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MEMORANDUM

THE SERVICES PERFORMED FOR, AND THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS MADE ON BEHALF OF, THE CHEROKEES (AND OTHER INDIANS) BY DWIGHT MISSION JUSTIFIES ITS DESIGNATION AS AN INTERPRETIVE CENTER IN RUSSELLVILLE, ARKANSAS, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN APPROPRIATE MUSEUM.

INTRODUCTION

By 1820, one fourth to one third of the Cherokee Nation resided in the Arkansas River Valley - now Pope County, Arkansas. At the request of Chief Tahlontuskee, made in 1817, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions of Boston began taking steps to establish a mission on the Illinois Bayou-Arkansas River, some six miles from the present city of Russellville, Arkansas. Ex. 1 is a photo of an oil painting of the Mission entitled "Sequoyah Meets the Reverend Cephas Washburn" by Dorris Curtis, an artist in Conway, Arkansas. It was an active and unusually successful mission until 1829, when it, along with the Arkansas Cherokees moved on to the Indian Territory in what is now Oklahoma, where it continued its splendid work on behalf of the Indians.

I. THE MISSIONARIES DESERVE SPECIAL RECOGNITION FOR THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND SERVICE TO THE INDIANS.

- A. These Missionaries Made a Genuine and Successful Effort to Educate the Indians.

The final National Trail Study (June 1986) Ex. II, Pages 2-3 states:

The Cherokee Trail of Tears also commemorates the unique Cherokee response to Indian removal. First, the people adopted white practices. They took up agriculture, domestic arts, formal education and Christianity. They spoke English, invented their own written language, published newspapers, owned slaves, maintained plantations, and intermarried with the whites. They even adopted a written constitution patterned after that of the United States. When confronted with harassment from the white settlers and Georgia State laws, they neither submitted quietly nor went to war. Instead, they used the American political and judicial systems.

They lobbied Congress, and they appealed to the Supreme Court, not once, but twice. Even when forced to move west, they won authorization to move themselves without military escort.

In the interest of accuracy and completeness, the following sentence could have been added: "Much of the credit for the Cherokees progress and attitude described above must go to the Mission schools, conducted among the Cherokee (and other tribes) by the missionaries." The enlightened program of the missionaries, referred to herein, to educate the Indians was a complete reversal of an earlier view held by some whites opposing the education of the Indians. For example, HARPER'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE, in its article SE-QUO-YAH, Ex.III, Page 2 states:

Byrd in his History of the Dividing Line tells us that a school of seventy-seven Indian children existed in 1720, and that they could all read and write English; but adds that the jealousy of the traders and land speculators, who feared it would interfere with their business, caused it to be closed.

B. The Missions Began Serving the Indians at Least Twenty-Eight Years prior to the Trail of Tears.

According to Foreman's book entitled SEQUOYAH, the Moravians established a mission in the Cherokee Nation in 1802. (Ex. IV, Page 9).

Not long thereafter, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions of Boston (acting on behalf of the Presbyterian Board of Missions) established a mission school among the Cherokees at Brainerd, Georgia, and another among the Choctaw at Elliot, Mississippi. In 1821, the United Foreign Missionary Society established Harmony Mission in Missouri to educate and Christianize the Osages. (The WPA Guide to 1930's Missouri, Page 34).

C. The Cherokee Requested the Board of Commissioners to Establish a Mission on the Arkansas River to Serve the Indians Living in the Arkansas River Valley.

Following the "Muscle Shoals Massacre" in 1792, the Cherokees involved crossed the Mississippi River and found homes in Spanish Territory - along the lower White and St. Francis River in what is now Arkansas. Even when exonerated for their part in the Massacre, they chose to remain in Arkansas. (Ex.V, The Arkansas Cherokees by J.H. Atkinson, Ex. XVI).

Moreover, the Cherokee Treaty of 1817 provided for emigration to the Arkansas River Valley of such members of the

tribe as desired to join a thousand of their countrymen who had previously located there. John Jolly, who had moved to Arkansas several years before, recruited a large party to return with him to Arkansas. Several of them, including Sequoyah, were beginning to take an interest in education. In February 1818, nineteen flatboats (some 331 persons) loaded with Cherokee emigrants set out for the Arkansas River near the Illinois Bayou which is some 5 miles from the Campus of Arkansas Tech University in the city of Russellville, Arkansas. (Ex.IV, Page 5 et seq.). By May 1822 one third of all the Cherokees lived in the Arkansas River Valley. They were referred to as the "The Arkansas Cherokees", "The Western Cherokees" or "Cherokee Nation West."

As an indication of the respect which the Cherokee held for the missions, Chief Tahlontuskee, having visited and having been impressed with the Brainerd mission school, requested the Presbyterians to establish a mission to serve the Cherokees in Arkansas. Their request was granted. Cephas Washburn, a Vermonter, and Alfred Finney, his brother-in-law, (both ordained ministers) volunteered and were accepted by the Board. They were first sent to South Carolina and Georgia for one year's experience. In the late Fall of 1819, Washburn, his wife and baby; Finney, his wife and baby; and Miss Minerva Washburn, set out for Arkansas. (Ex. VI, Arkansas Valley Historical Paper, Dwight Mission written in 1962, by G.R. Turrentine, the Dean of Education of Arkansas Polytechnic College, now Arkansas Tech University).

Washburn, who had been a student at Yale University, named the mission "Dwight Mission" in honor of the late Timothy Dwight, the former President of Yale University, and who had been an active member of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. (Ex. VII, Arkansas Historical Quarterly, Page 130)

By 1822, Dwight Mission was a well established landmark on the Arkansas River and, as stated by Dean Turrentine, the destination of the first steamboat to travel up the Arkansas River. (Ex. VIII).

D. Dwight Mission Was a Center of Learning Which Had a Salutory Effect on Both Whites and Indians.

Exhibit VIII describes the establishment of the mission, among other things, states:

In Pope County history, Dwight Mission furnishes many firsts. Here was the first blacksmith, grist mill, saw mill, post office, school, Church and doctor's clinic. Here was the first boarding school, the first Christian marriage ceremony, and the first Christian burial. This was the destination of the first steamboat to ascend the Arkansas River above the Arkansas Post.

Josiah H. Shinn's School History of Arkansas, at page 92-93, confirms Turrentine's statement that Dwight Mission was the first organized educational institution in the Arkansas Territory. (Arkansas became a state in 1836). Within two years after organization, it had more than 100 Cherokee students, including both boys and girls. This establishment was some 30 years before a public school system was adopted in St. Louis, the largest city in the area. (Page 302, The WPA Guide to 1930's Missouri)

In February 1818, Sequoyah migrated to Arkansas near the site where Dwight was established. His syllabary was taught at Dwight, which was among the first schools, if not the first, to use his expeditious means of teaching the Cherokees.

- E. The Missionaries Were the "Civil Rights Protectors" of the Rights of the Indians, Even to the Extent of Going to Prison in an Effort to Establish Those Rights .

The missionaries, particularly the Reverends Worcester and Butler, were in the forefront of the legal battle to thwart President Jackson's efforts to uproot the Cherokees and transport them to the Arkansas Territory, later called Indian Territory. The Reverends Worcester, Butler, and other missionaries were the most active and vocal group in support of the Cherokees. The two named missionaries were willing to be, and were, imprisoned for urging the Indians to resist Georgia's efforts to drive the Cherokees from their ancient lands. Thus, they provided Wirt and Sergeant, counsel for the Cherokees, with a jurisdictional basis upon which the Indians could assert their rights and to raise the constitutional issue in the Supreme Court of the United States. At least one of the major decisions by this Court was in favor of the Indians, but President Jackson would not enforce or carry it out. See Ex. IX, The Court and the Trail of Tears by Rennard J. Strickland and William M. Strickland, Yearbook, 1979, published by the Supreme Court Historical Society.

For an overall view of the missionaries and Dwight Mission, see Ex. X, which included a Biography of Cephas Washburn and his Reminiscences. After the Arkansas Cherokees moved on to the new Dwight Mission in what is now Oklahoma, he established several Presbyterian churches in the Arkansas River Valley. His son was one of the finest artists in Arkansas, and though he died as a young man, he lived to paint "The Arkansas Traveller."

II. THE DWIGHT MISSION MEMORIAL SHOULD BE ON THE CAMPUS OF ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY.

Today a highway sign marks the site of Dwight Mission on the northern shoreline of the lake created by the Dardanelle Dam. Most of the original sites are under water. Hence, it would be difficult and exceedingly expensive to undertake to establish an appropriate museum on the original sites.

The campus of Arkansas Tech University (see Catalogue Ex. XI) forms the shoreline on the eastern side of Dardanelle Lake. The distance from the original sites to the campus would be less than five miles as the crow flies.

In 1982, the University launched a program to collect appropriate paintings, prints, maps, books, etc. to become the Center of the Visual History of Arkansas. Accordingly it now has numerous such items which are on exhibition in the Tech Witherspoon Building. See Ex. XII, a collection of postcards, most of which are scenes of paintings in the Collection. Among such paintings is the 1986 Arkansas sesquicentennial celebration invitational winner commissioned by the University. Last May, a painting of Scott Joplin was added to the Collection. This May, the Dwight Mission painting referred to above, and a painting of the Battle of Pea Ridge will be commissioned on graduation day.

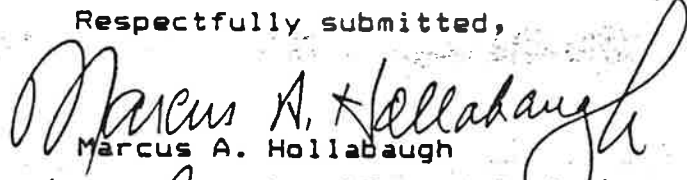
The Collection also includes (1) a bust of Sequoyah (Ex. XIII) now on exhibition in Senator Boren's office, Senate Office Building; and (2) the Scisson painting (Ex. XIV) of Sequoyah done by an artist who is himself a Cherokee.

The publication of Ex. XV, January 19, 1988 by the Arkansas Democrat stimulated offers of antiques and artifacts relating to Dwight Mission, among them being the large cast iron kettle used by Sequoyah in his salt operations (Marguerite Turner, Dover, Arkansas - the artist of "The Tribute to an American - Sequoyah" Ex. XVI) and a cupboard made by the students of the Mission (Rankin Baker, Russellville, Arkansas, whose great grandmother was a student of the Mission). There are today in the Arkansas River Valley many descendants of Washburn and alumni of the Dwight Mission School.

This memorandum sets forth certain source material and the highlights. It is not intended to present an exhaustive historical account of Dwight Mission.

We submit that Dwight Mission was a notable and shining landmark in the history of educating the Indians. It was the place where the missions educational efforts combined with Sequoyah's successful invention of a new language for the Indians. In a period where the Cherokees encountered great hardships, the Mission was a friendly haven for the Cherokees and many other Indians.

Respectfully submitted,


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