries. In November Lykins resigned from the Baptist Board when it ordered him to resume active mission work,⁹⁵ and the new organization obtained its first missionary. Lykins' son was appointed the second missionary. In 1844 the Baptist Board dismissed the Potawatomi missionary, who derived his support from his appointment as government blacksmith, and McCoy gained another worker.⁹⁶ Rather than a slow evolution of station openings, McCoy had hoped to gain all the Baptist missions by release from the Baptist

⁹⁰ Annual Meeting of Board for 1842, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, XXII (June 1842), 146-147.

⁹¹ McCoy's reasons for selecting this society to initiate his enterprise are given in "The Rev. Wm. C. Buck's Address to the Association," *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the American Indian Association*, 1846, pp. 22-23.

⁹² *Baptist Banner and Western Pioneer*, extra, June 18, 1842.

⁹³ "Proceedings of the Western Baptist Convention, held in Cincinnati, Ohio, October 27, 28, and 29, 1842," *Baptist Banner and Western Pioneer*, November 17, 1842.

⁹⁴ Publication began in Louisville in 1846.

⁹⁵ J. Lykins to Baptist Board, November 28, 1842, Correspondence, XXVIII; "Minutes of Facts, etc." August 31, 1843, Barker Correspondence.

⁹⁶ S. Peck to R. Simerwell, April 18, 1844, Robert Simerwell Papers in Kansas State Historical Society; McCoy to R. Simerwell, August 21, 1844, *Ibid*.

Board. As chairman of the Association's committee to arrange such a negotiation, he drafted the letter proposing the missions' transfer to his organization.⁹⁷ The Board's committee which considered the proposition did not recommend immediate transfer but allowed any missionary to switch his station to the other organization. Under this arrangement the Choctaw missionary came under the American Indian Mission Association.⁹⁸ At times the Board seemed on the verge of fulfilling McCoy's desires, but the Kansas missionaries who knew McCoy so well bitterly fought return to his dictatorship.⁹⁹ As another alternative McCoy resorted to the old tactic of attempting to secure federal funds and tribal annuities, but he was unsuccessful here too.¹⁰⁰

McCoy at the time of his death in 1846 had failed to realize his dream for a large successful American Indian Mission Association. A decade after its founding the society employed only nine men, ten women, and nine native assistants to labor among the Potawatomies, Shawnees, Weas, Choctaws, and Creeks.¹⁰¹

On his deathbed, McCoy requested his family to see to the preparation of a biography of himself.¹⁰² Such a dying wish seemed unnecessary, for the best memorial to his many years of service was his own *History*. No other writer could have expressed his trials and his triumphs as vividly,

⁹⁷ *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the American Indian Association*, October 1843, pp. 11-12.

⁹⁸ Report of Annual Meeting of Baptist Board, 1844, in *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, XXIV (July 1844), pp. 161-162; Baptist Board Annual Report, 1845, *Ibid.*, XXV (July 1845), pp. 166-167.

⁹⁹ Jotham Meeker Journal, April 17, 18, May 20, 1846, Jotham Meeker Papers in Kansas State Historical Society; Report of Committee on the Transfer of Indian Missions, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, XXVI (July 1846), p. 169.

¹⁰⁰ "Business with the Government of the United States," *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the American Indian Association*, October and November 1845, pp. 19-20.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 1852, pp. 28-43.

¹⁰² J. Lykins to S. H. Cone, January 27, 1847, Correspondence, XXXI.

and no other author could have omitted the last years of his life when history, if not Heaven, had passed him by in favor of others. The volume did secure McCoy's place in the annals of American missionaries to the Indians. While men of equal or even greater influence and industry are relatively unknown to historians, McCoy, because of his *History*, commands a large place in the story of antebellum missionary history.

The book deserves its fame despite the egocentric bias of its history. The pages reflect quite accurately the attitudes of many missionaries to the Indians. How McCoy viewed and wrote about Indian life and activities, about surrounding whites, and about the ways of teaching and preaching to aboriginal Americans was how many other missionaries described these things to their respective boards. While other missionaries felt strongly about the removal of the Indians, no other man propagandized and lobbied with the zeal or the skill of McCoy. Lastly, the book adds important detail to our knowledge of life upon the frontier. The difficulties of his travel, the frequent illnesses and deaths in his family, and his problems in hiring help and buying supplies all mirror the experience of white settlers upon the frontier.

At the same time, the book conceals much, sometimes deliberately but often not so. McCoy's failure to point out that Johnston Lykins was his son-in-law or that Spencer Cone's wife was related to Lewis Cass seems somewhat curious. His political efforts in the 1830s seem deliberately to have been played down in order to emphasize his missionary work as well as to conceal his role as a lobbyist. Thus the 1820s and early years of the next decade take up far more space in exposition than do the later 1830s. But the most interesting omission in the volume is any insight into Indian attitudes and customs. After twenty-three years among the Indians, McCoy seems as oblivious of their culture as when he first entered among them. In this blindness he was like most other Americans. In the end, his book

shows him to be a nineteenth-century American first and a missionary second. This perspective as well as the egocentric bias of the book in no way diminishes its utility to present-day scholars. In fact, that is why we read the book today, and that is why it is so valuable.

Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr.

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Histories by McCoy's Baptist contemporaries present another perspective upon his efforts. The most valuable are William Gammell, *History of American Baptist Missions in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America* (Boston, 1840, and later editions); and Solomon Peck, "History of the Missions of the Baptist General Convention," in Joseph Tracy et al., *History of American Missions to the Heathen, from Their Commencement to the Present Time* (Worcester, Mass., 1840), pp. 353-529. That McCoy was typical in his attitudes and approaches to Indian missionary work may be seen in Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions and American Indian Re-*

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