A HISTORY OF THE OSAGE INDIANS BEFORE
THEIR ALLOTMENT IN 1907

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CHAPTER I

THE OSAGES BEFORE THEIR FIRST CESSION TREATY WITH THE UNITED STATES

The Osage River rises on the plains of Kansas and traces a serpentine course before finally joining the Missouri 144 miles from its confluence with the Mississippi. A little over 150 years ago the banks of the lower Osage River were occupied by a powerful tribe of Indians, the Osages. From their villages they hunted and marauded over the vast region from the muddy, brown waters of the Mississippi to the snow-crested Rocky Mountains.¹ This territory was an untamed no man's land separating the French in the Mississippi Valley from the Spanish in Santa Fe. (See Map 1 in Appendix.) The Osages boasted the control of the eastern part of this great expanse, and they were quite capable of protecting their lands from the intrusions of other tribes.

The Osage River had not always been the home of the Osages. The two original bands of the tribe, the Great and Little Osages, were originally united with the

¹Grant Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, the Story of the American Southwest before 1830 (New Haven, 1930), pp. 14-15.
Quapaws, Omahas, Poncas, and Kansas along the upper Ohio River. The similarity of their languages provides ground for the theory that they were initially one tribe. Tradition indicates that these kindred peoples fled down the Ohio to its junction with the Mississippi. The Quapaws moved down the Mississippi while the other tribes went up the Missouri. The Osages then migrated to the river that bears their name.  

The name Osage resulted from the French corruption of Wa-sha' zhe, a tribal name, the meaning and derivation of which cannot be conclusively determined. It may correspond to the Omaha word Wa-ba-zhi, "one who carries a message," and probably had reference to an ancient ritual commemorating the return after a successful buffalo hunt.

Among the hunting tribes that wandered over the Great Plains in search of buffalo, the Osages held high rank. Although they raised little patches of squash and corn near their villages, the Osages still depended largely upon the buffalo for food, clothing, and building materials. When the buffalo vanished from the Mississippi Valley with the arrival of white traders, the Osages were forced to make hunting expeditions to the West, thus clashing with the

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Plains tribes. These tribes greatly feared the Osages because of their pugnacity and their use of firearms. Generally, the Osages set out from their villages afoot but returned well provided with horses stolen from their foes as spoils of battle. During the summer, whole villages would go to the plains of northern Oklahoma and western Kansas to hunt buffalo.\(^4\) The Osages, however, did not limit their hunting activities to the shaggy beasts of the Plains. They also killed small deer, beaver, black bear, otter, and raccoon and traded these skins to the white merchants from St. Louis.\(^5\)

Most of the buffalo hides were used for making robes and building houses. The Osages built rectangular or oval-shaped houses with curved roofs and straight walls, which the women covered with skins or mats. These buildings measured from 30 to 100 feet long, about 20 feet wide, and averaged 10 feet high. They were similar to the longhouses of the Iroquois, but there is no history of a contact between these two tribes.\(^6\)

At the time of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the Little Osages had one village of these buildings and the

\(^{4}\)Ibid.


Great Osages two. These villages had a combined population of 6,300 souls, about 1,500 of them being warriors.\footnote{Annals of the Congress of the United States, 9th Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 1041-1042.} In 1805, an American visitor described the chief village of the Great Osages as being located on a prairie within one mile of a stream that empties into the Osage River. The town consisted of 120 houses, each house sheltering from two to three families.\footnote{George Peter to Governor Wilkinson, September 8, 1805, enclosure in Governor Wilkinson to the Secretary of War, September 22, 1805, Clarence Edwin Carter, editor, The Territorial Papers of the United States (Washington, 1934--), XIII, 232.}

Osage town life centered about the families and the religious ceremonies and rites. Among their own people and their friends, the Osages were always generous and hospitable.\footnote{Wright, p. 190.} Like the other American Indians, they were notoriously indulgent toward their children, so that anarchy reigned in most Osage families. This amicable family spirit, however, was usually lacking in their relations with outside groups. They were habitually at war with all other Indian tribes and committed depredations throughout the Southwest. The Spanish in Texas referred to the Osages as a "treacherous, cruel, robbing, wandering, and very warlike nation" that "barbarously" attacked
their settlements along the Arkansas and the Natchitoches (Red) rivers. Nearly all writers noticed that they were exceedingly proud and insolent, bearing themselves with much dignity on all occasions.

Compared to some of the other Indians, the Osages were of an exceptionally large size, the males averaging more than six feet. But like many other tribes, the Osage males shaved both sides of the head except for a roach down the center approximately three inches high and three inches wide. This hair style, with their tall, alert forms, gave the Osage the appearance of Hollywood Indians.

These picturesque people made their historical debut in 1673 when Jacques Marquette included them on one of his maps. At that time they roamed over the region west of the Mississippi River, on both sides of the Missouri, and in the Ozark Mountain country. From the earliest historical accounts by the French and Spanish well into the

10. Frederick C. Chabot, editor, Excerpts from the Memorias for the Province of Texas by Juan Augustin de Morfi (San Antonio, 1932), p. 16.


nineteenth century, the Osages were continually at war with nearly all the surrounding tribes. The Caddoan peoples to the south lived in constant terror of their ravaging attacks.\textsuperscript{14} Their relations with the Pawnees and Comanches to the west and southwest alternated between bitter contests over hunting rights on the Plains and peaceful interludes when friendly trading relations prevailed.\textsuperscript{15}

By the nineteenth century, one band of the Osages had driven all the other tribes from the Arkansas River area. They had forced the other Indians to abandon their abodes and withdraw across the Red River.\textsuperscript{16} For example, in about 1770 the Wichitas fled to Texas after being vanquished by the fierce Osages.\textsuperscript{17} The Frenchman De Mézières, lieutenant governor in Natchitoches, Louisiana, under the Spanish rule, reported in 1770 that the Tawakonis, Tonkawas, Yscanis, and Kichais had suffered so severely from bloody skirmishes with the Osages that in desperation they had withdrawn toward San Antonio and

\textsuperscript{14}Foreman, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{15}Rupert Norval Richardson, \textit{The Comanche Barrier to South Plains Settlement} (Glendale, California, 1933), p. 51.

\textsuperscript{16}John B. Treat to the Secretary of War, November 15, 1805, \textit{Territorial Papers}, XIII, 281.

\textsuperscript{17}Hyde, p. 20.
presidios in that region of present-day Texas. By the summer of 1772, these tribes had formed a coalition to resist the invasions of the Osages, and De Mézières had secured the consent of the Governor of Texas for the construction of a military post for their security on the north. In addition, the French and Spanish hoped it would discourage the intrusions of English traders.\(^{18}\) By 1777, the hostilities between the refugee Indians and the Osages had become so serious that De Mézières proposed a plan to repel and chastise the Osages. He intended to enlist 1,270 braves from ten tribes residing within his jurisdiction to advance against the Osages. This proposed operation was probably never realized since there is no record of it. And the following year De Mézières wrote that the Osages continued to molest the residents of Louisiana, especially those along the Red and Arkansas rivers.\(^{19}\)

The few white settlers and traders along these rivers were mostly deserters from the ships and regiments of Spain and France. Many of them had committed robbery, homicide, or rape, the Arkansas River thus being an asylum

\(^{18}\) Foreman, pp. 15-16. This fort was completed in 1778 and named Fort Teodoro in honor of Teodoro de Croix, commander of the interior provinces of Mexico. (See Map 1 in Appendix.) Personal examination of site.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., pp. 17-18.
for what De Mézières described as "the most wicked persons, without doubt, in all the Indies." Their principal activity was debasing the Osages, whom they incited to commit depredations on the Spanish and to seize women from the Indians of the Red River to trade to the white men of the Arkansas.\(^{20}\) The trade competition between the French and Spanish settlers had made the region of the Red and Arkansas rivers a theatre for frequent robberies and conflicts. The violence culminated in the killing of four Frenchmen by the Osages on the Arkansas. The Spanish officials called the Osages with their chiefs Jeal Lafon, Clermont,\(^ {21}\) and others to St. Louis on August 16, 1787, and commanded that the Osage leaders be kept in custody at New Orleans to assure the tribe's proper behavior in the future. The Osages, however, refused to surrender, and on May 18, 1794, Auguste Chouteau and his brother Pierre, French traders, proposed to establish a fortification in the Osage region to restrain the tribesmen. In consideration, the Chouteaus asked for a commercial monopoly with

\(^{20}\)Ibid., p. 165.

\(^{21}\)The name Clermont is probably a result of the French pronunciation of Grah Moh (Arrow Going Home). He was called "the builder of towns." The first Clermont died in 1828, Clermont II in 1838, and Clermont III led a large band on the last reservation. John Joseph Mathews, Wah'Kon-Tah, the Osage and the White Man's Road (Norman, 1932), p. 349.
the Osages until 1801. Baron de Carondelet, the Spanish Governor at New Orleans, accepted the proposal. The contract was executed the same year with the building of a fort close to the Osage villages, and Pierre Chouteau was named commandant.22

Still the Osages persisted in their hostilities. A company of trappers returning from the Osage country reported that these Indians had robbed them about 450 miles from Arkansas Post. The Spanish and French traders were highly incensed at these outrages. Terrified trappers and hunters refused to hazard the Arkansas River country for pelts, and the Spanish authorities urged Pierre Chouteau to use his prestige with the Osages to avert the repetition of such violence. The Spanish also authorized the Osage chief White Hair23 to punish the

22Foreman, pp. 18-19.

23The first White Hair (Pah Hue Skah), who died in 1808, got his title White Hair during a fray with European soldiery. Tradition says that a daring Osage youth, during the turmoil of the battle, rushed in and wounded a European officer who was donning a white wig. As the officer fell to the ground, the young buck dashed in to scalp his victim, gripping the coiffure and drawing his blade. However, before he was able to use the knife, the soldier struggled to his feet and ran away, leaving the youthful Osage standing in wonder with the fluffy white wig clutched tightly in his hand. The wig became wah'kon (mystery). Thenceforth the youth fastened it to his roach so that no harm could befall him in battle, and he came to be known as Pah Hue Skah. The second White Hair died in 1833, and Pah Hue Skah III moved with his tribe to their last reservation in the Oklahoma Territory. Mathews, pp. 348-349.
outlaw members of the tribe. Instead, the lawless band came to St. Louis to atone for their crimes and made peace on August 29, 1800. This treaty, however, was unsuccessful because it failed to remove one of the basic causes of the Osage hostilities—the Missouri River trade competition between French and Spanish merchants under the Spanish government of Louisiana.

In 1802, the Spanish authorities took the Osage trade monopoly from the Chouteau brothers and gave it to Manuel Lisa, a Spaniard. In retaliation, the Chouteaus decided to move a band of the Osages into present-day Oklahoma, where they would be further removed from the supervision of the Spanish officials. To accomplish their plan, the Chouteaus selected a new Osage chief, an influential Indian named Big Track. Under this chief, and inspired by the Chouteaus, about half of the Osages moved to the Arkansas River near its confluence with the Verdigris. Though Big Track was the nominal chief of the Arkansas Band, their most influential leader and warrior was Clermont, the legitimate chief. He accompanied this Arkansas Band and located his village near Claremore Mound in present-day Rogers County, Oklahoma. (See Map 1 in

24 Foreman, p. 20.  
25 Ibid., pp. 21-22.  
26 Wright, p. 191.
Appendix.) The other Osages stayed at the old encampments in Missouri under the command of White Hair, who had usurped Clermont's chieftainship while Clermont was still an infant. 27

The Arkansas Band of the Osages included most of the more aggressive members of the tribe. They became more powerful each day, and the Great and Little Osages, who stayed on the Osage River, were obliged to go to the Arkansas every year to kill their provisions of buffalo meat and to steal horses from the enemy nations of the Plains. These inconveniences were such that the young and the enterprising were daily migrating from the old settlements to the new ones on the Arkansas. 28

The year following the division of the Osage tribe, President Thomas Jefferson purchased Louisiana from the French who had obtained it from the Spanish by the secret Treaty of Ildefonso in 1800. The United States moved promptly to break all alliances between the Osages and the Spanish and French. However, these European powers objected to giving up their Indian friends so quickly. In 1806, they had agents in the Osage villages, attempting to make the tribe believe that the United States would be unable to keep its newly acquired country. They told the

27 Mathews, p. 347.
Indians that the Spanish had already seized lower Louisiana and that, aided by the French, they could soon possess the entire territory.\(^2^9\) The next year, the Osages informed the Americans that they had received an invitation from the Spanish to join seven other Indian nations that had already allied themselves with Spain.\(^3^0\) However, there is no evidence that this Spanish-Indian coalition ever posed any serious threat to the United States.

Other changes came with the Louisiana Purchase. American curiosity about its new territory, some of it economically motivated, led to numerous official and unofficial explorations, the most famous being that of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. But there were others. In 1804, at the request of Thomas Jefferson, William Dunbar of the city of Natchez headed an exploring company on a trip up the Ouachita River to the famous hot springs of present-day Arkansas. His interesting account, subsequently entrusted to the American Philosophical Society, contained many valuable observations on the nature of the land and its people. One topic to which he alluded repeatedly, as affecting the accessibility of the

\(^{29}\)Rudolph Tillier to the Secretary of State, January 12, 1807, *Territorial Papers*, XIV, 78.

\(^{30}\)William Clark to the Secretary of War, May 18, 1807, *ibid.*, p. 122.
Southwest, was the belligerency of the Osage tribe. In November, 1806, James Wilkinson, the new governor of Louisiana, visited the Osage hunting camps near the Salt Fork of the Arkansas River. On his return, Wilkinson was a guest at the village of Big Track. About 1811, George Sibley, a young government employee, visited the Osages at their temporary camps on the Salt Plains. Sibley later became Indian agent for the Osages and was a member of a commission established by John Quincy Adams for surveying the famous Santa Fe Trail through the Osage country. (See Map 1 in Appendix.)

These expeditions were merely the forerunners of a new trend in Osage-white relations. When the Americans secured possession of Louisiana, they followed a different system than that used by the Spanish and French. They no longer relied upon weapons as their only means of controlling the Indians. Instead, the Americans used economic pressure when possible and military pressure when necessary.

31 Foreman, pp. 24-26.
32 George Rainey, The Cherokee Strip (Guthrie, Oklahoma, 1933), p. 25.
Though the Americans had purchased and explored the Louisiana country, the Osages still claimed all of modern-day Oklahoma north of the South Canadian River plus their lands in Missouri and Arkansas. (See Map 1 in Appendix.) During the nineteenth century, however, the Government took more than eighty million acres of property from the Osages and their cousins, the Quapaws, for a trifle.34 Trade agreements concluded after 1801 drove the Missouri Osages step by step closer to their relatives on the Arkansas.

The white settlers who moved into Louisiana after 1803 began to demand protection from the belligerent Indians. On July 17, 1804, Secretary of War Henry Dearborn instructed Pierre Chouteau, the newly-appointed Agent of Indian Affairs for upper Louisiana, to use all "prudent and possible" resources in his power for establishing the amity of the tribes living in the region of Louisiana northwest of the Arkansas River. He was to be especially attentive to the Osages and to prevail upon the Arkansas Band to return to Missouri and live in peace, an impossible task since so many of the Missouri Osages were joining their brothers on the Arkansas.35

34 Foreman, pp. 208-209.
35 The Secretary of War to Pierre Chouteau, July 17, 1804, Territorial Papers, XIII, 31-32.
To have any real influence on the Osages, the United States would have to establish a military post close to their villages. In the summer of 1805, Governor Wilkinson of St. Louis dispatched Pierre Chouteau with a military escort to the Osage settlements in Missouri to locate a commanding site for a fort. But the Osages refused to permit the post to be established until they had talked with Wilkinson, and delayed for two years the erection of Fort Clark, known also as Fort Osage, near the present town of Sibley in Jackson County, Missouri. (See Map 1 in Appendix.)

With a military post in the Osage country, the United States could proceed to carry out Jefferson's dream, the removal of the eastern tribes into Louisiana. In February, 1806, he had submitted to Congress information on the Plains Indians compiled by Meriwether Lewis on the famous expedition with Clark to the Pacific. (See Map 1 in Appendix.) He told of the tenure by which the tribes held their country, their reluctance to move, and the possibility of introducing the eastern Indians among them. He mentioned the migration of almost half of the Osages.

36 Governor Wilkinson to the Secretary of War, July 27, 1805, ibid., pp. 170-171.
37 Governor Wilkinson to the Secretary of War, September 22, 1805, ibid., p. 230.
38 Wright, p. 192.
from Missouri to the Arkansas River in 1802, and suggested that the other Osages could be persuaded to follow them, thus leaving a sufficient range of land for the Delawares, Kickapoos, Miamis, and Shawnees.\textsuperscript{39} Apparently, the United States had given up the idea of moving the Arkansas Band back to Missouri.

The moving of emigrant tribes toward the Osage country was to have an enduring effect on this western frontier. Some of the Delawares were already residing on the western side of the Mississippi by permission granted by the Spanish in 1789. Parts of the Delaware and Shawnee tribes were living on a tract of land of about twenty-five square miles close to Cape Girardeau, Missouri. They possessed this under an agreement with the Spaniards, given by Carondelet in 1793, and entered in the records at St. Louis by the Recorder of Titles. In 1815, the Delawares abandoned this locality, leaving cultivated land and improvements, and together with new arrivals from the East, pushed west. Six years later, the Secretary of War instructed Richard Graham, their Indian agent, to settle them with remnants of the Kickapoos, Shawnees, Miamis, Weas, and Piankashaws as far to the west and as near to the Osages as possible. But first he had to establish peaceful relations between the emigrants and the Osages.

\textsuperscript{39} Foreman, pp. 12-13.
Pending this, the Delawares stopped and grew a crop along the Current River. On October 10, 1821, Graham met with chiefs of the various tribes in St. Louis and negotiated the settlement. However, the western Indians—especially the Osages, but also the Comanches, Kiowas, and others—continued to object to their recently-arrived neighbors. And the eastern tribes—particularly the Five Civilized Tribes—struck back as best they could. The federal government then began to force cession agreements on the western nations to make space for the eastern Indians, to establish new forts to maintain the peace, and to send expeditionary forces to overawe the western tribes. This policy continued through the first half of the nineteenth century.

During this period of tribal warfare and conflicting land claims, the Osage people were on extremely good terms with the Americans, the latter even stopping hostile groups of Indians on their way to attack the Osages. This favoritism excited the hatred and jealousy of the other Indians and inflated the ego of the Osages. Among those hostile to the Osages were the Sacs and Foxes who

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40 Ibid., pp. 214–215.
were incited to new acts of aggression by reasoning that the Americans gave the most to those they feared the most. 42

Early in 1804, a band of Sac warriors fell upon a company of Osages who were en route to St. Louis on a boat owned by a fur-trading company of that town. A number of the Osages died in the engagement, and others were captured. Captain Amos Stoddard, temporary governor of Louisiana, commented angrily that the Sacs were lacking in proper respect toward the United States. 43 As the rift widened between these two tribes, the number of bloody skirmishes increased. Apparently, the stories about these encounters also grew. In 1840, the French traveler Victor Tixier heard one of these tales. It seems that during one particularly dark night, a Sac brave climbed through a cannon embrasure into a fortification containing Osages and Frenchmen. His tribe being at war against the Osages, the Sac was thoughtful enough to touch the ear lobes of all the slumbering occupants to avoid striking a friend. When he felt the Osages' pierced ears, he shouted the death cry, slaughtered and scalped his enemies, and

42 James Bruff to James Wilkinson, November 5, 1804, Territorial Papers, XIII, 80.
vanished before the Frenchmen could recover from such a bold stroke.\textsuperscript{44}

By November of 1804, the Sac chiefs were desirous of making a treaty that would shelter them from the Osages whom they considered under the special protection of the Americans. Without hesitation, they offered to give up an immense stretch of country containing valuable mineral deposits.\textsuperscript{45} When William Henry Harrison, representing the United States, met with the Sacs, he was careful to call for an ending of the warfare between the hostile tribes. This demand was unsatisfactory to the Sacs, who were more concerned with winning American favor than in establishing peace.\textsuperscript{46} However, at the urgent insistence of Harrison, the Sacs and Foxes signed a treaty on November 3, whereby they agreed to show their affection for the United States by giving up a large tract of land. They also agreed to stop the bloody strife between their people and the Great and Little Osages, and to meet with the Osage chiefs to adjust their differences.\textsuperscript{47} This treaty, however, failed to bring peace to the Osage country; it merely pacified

\begin{footnotes}
\item[44]McDermott, p. 121.
\item[45]James Bruff to James Wilkinson, November 5, 1804, Territorial Papers, XIII, 76.
\item[46]Hagan, pp. 24-25.
\end{footnotes}
one Osage enemy. The tribe was still at odds with the Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Shawnees, Creeks, Potawatomis, Delawares, and all other tribes that moved into their vicinity.

A large company of the Arkansas Osages on a raid to the Red River had recently met a Cherokee hunting party on the Little Missouri. They killed four of the Cherokee hunters. And in 1805, the Quapaws, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Shawnees joined the Cherokees to attack the Osages and take possession of their lands.48 Early in March, the Potawatomis were invited to join this coalition to carry war against those "very Bad Indians."49 By October, the allied tribes had recruited 800 braves for the execution of their scheme.50 Governor Wilkinson was unable to prevent the impending blow and feared that it would shake the Osages' confidence in the United States. All he could do was to warn the Osage chiefs and to urge the Government to mediate between the hostile tribes.51

49 Jean Ducoigne to John Lalime, March 2, 1805, enclosure in James Bruff to James Wilkinson, March 12, 1805, Territorial Papers, XIII, 104.
51 Governor Wilkinson to the Secretary of War, October 8, 1805, Territorial Papers, XIII, 235.
The reiterated reports in circulation pertaining to combinations of tribes east of the Mississippi River, with hostile aims toward the Osages and the United States, excited some uneasiness. The Osages, who possessed some firearms, were able to terrorize the Indians of the West and Southwest who depended upon lances, bows, and arrows. But they were no match for the tribes of the East and North who also employed firearms. Unless the United States intervened, the Osages were doomed to annihilation.

On June 20, 1805, the Secretary of War instructed the Governor of Indiana Territory, William Henry Harrison, to use any prudent measures in his power to prevent the organization of eastern coalitions, and to convince the eastern tribes of the rashness of prosecuting a war against tribes in amity with the United States. Harrison was also instructed to arrange a meeting at St. Louis between the eastern nations and the Osages. Governor Wilkinson of Louisiana was to see that the Osages attended the meeting.52

To accomplish his part of the plan, Wilkinson sent Pierre Chouteau to the Osage villages in Missouri. On September 22, Chouteau returned to St. Louis with twenty

52 The Secretary of War to Governor Harrison, June 20, 1805, *Territorial Papers*, VII, 296.
Osage chiefs headed by White Hair. Harrison, in the meantime, had persuaded a deputation of Delawares, Potawatomis, Miamis, Kickapoos, Kaskaskias, Sacs, Foxes, Sioux of the Des Moines River, and Iowas to accompany him to the peace council. On October 18, 1805, these tribes signed a treaty with the Osages. It contained two articles. The first called for cessation of hostilities. The other provided that future disputes should be reported to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for reconciliation.

Four days after the signing of this treaty, Captain Amos Stoddard conducted the participating tribes to Washington. The Osage party consisted of the chief and four select men of the Little Osage tribe. Traveling on horseback to Louisville, ascending the Ohio by boats, and then going from Wheeling by carriage, the chiefs reached the capital early in 1806. After a lecture by

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53 Governor Wilkinson to the Secretary of War, September 22, 1805, *ibid.*, XIII, 229.

54 A Treaty between the Tribes of Indians Called the Delawares, Miamis, Potawatimis, Kickapoos, Sacks, Foxes, Kaskaskias, Scicoux of the River Demoin & Iowas, of the one part and the Great and Little Osages of the Other part, October 18, 1805, *ibid.*, pp. 245-247.

55 Governor Wilkinson to the Secretary of War, October 22, 1805, *ibid.*, pp. 243-244.

President Jefferson on the virtues of peace, the Indians returned to their homes in the West. But lectures and superficial agreements could not produce peace. The Osages had been at war with their neighbors from earliest history. They knew nothing about treaties and negotiations. But they did know that they had survived by physical combat. They also realized their importance in the history of the Southwest—how they had dominated the region between St. Louis and Santa Fe and how they had been the main factor in the balance of power pursued by the French and Spanish. Since the Americans had bought Louisiana, the Osages had lost their bargaining position, but they had kept their pugnacity and their willingness to defend their country. These would be their assets as they faced the bloodiest period in their history, the long, violent struggle with the Cherokees. Throughout the early nineteenth century, the Osages were to be the most active force in preventing the peaceful settlement of Oklahoma by either white or red men.
CHAPTER II

THE OSAGES FROM THEIR FIRST CESSION TREATY WITH
THE UNITED STATES TO THEIR REMOVAL
TO KANSAS, 1808-1839

The history of the Osages from 1808 to 1839 may be
conveniently divided into three major sections, each
separated by a cession treaty. The first begins with the
cession treaty of 1808 and terminates with the cession of
1818. It covers the Osages' relations with the whites and
the eastern tribes during that decade. The second section
begins with the 1818 cession treaty and ends with the land
cession of 1825. It likewise covers the tribe's relations
with the eastern tribes and the whites. The concluding
division covers the period from the Osages' last major
cession treaty to their removal to Kansas in 1839, and
includes their relations with the eastern tribes, the
western tribes, and the whites. These three sections com-
bined cover the most turbulent period in Osage history, a
period in which the United States Government and the
powerful eastern tribes took the extensive Osage lands by
right of conquest.
The trouble began in 1808 when the Osages ceded their first land to the United States. Before the treaty could be negotiated, however, the Government had to find some pretext upon which to base their demand for the Osage lands. In the summer of 1808, Governor Meriwether Lewis of Louisiana Territory reported to the War Department that the Great Osages were disloyal to the Americans and had threatened the security of the citizens of the territory. He alleged that these Osages had taken several white prisoners and insulted them; that they had stolen horses, clothing, and household furniture; and that other depredations could be expected after the Indians returned from their summer hunt. The Little Osages, according to the report, had "behaved extremely well," while the Arkansas Band under Big Track were nearly as bad as the Great Osages.¹

As punishment for these hostilities, Governor Lewis declared the Osages out of United States protection and prohibited any trade with them by white merchants.² William Clark, the Agent of Indian Affairs for Louisiana Territory, proposed that a distinction be made between the

¹Governor Lewis to the Secretary of War, July 1, 1808, Clarence Edwin Carter, editor, The Territorial Papers of the United States (Washington, 1934-) (hereafter cited as Territorial Papers), XIV, 197-198.

²John B. Treat to the Secretary of War, July 26, 1808, ibid., XIV, 206.
friendly Little Osages and their "vicious and obscene" brothers. Though President Thomas Jefferson regretted that Osage-white relations had come to an open rupture, he approved the withdrawal of United States protection from the hostile band while maintaining trading relations with the friendly part of the tribe. This stern policy aroused the resentment of Pierre Chouteau, Jr., who complained that Governor Lewis had taken over the entire management of Indian affairs, even the most trivial details which had previously been left to the discretion of his father. He also charged that the alleged offenses of the Osages had served merely as an excuse to cut off United States relations with the tribe, whereas similar crimes among other tribes had never been corrected except by punishing the guilty individuals. When the Osages returned the stolen horses, Governor Lewis abandoned his plan of punishment. The United States, however, had succeeded in preparing a list of grievances against the Osages, and the way was cleared for a cession.

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3William Clark to the Secretary of War, August 18, 1808, ibid., XIV, 209.
4The President to Governor Lewis, August 21, 1808, ibid., XIV, 219.
5Pierre Chouteau, Jr., to the Secretary of War, September 1, 1809, ibid., XIV, 316.
William Clark drew up several articles of a treaty and read them to the Osages on September 13, 1808. The tribe was so well satisfied with Clark's treaty that Governor Lewis thought it wise to propose "a more favourable Treaty for the United States." He therefore drafted a new treaty and sent it to the Osage villages by Pierre Chouteau. The tribe unhesitatingly signed the document. Perhaps their receptivity was due to the fact that the Governor had instructed Chouteau that those who refused to sign could receive no more merchandise from the United States factory or from individual traders. Or they may have known that, in case they refused to accept the treaty, Pierre Chouteau was to inform the Governor by courier express so that a military expedition might be sent against them.

The treaty made the following provisions: The United States was to build a fort (Fort Clark or Fort Osage) on the Missouri River for the protection of the Osages, and a supply of goods was to be maintained at the fort for trading with the Osages for skins and furs. The

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6 William Clark to the Secretary of War, September 23, 1808, ibid., XIV, 225.
7 William Clark to the Secretary of War, December 2, 1808, ibid., XIV, 242-243.
8 Governor Lewis to Pierre Chouteau, October 3, 1808, ibid., XIV, 230.
Government was to furnish the Osages with a blacksmith and tools, utensils for farming, a mill, plows, and a block-house for each head chief. The Americans also promised to pay all damages claimed against the Osages by American citizens, and an annuity of $1000 was to be paid to the Great Osages and $500 to the Little Osages. Another incentive to signing the treaty was provided in Article Five, whereby the United States agreed to pay the Indians $1200 when the document was signed. The treaty further provided that a boundary line would be drawn from five miles above Fort Osage, south to the Arkansas River, and down that river to the Mississippi, and that the Osages were to give up all land east of that line forever. (See Map 2, Appendix.) Article Nine provided for the settlement of tribal disputes by the Superintendent. Article Ten provided that the Osages would be under the protection of no foreign powers. The Osages were also to capture unlicensed hunters in their territory and surrender them to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs or his agent, and the Osages were never to supply implements of war to another nation or tribe not in amity with the United States. 9

In the fall of 1808, the Missouri Osages moved to the vicinity of the newly established Fort Osage (Fort Clark). (See Map 2, Appendix.) In the summer of 1809, they "made corn" at that place, but a large number of them moved back to their old towns on the Osage River in the autumn and winter months of 1809 and 1810. And the next spring only about half of the Osages remained at the fort. 10

On Saturday, February 16, 1811, James Madison presented the treaty of November 10, 1808, to the House and Senate. 11 It was finally approved on March 3, and General Clark ordered Pierre Chouteau to deliver the promised annuities to the Osages. In the meantime, the Osages, having waited three years for their first annuity, considered the treaty broken by the United States. Chouteau then sent an interpreter to bring the distrustful Indians to the fort to receive their money. 12

During the decade between the Osages' first land cession to the United States and the treaty of 1818, the tribe devoted itself to two primary tasks, fighting the eastern tribes and bargaining their services to the

10 Fort Osage Officers to the Secretary of War, July 16, 1812, Territorial Papers, XIV, 587.


12 Pierre Chouteau to the Secretary of War, August 7, 1811, Territorial Papers, XIV, 465-466.
highest bidder in the War of 1812. During the war years, the British were trying to turn the Osages against the United States. To counteract the British proposals, the acting governor of Missouri Territory, Frederick Bates, sent Pierre Chouteau to enlist the Osages in a war against the British-inspired, northern tribes.\(^{13}\) Chouteau was successful in getting 260 of their best warriors for the job and began the trek northward. In the meantime, the Government, owing to pressure from the white citizens of the frontier, reversed the territorial governor’s plans.

The disappointed Governor Howard wrote to Pierre Chouteau:

> Altho’ no man can abhor more than I do the Barbarous practice of employing Savages against civilized enemy, yet I . . . am of opinion to employ them against each other is not only Justifiable but good policy. But so far as I can Understand the policy of our Government from circumstances their Views are different.\(^{14}\)

Chouteau, having aroused the passion for revenge in the hearts of the Osages, then had the delicate task of sending them home. The Osage war party was very disappointed after its long and difficult journey, deprived of its hopes of defending its allies and avenging its enemies.\(^{15}\)

But Chouteau finally persuaded them to return. Meanwhile,

\(^{13}\) Acting Governor Bates to Pierre Chouteau, March 4, 1813, \textit{ibid.}, XIV, 673.

\(^{14}\) Governor Howard to Pierre Chouteau, April, 1813, \textit{ibid.}, XIV, 674.

\(^{15}\) Pierre Chouteau to the Secretary of War, May 20, 1813, \textit{ibid.}, XIV, 671.
Cherokee homes down the Arkansas were never attacked in force by Osage warriors.  

In fulfillment of pledges made in Washington, the western Cherokees were granted a wide tract along the White River of present-day Arkansas—at that time, Missouri Territory—by a treaty in 1817. This brought an additional problem since the region assigned to the Cherokees, as well as an assurance to them of an outlet toward the West, intruded upon the Osage country. The principal reason for hostilities between the Osages and Cherokees was that the former supposed the latter to have located upon their lands. All published maps substantiated the Osage claim, but the public surveyor of Missouri and Illinois thought the maps were inaccurate. It was evident that no satisfactory settlement could take place without surveying the eastern Osage line.

In the meantime, the turbulent Osages broke their peace with the Cherokees. Restless bands of warriors who defied the command of their chiefs plundered the Cherokee hunters and killed some of them. However, murders had

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18 Grant Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, the Story of the American Southwest before 1830 (New Haven, 1930), p. 750.


20 American State Papers: Indian Affairs, II, 98.
been committed by both sides. The Quapaws, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Delawares living within the orbit of Cherokee influence, readily agreed to unite in a war to exterminate the Osages. At councils conducted in the Cherokee territory on the Arkansas River in 1817, messages were prepared and sent to the eastern Cherokees, inviting them to join the proposed expedition against the Osages. It was decided to start in May when there would be enough grass to support their horses. The Cherokees told Colonel Return J. Meigs, Cherokee agent in Tennessee, that after nearly a decade of fruitless efforts to establish peace with the Osages, finally they had resolved to make war. Several boatloads of eastern Cherokee braves had come down the Tennessee River to help their western brothers. Meigs received instructions from the War Department to stop this coalition and succeeded in preventing the departure of more eastern recruits. Either because of Colonel Meigs' influence or from fear of meeting the Osage warriors, the campaign was postponed. However, it was not given up, for in July the Cherokee chiefs Takatoka and Tahlonteskee informed the governor of Missouri of their intention to attack the Osages. 21

21 Foreman, pp. 53-55.
While the Cherokees were preparing for their invasion, the War Department was taking steps to prevent the disaster. In 1813, the Government had appointed William L. Lovely agent for the western Cherokees. He reached his new post in July and tried in vain to mediate between the tribes. By 1816, Lovely realized that his talks were of no avail. He then requested the establishment of a fort on the Arkansas River to maintain peace between the hostile tribes. The Secretary of War directed the construction of Fort Smith at the intersection of the Arkansas River and the eastern Osage line. (See Map 2, Appendix.) Major William Bradford was dispatched with a company of troops to the newly-established fort in 1817. But in October, before his command reached its station, the Cherokee army of about 600 warriors, augmented by Koasati, Comanche, Tonkawa, and white recruits, marched toward the Osage country. Clermont and his braves were away from their village on a hunting excursion. Taking advantage of this opportunity, the invading force fell with savage force upon the unprotected village occupied by old men, women, and children. The Osages, in their retreat, lost fourteen men and sixty-nine women and children. The Cherokees took 103 prisoners, burned the

22 Ibid., pp. 38-41. 23 Ibid., p. 45.
24 Ibid., p. 55.
town, and destroyed the crops.\(^{25}\) This campaign resulted in such an impressive "victory" that the Cherokees demanded the spoils of war, the coveted Osage lands of present-day eastern Oklahoma. As Tahlonteskee told Governor Clark:

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\ldots \text{we expect country in payment for the various losses we have experienced. If I had been unfortunate in war, our claims for an outlet would not have been as good against them, perhaps, as it is in our present relations with that Tribe.}
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Secretary of War John C. Calhoun agreed with Tahlonteskee and ordered Governor Clark to give part of the Osage lands to the Cherokees as an outlet to the buffalo grounds in the West. The Cherokees immediately began to consolidate their gains, dividing the Osage lands among their allies.\(^{26}\)

The Cherokees had gained this new tract of country by the same method used by their American friends, the right of conquest, but the Government thought it wise to give this forced cession an air of legality. On September 25, 1818, the governor of Missouri Territory, William Clark, drafted a treaty with the Osages by which the tribe ceded to the Federal Government land bounded by the Arkansas River on the south, the Verdigris on the west, up to the falls of that river, thence northeast to the site of

\[^{25}\text{Ibid., pp. 57-59.}\]
\[^{26}\text{Ibid., pp. 79-81.}\]
present-day Salina, Oklahoma, then east to the settlement of the Cherokees. (See Map 2, Appendix.) The Government, claiming that the Osage annuities were not sufficient to cover claims against the tribe, agreed to pay all damage claims of United States citizens against the Osages.27 The Government also promised that peaceful settlers would be moved into the newly-acquired Osage lands and that these people would teach the Osages the wholesome arts of farming. Actually the United States gave the land to the Cherokees as a hunting ground.28 This tract later became known as the Lovely Purchase because of the part played in the deal by William Lovely, then agent for the Cherokees.

During the seven years between the Osages' second land cession to the United States and their last major cession in 1825, the tribe was in almost constant warfare with the eastern tribes and with many whites, the only major exceptions being the United States Government and the early Osage missionaries. Though the Cherokees had won a major victory at Claremore Mound, the war was not over. (See Map 1, Appendix.) In 1818, the Osages determined to resume the strife unless the Cherokees gave up their Osage prisoners. It was the summer of 1819 before

28John Joseph Mathews, Wah'Kon-Tah, the Osage and the White Man's Road (Norman, 1932), pp. 351-352.
the Cherokees offered to return the captives. In July, Clermont and a party of Osage chiefs went to Fort Smith where they were to receive the captives. However, the Cherokees, on the pretext of being busy in their harvest, postponed the council until September. The Osages, eager to receive their relatives, arrived promptly at the fort in September. But the Cherokees, refusing to meet with the Osages, sent word that they had adopted the prisoners, mostly women, into their tribe. The Osage chiefs, Clermont and Tallai, insisted that the Cherokees keep their word, and the post commander ordered them to bring forth the prisoners within ten days. When the Cherokees had not produced the captives by the eleventh day, the Osages started home. Only Clermont and Tallai remained at Fort Smith. The Cherokees appeared the next day, and messengers went to bring the Osages back to the post. The Cherokees reluctantly gave up a few of the prisoners, some of whom were married to their captors. An American witness described the parting of one Osage woman from her husband as a "scene of sorrow." She pleaded with the Osage chiefs to let her stay with the Cherokees. But Clermont answered, "Your father and mother lament you; it is your duty to go see them. If the Cherokee loves you, he will not forget to come for you."29

refusal to return all the prisoners kept alive the disagreement between the tribes, and killings and robberies were committed by both sides. Some of the white settlers helped to encourage these depredations by buying the stolen horses. Several distilleries were operated near Fort Smith, the owners trading the whiskey to the eastern tribes for the horses they were inspired to take from the Osages. 30

To gain greater protection in their new lands against the unfriendly Osages, the Cherokees, with the approval of the Government, invited the Delawares and Shawnees to abandon their lands near Cape Girardeau and unite with the western Cherokees along the Arkansas. (See Map 2, Appendix.) Similar proposals were extended to the Oneida tribe of New York. 31 The Cherokee leaders envisioned a confederacy of eastern tribes, combined for their common welfare to oppose the "uncivilized" tribes of the West, to further their own conquests, and to demand more favorable treatment from the whites.

While the immigrant tribes were strengthening their alliance, the Osages were planning to retaliate against the Cherokees for their refusal to repatriate all the

30 John Jolly and Walter Webber to Governor Miller, July 2, 1820, Arkansas Gazette, July 29, 1820, p. 3. Foreman, pp. 91, 206.

31 Foreman, pp. 82-83.
prisoners taken at Claremore Mound. In February, 1820, an Osage war party under Clermont’s son, Mad Buffalo, intercepted a Cherokee hunting party on Poteau River. (See Map 2, Appendix.) They killed three of the Cherokees and robbed the party’s furs. The Cherokees held a council on February 10 to prepare a petition to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, demanding that the Osages pay for the stolen furs and surrender for execution as many men as they had murdered of the Cherokees.\textsuperscript{32} Admitting to James Miller, governor of Arkansas Territory, that some members of their nation had slain the Cherokees, the Osages said they should not be compelled to surrender the murderers unless the Cherokees returned the Osage prisoners. Miller then informed the Cherokees that he could not help them until they would give up their captives.\textsuperscript{33} The Cherokees chose to keep the prisoners, and the Osages chose to commit more depredations.

By 1821 Governor Miller was tired of his role as mediator. He told the Cherokees that he would hinder them no longer in their war plans, provided they would do no harm to the whites. On March 12, the Cherokees asked Major Bradford to remove all white settlers from the danger area. Bradford, whose views differed from those

\textsuperscript{32}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 85-86.

\textsuperscript{33}\textit{Missionary Herald}, XVII, 21. Foreman, p. 89.
was unsuccessful; it merely provoked the Cherokees to retaliate.

In early October, 1821, Major Bradford visited the Cherokees at their encampment a few miles from Fort Smith. He pleaded with them not to retaliate against the Osages who had expressed their desire for peace. But the Cherokees said that they were determined to press the war against their enemy. There were 300 of them, including twelve Choctaws, twelve Creeks, ten Delawares, fifteen Shawnees, and some white men. Bradford ordered the white men back but let the Indians proceed when he found that he could not dissuade them. For some unexplainable reason he gave the invading force a cask of gun powder. The Osages, depending upon Bradford to defend them, had left their village unprotected while they fought the Pawnees in the West. The Cherokees divided into two parties. One group defeated the unprotected village, while the other was surprised by a party of Osage warriors. The Osages attacked at such close range that several of the Cherokee braves were powder-burned. The Cherokees, however, had a number of Osage captives to take back to their settlements. The victory celebrations became so wild that the Cherokees butchered some of the defenseless prisoners including women and children. Leading this atrocity was Tom Graves, a Cherokee leader who harbored an insatiable hatred for
the Osages. He was tried for these murders at Little Rock. But the court decided that the case was out of its jurisdiction, since the crimes took place on Indian land, and Graves was released.36

With so many crimes committed by both sides, Governor Miller held little prospect of establishing peace between the Osages and Cherokees, but there was one man who had not lost hope. Nathaniel Philbrook, subagent for the Osages, visited their village in January, 1822, and proposed an armistice. Clermont was indifferent to the proposal, but Tallai said, "I do not want to live always with my thumb on the cock of the gun." Under his influence, the Osages promised to observe a truce while Philbrook counseled with the Cherokees. The Cherokees agreed to the truce which was to last until July 30, when the two tribes would meet at a peace conference at Fort Smith.37

The meeting at Fort Smith resulted in a treaty signed on August 9, 1822. The tribes agreed to live in peace, and the Cherokees returned eight Osage prisoners and promised to deliver nine more in September. For some

36 Miles' Weekly Register, May 31, 1823; Arkansas Gazette, April 29, 1823, p. 3; Foreman, pp. 123-124, 126-127.

reason, the Cherokees repatriated twenty-one more captives, exceeding the number specified in the treaty, and Nathaniel Philbrook received much praise for his work as mediator.  

In 1824 his personal effects were found on the Grand River. It was supposed that he was drowned while crossing the river, but a few weeks later his bullet-pierced body was discovered about 200 miles down the Arkansas. Who killed him was a mystery, but many suspected the Osages.

In spite of Philbrook's treaty, a new period of bloodshed began before the end of 1822. The Cherokees still coveted the Osage lands in eastern Oklahoma, and many of them were unsatisfied with the treaty. They regretted having been persuaded to sign it when victory seemed within their grasp. Both sides renewed their preparations for war, the eastern alliance recruiting about 2100 warriors besides 2000 Pawnees, Comanchies, and others from the West. To meet this army, the Osages could muster but 1250 braves. It seemed that the entire southwestern frontier would be involved in the impending war.

Into this region of bloody conflict, few white men were willing to venture, the major exceptions being

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38 Foreman, pp. 138-139.  
40 Ibid., pp. 147-148.  
41 Ibid., pp. 216-217.
government officials and missionaries. In 1819, Epaphras Chapman and Job P. Vinall, sponsored by the United Foreign Missionary Society of New York, had gone to locate mission sites in Missouri. They went up the Arkansas to the western Cherokee settlements where they presented their plan to that tribe on July 13. Since the Cherokees were already conferring with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Vinall and Chapman proceeded to Fort Smith and interviewed the Osages who gave them a favorable reply. At Fort Smith, both men were seized by a fever. Vinall died, but Chapman went on to the Osage settlement where the chiefs granted him permission to build a mission on the west side of the Neosho River. He then went back to New York to report to his board. The Cherokee country was relinquished to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions; the Osage mission was organized, and the first missionaries departed in April, 1820. On November 15, they arrived in the Osage country and established Union Mission (Presbyterian-Dutch Reformed), the first mission station in Oklahoma. (See

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42 Reuben Gold Thwaites, editor, Early Western Travels, 1748-1846 (Cleveland, 1904-1908), XIII, 278; Arkansas Gazette, July 8, 1820, p. 2; Foreman, pp. 94-95.

43 Wright, p. 191. The most valuable source on the history of Union Mission is the unpublished Union Mission Journal, Oklahoma Historical Society.
The second group of missionaries stopped in Little Rock until December when they started up the Arkansas. When they reached the mouth of the Grand River, they discovered that the boatmen would be unable to use their poles in the deep and swift water. This necessitated "bush-whacking," an arduous method of moving the boat by pulling the branches along the bank. The party finally arrived at the mission site on February 28, 1821. Two days later they were greeted by Tallai and several Osage warriors, and on March 5 they were introduced to the tribe by Clermont who promised to let his children attend the mission school when it opened. 44

These young missionaries found that there was much work to be done before they could begin to teach the Osage children. Logs had to be cut, puncheons split, clapboards rived, and cabins constructed. There was also underbrush to be cleared, land to be plowed, and crops to be planted. 45

Before the end of 1821, the missionaries had opened the first school in present Oklahoma, with an enrollment of four French-Osage children. At the same time, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions established Harmony Mission among the Missouri Osages. 46

44 Foreman, pp. 104-105.  
46 Wright, p. 209.
These schools, as well as others in Arkansas and Missouri, were supported by an annual $10,000 appropriation by Congress.\textsuperscript{47}

The majority of students attending the Union Mission school were full-blood Osages, but there were some mixed bloods, French, Dutch, Spanish, Kickapoo, Sioux and Missouri. A number of deserted infants were picked up where they had been left to die from exposure or to be devoured by wolves.\textsuperscript{48} When the missionaries succeeded in enrolling an Osage youth, the parents would soon take him back under various pretexts: the derision of their kinsmen; the missionaries were making the boy into a white man; the father needed his son on the buffalo hunt; the boy needed to eat buffalo meat for his health. Usually he would come back in a few weeks for food. He would then be practically naked, having thrown away the clothing provided by the mission or carrying his clothes in a roll to escape the ridicule of his friends.\textsuperscript{49}

Running a school was not the only work of the missionaries. On May 26, 1821, they organized the first Protestant congregation in Oklahoma.\textsuperscript{50} There were other firsts at the mission—the first white wedding, the first

\textsuperscript{47}Thomas L. McKenney to Governor Izard, September 16, 1825, Territorial Papers, XX, 112.

\textsuperscript{48}Foreman, p. 140.

\textsuperscript{49}Ibid., p. 152.

\textsuperscript{50}Ibid., p. 116.
printing press and printed book. Dr. Marcus Palmer from Greenwich, Connecticut, the mission physician, was the only doctor in hundreds of miles. The Indians and white people along the Verdigris and Arkansas rivers made a constant demand on his services. The missionaries also provided food and clothing for the Indians, but the Osages did not always know the limits of the mission's bounty. Sometimes they camped in great numbers around the mission desiring to be fed, at times stealing all the movable objects they could reach.51

It was not easy to survive in this most remote settlement of the American Southwest. In 1826 and 1827, floods carried off ten of their cabins, drowned their hogs and cattle, and washed away their corn fields. Their horses and cattle perished from prairie flies, and on top of all these pestilences was the Osage-Cherokee war.52

Aside from some immediate success in benevolence, the missionaries made few lasting contributions to Osage life. In agriculture, the missionaries themselves confessed that they had accomplished little.53 In religion and education, they testified to their failure in letters to their sponsors in the East. In 1832 one of the missionaries

52 Ibid., p. 246.  
53 John F. Hamtramck to William Clark, January 13, 1828, Territorial Papers, XX, 618.
wrote to the Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions that the missions had failed in civilizing and Christianizing the Osages, who had no religious or secular motives to inspire them in literary pursuits.\(^5^4\) When the Government announced a plan to move the Osages to Kansas, the Protestant missions closed.\(^5^5\) The following year, 1836, the Government reimbursed the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions for improvements at Union and Harmony missions.\(^5^6\) By 1840 the old mission buildings were crumbling to ruins.\(^5^7\) Today there is nothing but a small graveyard to mark the site of Union Mission. One of the headstones bears the following inscription:

> In Memory Of
> Epaphras Chapman
> Who died 7 June, 1825
> Aged 32
> First Missionary to the Osages
> Say among the heathen the Lord Reigneth\(^5^8\)

Though the Osages were usually opposed to the aims of the missionaries, they nevertheless maintained friendly


\(^5^5\) Wright, pp. 191-192.


\(^5^8\) Personal examination of site.
relations with them. Such was not always the case with other whites who dared to enter the Osage country. In 1821, an Osage war party commanded by Big Soldier, a chief of White Hair's town, went on a mission toward the Red River. The band was composed of warriors from Clermont's Town, White Hair's village in Missouri, and a settlement on the Verdigris River. Hugh Glenn, a trader in the Osage country, was at Clermont's Town when the warriors returned. He described five scalps taken from white men on the Red River.\(^{59}\)

Two years later a party from Arkansas Post was camping on the Blue River (De L'eau Bleu), a stream abounding in beaver, in present Bryan County, Oklahoma. (See Map 2, Appendix.) This party of Americans, Frenchmen, and Quapaw half-breeds was engaged in trapping, hunting, and trading. To avoid being taken for an Indian encampment and thereby being involved in the hostilities between the Osages and Red River Indians, the company hoisted a flag over their camp and put bells on their grazing horses. On November 17, 1823, 200 Osages under Mad Buffalo attacked the hunters. After a very fierce battle, five of the hunters were killed, beheaded, and shockingly mutilated. The Osages stole their hunting equipment, clothing, \(^{59}\)Foreman, p. 99.
peltries, and horses. The survivors fled in terror to the white settlements on the Arkansas and Red rivers where they recounted the story of the atrocity. This massacre caused some of the missionaries to flee the country. White settlers began to organize for defense. Under Colonel Matthew Arbuckle's command, Major Alexander Cummings was sent from Fort Smith to Colonel A. P. Chouteau's trading house to demand satisfaction from the Osages. Mad Buffalo, Moi-neh-per-sha, and Clermont met with Major Cummings and returned twenty-six horses, some beaver skins, and other items. The Osage chiefs expressed their regrets about the encounter, saying that those who participated were unaware that the camp contained white men.  

As a result of the Blue River massacre and other such conflicts, the Arkansas House of Representatives and Legislative Council petitioned the Secretary of War on October 18, 1823, asking him to establish a military post at the junction of the Red and Kiamichi rivers. Fort Smith and Natchitoches were too far to the north and east to help the 1,500 white settlers below the Kiamichi. In May of the following year, Major Cummings was sent with a

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60 Ibid., pp. 188-191.
detachment of troops to establish Cantonment Towson. 61
(See Map 2, Appendix.)

There were other troubles between the Osages and
whites. As early as 1813, the Government had decided to
discontinue the operation of the trading house at Fort
Osage. In the fall of that year, George Sibley, the Osage
Factor, met with the Osage chiefs to discuss their views
on the removal of the fort. The Indians were divided in
their opinions, but Big Soldier's speech revealed the
typical Osage feelings about the whole matter.

Whose fault is it that these two villages [the
Great and Little Osages] are divided? The Big Red
Head (Gen'l Clark) built a Fort at Fire Prairie—Old
White Hair as well as my chief agreed to settle
there—we have kept our promises they have not
remembered theirs—. . . I was lately on a visit to
the Great American Chief—He told me that Fort Clark
should be made stronger than ever, that he would
plant an Iron Post there that could not be pulled
up, . . . I fear he has forgotten that promise and
instead of planting an Iron Post intends to let the
old wooden one rot—The Trading House is not for
nothing—we have given our Land for it—and I tell
you plainly, I think the President has done very
wrong to remove it at all—I have seen him and his
Country and Millions of his People, and am very
certain that he is able to protect a Trading House
wherever he is bound by contract to keep one—. . . . 62

61 Delegate Conway to the Secretary of War,
January 30, 1824, Territorial Papers, XIX, 602; Foreman,
p. 203, 205.

62 George Sibley to Governor Clark, November 28, 1813,
Territorial Papers, XIV, 714.
By 1822, the pressure from white settlers and eastern emigrants had forced the Osages to look to the west. By a treaty signed at Marias de Cygne on August 31, the Osages relieved the United States from the provisions of Article Two of the treaty of 1808, whereby the Americans had promised to keep a store of goods at Fort Osage, and the United States paid the Osages $2,329.40.63

Three years later, the United States prepared to negotiate the last of the three major cession treaties with the Osages. In April William Clark made plans to meet with the Osages at St. Louis on June 1. The treaty was signed on June 2. By its terms, the Osages were to relinquish and cede to the United States all their remaining lands within the Territory of Arkansas and the State of Missouri, west and north of Red River, and south of the Kansas River. And a line was to be drawn from the sources of the Kansas River southwardly through the Rock Saline. Within this boundary certain lands were to be reserved for the Osages, and no other nations were to be allowed in their reservation. (See Map 2, Appendix.) The Government was to pay the Osages $7,000 a year for twenty years, and

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64 William Clark to the Secretary of War, April 19, 1825, *Territorial Papers*, XX, 43-44.
they were to be supplied with farming implements, hogs, cattle, chickens, and a blacksmith. There were to be certain areas designated for mixed bloods, and fifty-four sections were to be sold from the reservation lands for the purpose of maintaining schools for the Osage children. The Government was to pay further claims held by citizens against the Osages, and the Osages were to give up all claims on the United States for keeping troops at Fort Osage. 65

As a result of the treaty of 1825 the Osages were confined to lands comprising about one fourth of present-day Kansas, with their chief village on the Neosho River near what is now the town of Erie in Neosho County. 66 (See Map 2, Appendix.) However, the Osages were not quick to give up their lands in Oklahoma, Missouri, and Arkansas. They continued to roam over their old hunting grounds, and government officials who tried to compel the tribe to locate on their new reservation met with obstinate resistance. 67 Since the eastern line of the new reservation was twenty-five miles from the western border of Missouri, this left a tract fifty miles north and south

66 George Rainey, The Cherokee Strip (Guthrie, Oklahoma, 1933), p. 36.
67 Foreman, p. 212.
by twenty-five miles east and west. These lands were assigned to the Cherokees. 68

Trouble with the Cherokees broke out again in 1826. In January of that year a party of Cherokees, Delawares, and other Indians killed five Osages near the Red River. The Cherokees had joined forces with the Delawares and others to exterminate the Osages. 69 The United States Government tried to mediate between the warring parties at Fort Gibson (see Map 2, Appendix) in May of 1826, but on reaching the fort, the Osages declined to go into council with their hated enemies. 70

Though there was a long history of crimes committed by both sides, this final phase of the Osage-Cherokee war seems to have started over the slaying of the nephew of Tom Graves, a Cherokee chief, in 1822. According to previous agreements made between the tribes, the Government was to demand the surrender of any murderer who did not make satisfaction to the injured tribe. 71 In compliance with this stipulation, the Osages surrendered the

68 Rainey, p. 38.

69 Governor Izard to the Secretary of War, January 30, 1826, Territorial Papers, XX, 193.

70 Edward W. DuVal to the Secretary of War, May 31, 1826, ibid., XX, 259.

71 Edmund P. Gaines to the Secretary of War, July 20, 1826, ibid., XX, 272.
murder suspect in August of 1826. He was placed in confinement at Cantonment Gibson to be disposed of as the President of the United States would direct.

Sometime in the summer of 1826, a Cherokee named Dutch was paid by Graves to kill an Osage in retaliation for the loss of the chief's nephew. The Government seemed to feel that this killing would satisfy the Cherokee desire for vengeance, but the Cherokees claimed that Dutch was not one of their group—that he lived on the Red River. Actually, Dutch did live on the Red River at the time of the killing, but he had been a party to a treaty in 1822 between the Osages and the Cherokees. It was obvious that the Cherokees wanted the punishment of the individual who killed one of their tribe—not the death of just any Osage.

In December of 1826, Graves was becoming impatient with the slow justice of the United States in dealing with the Osage prisoner. Graves was a popular warrior and had a reputation to protect. The Cherokee Agent, Edward W. DuVal, feared that the old Cherokee warrior could not do that much longer, unless his nephew's murder was atoned for. DuVal was having a very difficult time convincing

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72 Matthew Arbuckle to Edward G. W. Butler, November 4, 1826, *ibid.*, XX, 302.
the Cherokees that justice would certainly arrive, though its arrival might seem unreasonably slow to them.\textsuperscript{73}

In February of 1828, William Clark reported to Washington that there had been no hostilities between the Osages and Cherokees since November of the previous year.\textsuperscript{74} A few months later Graves and his Cherokee friends received a letter from the War Department encouraging them to remain at peace with the Osages and assuring them that the President would do anything he could to promote that peace.\textsuperscript{75}

Early in 1830 the migration of the Osages north and Cherokees west was continuing, and the controversy was still smoldering between the two tribes. Meanwhile, the Osage prisoner had escaped from Fort Gibson. The Government, noting that the number of murder victims on both sides was quite evenly balanced, believed that the tribes should call a halt to their warfare.\textsuperscript{76} In March of 1830, the Secretary of War directed Colonel Arbuckle to use military force if necessary to maintain peace between the

\textsuperscript{73}Edward DuVal to William Clark, December 6, 1826, \textit{ibid.}, XX, 320.

\textsuperscript{74}William Clark to Thomas L. McKenney, February 24, 1828, \textit{ibid.}, XX, 607.

\textsuperscript{75}Thomas L. McKenney to the Arkansas Cherokee Delegation, April 11, 1828, \textit{ibid.}, XX, 646.

\textsuperscript{76}Thomas L. McKenney to the Secretary of War, January 21, 1830, \textit{Territorial Papers}, XXI, 177.
warring tribes along the southwestern frontier. He was to arrest any Indian chief who tried to inspire his band to acts of violence. 77 By 1836 Arbuckle was able to report that the Osage-Cherokee war had finally been stopped by the troops at Fort Gibson. 78

For many years the United States had experimented with the removal of the eastern tribes in small groups. These experiments, usually unorganized and haphazardly administered, were a direct cause of the bloody conflicts between the Osages and the eastern coalitions, led by the Cherokees. With the acquisition of the old Osage lands by the treaties of 1808, 1818, and 1825, the way was opened for a large-scale Indian removal policy, the Indian Removal Bill of 1830. As a result of this bill, multitudes of eastern Indians flooded into the old Osage country for which the United States, according to Osage figures, had paid the unbelievably small sum of one cent for every six acres.

With the great number of well-armed Indians pouring into Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, and with a strong military force at Fort Gibson, the Osages directed their hostile activities toward their poorly-armed foes on the

77 The Secretary of War to Matthew Arbuckle, March 25, 1830, ibid., XXI, 200.
78 William Armstrong to Elbert Herring, June 23, 1836, ibid., XXI, 1230.
Plains. One Plains tribe with which the Osages were at perpetual war was the Pawnees, and an Osage would as soon shoot a Pawnee as a buffalo. In the summer of 1827, a band of Pawnees were looking for horses in the vicinity of the Little Osage village on the Neosho River. (See Map 2, Appendix.) Being caught in a storm, they took shelter in one of four cabins which the Government was constructing for the Osage chiefs. The next morning the Osages discovered the uninvited guests, pursued them, and returned with three scalps.79

There were many other clashes between the two tribes. In the winter of 1829-30, the Osages launched an invasion of the Pawnee country on the upper Arkansas. Three hundred Osage warriors descended upon an unprotected Pawnee camp and chased the bucks, squaws, and children into a lake where they were tomahawked. In February, the Osages returned to their homes, bragging that they had killed eighty or ninety Pawnees--more than they had killed in any previous battle with that tribe. The invaders had also returned with five women prisoners and eighty-four horses, and they had not lost a single warrior in the entire campaign. 80

79 Foreman, p. 272.
To protect themselves against further invasions by the immigrant tribes--now including the Osages--the Pawnees formed an alliance with the Otos, their neighbors on the Platte River. The Osages promptly joined an offensive alliance composed of Delawares, Kansas, Shawnees, Iowas, Sacs, Foxes, and Kickapoos to drive the Pawnees from the buffalo hunting grounds of Kansas. To prevent this impending war, the Government appointed a peace commission to mediate between the two enemy alliances. One of the commissioners accompanied a military party from Fort Gibson in 1832. They met a few Osages, who were admonished to live in friendship with the Pawnees. The Osages were very attentive to the commissioner's words, but the interpreter overheard the Indians say that they should steal as many Pawnee horses as possible before the proclamation of peace. On October 9 of the following year, the peace commission went to the Pawnee village and persuaded that tribe to sign a peace treaty. Following this preliminary agreement, peace conferences were held at Fort Leavenworth (see Map 2, Appendix) and Fort Gibson. The Pawnees and Otos promised to relinquish their claims to exclusive hunting rights.

81 Hyde, pp. 128-139.
82 Angie Debo, The Road to Disappearance (Norman, 1941), pp. 132-133.
western Kansas; and the Osages, Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, and other immigrant tribes agreed to live in peace with the Pawnees while hunting on the Plains. But the Osages had other enemies in the West. Among these were the Kiowas living on the Washita north of Red River. (See Map 2, Appendix.)

Clermont, the Osage chief who often said that he had "never made war with the white man or peace with the Indians," left his village with 300 warriors in 1833 to find the Kiowas. Meanwhile, the Kiowa braves had gone east to find the Osages, leaving their women, children, and old men unprotected. Somewhere in the Cimarron area the Osages discovered the Kiowa trail and backtracked it toward the Kiowa village. The unprotected Kiowas were going about their daily affairs when a wounded buffalo ran through their settlement, and one of the observant savages noticed that it was shot with an Osage arrow. Knowing that the Osages were near, most of the Kiowas retreated to the mountains, but a few remained--enough to afford the Osages a good slaughter. The invaders soon had more than enough Kiowa heads to take home for the war.

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83 Hyde, p. 129.
It was this bloody war with the Kiowas that led the United States to send out the famous Dragoon Expedition under General Henry Leavenworth and Colonel Henry Dodge in 1834.85

When the Osages returned from their campaign against the Kiowas, they brought with them a boy and girl as captives. A clever trader by the name of Love conceived the plan of buying the two captives and using them to open trading negotiations with the Kiowas. He paid the Osages $125 for the girl and $75 for the boy and kept them at his trading house until General Leavenworth arrived with his dragoons. The general then bought the two, Gunpandama and Tunk-aht-oh-ye, for the purpose of making a peaceful entrance into the Kiowa country.86 Leavenworth and over a hundred of his army died from a fever, but Colonel Dodge took command of the remaining troops, and the little girl, Gunpandama, was returned to the Kiowas—the boy having been accidentally killed before the journey. The Kiowas recorded her return on their pictorial calendar as the greatest event of 1834.87

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84 Clarence Wharton, Satanta, the Great Chief of the Kiowas and His People (Dallas, 1935), pp. 41-42. Wharton notes that the Kiowa pictorial calendar for the summer of 1833 contained a caricature showing it as "the summer they cut off our heads" (p. 53).

85 Wright, p. 258.

86 Wharton, pp. 44-45.

87 Ibid., p. 51.
The Dragoon Expedition was successful in getting the Wichitas, Kiowas, and Comanches to meet with the Osages at Fort Gibson in September, 1834. Here the Indians exchanged beads, smoked tobacco, and made speeches. And the United States presented flags and medals to the chiefs. The participants, largely by the influence of the beloved Wichita Chief We-tar-ra-shah-ro, finally agreed to a treaty of peace. This conference led to the treaty of August 24, 1835, signed near the Canadian River at Camp Holmes (see Map 2, Appendix) by the United States and a number of Indian tribes. A delegation of Osages accompanied by the famous Osage leader, Black Dog, signed the document along with delegates from the Comanches, Wichitas, Cherokees, Choctaws, Senecas, and Quapaws. The parties agreed that all previous acts of violence would be forgiven, and the United States would indemnify any tribe whose horses had been stolen by another tribe--provided the horses could not be recovered. The Government also agreed to let the tribes hunt on the lands to the western boundary of the United States, as long as they would not bother other Indians found on those grounds.

88 Debo, p. 133.
89 Wright, p. 258.
These tribes were assembled again in May, 1837, at Fort Gibson, where the Osages, Creeks, Kiowas, and other tribes signed a treaty agreeing to live in peace with the United States. The Osages also promised to stop their raids on the Kiowas, Muskogees, and the prairie Indians.  

About a year and a half later, the Osages signed a treaty releasing the Government from all responsibilities incurred in the treaties of 1808 and 1825, except those dealing with sections of land to be sold for educational purposes. The United States was to pay the Osages $20,000 annually in money and goods plus part of the 1829 annuities wrongfully withheld from them by a government agent. The Osages agreed to give up all their claims to any land lying within the boundaries of any other tribe. Thus the vast Osage domain of the eighteenth century was reduced to a relatively small reservation in Kansas. Some of the Osages had moved to their new location as early as 1828, but it was not until 1836 that the Arkansas Band could be persuaded to give up their lands in Oklahoma. And it was 1839 before the Osages gave up all their old land claims. The history of the Osages from 1839 to 1872 is part of the story of Kansas.

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91 Wharton, p. 55; Mathews, p. 354.
93 Wright, pp. 192-193.
CHAPTER III

THE OSAGES IN KANSAS, 1839-1871

The new Osage reservation was twenty-five miles west of the western border of Missouri and just to the north of the present boundary between Oklahoma and Kansas. It measured about 50 miles from north to south by about 276 miles from east to west. (See Map 3, Appendix.)\(^1\) To the north lived the Peorias, Kansas, and Ottawas; and to the south, the Cherokees and Senecas.

The Osages had established several villages in this area. One was known as Nion-Chou, where Pierre Melicourt Papin resided as the agent of the American Fur Company.\(^2\) Some distance from the village houses was a large, carefully locked warehouse containing the goods to be traded with the Osages for pelts and money.\(^3\) Indeed, most of the Osage annuity money—paid by the terms of the treaty of 1839—went into the coffers of the Fur Company. In 1840,

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\(^3\) *Ibid.*, p. 120.
for example, Papin received $16,000, and the entire annuity payment was but $20,000 per year.\(^4\) Merchants who traded with the Indians sometimes made enormous profits, but they also ran risks not encountered by eastern merchants: goods were often stolen; the Indians frequently moved their residences away from the trader's establishment; and there was always the danger of becoming involved in tribal wars. Some traders became very wealthy, but many lost their fortunes, and a few lost their lives. During the Osage-Cherokee wars, a number of white merchants had been killed. But by 1840 the dangers were not nearly so great, most of the Indian conflicts taking place on the western Plains.

Though most of the Osage money went into the white man's pocket, it also came from the same place. The government agent was the main link between the Indian and Washington. It was he who paid the Osages their annuities, listened to their complaints, and interceded for them before the Great White Father. Some of these agents were slothful and dishonest; others were energetic crusaders, standing up for their Indian friends against the encroachments of white civilization; but most of them were somewhere between these extremes.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 130.
In 1851, the Neosho and Osage sub-agencies were com-
combined under the authority of one agent who resided at the 
old Neosho sub-agency close to the Seneca villages. (See 
Map 3, Appendix.)\(^5\) His task was a difficult one for 
several reasons. First, he had to supervise the affairs 
of a number of Indian tribes and could, therefore, follow 
no single policy, since many of the tribes had different 
types of treaties with the Government. And then he found 
it difficult to enforce whatever policy he did make, since 
there were no troops closer than Fort Smith, 150 miles to 
the south, and Fort Leavenworth, nearly 200 miles to the 
north. (See Map 3, Appendix.)\(^6\) The Osages presented 
another major problem in that they were scattered over a 
very wide area. While most of them had moved to the 
Kansas reservation, there were some who remained in the 
Indian Territory until after the Civil War.\(^7\)

\(^5\)Annual Report of W. J. J. Morrow, September 11, 
1851, Senate Executive Documents (hereafter cited as S. 
Ex. Docs.), 32nd Congress, 1st Session (Washington, 1851), 
Serial 611, p. 401.

\(^6\)Annual Report of Andrew J. Dorn, August 31, 1857, 
House Executive Documents (hereafter cited as H. Ex. 
Docs.), 35th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, 1857), 
Serial 942, p. 494.

\(^7\)John Joseph Mathews, Wah'Kon-Tah, the Osage and the 
White Man's Road (Norman, 1932), pp. 34-35.
There were other complications. Many of the Osage people disregarded their old chiefs and chose new leaders who were less honest. The nation, formerly composed of four or five towns, was divided into many small groups.\(^8\)

Troubles also arose over the annuity payments. In 1852, the Osages had enrolled 4,941 members, which was more than their total population. One of their chiefs acknowledged to the agent that the enrollment figure for his band was too high, but he reasoned that such a step was necessary to get enough money to pay a debt to one of the traders.\(^9\) When the annuities were sent to the Osages other problems arose. The chiefs in charge of distribution were often dishonest and made unequal divisions of the merchandise. Even an honest chief found it impossible to divide the goods equally.\(^10\) Once an Indian received his share of the articles, he would immediately kill and eat the hogs and cattle and carry his plow to the States to barter for whiskey.\(^11\) Sometimes these

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government-supplied goods were of a very cheap quality and were often unwisely selected. The Government used Osage trust funds to purchase the articles, some of which could have been bought at a lower price from the traders.12

Besides merchandise, the Osages received some cash from the Government. It was usually expended for such items as flour, sugar, coffee, clothing, and rifles for their buffalo hunts.13 These trips were usually begun about the first of May and the first of October, and when the annuities did not reach the tribe until after these dates, the hunters could not properly outfit themselves.14 As a result they were unable to compete with the Plains tribes who sometimes drove them back to the reservation with a very limited supply of meat, robes, and furs.15 Added to this were crop failures due to droughts and insects. All of these problems were too much for the


Osages to cope with. Sometimes the tribe was destitute of any blankets to protect them from the cold winter winds that swept in from the Northern Plains. At times their condition would become so desperate that the squaws would trade their brass kettles and tin pans for a few green pumpkins and melons or a little pile of corn meal. These people were completely hemmed in by hostile tribes to the west, unfriendly whites to the north and east, and suspicious Indians to the south. More than once their poverty drove them to steal cattle from the herds passing through from Texas to the Kansas markets.

The Osages had many enemies, but they also had a few friends, among whom were the Catholic missionaries who had taken over the Osage work after the closing of Union and Harmony missions. In 1847 the Catholic Church opened schools for boys and for girls. The missionaries found that it was very difficult to persuade the full bloods to send their girls to school. However, both schools gradually increased in numbers, and the Catholics were


more successful in educational endeavors than any previous group had been. Their success was due to their years of experience in Indian education and to the more favorable atmosphere for mission work after the end of the Cherokee-Osage wars.

These Catholic schools were financed from several sources, including the Civilization Fund (an annual appropriation of $10,000 from the regular trust funds of all the Indian tribes), the Catholic Church, and some individuals. But their funds were usually insufficient to allow the missionaries to do all they wanted to do. The Ladies of Loretto, who were in charge of the girls' school, complained of a lack of housing facilities. And if it had not been for contributions from their friends in Europe, the Catholic mission would have been discontinued.


those of the half breeds and of George White Hair, the head chief.\textsuperscript{26} The half breeds were often discouraged by their full-blood relatives and friends, who killed and ate their cattle and hogs and visited their houses solely with a desire to be fed.\textsuperscript{27} The full-blood Osages, like the other American Indians, had always looked upon the property of one Indian as belonging to the entire tribe. But some of the mixed bloods had come to believe in private property.

The Osages' poor diet and their consumption of large quantities of whiskey led to many problems of health and morality. Having suffered from a long series of unfair cession treaties, and having lost much of their earlier power and influence, the Osages were entering a period of decadence. Since the Louisiana Purchase, the tribe had lost most of its diplomatic battles with the United States. It had been defeated by the Cherokees who now occupied its old lands, and it had yielded time and again to the encroachments of white settlers. Now even the Pawnees were driving the Osage hunters from the Plains. Caught in the stream of uncontrollable economic, social, 

\textsuperscript{26} Annual Report of Henry Harvey, October 23, 1850, S. Ex. Docs., 31st Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1850), Serial 587, p. 66.

and political changes, many of the Osage braves turned to the bottle in order to recapture the grandeur of the past. If an Osage was thirsty for whiskey, and had enough money, ponies, or other items for trade, he could obtain it from two sources. By going to Kansas, he could drink without the fear of being caught by the agent or his assistants. But there was the danger that he might come into conflict with hostile whites. By purchasing his whiskey from the half-breed bootleggers on the reservation, there was a risk of being punished by the agent or lectured by the Catholic missionaries. However, these dangers were lessened because the reservation was so large that the agent and his staff could not possibly watch over it.

An Indian with any ingenuity at all could find a secluded spot in which to empty his bottle; but when the bottle was dry, his judgment would sometimes leave him, and he would venture into the villages and come into conflict with his white or Indian enemies.

During their residence in Kansas, the Osages encountered an enemy more formidable than whiskey, whites,

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Cherokees, or Pawnees. It was the deadly typhoid bacillus and its allies, measles, whooping cough, smallpox, and cholera. Some of these diseases, and others, were contributed to the Indians by white men who were always willing to share their advanced civilization with the savages. Many an Osage bore no other mark of white civilization than his pock-marked face. In 1852, an epidemic of measles, typhoid fever, and whooping cough broke out in the Osage communities, and more than 1,000 members of the tribe died within a year. Among the victims were George White Hair, one of the most intelligent and able leaders of the whole tribe, and the much-loved Catholic priest, J. B. Bax. As fear seized the tribe, many of the Osage parents took their children from the mission school. A group of Catholic missionaries made an eight-day journey, visiting each village and trying to persuade the parents to return their children. Some of the parents promised to send their children back to school, but many of these promises were never kept and the school's attendance dropped sharply.\footnote{Report of School Superintendent John Schoenmakers, September 15, 1852, \textit{S. Ex. Docs.}, 32nd Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1852), Serial 658, pp. 399-400; Annual Report of W. J. J. Morrow, October 1, 1852, \textit{ibid.}, p. 396.} By the mid-1870's, the tribe's health was much better, and there was a decrease in smallpox, cholera, venereal diseases, and
other ailments. The old men attributed this to the Great Spirit, but the agent gave the credit to the tribe's "purity and virtue."  

Added to their economic and social difficulties, the Osages faced two other major problems in Kansas: hostile Indian neighbors and encroaching white settlers and hunters. Though the relationship between the Osages and the eastern tribes was relatively peaceful after 1836, there were still some minor conflicts. In 1851, for example, George White Hair complained to the agent that a member of his band had been killed on the Plains by the Sacs. The Osage agent, W. J. J. Morrow, wrote to the Sac agent and proposed that a council be held to settle the dispute before it led to reprisals. The Sac agent replied with an invitation for the Osages to send a delegation to the Sac village. Morrow then dispatched an Osage runner to deliver a favorable reply to the Sacs, but the young Osage met a drunken Sac, became alarmed, and returned without delivering the note. When Morrow and the Osage delegation arrived at the Sac community in 1852, they found that the Sac agent had gone to St. Louis and

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therefore would be unable to help settle the feud. But the next day the delegations met under the direction of the Osage agent, settled their grievances, and promised to live in peace.\textsuperscript{33}

There were also a number of minor disputes between the Osages and the Choctaws and Cherokees. In the summer of 1852, for example, a Choctaw half breed, a Cherokee, and a white man stole thirty-three head of mules and horses from Tally's band. The Osages pursued the thieves for two days and returned with five horses. The deputy marshal for the western district of Arkansas then took up the trail, arrested the horse thieves near Jefferson City, Missouri, and took them to the Van Buren jail. Similar depredations were committed upon Black Dog's band by Indian and white thieves.\textsuperscript{34}

The relationship between the Osages and the western tribes also had become more peaceful after 1836, but there were still some conflicts over hunting rights on the Plains. Whereas the Plains tribes had previously held the Osages in awe, these western Indians now began to have their share of victories. Part of their success was due to the Osages themselves who traded large numbers of guns


\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., p. 397.
to the Comanches for mules. These same guns would subsequently be turned against the Osages and whites along the southwestern frontier. In 1858 the Osages sought to maintain their lucrative trade with the Comanches, but the Comanches responded by killing an Osage hunter. In retaliation, the Osages killed four Comanches and took a woman prisoner.

The new power of the western tribes is well illustrated by an incident in 1852 when 400 Osages, Kaws, and Kiowas attacked a party of Pawnees on the Plains. Being outnumbered by their would-be victims, the attackers turned in retreat, leaving one dead war chief on the ground. In earlier times, the Osages would have killed several Pawnees and taken their horses, but now they returned to their village with nothing more than the scalp of one Pawnee woman.

The Osages suffered another defeat in 1868. While hunting on the Plains, they were attacked by a band of Arapahos who killed two Osage women and several men and took about 300 horses. Nearly all the Plains tribes were

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allies of the Arapahos, and the Osages were unable to hunt
the buffalo with any assurance of safety or success. 38

Added to the menace of Arapaho, Comanche, and Pawnee
enemies was the problem of white intruders who trespassed
on the Osage reservation. Two factors contributed to this
problem. First, the extensive Osage reservation lay
within the Territory of Kansas. 39 And secondly, the
northern Osage line was not visibly marked. 40 In 1857,
the Osages complained bitterly that great numbers of white
hunters were destroying the buffalo and killing other
game. 41 By 1868, about sixty-five white families were
squatting on Osage lands. These people knew they were
intruders, but they felt that they deserved the land as a
reward for the hardships they had endured among the
Indians and for the service they had performed in crowding
the Osages off of their lands. 42 The following year, the

38 Annual Report of G. C. Snow, September 8, 1868,
H. Ex. Docs., 40th Congress, 3rd Session (Washington,
1868), Serial 1366, p. 731.

39 Annual Report of Andrew J. Dorn, September 18,
1860, S. Ex. Docs., 36th Congress, 2nd Session
(Washington, 1860), Serial 1078, p. 344.

40 Annual Report of Andrew J. Dorn, September 9, 1858,
H. Ex. Docs., 35th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington,
1858), Serial 997, p. 489.

41 Annual Report of Andrew J. Dorn, August 31, 1857,
H. Ex. Docs., 35th Congress, 1st Session (Washington,
1857), Serial 942, p. 494.

42 Annual Report of G. C. Snow, September 8, 1868,
H. Ex. Docs., 40th Congress, 3rd Session (Washington,
1868), Serial 1366, p. 731.
number of white families had increased to 500. These settlers cut the timber, built houses, and tried to pre-empt their new homesteads. Some of them stole horses and mules from the Osages. In 1857 and 1858, the tribe lost nearly 200 head. Since the settlers were so numerous and had so much influence in Washington, the agent was unable to protect the Osages. When the Government did take action, it was to purchase the settled areas and thus to diminish the reservation. In 1872, Congress passed a law whereby the settlers could buy these lands in accordance with the general pre-emption laws. This act was passed after a long feud between the settlers and a number of railroad companies. In earlier land disputes, the railroads had usually received the lands they wanted. But by the use of the press and the influence of their representatives in Congress, the settlers had incited a strong public reaction against the railroads. The only companies receiving grants on the former Osage

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45 An Act for the Relief of Settlers on the Osage Lands in the State of Kansas, May 9, 1872, United States Statutes at Large, 42nd Congress, 2nd Session (Boston, 1872), XVII, 90-91.
reservation were the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe, which cut across the northwest corner, and the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas and Leavenworth, Lawrence, and Galveston lines which crossed the eastern end. Most of the reservation became a part of the public domain.46

The westward surge of population had thrown the whites and Osages closer together than they had ever been before, but this was not the only factor leading to Osage-white conflicts. In 1861 South Carolina forces fired on Fort Sumter. The Osage reservation was a long way from South Carolina, but not far enough to escape the sound of that shot. During the Civil War, many of the Kansas Osages joined forces with the Union, while a number of their brothers in the Indian Territory fought for the Confederacy. Besides dividing the tribe, the war had other significant effects on the Osages. The Government's efforts in the war turned attention away from the Indians, and the Osages were left to make out for themselves. They subsisted almost entirely by their summer and fall hunts.47 When the war ended, the white man's attention was absorbed by great enterprises like building railroads


47Mathews, pp. 33-35.
and factories, plowing sod, and tapping the natural resources of the Great West. He had little time to worry about a few poverty-stricken Indians in the wilds of Kansas and the Territory. However, the Government did take time to negotiate some new cession treaties with the Osages.

On September 13, 1865, the United States, wanting to reestablish friendly relations among the Indian tribes and between the Indians and the Government, met the Osage chiefs at Fort Smith. The Government's avowed purpose was to reunite the northern and southern factions in the tribe. But White Hair and Man Not Afraid of Pawnees, also known as Governor Jo, feared that the Government was taking advantage of the tribe's division in order to impose an unfair treaty on them. The Osages were not the only nation represented at Fort Smith. There were also Cherokees, Choctaws, Creeks, Chickasaws, Senecas, Seminoles, Shawnees, and Quapaws.\textsuperscript{48}

Following this preliminary meeting, the United States made a number of treaties with the individual Kansas tribes. The one with the Osages was signed at Canville trading house on the Osage reservation on September 19, 1865. The treaty began with a statement that the Osages had too much land, that all Government payments to the

\textsuperscript{48}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 355-356.
tribe under former agreements had ceased, and that the Osages were thus greatly impoverished. To save the Indians from starvation, the Government agreed to take about 1,500 square miles of land from the southeast corner of the reservation. (See Map 3, Appendix.) The United States agreed to pay the tribe $300,000, this sum to be kept at 5 per cent interest per annum in the United States Treasury, and to be paid to the Osages in semi-annual installments. The Government was to sell these lands and place the proceeds in a "civilization fund" to be used by the Secretary of the Interior for educating and civilizing the Indians. By Article Two, the Osages ceded a twenty-five mile wide strip of land along the entire length of the northern border of the reservation. (See Map 3, Appendix.) These lands were to be sold and the proceeds deposited to the tribe's credit. The interest on this money was to be used for providing houses, stock animals, agricultural implements, mechanics, and a physician for the Osages. Part of this fund was also to be used for educational purposes. The following articles provided that the tribe would pay the claims of certain traders, that the Osage chiefs would each receive $500 annually, that the tribe would abstain from war against whites or Indians, and that they would abstain from the use of alcohol. Within six months after the treaty's
ratification, the tribe was to move to the diminished reservation. A further article provided that the Osages could move to the Indian Territory if they wished, and that the diminished reserve would be disposed of as the other lands had been.49

The Osages were never satisfied with the 1865 treaty. Many of them believed that the trust fund would be used solely for the benefit of the Osage tribe, but the Government maintained that the money could be expended for the civilization of other Indian tribes.50 Another misunderstanding arose over surveying the lands. The Government charged the Osages $60,000 for this service, but the tribe's leaders had understood that the United States would pay this fee.51

When the United States commissioners approached the Osages again in 1868, the chiefs showed them an old, elaborately-engrossed document signed in 1804 by Henry Dearborn, Thomas Jefferson's Secretary of War. It had a gold chain attached and read: "The President sends you this chain made of pure gold which will never rust, and

49Royce, p. 836; Mathews, pp. 356-359.


the Americans and British were fighting the War of 1812; and the British, in 1814, were making futile efforts to win the Osages to their side. 16

At the conclusion of the war, the Osages and the United States entered into a treaty at Portage des Sioux on September 12, 1815. (See Map 2, Appendix.) It was designed to strengthen the 1808 treaty and provided that all past injuries would be forgiven and forgotten, that there would be perpetual peace and friendship between the two nations, and that both nations would reëstablish every treaty they had ever made with one another. 17

The Osages' relations with their new eastern neighbors were not so amicable as their relations with the Americans. The Cherokees, possibly influenced by the whites among them, desired the fine country in present-day eastern Oklahoma, then held by the Osages. The beautiful Neosho, Verdigris, and Illinois rivers were abundantly supplied with beaver; the woods abounded with bear and other game; the region was a hunters' heaven. The emigrant tribes pushed their attack against the Osages for possession of this valuable and beautiful land, most of the clashes taking place on Osage territory. The

16 Governor Clark to the Secretary of War, September 18, 1814, ibid., XIV, 787.

17 American State Papers: Indian Affairs, II, 3.
of Miller, induced the Cherokees to delay reluctantly their plans for revenge against their Osage enemies.\textsuperscript{34}

In the meantime, Clermont had sent 400 braves to attack the Cherokees. This war party, under Mad Buffalo, descended the Arkansas along its north side until they reached a point opposite Fort Smith. The Osage leaders went to the fort and asked permission to hunt on the south side of the river, but their real purpose was to secure rifles and powder for their attack on the Cherokees. They carefully examined the post to ascertain the number of troops defending it. When the commander refused their permission to cross the river, the Osage chiefs rejoined their band. Soon they had constructed between forty and fifty rafts and attempted to land near the fort. However, on seeing two loaded six-pounders and soldiers with lighted matches, the Indian army retreated after killing a few Quapaws and Delawares near the fort. This foray caused much excitement among the whites and Cherokees on the Arkansas. Messengers told the Cherokees that each Osage brave carried a halter in expectation of riding a Cherokee horse back to his village.\textsuperscript{35} The Osage invasion

\textsuperscript{34}Foreman, pp. 109-110.

\textsuperscript{35}Niles' Weekly Register, June 30, 1821; letter from Fort Smith, April 25, 1821, Arkansas Gazette, May 12, 1821, p. 3; Foreman, pp. 111-113.
The curriculum of the school consisted of reading, writing, composition, spelling, grammar, geography, arithmetic, manual arts, and Catholic doctrine. The classes in religion were conducted by the clergymen, who found that the only way to subdue the Osages' "passionate and stubborn dispositions" was to teach them of a common Father, who saw all their deeds, rewarded their virtues, punished their vices, and demanded strict obedience to his commandments. The Osages--like most of their white neighbors--failed to keep all the commandments, but they did become accustomed to the English language and to some types of manual labor. After leaving the school, they would associate with the half breeds and whites and show off their learning by reading newspapers and books. Perhaps the teaching of the English language was the greatest single contribution of the Catholic mission schools.

In the field of agriculture, the Osages were very slow to learn the white man's ways. Their only farms were

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may the Great Spirit assist us in keeping the chain of friendship bright for the succession of ages." Then the Osage leaders told how they had been forced to give up the lands guaranteed by this very treaty, and that there were 20,000 white trespassers on their lands. The commissioners then promised to send economic relief to the tribe. But flood waters and bad roads delayed the delivery of the goods, and the Osages lost whatever confidence they still had in the Government.

The Osages' plight in Kansas may be summarized by one word, poverty. And this poverty had resulted from three major causes: the hostility of the Plains tribes, the encroachments of white settlers, and the inefficient and poorly administered policy of the Federal Government. By 1869, these problems had forced the tribe to move to the Indian Territory. Ironically, they had to pay the Cherokees seventy cents an acre for lands which that tribe had previously taken from the Osages.

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52 Clarence Wharton, Satanta, the Great Chief of the Kiowas and His People (Dallas, 1935), pp. 152-153.


CHAPTER IV

THE OSAGES IN OKLAHOMA BEFORE ALLOTMENT,
1872-1907

The last Osage reservation, containing about 1,400,000 acres, was bounded on the south and west by the Arkansas River, on the north by the State of Kansas, and on the east by the ninety-sixth meridian.¹ When the Osages first moved to the Indian Territory, they were located by mistake at Silver Lake, a few miles east of their final home. Here they made a number of improvements.² But when the ninety-sixth meridian was resurveyed, it was discovered that the Osages had settled on the Cherokee diminished reserve. The Government offered to let the Osages keep this strip of land, but the Cherokees insisted that the intruders move further west. To preserve the friendship


²John Joseph Mathews, Wah'Kon-Tah, the Osage and the White Man's Road (Norman, 1932), p. 359.
of their civilized brothers, the Osages agreed to give up the disputed area. The Cherokees, in turn, promised to pay for all the Osage improvements at Silver Lake.³ (See Map 4, Appendix.)

When the Osages moved to their new reservation—now Osage County, Oklahoma—they found that it was very hilly with outcroppings of stone on the uplands, but that the valleys along the creeks were fertile and free of rocks. These valleys were well watered by fresh-water springs and streams, the water generally flowing to the southeast. The largest stream on the reservation was Bird Creek, which rose from the high, limestone prairie in the northwest, followed a tortuous course through the center of the reservation, flowed past the agency settlement, and joined the Verdigris River in the East. (See Map 4, Appendix.)

Along the Arkansas River and the larger creeks walnut, cottonwood, sycamore, and oak grew in considerable numbers. The timber away from the streams was mostly hickory, blackjack, and the scraggy, knotty post oak. The country was very beautiful in the summer, with green foliage on the scrubby trees and grass hiding the rocky

Before the white man moved into the reservation, it abounded in deer, wild turkey, quail, prairie chickens, squirrels, ducks, and snipe, affording the Osages a sufficient supply of targets for their hunting. 

The agency headquarters were located at what is now Pawhuska, Oklahoma, about twenty-seven miles from the Kansas border. (See Map 4, Appendix.) At first, the agency offices were in a group of little log houses, but these were soon replaced by a number of sandstone buildings including a church, school house, agent's office, council room, gristmill, and doctor's office. There were also a number of frame buildings including blacksmith shops, traders' stores, and dwelling houses. Four roads led into the agency. Between their intersection and the agency buildings was an area dotted with post oaks where

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4 Personal examination of site.


the people met to talk and loaf under the trees. This was the heart of the Osage reservation.  

Since the reservation was very large and the population scattered, the agent divided it into five parts, the Agency, Bird Creek, Salt Fork, and the Little Osage divisions. In the southern part of the reservation were a number of Indian settlements including the camps of Big Chief, the leader of one of the largest bands of the tribe; Black Dog, the tribe's orator and chief councilor; and Clermont (or Claremore), a descendant of the great Osage chief of an earlier day. A few miles northwest of the agency, in the camp of Saucy Chief, lived the great Osage hero, Big Wild Cat, who had scouted for General George Armstrong Custer at the Battle of the Washita.  

The history of the Osages from the time they moved to their last reservation (1872) to their allotment (1906-1907) may be conveniently divided into six major topics, their economic condition, their experiment with a democratic tribal government, their crimes and conflicts, their changing social customs, their religious and

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8 Mathews, pp. 27-28.
10 Mathews, pp. 5, 240-241.
educational endeavors, and their change from common to private property.

Though many individual Osages were still dwelling in poverty, the tribe's general economic condition was much better than it had been in Kansas. Most of the tribe's revenue came from the sale of its Kansas lands. This money was held in trust for the tribe by the United States Treasury, and the interest was paid to the tribe in annuities. Before 1879, the Government paid the Osages in rationed goods rather than cash. This system was very unpopular with the Indians, and when Laban J. Miles came to the reservation as their new agent in 1878, the people complained that they were "fed like dogs." After looking over the cattle which the Government had given the tribe, the agent agreed with the Osages. He observed that these cattle were often very poor, especially when they were left all winter on the range.\footnote{Ibid., p. 43.} Agent Miles held several councils with the tribe, and the chiefs decided that a delegation should be sent to Washington to present their problems to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. When the chiefs were choosing their delegation, they purposely left off the name of Wah Ti An Kah, a very undiplomatic member of the tribe. By some means, however, he got his name on
the list and after some discussion was allowed to accompany the other leaders. When the group appeared before the commissioner, Wah Ti An Kah wore a large red blanket. He had painted a yellow band across his eyes and red and black symbols on his cheeks, the war paint of an Osage. When the commissioner said he had another appointment before he could meet with the delegation, Wah Ti An Kah jumped before him and blocked his path to the door. Then the Osage warrior let his blanket fall from his shoulders. The other Osage leaders were shocked to see that he was adorned with nothing but moccasins, breech clout, and bear-claw necklace. Then Wah Ti An Kah commanded the commissioner to sit down and listen to the tribe's complaints. The commissioner obeyed, but replied that naked Indians with war paint did not know how to use money. The Osage delegation felt that their cause was lost until the commissioner, after a moment of consideration, promised that the ration system would be stopped. A compromise was reached whereby the Osages would receive beef and clothing rations for one more year.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 51-56.} There was some suffering when the policy went into effect on July 1, 1879, but the tribe never asked that rations be resumed.\footnote{\textit{Annual Report of L. J. Miles, September 10, 1880, H. Ex. Docs., 46th Congress, 3rd Session (Washington, 1880), Serial 1959, p. 199.}
With the discontinuance of the ration system, the Government began to pay the Osages in cash. When payment time approached, the people came to the agency from all over the reservation with their entire families including women, children, and dogs. Camps sprang up along Bird Creek and around the agent's house. Some of the Indians stayed several days; some, several weeks. They visited the traders' stores, priced clothing and other goods, stood around the agent's house or the Council House, and rested under the post oaks. But mostly they talked and visited with one another.14

On the payment day, the agent would stand at a window of the Council House. Then the tribe crier, Ho Lah Go Ne (Good Voice), would call the Indians together, and each would wait for his name to be called, walk to the window, and receive his annuity. In the meantime, the traders would check their merchandise in preparation for their busiest day.15

Actually, the annuities were not paid yearly, but quarterly. The payments varied from time to time, depending upon the amount of money in the Osage trust fund, the amount of interest it had accumulated, and the number of Osages on the roll. In 1887, the quarterly

14Mathews, pp. 151-152.  
15Ibid., pp. 157-158.
payment was about $37.00 per capita. By 1905, the Osage trust fund had grown to $8,372,427.80, about twice what it had been in 1872, and the annual payment to the tribe was $418,611.39.

The effect of government annuities on the Indians has been a controversial topic. Some have said that the annuities made the Indians lazy. And there is no question but that most of the Indians, including the Osages, were indolent when compared with the white man. The question is one of cause and effect. When viewed in their broad historical perspective, the Osages do not appear to have been changed one way or another in their work habits by government supervision and aid. According to the white man's standard, they had always been improvident and indolent, even before they received a single cent from the Government.


Most of the money that the Osages did receive went to the traders. In 1897, there were twenty-one licensed merchants on the reservation.\(^{19}\) Before the creation of town sites in 1906, every trader on the reservation was required to have a license from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, prices were regulated by the Government, and no trader could give an Osage credit for more than 60 percent of his next quarterly annuity. But after the establishment of towns, these restrictions were abolished.\(^{20}\) Unrestricted credit policies were a handicap to debtor and creditor alike. The debtor could not secure the best prices and was often glad to buy merchandise at any price and on any terms. The creditor's total assets were often represented by uncollectible accounts which ruined his credit standing.\(^{21}\)

Besides their annuity payments, the Osages received their income from three other major sources, hunting, farming, and ranching. On a typical hunting trip, about


one sixth of the tribe would stay on the reservation to care for the crops and other tribal business, while the rest of the tribe would move to the Plains. The general course of their trip was westward across Salt Creek through the Arkansas River bottoms to the Kaw reservation. Then the bands would cross the prairies until they came to the Great Salt Plains, turn south, and set up their camps in the valley of the Cimarron. (See Map 4, Appendix.)

When the buffalo herds were sighted, each chief would lead out his respective band. At the appointed signal, the bands would attack the herd's flanks; clouds of dust would fill the air, and the ground would vibrate with the thunder of stampeding hooves. When the reports of the rifles had stopped, the man's job was finished. The skinning of the animals and the preparation of the meat was left to the women.

When the Osages first moved to the Indian Territory, hunting was good. On the fall and winter hunt of 1872-73, the Osages brought in 10,800 buffalo robes plus a number of small furs, for which they received $68,000 in coffee.

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23 Mathews, pp. 202-204.
flour, sugar, calico, blankets, and other items from the traders. But as time went by, the Osage hunters encountered more and more difficulties. Sometimes their provisions were insufficient to allow them to complete a hunting trip. At other times, they encountered white hunters who had already killed the game. These hunters were usually armed with long-range rifles, and some of them enjoyed shooting at Indians more than killing the buffalo. Added to these difficulties were the frequent hostilities between the Plains Indians and United States troops. In 1874, the agent had to call the Osages back to the reservation before they had killed scarcely any buffalo.

Their failure in hunting caused some of the Osages to turn to farming to supplement their annuities. Most of the Osage farmers were landlords who leased their farms to whites. Under such leases, the tenant was required to break the land, fence it, build a house and stables, dig a well, and turn all these improvements over to the Indian


landlord when the lease expired.27 The Osage farmers preferred squashes, pumpkins, onions, and melons to other vegetables.28 But as the cattle industry developed on the reservation, corn became the principal crop.29

With the full bloods, progress in agriculture was very slow. Most of them looked upon work as a dishonorable activity, and upon plowing and hoeing as occupations for poor white people.30 But the greatest obstacle to his success was the Indian's dislike of isolation, which led him to neglect his farm and congregate with his friends to dance, feast, gossip, and tell stories of the tribe's past.31 The Osage, however, was not a total failure at farming. His attitude was the same as that of a prosperous white farmer, who leased his farm and moved to town

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to enjoy the pleasures of community life and to give his children the advantage of an easier life. Osage farmers were just as skillful in their occupation as were white men with as little experience.\(^3\)

As ranchers, the Osages were much more successful than they were as farmers. The blue stem grass on the reservation was the best type for fattening steers for market.\(^3\) There was also an abundance of clean, clear water, and the reservation's nearness to the Kansas cattle markets made it especially attractive to Texas cattlemen who drove or hauled their stock to the reservation in the spring, fattened them in the summer, and sold them at the market in the fall.\(^3\) Besides leasing pastures to the Texans and Kansans, the Osages held many cattle of their own. These were purchased by the Government with Osage funds, and by the turn of the century the tribe owned about 225,000 head. This amounted to five head for each member of the tribe.\(^3\) These great herds made the little town of Elgin, Kansas, into one of the busiest cattle


\(^{33}\)Mathews, p. 149.

\(^{34}\)Annual Report of O. A. Mitscher, August 21, 1900, Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior, 56th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1900), Serial 4101, p. 337.

\(^{35}\)Mathews, pp. 304-305.
shipping points in the world. To the Indians and whites on the reservation, Elgin was the symbol of the white man's civilization. They referred to it as "the outside" or "up in the States."36 (See Map 4, Appendix.)

The revenue from their own cattle and from the pasture leases enabled the Osages to undertake an experiment in tribal government.37 For a number of years, they had desired to be known as a "civilized tribe." The government of their neighbors, the "five civilized tribes," had a special appeal to the Osage mixed bloods who were on friendly terms with the Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. They had conferences with these tribes and asked to be included in their government, but there was much indecision and confusion, and the Osages never became the sixth "civilized tribe."38

After this failure, the Osages appointed a committee of their own to write a constitution and draft a code of laws to govern the tribe. They took the Cherokee laws as a guide and submitted the finished document to the tribe for a vote.39 It was adopted in 1882 and provided for the following officials to be elected for two-year terms:

36 Ibid., pp. 149-150.
37 Ibid., p. 302.
38 Ibid., p. 136.
a governor and his assistants as the executive branch, a
council of three representatives from each of five tribal
districts as the legislative branch, and a court of three
judges as the judicial branch. Most of the other offici-
cials were to be appointed by the governor with the
approval of the council.

The new tribal laws made no mention of political
parties, but as usual, political factions appeared. The
full bloods were generally the conservative party, while
the mixed bloods were more liberal and usually outnumbered
their opponents. Tribal elections were often bitter con-
tests, and though the mixed-blood ticket usually won, this
was not always the case. During one of their campaigns
the mixed bloods, who styled themselves "the progres-
sives," took a barrel of whiskey to the most
"unprogressive" camp on the reservation. But their plan
was foiled when the full bloods went to the polls, voted
their own ticket, and returned to their camp to celebrate
their victory around the whiskey barrel.

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40 Annual Report of H. B. Freeman, July 31, 1895,
H. Ex. Docs., 54th Congress, 1st Session (Washington,
1896), Serial 3382, p. 255.

41 Annual Report of Frank Frantz, August 16, 1905,
H. Docs., 59th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, 1906),
Serial 4959, p. 312.

42 Mathews, p. 303.
Though the Osage government had the approval of the Department, there was some debate over its merits. Some of the agents believed that the experiment had produced nothing but a crop of skilled politicians. Some complained that the Indian court had overstepped its authority, especially in the performance of marriage ceremonies and the granting of divorces. But others, especially Agent Miles, believed the experiment to be a success. He pointed out that the tribal government was handling many of the disciplinary problems on the reservation. One of the first acts of the new council was the erection of a whipping post. One Indian received twenty lashes for the crime of stealing. Though this form of punishment was rather archaic, it reflected a changing attitude of the Osage toward law, especially the white man's law. As feeble and crude as it was, the Osages' experiment in democratic tribal government was a success.

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45Mathews, p. 143.

in two ways. First, the Indians became more interested in Congressional and Departmental matters relating to their own welfare.\textsuperscript{47} And secondly, their experience familiarized them with the rights and duties they would eventually assume as United States citizens and gave them a higher respect for law.\textsuperscript{48}

Many white citizens believed that the Indians were by nature a lawless race, but this was untrue. On the contrary, most of the American Indians, including the Osages, were a harmless and peaceful people.\textsuperscript{49} Most of the crimes and conflicts on the Osage reservation were due to the corrupting influences of disappointed traders, discharged employees, and would-be contractors.\textsuperscript{50}

The most prevalent crime on the reservation was the drinking of alcohol. Sometimes white or mixed-blood


\textsuperscript{50}Annual Report of Isaac T. Gibson, September 1, 1875, H. Ex. Docs., 44th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, 1875), Serial 1680, p. 780.
bootleggers sold their whiskey on the reservation. But this was a risky business, so most of the Osage drinkers were obliged to buy their whiskey in the States. One of the most popular sources of alcohol was Elgin, Kansas, where the many bars would be filled with Osages, especially at payment time. But with the opening of Oklahoma Territory, much of the whiskey trade shifted to Ralston, Oklahoma (see Map 4, Appendix), where there were saloons with all types of contrivances to prevent the customers and the police officers from seeing the liquor merchants. Some had high board fences, known as "bull pens," around the back yards. Others had small rooms equipped with dumbwaiters. Some Osage women had become so addicted to whiskey that they turned to prostitution, a profession unheard of among earlier Osage women. It was quite common to see fifteen to twenty drunken Indians on the Ralston streets at one time. Some of them would be practically naked, having traded their blankets for liquor, or having had them stolen during their drunken slumber.

Convicting a white bootlegger was very difficult since many of the Indian customers were afraid to testify.

When a conviction was obtained, the sentence would be so ridiculously light that it would have no preventive effect. Most of the convictions were against the buyer rather than the peddler. When an Osage was arrested for drunkenness off the reservation, his first desire was to return to his friends. To accomplish this object, he would sign any paper put before him and do anything his lawyer asked. To save time and trouble, the lawyer would plead guilty and send his client back to the reservation. Soon the Indian would learn that he had signed a promissory note to the lawyer for legal counsel and had been fined $10.00 plus court costs. Meanwhile, the bootlegger would go on with his lucrative business. Needless to say, this led to many conflicts between Osages and whites. But there were other sources of trouble.

Like most of the other Indian tribes, the Osages had a way of avenging the death of a member of the tribe. If an Osage was killed by a white man or another Indian, the victim's relatives were bound by tribal custom to retaliate, unless the dead man's character or conduct showed that he deserved to die. Vengeance did not require the killing of the actual person who had perpetrated the crime; any member of his tribe, race, or nation would

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This custom did not usually cause the conflicts between Osages and whites, but it often kept these conflicts alive and led to the deaths of many innocent persons.

The underlying cause for nearly all of the difficulties between the tribe and their white neighbors was the large Osage annuity payment. By the 1890's, it amounted to $90,000 quarterly, enough to attract a swarm of the most adept crooks in the Southwest. Many of these people seemed to feel that a stake on the Osage reservation was worth more than a placer in the Klondike. Some of them married Indians in order to be adopted by the tribe and to share in the annuities. A few of the mixed bloods claimed membership in more than one tribe at a time. Sometimes these people could claim no more than one-sixteenth Indian blood. They were a constant source of disturbance on the reservation.

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there were the outright trespassers who had not married into the tribe and who claimed no Indian blood. These people often excused their intrusions by claiming that they were United States citizens and had rights anywhere.\textsuperscript{59} When the Cherokee Strip (see Map 4, Appendix) was opened to white settlers in 1893, numerous little towns sprang up along the reservation border. Most of the whites in these towns were ignorant of the laws regulating the relations between reservation Indians and whites. Others defied these laws, and the result was conflict.\textsuperscript{60} Soon there were as many whites as Osages on the reservation, and by the turn of the century, the whites outnumbered the Indians. By 1905, despite the efforts of United States marshals and Indian policemen, there were about 12,500 white trespassers residing among the Osages. When the Indians realized that the Government would do nothing to remove these intruders, the tribal council made the most of the situation by levying a monthly resident tax of $1.00 upon each adult male who lived on the reservation without government authorization. Besides

\textsuperscript{59} Mathews, p. 307.

\textsuperscript{60} Annual Report of H. B. Freeman, August 18, 1897, H. Ex. Docs., 55th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1898), Serial 3641, p. 238.
the revenue derived from this tax, it helped the agent keep track of all trespassers.  

As if human intruders were not enough, there were also animal trespassers. Each year Kansas cattlemen allowed their herds to stray into the reservation, and in the fall cowboys crossed the border to round up these cattle for market. If any of the steers were missing, the cattlemen would assume that the Osages had stolen them. Then claims would be filed with the Government, and the cattlemen would receive compensations from the tribe's trust fund.

Most of the conflicts between Osages and whites were legal battles, but there were some cases of physical violence. One of the worst of these incidents took place at Medicine Lodge, Kansas, on August 7, 1874. (See Map 4, Appendix.) A party of twenty-nine Osages, including some women and children, went to the Kansas border and asked some white men if they had seen any buffalo. The men directed the hunters to an uninhabited area of Kansas where they found and killed a number of the animals. The Osage hunters had no evil intentions, since they had reserved the right to hunt in this part of their former

62 Mathews, pp. 121-122.
reservation as long as it remained unsettled. After drying their meat, the Osages were preparing to return to their reservation when they spotted a company of forty mounted white men armed with revolvers and breech-loading guns. The Osages sent two of their hunters to speak to the whites. After shaking hands with them, the white men disarmed and detained the Indians. The Osages sent three more pairs of men to the whites, and they were all treated as the first pair. Then began one of the most treacherous acts in Kansas history. The white men shot four of the unarmed Indian prisoners, but the other four, along with the rest of the hunting party, ran for their lives. They were pursued about four miles and miraculously escaped the shower of bullets falling around them. After dark, two of the Osages returned to the site of the massacre and found the mutilated bodies of their comrades. All the party's property, including fifty-four mules, colts, and ponies, had been driven off or destroyed by the marauders. Without food and nearly naked, the survivors made a five-day journey back to the reservation. The Osage agent then sent a three-man commission to inspect the site of the murders, to have the white killers arrested, and to recover the stolen property. The commission visited Medicine Lodge and saw the stolen Osage goods, but the town's residents, proudly acknowledging the killings,
refused to give any details of the crime or to return the property. They also said that they were responsible to no one except the Kansas governor, who had mustered them into the state militia and dated their papers back to legalize the massacre. One of the investigating commissioners, accompanied by the Indian superintendent, then visited the Kansas governor, but he refused to give any compensation to the Indians.

In keeping with tribal customs, the friends of the four murdered Osages tried to lead several war parties to Kansas, but they were prevented by the agent and some of the chiefs. On one occasion, Chief Che-sho-how-kah gave his best horse and his chief's salary and offered his life to the victims' relatives as a ransom. It was not until 1878 that the injured parties received compensation for their losses, and this money did not come from the State of Kansas, but rather from a Congressional appropriation.

The Medicine Lodge massacre was not the only case of this nature. One day some white men killed an Osage

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65 Mathews, pp. 36-37.
woman, for no reason except to brag that they had killed an Indian.\textsuperscript{66} On another occasion, the United States troops killed an old, near-sighted Osage man who had left the reservation to collect tolls from the cowboys on the Chisholm Trail.\textsuperscript{67} (See Map 4, Appendix.) In earlier days, these acts might have led to war, but after years of association with white men, the Osages had given up many of their old ways. They might have some mourning dances, known to the whites as war dances, and make fiery speeches against the white man; but there would be no war parties or white scalps drying in front of their lodges. These had been given up long ago, and the dances and other rites had come to be merely the imitation of ancient customs. The older members of the tribe still dressed in their old costumes and hair styles, but the bow, tomahawk, and scalping knife were gone.\textsuperscript{68}

One of the best illustrations of the change in tribal customs is the modification of the mourning dance. The first stages of the ceremony were the same as they had

\textsuperscript{66}Ibid., p. 308.
\textsuperscript{67}Annual Report of Isaac T. Gibson, September 1, 1875, H. Ex. Docs., 44th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, 1875), Serial 1680, p. 782.
\textsuperscript{68}Annual Report of O. A. Mitscher, August 22, 1903, Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior, 58th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1904), Serial 4645, p. 271.
been before the Osages moved to their last reservation. They used the same symbols, chants, and body movements; and the wife of the dead Indian, for whom the dance was held, still plastered her hair with mud and ashes. But the conclusion of the ceremony was different. In former times the dance was climaxed by the formation of a war party that would ride out to take an enemy scalp. But now the warriors would return with nothing more than a tuft of hair clipped from the head of a Pawnee or other Indian who had been hired to grow long hair and to hide where the war party could find him. This was not always an ideal way of earning money, for the Osage warriors would sometimes forget that it was all make-believe.

Most of the Osage ceremonies, including the mourning rites, had a religious significance. The Osages were always aware of a supreme being whom they called "Wah'Kon-Tah," the great mystery. Through the intercessions of the medicine men, they placated his wrath and sought his protection. But not all Osages saw Wah'Kon-Tah in the same way.

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70 Ibid., p. 288.

71 Ibid., p. 112.
Some tried to worship him according to ancient tribal traditions. Many of these people were members of a religious society known as "the order of the dove," and their zeal was such that they would sacrifice anything for the order. Sometimes an Osage would give his cattle or his annuity to the medicine men for the privilege of joining this organization.72

As the number of white men on the reservation increased, some of the Osages turned to a new religious cult which had developed in the West, where a medicine man had dreamed about an Indian messiah who would restore the buffalo and drive away the white man. This religion was brought to the Osages by the Cheyennes and Arapahos in the West. For a while there were secret meetings on the Salt and Sycamore creek bottoms where the Indians met to talk and dance. The white men referred to these rites as "ghost dances." But after a while, most of the Osages came to believe that this western prophet had seen a false vision, and the drumbeats were no longer heard along the creeks. The "ghost dance" cult was never as popular with the Osages as it was with their neighbors, the Pawnees and Arapahos. Perhaps this was due to the fact that the

Osages were more wealthy than these other tribes and saw less need for an Indian redeemer.\(^73\)

Another religious sect which was popular among the Osages and other tribes was the Peyote Cult, a combination of Christian and traditional Indian beliefs. Its ceremonies included the eating of an opium-like portion of the peyote cactus plant or the mescal bean, which produces delirium and visions.\(^74\)

Besides these and other Indian cults, there were a number of white religious sects represented on the reservation. Among these were the Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Catholics.\(^75\) When Ulysses S. Grant became President, employees in the Indian service were hired on the recommendations of religious groups. Many of these new employees were members of the Society of


Friends (Quakers), whom the Department believed would have a good influence on the Indians. Many of the Osage agents and their assistants were Quakers, and there were missionaries supported by the Friends of Iowa and Philadelphia. It was largely through their work that the Osages came into contact with a better class of white people than they had known before.

On the Osage reservation, religion and education were closely tied together, as they were on the other reservations. The Catholics maintained two parochial schools, the St. John's School for boys on Hominy Creek and the St. Louis School for girls at Pawhuska. There were other church-operated schools including a Methodist school for girls at Pawhuska. But most of the other educational work was carried on by the government boarding school at the agency. This institution was often overcrowded, and the surplus students were sent to Carlisle,


Pennsylvania; Osage Mission, Kansas; or Haskell Institute at Lawrence, Kansas.\textsuperscript{79}

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, there was a marked change in the Osage attitude toward education. When the tribe first moved to Oklahoma, they were very reluctant to put their children in school. Some feared that the white teachers would make their children into white men.\textsuperscript{80} Others were afraid their children would catch the measles or smallpox.\textsuperscript{81} Even those who could see advantages in industrial training could see no value in literary pursuits.

In 1884, the Osage agent met these Indian objections by influencing the tribal council to pass a compulsory education bill. The penalty for violating this law was the loss of annuity payments.\textsuperscript{82} Though the Department approved this measure, a number of the parents refused to comply and suffered the suspension of their annuities.

\textsuperscript{80} Mathews, pp. 259-260.
Many of these people objected that the Government had no right to place conditions upon the payment of the annuities since the money belonged to the tribe. But the Department continued to enforce this policy, and it had the desired effect. By 1888, the agency school was filled to capacity. By the turn of the century, it was a propitious sign to see an old blanket Osage rounding up his cattle to sell for the support of his children's education.

Before 1906, this old Indian would have rounded up his cattle on common property, but by the 1890's there was already talk that the Osage property would be divided among the members of the tribe. Most of the full bloods were opposed to allotment for a number of reasons. Some claimed that it was the first step toward the loss of all their lands. And others pointed out that the reservation contained just enough good land for the Indians, and that the surplus lands would be of little value to the white farmers who were pushing for an allotment bill. There were Potawatomis and other people on the reservation who had taken allotment and wasted all they had. These Indians were now poor wanderers, many of them working as

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83 Mathews, p. 144.
common laborers for the Osages. Another argument against allotment was the faulty Osage roll which contained names of people who were not entitled to a share of the tribal property.

However valid these arguments were, they had no influence on the politicians in Washington or the land-hungry whites who supported these politicians. The Indian Office directed the agent to prepare the tribe for allotment by letting each Osage citizen select 160 acres for himself and for each person in his family. By 1894, every Indian family had at least one claim with the best lands occupied by the mixed bloods. The following year Congress authorized the President to allot any Indian lands at his discretion. This act was designed to augment the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887 which had not applied to


the Osages and a number of other tribes. And on June 28, 1906, a bill was passed which provided for the equal division of all Osage lands and funds among the tribe's members. Each Indian could select three claims of 160 acres each. One was to be designated as a "home- stead," which would be inalienable and nontaxable unless Congress provided otherwise. The other two selections plus the surplus lands, which were to be divided among the Osages, were to become taxable in three years but to remain inalienable for twenty-five years. If an Indian wished to sell any of these lands, he was required to receive permission from the Secretary of the Interior. After January 1, 1907, all tribal funds were to be equally divided among the members of the tribe, and this money would continue to be paid quarterly to the Indians.

Through the wise efforts of several members of the tribe, the Osages retained the mineral rights on their surplus lands as communal property. In 1906, the oil


91 Mathews, p. 304.
wells on the reservation produced 15,000 barrels daily, but this was before the demand for oil had made it valuable. It was not long, however, until the development of the automobile and other industries made oil the most sought-after fuel in the world. With the oil wells came the boom towns with their hurriedly constructed houses and stores, their dirt streets, exorbitant prices, and free-flowing whiskey. Many of these little communities died, but some of them lived and poured much of their wealth into Osage pockets. Soon there were sprawling ranch houses on many of the Osage homesteads, where the old tribal aristocrats sat and told stories about the old days when the Osages wore clothes without pockets.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The story of the Osages before their allotment is not unique in its broad outline. Nearly every Indian tribe in the United States went through the same stages of transition in one form or another. The Osage story is unique in its details, some of them showing the tribe's distinct character, but most of them illustrating its similarity to the cultural changes in other tribes.

The transition from Indian to white ways did not take place "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." For the Osages it began with their first contact with white men in the seventeenth century and is still going on today. Under the Spanish and French the process of "civilizing" the Osages and other Indians was relatively slow and painless, but under the Americans it was painfully fast. Whether these cultural changes were slow or fast, one thing is certain: they were inevitable for several reasons.

First, the Osages were outnumbered by the white men who poured into the Southwest after the Louisiana Purchase. This had not always been the case. Before 1803 and for
several years thereafter, the Osages had enjoyed a numerical advantage over the whites. It was only by playing one tribe against another that the French and Spanish could offset this advantage. The Osages capitalized on this situation by offering their military services to the highest bidder. During this era the Osages, along with the Comanches and a few other tribes, were a major factor in the contest between the Spanish and French and between these powers and other Indian tribes. After President Jefferson bought Louisiana Territory, things were different. An avalanche of white settlers flooded into Arkansas and Missouri and eventually into the Osage reservations in Kansas and Oklahoma. The tribe's only alternative to extinction was to bargain on the white man's terms.

A second reason for the inevitable modification of Osage culture was the white genius for organization. Most of the American Indians lived in loosely organized bands or tribes. When a number of tribes did unite—as under Pontiac and Tecumseh—the confederation was usually short-lived, the major exception being the Iroquois Confederation. The failure of Indian efforts to maintain any unified resistance against the whites was due partly to their clashing tribal interests. But it also illustrated an improvidence which was characteristic of most of
the Indian tribes in other matters. Among the Osages, tribal unity was conspicuous by its absence. Even Clermont and White Hair, the two greatest Osage leaders, were unable to win the allegiance of all the Osage bands. The television prototype of the venerated Indian chief whose word is law was unknown to the Osages whose democratic ways approached anarchy.

Thirdly, the Osages were inferior to the white men in technology, especially in the development and use of instruments of war. What guns the Indians did possess were acquired from the whites, and when these weapons were broken, most of the tribesmen did not have the tools or the skill to repair them. In order to maintain their arms, the Indians found it necessary to maintain friendly relations with some of the whites or with other well-armed tribes while fighting another part of the white or Indian population. This was sometimes impossible, and the result was disaster for the unarmed tribe. The defeats suffered by the Osages at the hands of the Cherokees and their allies were due partially to the better firearms possessed by the eastern tribes and to the fact that these emigrant Indians had an unbroken supply line to the sources of weapons in the East. The Osages, on the other hand, were successful in their warfare against the Plains tribes before the 1840's for the same reason. The military
success or failure of a tribe was generally proportionate to its nearness or distance from the whites. But the whites always had the advantage in weapons.

A fourth major advantage of the whites was their proficiency in the use of economic weapons. Since the Osages never chose to go to war against the United States, the Government resorted to this economic pressure to break the tribe's passive resistance to its policies. Before the acquisition of Louisiana Territory, the Spanish and French had wooed the Osages to their respective sides in the trade rivalries that developed along the Red and Arkansas rivers. Unlike the white settlers after 1803, these early frontiersmen were mostly fur traders who associated their economic success with the success of their Indian friends. The Indians in turn depended upon the white traders for guns, metal tools and utensils, and other desirable items. Since the Osages lived closer to the French than to the Spanish, the tribe usually yielded its allegiance to France. But the Osages were not averse to helping the Spaniards if the price was right. It was this bargaining position that made the Osages such a powerful tribe in the early Southwest.

After the Louisiana Purchase, the tribe lost this power, and the period from 1803 to 1839 witnessed the most marked decline of prestige in Osage history. The American
settlers, like their English ancestors, were mostly farmers. They were interested in soil, timber, and the peaceful atmosphere that is necessary to agricultural pursuits. Consequently, they looked upon the Indians as a menace to their way of life. The Indians, on the other hand, were even more dependent upon the whites than they had been before. The result was one-sided dealing to the advantage of the white settlers and traders. The policies of the Government were tailored to suit the white voters who kept the Washington legislators in office. When the white men in the East clamored for land, the Government removed the eastern tribes into Arkansas and Missouri. This policy might have led to less bloodshed had the United States previously made room for these tribes, but the Government chose to follow an easier and less expensive course. First, the eastern tribes were moved to land already occupied by the Osages and other tribes. Then the Indians were allowed to "fight it out" until one side was so exhausted that it would accept peace on any terms. For the Osages, the terms were high—one hundred million acres of the best lands in the Southwest besides their losses in life and suffering. Most of these lands went to the emigrant tribes, but they were later opened to the white men when these tribes were moved to the Indian Territory. If the defeated Indians refused to sign the cession treaties
put before them, the Government would employ military or economic pressure. In the case of the Osages, the threat of military action was sometimes employed, but the use of economic weapons was usually more expedient since the tribe was on excellent terms with the United States. This pressure came in the form of boycotts, whereby all white traders were forbidden to transact business with the tribe, and in the form of white grievance lists against the Indians.

After the Osages moved to their Kansas reservation in the 1830's and 1840's, their economic losses were not so great—mainly because they had nothing else to lose. From 1839 to 1872, the tribe went through the lowest ebb in its history. The extreme poverty of this period was a result of a combination of overwhelming factors including an inefficiently-administered Government annuity program, a loss of hunting rights on the Plains, a series of natural disasters in the form of droughts, floods, insects, and diseases, and an onslaught of white settlers. The only choice left to the Osages and other tribes in Kansas was to move to the Indian Territory.

Here they encountered a fifth force which was destined to alter the remaining relics of their traditional way of life. This came in the form of social and religious reforms which the Osages had encountered before,
but never to such an intensive degree. The history of the Osages from their move to Oklahoma in 1872 to their allotment in 1907 saw the tribe making economic gains but losing its old culture at an unprecedented rate of speed. The whites had always been more evangelical than the Indians in social and religious matters. The Osages were willing to accept some of the new white teachings, but they were not willing to give up all their old ways. Consequently, they began to observe the ancient rites in form while living like white men in their daily affairs. The two best examples of this compromise are the mourning rites and the Peyote religion. In the former, the Osages performed the dances in the traditional form but gave up the primary object of the rite, the taking of an enemy scalp. In the latter, they mixed Christian and Indian beliefs to produce a new religious cult.

The Osages, like their brothers in other tribes, found it difficult to judge the motives of their white neighbors. Why did the white men bring them whiskey and then send missionaries to tell them that drinking was a sin? Why did the whites preach against polygamy and at the same time lead the Osage squaws into prostitution and kindred vices? Why did they take away the Indian's property and then send him benevolent aid? These questions
and others were discussed but left unanswered by most of the Indians.

Another factor in the inevitable triumph of white civilization was the white man's advantage in government representation. The Osages, since they were not citizens, depended upon white men to defend their rights. Needless to say, the white men usually had their way in Washington and in the territorial assemblies.

Finally, the white men were better informed and more articulate in their demands. By reading newspapers, stock market reports, and letters from their friends in Washington, they knew which Indian lands were most valuable and how to word the treaties in order to get these lands. The Osages eventually produced leaders acquainted with the white man's ways. Under the wise direction of these men, the tribe fared better than most of their Indian brothers. They were able to stall the allotment of their lands until 1907 and to profit by the mistakes of tribes which were allotted earlier. This time was used wisely by the Osage chiefs and lawyers who selected the best lands for the tribe and reserved the mineral rights on the surplus lands. Soon the Osages became the wealthiest tribe in the United States. They had finally discovered the only formula for Indian success in a white society: prepare for the inevitable.
APPENDIX
Fig. 3—Map of the Osage reservation in Kansas
Fig. 4--Map of the Osage reservation in the Indian Territory.
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