"Who Was Jane Lamont?"

ANGLO-DAKOTA DAUGHTERS
IN EARLY MINNESOTA

Jane Lamm Carroll

ON SEPTEMBER 23, 1838, Lawrence Taliaferro, the United States Indian agent at Fort Snelling, recorded in his journal a conversation with a commissioner sent to verify the 1837 treaty claims of mixed-blood relatives of the Mdewankantonn Dakota.

> General Ewing at supper addressed himself to me for the first time in some days by asking who was Jane Lamont. . . . I replied she is the Daughter of the late Daniel Lamont formerly a partner of the Columbia Fur Company near this post. Jane Lamont was a cousin of my Daughter—as well as Elizabeth Williams and Nancy Eastman.[1]

Jane Lamont, Mary Taliaferro, Elizabeth Williams, and Nancy Eastman were the daughters of sisters whose father was Cloud Man (Mahpiyawicasta), a Mdewankanton Dakota chief.[2] Their Anglo-American fathers had married their mothers according to Dakota customs, or, in the language of the fur trade, *a la facon du pays*. As historians of the Canadian and Great Lakes fur trade have shown, such marriages had been commonplace for French, British, Métis (French-Indian), and other men of mixed heritage since the eighteenth century, as both Indians and traders saw such unions as economically and socially beneficial.[3] These country marriages, as they

Indian people at Mendota and soldiers across the river at Fort Snelling, about 1850, well past the early years of Anglo-American contact with the Mdewankanton Dakota; Fort Snelling, *oil painting by Henry Lewis.*

were commonly called, were not restricted to traders. In the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, first British and then American government officials and soldiers also married Indian women *a la facon du pays*, though for different motives than traders.[4]

While Native women married European, American, and bicultural men primarily to benefit themselves and their kin, such practical considerations did not necessarily preclude personal ambition, romantic sentiment, sexual attraction, love, or a disposition to acculturation as factors affecting marital choice.[5] But regardless of what Native wives hoped to gain, were they, as women, better off? Despite the social and material advantages—and, often, less arduous physical labor for the woman herself—there also could be negative consequences.

Two of the worst possibilities for a Native wife were the loss of her personal autonomy and the loss of control over her children. Women who made legally sanctioned unions with Anglo-American men married into a patriarchal culture and legal system that assumed virtually absolute male authority over wives and children in nuclear-ordered families. Ironically, but not surprisingly, Anglo-American husbands often carried their patriarchal prerogatives into marriages *a la facon du pays*. So, while logic might dictate that marriages by native customs should operate accordingly, they were frequently characterized by husbands' patriarchal assumptions.[6]

NATIVE WOMEN WORKED IN COMMUNITY WITH OTHER WOMEN AND ENJOYED THE SUPPORT OF EXTENSIVE KINSHIP NETWORKS.

These customs and legal practices directly clashed with the cultural traditions of North American native groups. In the tribes of Canada, the Great Lakes, and Upper Mississippi regions, as among most North American native societies, mothers retained control over their children regardless of their marital status. In contrast especially to married Anglo-American women, North American Indian women also possessed autonomy over

Dr. Carroll is an associate professor of history at the College of St. Catherine, St. Paul.

Dakota women and children working together to guard their corn from blackbirds, 1862

their own bodies, as well as control over their own labor, the food they gathered or produced, and their household goods. Moreover, Native women worked in community with other women and enjoyed the support of extensive kinship networks. Thus, most Native women were accustomed to communal support and to operating within a large sphere of female activity that fell outside the purview of Indian men.

One wonders whether Indian women fully understood the potential consequences of marrying an Anglo-American man—what might be lost as well as gained. Were they aware that their husbands were likely to exert control over their children, even when their marriages according to native customs were not sanctioned by American law and even after their husbands abandoned them?[7] To what extent did Native mothers retain control over their bicultural children and determine their cultural identities? What circumstances determined which parent was more influential in the life of a bicultural child? Did Anglo-Native children come ultimately to identify more with one culture than the other, or did they create a cultural middle ground for themselves? An analysis of the lives of three Anglo-Dakota daughters—Jane Lamont, Mary Taliaferro, and Helen Sibley—all born in Minnesota in the 1820s and 1830s reveals some of the complex dynamics of biculturalism.

GEOGRAPHY AND TIMING were major factors in the lives of Jane Lamont, Mary Taliaferro, and Helen Sibley, for their mothers were Mdewankanton Dakota. Their bands lived in villages close to the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers in what is now eastern Minnesota. The Mdewankanton had lived near, conducted trade with, and had significant exposure to Anglo-American society since the advent of the British fur trade in the late-eighteenth century, with its regional headquarters at Prairie du Chien. Contact continued during the American fur trade regime, which made Mendota an important trading post, and accelerated with the establishment of the U.S. military presence at Fort Snelling in 1819. As the easternmost of the Dakota bands, the Mdewankanton also were the first to cede lands to the U.S. and were, thus, also the first of the Dakota to suffer the devastating economic and cultural effects of Euro-American settlement.[8]

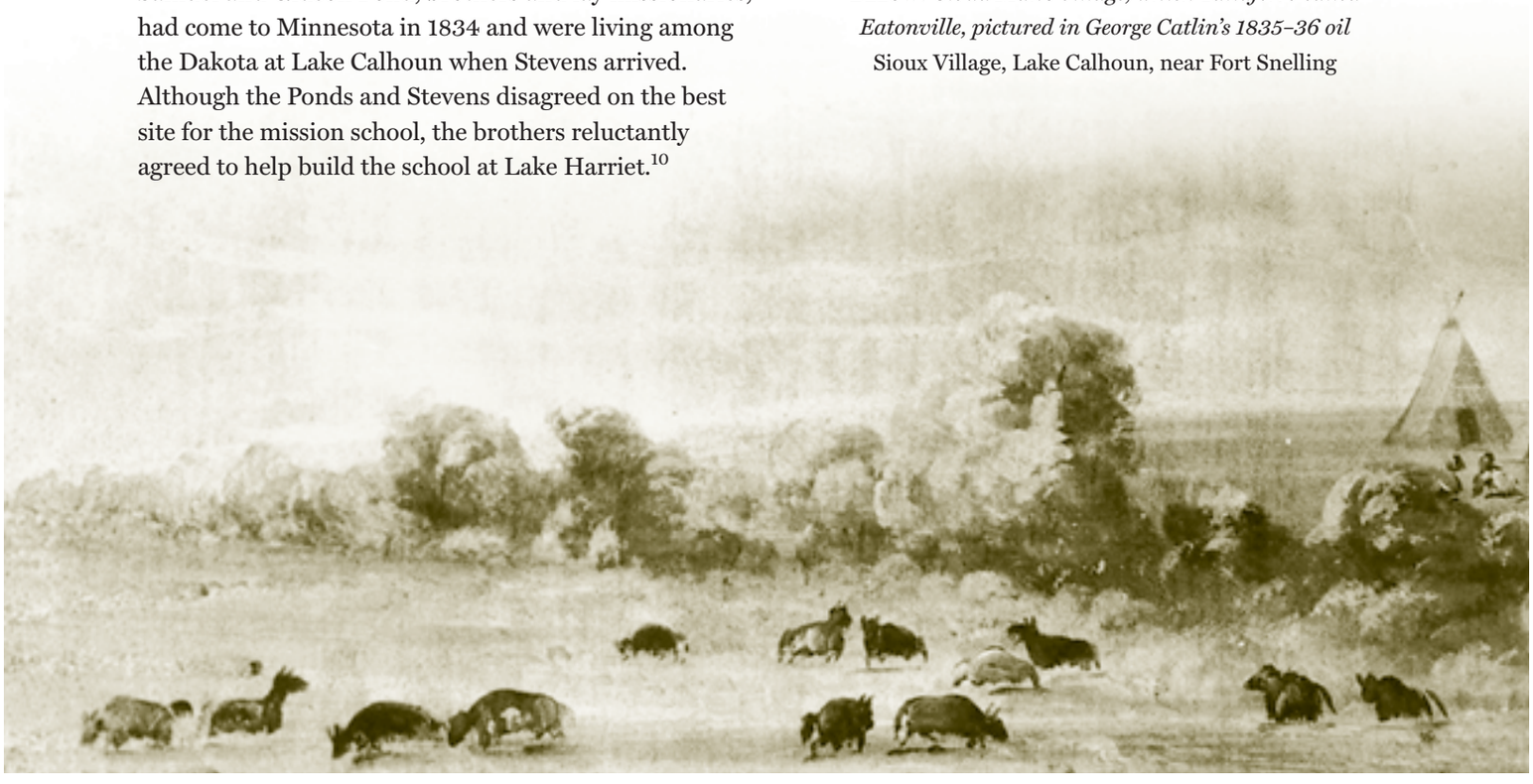
During the 1830s Jane Lamont, Mary Taliaferro, their cousins, and several other bicultural and Dakota children were pupils at a school the Rev. Jedediah Stevens, a missionary from New York, had established at Lake Harriet in the summer of 1835. Founded under the direction of Agent Taliaferro, the mission was close to Cloud Man's Lake Calhoun farming village.[9] (Lakes Harriet and Calhoun are in what is now South Minneapolis, about eight miles west of Fort Snelling.) That year, Cloud Man's village consisted of about 14 dwellings and was home to about 45 families, including those of his daughters. By the summer of 1839, there were estimated to be as many as 500 Dakota living in the vicinity of the two lakes. Samuel and Gideon Pond, brothers and lay missionaries, had come to Minnesota in 1834 and were living among the Dakota at Lake Calhoun when Stevens arrived. Although the Ponds and Stevens disagreed on the best site for the mission school, the brothers reluctantly agreed to help build the school at Lake Harriet.[10]

By 1840 Jane Lamont's mother, Hushes the Night (Hanyetukihnayewn), was the widow of Daniel Lamont, a Scotsman who had been trading in the region since the early 1820s. They had married in about 1829; he died sometime between 1836 and 1837. In the spring of 1840, as Samuel Pond was preparing to abandon the Lake Harriet mission, Hushes the Night—for reasons we will never know—asked him to take Jane and raise her with his own family. Jane was about 10 or 11 years old and did not speak English. Hushes the Night, two or more of her sisters, and their children had all had extensive contact with the Ponds, however, while living in their father's village.[11]

Although Jane was taken into the Pond family, mother and daughter were never far apart. Several years after the Ponds left Lake Harriet, they established another mission at Oak Grove (now Bloomington) on the

The Pond brothers' cabin at Lake Calhoun

BELOW: *Cloud Man's village, which Taliaferro called Eatonville, pictured in George Catlin's 1835–36 oil* Sioux Village, Lake Calhoun, near Fort Snelling

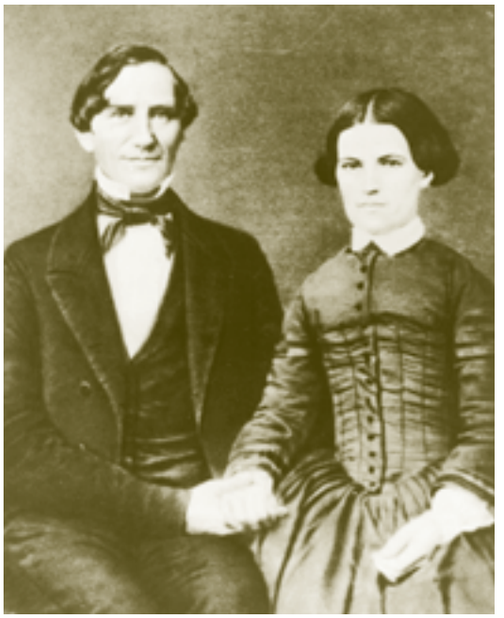


Minnesota River. Hushes the Night, her other children, and a large contingent of Cloud Man's band lived nearby, except for short periods when they were away gathering food or hunting. Hushes the Night's sister, The Day Sets, and Mary, her daughter by Lawrence Taliaferro, were also part of the Ponds' circle at Oak Grove.[12]

JANE LAMONT LIVED IN THE HOMES OF SAMUEL AND GIDEON POND AT OAK GROVE AND SHAKOPEE FOR 13 YEARS.

In June 1847, when Jane was about 17 years old, Cordelia Pond, Samuel's wife, wrote that there was "much sickness among the Indians here" and that "Jane's younger sister and cousin have been thought to be very near death for several days past." On August 14 Gideon Pond noted in his diary that Jane's mother had died. Ten years later, although Jane's Dakota kin no longer resided in the vicinity, Jane and the Ponds still maintained ties with them. Samuel Pond reported in an 1857 letter that he had heard from a Dakota source that "Jane's relatives are all well."[13]

Jane Lamont lived in the homes of Samuel and Gideon Pond at Oak Grove and Shakopee for 13 years. Pond family letters and Gideon's diary refer frequently to Jane's activities, health, character, and piety. It is clear that both families held her in high esteem and affectionate regard and were solicitous of her welfare. In 1847 Cordelia Pond wrote a friend:

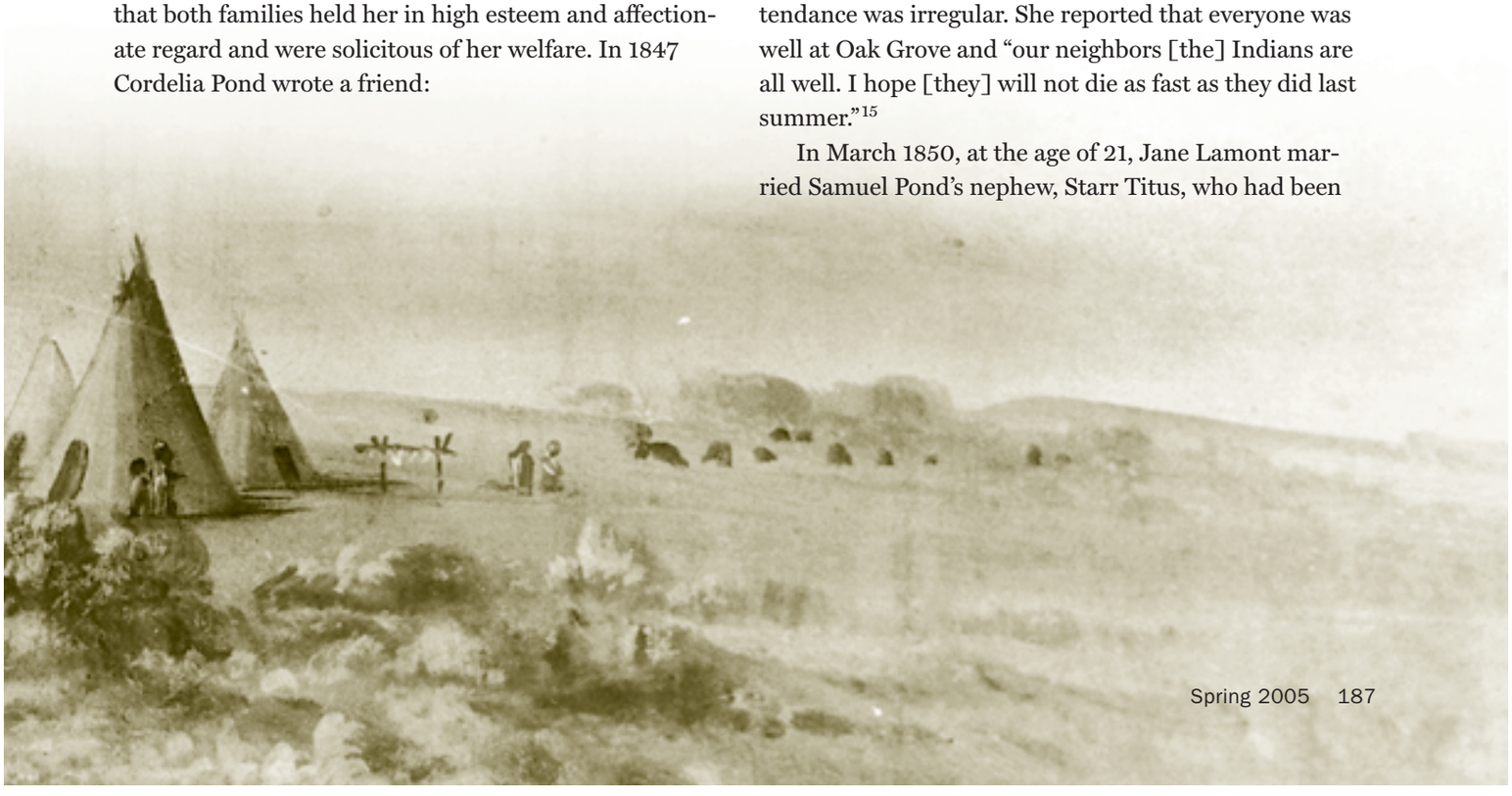


Gideon Pond and his second wife, Agnes Hopkins Pond, 1854

> We have a teacher for our Indian school this winter of our own training. She does very well, I believe. She came to live with us about 7 years ago and has lived either in our family or Brother's most of the time since. We think she gives good evidence of piety. [She] was received into the church last summer.[14]

The next year, Jane herself wrote to Cordelia that she had 12 students in her school at Oak Grove but that attendance was irregular. She reported that everyone was well at Oak Grove and "our neighbors [the] Indians are all well. I hope [they] will not die as fast as they did last summer."[15]

In March 1850, at the age of 21, Jane Lamont married Samuel Pond's nephew, Starr Titus, who had been



living with the family for some years. It seems that some of the Ponds were surprised at the marriage. Eleven days later, Gideon wrote in his diary, "This morning for the first time heard Starr speak to Jane in the presence of the family—*never heard her speak to him*." Starr and Jane had apparently hidden their affection for one another well in the years they lived together in the same household.[16]

The extent to which Jane had become acculturated into Anglo-American society is evident in a letter Cordelia Pond wrote two months after Jane's wedding: "Perhaps you would like to hear something more about Jane Lamont, as she has now become our niece. . . . She is a fine young woman [whom] we believe truly pious. Should you form an acquaintance with her now you would not suspect that she spent the first 11 years of her life with the Indians."[17]

Starr and Jane remained with the Ponds until October 1853, when Gideon noted in his diary, "Starr moved, went with Jane to Mr. Dean's." For some months the couple had been making plans to find their own place. Jane had to decide whether to follow her Dakota kin west to their new reservation on the Minnesota River, where she would be their teacher, or remain among the growing numbers of immigrants pouring into the territory west of the Mississippi River. She chose to live a settler's life. In January 1853 Samuel Pond wrote, "Starr intends to build a half mile from us next spring. Jane is very unwilling to go with the Indians."[18] The nature of Samuel's explanation, the close relationship between the Pond family and the Mdewakanton Dakota, and the fact that Jane and Starr were married—both legally and in the eyes of the church—indicates that Jane was not being forced to choose between her marriage and the reservation. Rather, she was deciding in which society she preferred to reside.

JANE AND HER HUSBAND QUICKLY PROSPERED ON THEIR NEW HOMESTEAD.

Jane and her husband quickly prospered on their new homestead. Less than a year after they moved, Samuel Pond wrote his sister:

> Starr and family are well. He is getting rich too fast. He earns five or six dollars a day with his team probably more and Jane milks six cows and sells her butter for thirty cents a pound. . . . He has lately sold about ten acres of land and had a great deal more that he will sell as well. I suppose he has some three or four thousand dollars out at interest and has perhaps forty head of cattle and horses. His claim probably will make a rich man of him.[19]

By the time she was a young woman, Jane Lamont must have identified strongly with both the Dakota and Anglo-American cultures. She was a Dakota girl until the age of ten; her Dakota family lived nearby during her years with the Ponds; and she maintained contact with her relatives and friends after they moved to the reservation. Living with a missionary family whose work was among the Dakota, Jane remained close to her mother's people and culture even while she herself was becoming increasingly acculturated into Anglo-American society. Ultimately, Jane chose to live her life primarily as an Anglo-American woman. Although the Ponds had trained her to be a missionary teacher to the Dakota, Jane rejected that life when she refused to move to the reservation. Perhaps she might have chosen differently had her mother still been alive, but by 1853 Jane was 24 years old, her mother had been dead for six years, and

Building St. Cornelia's Church near Morton on the newly established Lower Sioux Indian Reservation

Jane had been married for three. She had embarked on her own life in Anglo-American society and no longer saw her fate as linked to that of her Dakota kin. She likely remained in contact with them, however, including her cousin, Mary Taliaferro Woodbury, with whom she had grown up and who also had been close to the Ponds.

MARY'S MOTHER, THE DAY SETS (Anpetu Inajinwin), lived in Cloud Man's village during and after her short-lived country marriage to Indian Agent Taliaferro. By the summer of 1828, when The Day Sets gave birth to their daughter, Mary, Taliaferro was back East courting and marrying an Anglo woman, Eliza Dillon.[20] Although his marriage to The Day Sets did not last long, Taliaferro was interested in their daughter and took responsibility for her financially. Hoping Mary would become more Anglo-American than Dakota, he tried hard to shape her cultural identity.

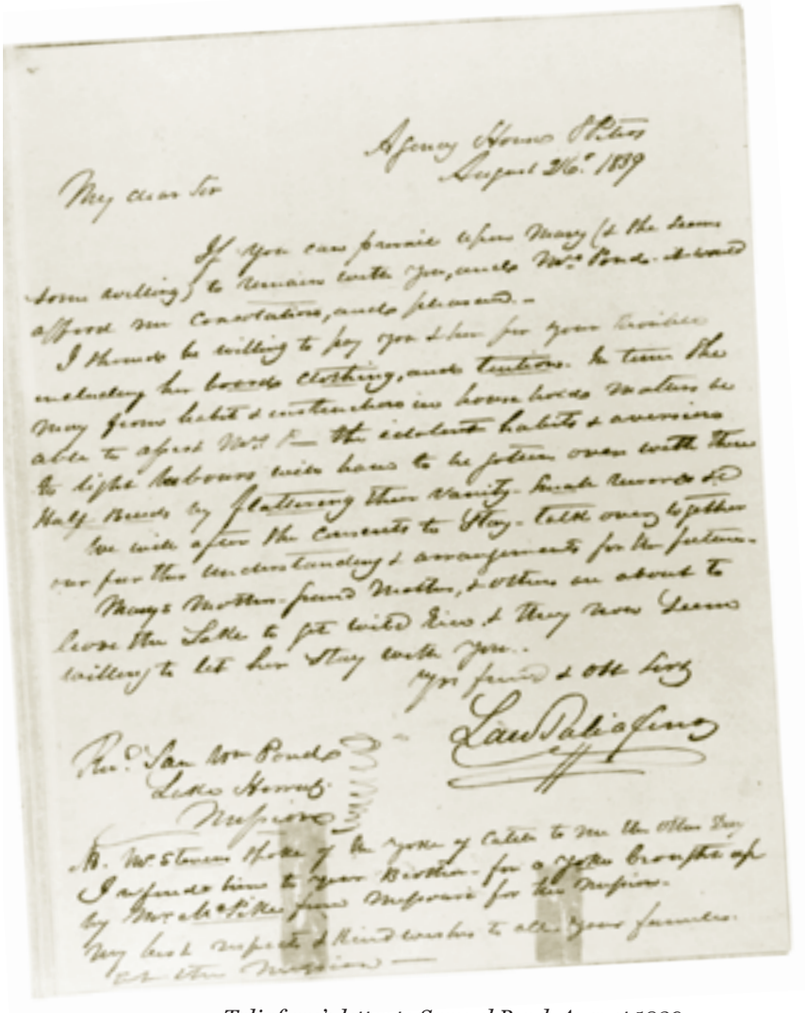
Handsomely attired Lawrence Taliaferro looms before Fort Snelling and some Indian people in this portrait, about 1830, by an unknown artist

Taliaferro affected Mary's life both directly and indirectly. The agent had spent his career trying (mostly in vain) to protect the Indians from the negative impacts of Euro-American society—alcohol, exploitation, diseases—while encouraging them to adopt what he saw as the positive aspects of the culture. Like most nineteenth-century Anglo-Americans, Taliaferro believed that Native Americans would eventually have to assimilate or face extinction. In supporting Cloud Man as he established the farming village at Lake Calhoun, the agent was undoubtedly thinking that his daughter and her kin would benefit from a shift to agriculture as a steady, substantial food source. Taliaferro was eager to help Cloud Man because more reliance on farming represented acculturation and pointed toward assimilation. He was also thrilled with the arrival of the Ponds, Stevens, and other missionaries because they brought both educational opportunities and Anglo-American culture to the Dakota.[21]

Taliaferro directly attempted to shape Mary's social environment and cultural identity by trying to persuade The Day Sets to expose their daughter as much as possible to Anglo-American culture through the mission schools and association with Anglo-American society. The agent never, however, presumed that he had the legal or moral right to control Mary or dictate to her mother particular courses of action (which, indeed, he did not). The extent to which Taliaferro had to negotiate with The Day Sets and Mary's grandmother, Red Cherry Woman, as well as his frustration that his daughter was still living a predominantly Dakota life at the age of 11, is evident in his 1839 letter to Samuel Pond:

> If you could prevail upon Mary (and she seems some willing) to remain with you, and Mrs. Pond—it would afford me some consolation, and pleasure.
>
> I should be willing to pay you and her for your trouble including her board, clothing, and tuition. In time she may from habit and instruction in household matters be able to assist Mrs. P.—the indolent habits and aversion to light labours will have to be gotten over with these Half Breeds by flattering their vanity—small rewards, etc.
>
> We will after she consents to stay—talk over together our further understanding and arrangements for the future.
>
> Mary's mother–grandmother and others are about to leave the Lake to get wild rice, and they now seem willing to let her stay with you.[22]

The timing of this letter is especially significant. Taliaferro had tendered his resignation as Indian agent and knew he was leaving Minnesota in a few months. He



Taliaferro's letter to Samuel Pond, August 1839

must have felt a particular urgency in matters relating to Mary, as he would soon be far away and his ability to influence her would be greatly reduced. Thus, he wished to arrange for Mary's future at the mission school.[23]

Most of Cloud Man's band abandoned their village at Lake Calhoun after the harvest of 1839. (Its location had left the band vulnerable to attacks by their long-time enemies, the Ojibwe.) The Ponds stayed on until the spring of 1840. In January 1840, Samuel Pond wrote that there were only five Indian families still living near the mission. The rest of the band had moved a "considerable distance" yet still visited frequently. The Day Sets and Mary were among those who stayed nearby and later followed the Ponds to Oak Grove.[24]

Six years after leaving Minnesota, Taliaferro responded to Samuel Pond's inquiry on behalf of Mary and her cousins regarding the 1837 treaty funds the former Indian agent held in trust for the girls. In his distraught reply, Taliaferro described his own woes and hinted at his fears regarding Mary's future, which he still aimed to influence:

My Good Friend,

I have for months not been well—or your very acceptable letter of the 5th of October past would have been much sooner responded to. In fact I have had to think of what I ought to say to you, and Mary—to the end that hopes of satisfactory information might reach you both. Yours is the first letter from St. Peter's from any one save Mr. Scott Campbell since December 1839—this is January, 1846.

I informed Mr. F. Steele by letter as well as verbally of my grief and distress at the loss of all the trust funds and my own money—which had been placed at interest for the benefit of Elizabeth Williams, Nancy Eastman and Mary. The firm in whose hands the money was [placed] failed and the parties took the benefit of that odious bankrupt law and I unhappily left destitute of available means. I am now trying to get an office—which will soon enable me to relieve myself of my responsibility and liability to those poor children.

I have had pain and anguish of feeling that one only knows its extent and bitterness. . . .

As yet I cannot say if you may expect me at St. Peter's. I will however write you again as to what I wish.

Could Mary be steady, and prevailed upon to stay with you and Mrs. Pond and your brother's family, I should be happy in the hopes of her future correct deportment. Tell her I will if God permit—try to do something for her, but she must not cause me grief or shame on her account.

I was in hopes that Mary would have been an instrument under God—in the hands of the missionaries of doing good for her people. She ought to be made to think of this—study hard and be governed by good advice.[25]

Taliaferro's letter suggests that Mary was contemplating leaving the Oak Grove mission. Was she, now 17, perhaps considering marriage? Clearly her father hoped she would become a missionary among her people, and perhaps he hoped she might marry a man similarly inclined. Did she have a suitor whom her father deemed undesirable? (It is not clear whether The Day Sets was still alive; she died when Mary was in her late teens.)

By November 1848 Mary had married Warren Woodbury, a soldier who, by his own account, had lived on the frontier since 1835. Woodbury was barely literate, as an 1850 letter he wrote to Henry Hastings Sibley shows. It is likely that Mary herself could read and write better in English than Warren, given her years of education at mission schools. As Taliaferro had not held a high opinion of

the character of the soldiers at Fort Snelling, and as he was himself well educated, he may not have seen such a match as worthy of his daughter.[26]

Woodbury's letter asked whether Sibley, who was in Washington, D.C. at the time, had seen his father-in-law. According to Woodbury, Taliaferro had written Mary in the spring that he was coming to visit on the first boat, but by August had not yet arrived. Did Taliaferro ever visit Mary in 1850? We don't know. He did return to Minnesota in 1856, at which time, he noted in his autobiography, "he found none to know him," perhaps indicating that this was his first visit since he had retired in 1839. Taliaferro's efforts to meet with Mary as well as maintain a relationship via correspondence reflect the strength of his feelings for her and his interest in her well-being. He was in regular communication with Mary well into the 1860s and probably up to his death in 1871.[27]

Mary and Warren lived in West St. Paul in the years after their marriage. In 1856 Mary Woodbury and her three young children were listed on a treaty roll as living in Dakota County. In 1862, after Warren left to fight in the Civil War, Mary was visiting her Dakota kin on the reservation when the Dakota War broke out. Little Crow's warriors took Mary and her children, as well as many other mixed-blood and non-Indian families, captive. Taliaferro later claimed that Mary had told him Little Crow intervened when she and her family were threatened with death, saying he was sparing them because of his respect for and friendship with the former Indian agent. In an 1888 affidavit, Mary additionally credited a Mdewankanton Dakota man, Mahpiyawakonze (Indian John), with rescuing and protecting her family, which now numbered four children. Mary, who apparently was a skilled healer, had treated Mahpiyawakonze for serious injuries sustained in the struggle and nursed him later that year after he almost froze to death on a scouting expedition for General Sibley.[28]

MARY TALIAFERRO WOODBURY DECIDED TO LIVE PERMANENTLY AMONG HER DAKOTA KIN WHO HAD BEEN EXILED TO THE SANTEE INDIAN RESERVATION IN NEBRASKA.

In the immediate aftermath of the Dakota War, and perhaps for several more years, Mary and her children may have lived at Mendota, where Henry Sibley gave refuge to some of the friendly Dakota and mixed-blood people whom the government had not deported from Minnesota. Mary's husband, Warren, died at the Battle of Vicksburg in 1863. By 1870 Mary was living in St. Paul with three of her children. Ten years later she was listed in the St. Paul city directory as living with her eldest son, Warren L. Woodbury, a conductor on the St. Paul and Dakota Railroad.[29]

In 1887–88 Mary Taliaferro Woodbury decided to live permanently among her Dakota kin who had been exiled to the Santee Indian Reservation in Nebraska. She, her daughter Nancy, her son Warren, his six children, and his non-Indian wife all moved permanently to the reservation. There, Mary lived out the remainder of her life. She died in 1916 at the age of 88.[30]

Unlike her cousin Jane Lamont, Mary Taliaferro was not immersed in Anglo-American culture or society for long periods of her youth. While Mary appears to have stayed sporadically with the Ponds as an adolescent and

Students gardening at the Santee mission school, Nebraska

attended their mission schools at Lake Harriet and Oak Grove, she remained throughout most of her formative years with her mother, grandmother, and Dakota kin living a primarily Dakota life. It is not clear when The Day Sets died, but we know that she was still alive when Mary was 16 years old.[31] The Day Sets and Cloud Man were disposed to some acculturation and modification of their traditional way of life, such as increased dependence on agriculture. Nevertheless, Mary had been raised in a society that remained more Dakota than not.

In her 1888 affidavit, Mary testified that she was one-quarter Sioux and had spoken the Sioux language all of her life. That was also the year she chose to leave St. Paul, where she had lived for more than 20 years, for the Santee Reservation. So, despite Taliaferro's efforts to shape his daughter's identity, despite her significant exposure to Anglo-American culture, despite her missionary education, despite 14 years of marriage to an Anglo-American man and many years of living in Anglo-American society, Mary Taliaferro appears to have maintained a very strong Dakota identity. Moreover, the fact that two of her grown children chose to live with their mother among their Dakota and mixed-blood kin indicates the strong role Mary played in shaping the cultural identity of her own children.

Helen Sibley, whose portrait accompanied "old settlers'" reminiscences in the St. Paul Dispatch *long after her death*

HELEN HASTINGS SIBLEY, another Anglo-Dakota woman, was the daughter of Red Blanket Woman and the granddaughter of Bad Hail, a chief of the Black Dog band of Mdewankanton Dakota. Helen's father, Henry Sibley, was one of the most prominent Anglo-Americans in Minnesota in the years between 1820 and 1862. A powerful and influential American Fur Company trader, he was the first governor of the State of Minnesota and the leader of military forces against the Dakota during the 1862 Dakota War. Sibley married Red Blanket Woman *a la facon du pays* during the winter of 1839–40. In August 1841 Red Blanket Woman gave birth to their daughter, Helen Hastings, Wahkiyee (Bird).[32] In February 1842 William Forbes sent Sibley, his employer, a cryptic message in a letter relaying the news from Mendota:

> *She* is well and the *stranger*. I went out there the other day and they are camped about 4 miles back from this place on the other side of a lake out there with Black Dog's band, she behaves well, only once she joined in the *Scalp Dance*, when I sent her word if she did so again I would act the soldier. She has been here but twice since you left.

Forbes' message is the only extant reference in Sibley's papers to his Dakota wife.[33]

When Helen was still a young child, Sibley arranged to have her adopted by an Anglo-American farmer, William Reynolds Brown, and his wife Martha. William had joined the Methodist missionaries at Kaposia in 1841 as a carpenter, and Martha was the mission's teacher. The Browns stayed to farm at nearby Red Rock after the mission closed in 1843.[34]

As all but one letter of Sibley's correspondence related to Helen was destroyed, it is difficult to verify the circumstances under which Sibley arranged for his daughter's adoption. According to several sources, Red Blanket Woman married a Dakota man sometime after Sibley abandoned her (in 1842?) and had died before May 1843, when Sibley married his Anglo-American wife, Sarah Jane Steele. It is not clear, however, whether Helen was placed with the Browns immediately upon her mother's death. Documentary evidence of Helen living in the Brown household begins in 1846, when she was five years old. To add to the mystery surrounding Helen's earliest

years, Martha Brown reported that Helen spoke French when she first came to live with the couple. If she was old enough to converse when the Browns took her in, perhaps Sibley did not place Helen with the family immediately after her mother's death; she was only 21 months old in the spring of 1843. Helen may have stayed among her Dakota relatives until she was three or four years old, since that is where she would have learned French.[35]

In addition to arranging Helen's adoption, Sibley provided for his daughter financially, monitored her welfare, and maintained a relationship with her throughout her life. While Helen lived at Red Rock, Sibley's friends (and presumably the Browns) relayed information to him regarding his daughter. When she was 15, Helen moved with the Browns to St. Paul, where Sibley is said to have visited her frequently. He paid the Browns to support Helen and financed her education. By the time she was a young woman living in St. Paul, she was thought to have acquired a substantial income as a result of Sibley's investment of her treaty annuities.[36]

In St. Paul, Helen was active in the Methodist church, took dancing and singing classes, and apparently had many friends. As a teenager, she attended boarding school at Sibley's expense for several years somewhere in the East. By the age of 17, she appears to have been totally acculturated and generally accepted by St. Paul's Anglo-American society, although all knew of her Dakota heritage. This acceptance was due to many factors, including Sibley's prestige and his interest in her. "Old settlers" told

Henry Sibley in 1849, when Helen was 8 years old

WHO WAS JANE LAMONT? SHE WAS DAKOTA, SHE WAS SCOTS, SHE WAS AMERICAN.

a journalist in 1908 that they recalled "long chats between Helen and the governor at the picket-fence gate." The two also rode together in a carriage in a St. Paul parade celebrating the laying of the transatlantic cable in September 1858. Undoubtedly also important to Helen's social status were her income, evident Christian piety, attractive appearance, and pleasing character.[37]

However, Helen's mixed ancestry was neither universally ignored nor accepted by Anglo-American society. During the election campaign of 1858, when Sibley was running as the Democratic candidate for governor, Republican newspapers disparaged him as a "Moccasin Democrat," calling into question his character for having married *a la facon du pays*.[38]

In 1859, at age 20, Helen married an Anglo-American doctor, Sylvester Sawyer, in a Methodist ceremony in the Browns' St. Paul home. Governor Sibley gave his daughter away.[39] Tragically, less than a year later Helen died of scarlet fever just after giving birth to a baby girl, who also died within days. A month after Helen's death, the bereft Sawyer wrote William Brown asking him to share with him "anything relating to Helen's early life. . . . I should much like to hear from you some of the incidents of her early childhood up to my meeting her in St. Paul." Sawyer also asked Brown to procure a likeness of the Governor, which Helen had asked of Sibley before her death but had not received. Of Sibley's response to Helen's death, Sawyer said:

> I received one letter from him since Helen's death. He mourned her loss sincerely and truly. He cannot receive any more love or devotion from any other child, than he did from his first born—Had circumstances been different, he would have had abundant evidence of the fact. I wonder how Mrs. S. feels—death *ought* to banish all harshness and ill will.[40]

Apparently Sarah Sibley openly disapproved of (and probably resented) her husband's Anglo-Dakota daughter. A few months later, Sawyer must have been referring to Mrs. Sibley's enmity again, when he wrote of Helen, "I hope her death will make an impression upon the mind

of the only person I know of, who disliked her, and that without cause."[41]

Sibley wrote about Helen's death to William Brown on September 14, 1860:

> I am much obliged for your kindness in sending me for perusal, Doct. S.'s letter giving a detailed account of the illness and death of poor Helen. I had already rec'd a similar one from him. Poor Girl! her dream of happiness here was a short one, but we have reasons to hope that she has been transplanted to a better and purer state.
>
> I wrote Dr. S. yesterday, sympathizing with him in his loss, and expressing my own sorrow at the sad bereavement he has sustained. May his child be preserved to him.
>
> Please make my kind regards to Mrs. B. who, I have no doubt, equally with ourselves, has been shocked at the sad intelligence.[42]

There is no evidence that Helen maintained ties with her Dakota relatives, although it is certainly possible that she did. Regardless of whether Helen knew or had regular contact with them, by the time of her marriage she clearly saw herself as an Anglo-American woman. Once her mother had died and the Browns adopted her, there was virtually no chance that Helen Sibley would develop any significant cultural or social identity as a Dakota. By the time she was a young woman, all of her emotional and familial attachments were with her adoptive parents and Henry Sibley. To Helen, her mother was not Red Blanket Woman, but Martha Brown. After Helen's death, her husband wrote to the Browns: "You must know the great love and regard she had for you—very often she has spoken to me of her affection towards yourself, who was all that a mother could be to a loved child, she felt certain that you entertained for her a mother's sentiments."[43]

WHO WAS JANE LAMONT? She was Dakota, she was Scots, she was American. Jane Lamont was one of many Anglo-Dakota children born in early-to-mid-nineteenth-century Minnesota who were challenged with forging cultural identities for themselves in the midst of a heterogeneous frontier society that was rapidly changing. Jane Lamont, Mary Taliaferro, and Helen Sibley shaped their cultural identities as the result of diverse parental, familial, and external influences. Thus, their destinies varied. However, key to each of their fates was the presence and influence of a Dakota mother.

Hushes the Night's decision to place Jane in the Pond home after Daniel Lamont died determined that Jane would not live her life strictly as a Dakota woman. While we don't know why Hushes the Night made that choice, it is clear that she could have chosen, as her sister The Day Sets did, to raise her daughter primarily as a Dakota woman.[44]

In contrast, the fathers of Jane's cousin, Mary Taliaferro, and of Helen Sibley remained in the region after abandoning their Dakota wives. Both girls were influenced by their fathers, who hoped to see their daughters fully acculturated, if not fully assimilated, into Anglo-American society. Yet each adopted a different primary cultural identity. While Helen virtually assimilated into Anglo-American society, Mary, who chose to spend her last 28 years on the reservation, clearly retained a robust Dakota identity—even after a missionary education and living many years in Anglo-American society. The key to these different outcomes was their Dakota mothers. Red Blanket Woman's death when Helen was a toddler allowed Henry Sibley to manage the course of her life without opposition from or negotiations with her Dakota kin. In contrast, Lawrence Taliaferro was unable, in spite of continuous effort, to exert as much control over his daughter because The Day Sets remained alive until Mary was at least 16 years old. Thus, although Anglo-American men may have presumed a patriarchal prerogative over their bicultural offspring, the social reality in this era of Minnesota history was that Dakota mothers often retained physical and emotional custody of their children, significantly influencing their cultural identities.[45]

Dakota woman and child, about 1865. In an era of Indian treaties and conflict, Minnesota photographer Joel Whitney sold many such cartes-de-visite to a curious public.

Notes

1. Lawrence Taliaferro, Journal, Sept. 23, 1838, Lawrence Taliaferro Papers, Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), St. Paul. In the Treaty of 1837 the Mdewankanton ceded their land between the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers in exchange for annuity payments, annual provisions, and other government support. The treaty included $110,000 for distribution among friends and relations of the Mdewankanton who were at least one-quarter Dakota. William W. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1956), 1:160; Franklin Curtiss-Wedge, *History of Dakota and Goodhue Counties* (Chicago: H. C. Cooper, 1910), 1:75; Gary Clayton Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 155–56, 160–61.

2. It is not clear which of Cloud Man's daughters was Elizabeth Williams's mother. Other than Taliaferro's statement that Elizabeth was his daughter's cousin and missionary Benjamin Kavanaugh's mention of a girl in his household whose father was Judge Williams of Iowa, I could find no evidence of Elizabeth's parentage. Benjamin Kavanaugh to Hercules Dousman, May 23, 1842, Henry H. Sibley Papers, microfilm ed., roll 3, MHS; William Bean, comp., "Eastman, Cloud Man, Many Lightnings: An Anglo-Dakota Family" (family reunion booklet, 1989), 23, 30; Edward Letterman, *Whole Log or No Log* (Minneapolis: Dillon Press, 1969), 111, 184; S. W. Pond Jr., *Two Volunteer Missionaries Among the Dakotas* (Boston: Congregational Sunday School Publishing Society, 1893), 134–35.

3. "Anglo-American" here means either British immigrants or American descendants of British or European ancestors who identified themselves as Americans; the term excludes French or French Canadian immigrants and their descendants. Jacqueline L. Peterson, "The People In Between: Indian-White Marriage and the Genesis of a Metis Society and Culture in the Great Lakes Region, 1680–1830" (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 1981), 58–92, 193–243; Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), 60–72, 88, 96, 126; Anderson, *Kinsmen*, 58–76, 103–29.

4. It is difficult to attribute any motive other than sexual desire, attraction, or romantic love to relationships between soldiers and Indian women, as there were neither economic nor social benefits for soldiers from such unions unless they planned to enter into business in Indian country once discharged from the army. On the other hand, they would be expected to support their wives and wives' relatives. A government official, such as Taliaferro, could benefit from kinship with the Dakota by using it to expand his influence among the tribe. Anderson, *Kinsmen*, 103–29; Peterson, "People In Between," 87–92, 193–207, 231–34; Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 61–68.

5. Peterson, "People In Between," ch. 2; Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society* (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1980), 4–8, 28–40, 52–53, 75–83; Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 60–67.

6. The inferior social, political, and legal status of women in both Western European and American society in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early-nineteenth centuries has been well documented. Under Anglo-American law, women literally ceased to exist legally once married, had no control over their property or income, could not enter into contracts or operate businesses, could legally be physically abused by their husbands, and did not get custody of the children in the event of divorce (which was difficult to obtain). Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2000), 75–78, 195–205; Marlene LeGates, *In Their Time* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 1–23.

Other negative consequences included a higher fertility rate, more pain and complications with childbirth due to lack of physical conditioning, and more frequent exposure to European diseases and alcohol; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 87–91; Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 89–158, 171, 177–78.

7. Rayna Green, *Women in American Indian Society* (New York: Chelsea House, 1992), 1–51; Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine, "Sioux Women in Transition: A Study of Their Changing Status in Domestic and Capitalistic Centers of Production," in *The Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women*, ed. Albers and Medicine (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 188–93; Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 32–36; John Demos, "The Tried and True: Native American Women Confronting Colonization," in *No Small Courage*, ed. Nancy Cott (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3–50; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 7, 83–87; Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 61–67; Peterson, "People in Between," 203.

8. Folwell, *History of Minnesota*, 1: 73–88, 92–93, 131–69, 136–40, 210–11; Gary C. Anderson, *Little Crow: Spokesman for the Sioux* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1986), 9–10, 23. Because the western bands of Dakota in Minnesota (the Wahpekute, Wahpeton, Sisseton) were insulated longer from Euro-American colonization, their Anglo-Dakota children, if abandoned by fathers or orphaned, were more likely to be raised by Dakota kin and absorbed into the tribe. The establishment of Protestant missions at Lac qui Parle in 1835 and Traverse des Sioux in 1842, however, brought exposure to Anglo society. Stephen R. Riggs, "The Dakota Mission," *Minnesota Historical Society Collections* (St. Paul, 1880), 3:115, 121.

9. Other Anglo-Dakota girls who attended included Lucy Prescott, whose mother was Cloud Man's niece, Mary Mooers, whose father was a trader on the upper Minnesota River, and Nancy Eastman, Jane and Mary's cousin. "Lucy Prescott Pettijohn," "Fragment—no title," and "Early Minnesota History," box 1, John H. Case Papers, MHS; Anderson, *Little Crow*, 190; Raymond Wilson, *Ohiyesa: Charles Eastman, Santee Sioux* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 12–13; Taliaferro, Journal, July 6, 1835, Feb. 12, 1836, Apr. 15, 1836, Taliaferro papers.

10. Pond Jr., *Two Volunteer Missionaries*, 37–72, 142; Julie A. Humann, "The Two Worlds of Jane Gibbs: The Gibbs Farm and the Santee Dakota," *Ramsey County History* 35 (Spring, 2000):8.

11. According to Evan Jones, *Citadel in the Wilderness* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1966), 109, Lamont was trading near Fort Snelling as early as 1822. The earliest reference to him in Taliaferro's journal is October 10, 1823. On March 1, 1836, Taliaferro wrote to Lamont (and to Henry Ortley) "relative to their children in the Indian country." By September 19, 1838, Taliaferro had appointed himself the guardian and trustee for Jane under the Treaty of 1837, noting that Lamont was deceased; Journal, Taliaferro papers.

Pond Jr., *Two Volunteer Missionaries*, 134–35, 232–33; Samuel Pond to Mrs. Rebecca Hine, Dec. 10, 1840, Pond Family Papers, MHS; Letterman, *Whole Log*, 184. Lamont apparently had at least one other child, a boy, with Hushes the Night, and possibly more; Gideon Pond to Samuel Pond, Oct. 4, 1843, Pond papers. Correspondence in the Pond papers also refers to Jane's younger sister (likely she was a half sister, not a child of Lamont).

12. The two Pond families lived together near Fort Snelling for at least a year after leaving Lake Calhoun. The Samuel Ponds next went to Lac qui Parle; then, in 1842, Gideon built the two families a new house at Oak Grove. They moved in the summer of 1843. Pond Jr., *Two Volunteer Missionaries*, 148–65.

13. Cordelia Pond to Mrs. Hopkins, June 4, 1847; Samuel Pond to Nephew, Feb. 25, 1857—both in Pond papers.

14. Cordelia Pond to Emily [?], Feb. 4, 1847, Pond papers.

15. Jane Lamont to Mrs. Samuel Pond, Spring 1858, Pond papers.

16. Gideon Pond, Diary, Mar. 14, 1850, Mar. 25, 1850; M. S. Titus to Samuel Pond, Apr. 28, 1850—all in Pond papers.

17. Cordelia Pond to Mrs. Emily Churchill, May 24, 1850, Pond papers.

18. Gideon Pond, Diary, Oct. 1853; Samuel Pond to Ruth Riggs, Jan. 17, 1853—both Pond papers. Dean was probably the owner of the property Jane and Starr would soon purchase.

19. Samuel Pond to his sister, Sept. 25, 1854, Pond papers. Jane and Starr had three sons and two daughters. Two sons became bankers in North Dakota, the other son a farmer near Tracy, Minnesota. I could find no information on the daughters. Letterman, *From Whole Log,* 184.

20. Anderson, *Little Crow*, 24; Helen M. White, "Guide to a Microfilm Edition of the Lawrence Taliaferro Papers," 6, MHS; Taliaferro, Journal, May 11–Nov. 18, 1828, Taliaferro papers.

21. Taliaferro was constantly at odds with traders for their unfair practices and for importing alcohol into Indian country. He also tried to protect Indian women from sexual exploitation by soldiers and took action against non-Indians who perpetrated crimes against Indians. Taliaferro, Journal; Lawrence Taliaferro, "Autobiography," *Minnesota Historical Society Collections* (St. Paul, 1864), 6:202, 222–23, 238.

22. Lawrence Taliaferro to Samuel Pond, Aug. 26, 1839, Pond papers.

23. Taliaferro, Journal, May 20, May 31, 1839; Willoughby Babcock, "A Pioneer Indian Agent at Fort Snelling," *Minnesota Alumni Weekly* 31 (1932): 407–08, 419.

24. Stevens had left the mission in the fall of 1839. David Greene to Samuel Pond, Aug. 14, 1839; Samuel Pond to Ruth Pond, Jan. 7, 1840; Gideon Pond to Mr. E. J. Pond, Jan. 13, 1840—all Pond papers.

25. Lawrence Taliaferro to Samuel Pond, Jan. 1, 1846, Pond papers. Taliaferro had named himself trustee for Nancy Eastman, Elizabeth Williams, and his daughter Mary. He appointed Benjamin F. Baker, a trader at Fort Snelling who had bicultural children, trustee for Jane Lamont, Winona Culbertson, and several boys. Unfortunately, Baker died a few years after receiving the funds, and they were never recovered. Taliaferro, Journal, Sept. 18, 21, 23, 25, 26, and Oct. 3, 1838; John H. Stevens, *An Address, Giving the Early History of Hennepin County* (Minneapolis: North-Western Democrat, 1856), 9.

26. "Half and Quarter Breeds of Sioux Nation to Henry H. Sibley, Treaty of 1837, Power of Attorney," [Nov. 1848], and "Signed Warren Woodbury, on behalf of his wife, Mary," both roll 5, and "Deposition of Warren Woodbury, Witness in the Case of *LeDuc et alia v. Odell et alia*, Henry Sibley, Referee," roll 1—all Sibley papers. Taliaferro made numerous references in his journal to the inferior character and improper behavior of the soldiers (as well as some officers) at Fort Snelling, especially in regard to their relations with the Indians.

27. Warren Woodbury to Henry Sibley, Aug. 25, 1850, roll 7, Sibley papers; Taliaferro, Autobiography," 239, 254–55; Grace Lee Nute, "Biographical Sketch of Lawrence Taliaferro for the Dictionary of American Biography," 1, Grace Lee Nute Papers, MHS; White, "Guide to . . . Taliaferro Papers," 6. Taliaferro was present for the laying of the Minnesota Historical Society's cornerstone.

28. In 1856 Mary and Warren's children were Hannah, age 6, Warren, age 5, and Alex, age 1. They had at least one additional child (Nancy), and perhaps more, before Warren died in 1863. Taliaferro, "Autobiography," 254–55; James L. Hansen, transcriber, "Roll of Sioux Mixed-Bloods, 1855–56," *Minnesota Genealogical Journal* 7 (Nov. 1987): 607; Affidavit of Mary Woodbury, Feb. 17, 1888, Manuscripts Collection P939 (filed under Muck-a-pea-wak-kenzeh), MHS.

29. Rhoda R. Gilman, *Henry Hastings Sibley, Divided Heart* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2004), 191; Folwell, *History of Minnesota*, 2: 263; Affidavit of Mary Woodbury; U.S., *Census*, 1870, Minnesota Population Schedules, Ramsey Co., Ward 5, p. 1362; *St. Paul City Directory*, 1880.

30. U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, Santee Reservation Censuses, 1885–1917, microfilm ed., rolls 475–77, MHS.

31. The last documented reference to The Day Sets is in Gideon Pond to S. W. Pond, Jan. 15, 1844, Pond papers: Gideon sends love to "Jane, Mary, and their mothers."

32. Millie K. Smith, "Helen Hastings Sibley," *Dakota County Genealogist*, Jan. 1991, p. 9; Alan Woolworth, "Helen Hastings Sibley, 1841–1860," site interpretive manual, 1995, and David Grabitske, "Biographical Sketch of Helen Hastings Sibley"—both in Sibley House Historic Site Files, Mendota.

33. W. H. Forbes to Henry H. Sibley, Feb. 15, 1842, roll 3, Sibley papers. Apparently Sibley's papers were purged of all references to Red Blanket Woman and Helen after his death; Grabitske, "Biographical Sketch."

34. "Biographical Sketch," in Manuscripts Collection Inventory, and Sylvester Sawyer to William R. Brown, Oct. 4, 1860, both William R. Brown Papers, MHS; John A. Ford, "Biographical Data on William R. Brown," Manuscripts Collection P939, MHS; "House and Its Heroine," *St. Paul Dispatch*, Oct. 25, 1908, p. 24.

35. Ford, "Biographical Data." Return I. Holcombe, who wrote the 1908 *Dispatch* article, claimed that Sibley took Helen away from Red Blanket Woman while she was still alive. Erling Jorstad, "The Life of Henry Hastings Sibley" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1957), 27n14; Bruce Kohn, "The Governor's Daughter," unpublished manuscript, 1996, ch. 7, p. 2, Sibley House files; Sawyer to Brown, Oct. 4, 1860, Sept. 1861 [?], Brown papers; Grabitske, "Biographical Sketch."

36. Dr. Williamson to Henry Sibley, Jan. 26, 1849, roll 5, Sibley papers; *St. Paul Dispatch*, Oct. 24, 1908.

37. Kohn, "Governor's Daughter," ch. 1, p. 1, ch. 9, p. 2. Settlers also reminisced that she was "pretty", "slender," "tall," had "dark eyes and hair but a fair complexion," a "sprightly intelligence," and a "kindly, sunny disposition"; *St. Paul Dispatch*, Oct. 24, 1908, p. 24.

38. Woolworth, "Helen Sibley," 6.

39. Kohn, "Governor's Daughter," ch. 1, p. 1; *St. Paul Dispatch*, Oct. 24, 1908, p. 24.

40. Sawyer to Brown, Oct. 4, 1860, Brown papers.

41. Sylvester Sawyer to William R. Brown, Jan. 21, 1861, Brown papers.

42. Kohn, "Governor's Daughter," ch. 11, p. 2.

43. Sylvester Sawyer to Martha Brown, Sept. 19, 1860, Brown papers.

44. Nancy Eastman, Jane's cousin, also lived in Cloud Man's village and was exposed to the missionaries at Lake Harriet and Oak Grove. Eastman, however, lived her adult life as a Dakota woman, probably in large part because her grandmother refused to allow her to accompany Jane to the Pond's house, despite Nancy's mother desire that she do so. Bean, "Eastman, Cloud Man, Many Lightnings," 34–37.

45. Other Dakota relatives also exerted important control over Anglo-Dakota girls and helped shape their cultural identities. The grandmothers of Nancy Eastman and Mary Taliaferro seemed influential in determining the amount of time they could spend in Anglo-American society.

The photo on p. 186–87 (bottom) is courtesy the Smithsonian Institution; all others are in MHS collections, including p. 185 by Adrian Ebell.

Dakota tipis, Mendota, about 1862