

THE WYANDOT INDIANS,

1843-1876

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PREFACE

This dissertation began with a casual stroll through the old Huron Cemetery in the heart of downtown Kansas City, Kansas, in September, 1968. My curiosity led me to seek more knowledge about those Indians who once lived in Wyandotte County, Kansas. I started with Grant Foreman's The Last Trek of the Indians, a survey of the removal of many of the Indian tribes to Oklahoma. Foreman's work, published in 1946, remains the standard reference for the removal of the small tribes, but space limitations made it impossible for him to include a comprehensive account of the removal of any one tribe.

Further research revealed that there were conflicting accounts of various aspects of Wyandot civilization. Isolated incidents did not present an accurate picture, and I believed that only a detailed analysis would give the total story. In 1971, after this topic was approved for my dissertation by my doctoral committee, I examined the Wyandot papers of the Office of Indian Affairs. These records, together with the John G. Pratt Papers, the John M. Armstrong Papers, and other materials, confirmed my view that there were significant historical differences between the Wyandots and many other emigrant tribes. The predominance of white blood in the tribe, and the outstanding qualities exhibited by some of its leaders, led to novel solutions in various situations.

During both the research and writing of this study, I attempted

constantly to remember that the Wyandots in the nineteenth century had different values and habits than white Americans. A realistic appraisal of their civilization was possible only by maintaining this attitude. I tried to retain a neutral stance throughout this study, but occasionally the evidence was so one-sided that my conclusions may seem to support the Wyandots or the United States government.

The able and often needed assistance of the staff of the Oklahoma State University Library deserves my appreciation. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the support of the late Mrs. Marguerite S. Howland, the head documents librarian; Mr. Josh H. Stroman, who was of invaluable help in acquiring much needed material; and Mrs. Heather MacAlpine Lloyd, the reference librarian, who was of inestimable value in my research.

The author extends appreciation to Miss Esther Norman of the Kansas City, Kansas, Public Library for her help in locating items in the Kansas Collection. Mrs. Peggy Smith of the Kansas City, Missouri, Public Library was helpful in locating newspapers in the Missouri Valley Collection. Valuable assistance was rendered by Mr. Joseph W. Snell of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas, in locating manuscripts in the Wyandot Indian Collection and the John G. Pratt Papers.

Many significant items were located in the John M. Armstrong Papers, thanks to the able assistance of Mrs. Marie E. Keene of the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Mr. Jack D. Haley, Assistant Curator of the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Library, Norman, Oklahoma, located a number of manuscripts for the author. Special thanks are extended

to Mrs. Rella Looney of the Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, for her help in locating numerous items in the Wyandot Indian Collection.

Courtesy and cooperation were extended to the author by Mr. Leonard N. Cotter, Chief of the Wyandotte Tribe of Oklahoma, who consented to be interviewed, and who related his personal experiences of over thirty years as a tribal official. Mrs. Cecilia Wallace, and her daughter, Mrs. Charlotte Nesvold, descendants of Isaiah Walker, graciously consented to an interview and allowed the author to examine Wyandot archives in their possession. Special thanks are extended to Ernest Huber, who drew the map and the graph.

I would also like to thank the members of my graduate committee for their aid throughout my entire graduate program, and for their careful reading of this dissertation: Professor James Stine of the Geography Department; Dr. H. James Henderson, Dr. Douglas D. Hale, Dr. Robert Spaulding, and Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer of the History Department. I owe special thanks to Dr. Knight, who, as head of the History Department, made it possible for me to pursue my graduate academic degrees, and to Dr. Fischer, the chairman of my graduate committee, whose long, hard, and able editorship of my dissertation is appreciated.

I would also like to thank my son, Rob, and my daughter, Theresa, for tolerating a father who was often irritable, and who did not seem to understand that sometimes children create noise when they play. But most of all, I want to thank my wife, Ann, who has had the fortitude to bear with a historian for these last eight years, and whose encouragement, writing help, and typing skill has made this dissertation possible.

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