The Enduring Indians of Kansas

Herring, Joseph B.

Published by University Press of Kansas

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The Enduring Indians of Kansas: A Century and a Half of Acculturation.

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The courageous pioneers of the nineteenth century are usually described as self-reliant Euro-Americans who made their way west in covered wagons. These pioneers carved homes and farms out of the prairie, braved the forces of nature in a strange new land, and fought off fierce Indians to bring the fruits of American civilization and democracy to the wilderness. For Kansas and most of the West, however, this is both an exaggerated and a distorted picture. Indian peoples had settled in Kansas centuries before the first Europeans ever saw the land. The Spanish explorer Francisco Vasquez de Coronado and his expedition, while wandering through southern Kansas in 1541 in a futile search for the fabulous kingdom of Quivira, encountered several villages of Wichitas, an agricultural people.

By the eighteenth century, the Kaws (Kansa Indians), the Osages, the Pawnees, and others were settling and hunting in the area. Then, some sixty years before Kansas was opened to white settlement in 1854, Indians from the East infringed on the hunting grounds of the indigenous tribes, exploring, hunting, and settling in what would later become Kansas. These intruders, who had a long history of interaction with the French, the British, and the Americans, brought with them syncretic cultures that often included the English language, Christianity or Christian-like religions, modern farming techniques, and sophisticated tools and weapons.

Among the intruders were small groups of Iowas and Missouri Sacs who had crossed the Missouri River as early as the 1790s to gather food and to hunt in the region between the Nemaha and Kansas rivers. Following the War of 1812, bands of Shawnees, Delawares, Kickapoos, and other easterners also arrived, and by the late 1820s many were making Kansas their permanent home. By 1854, when the territory was opened to white settlement, thousands of other Indian immigrants had
flocked into Kansas. These acculturated tribespeople had adopted many aspects of the dominant Euro-American culture, and when they arrived with their wagons and belongings in Kansas, they continued their accustomed ways of living. Free of interference from white settlers, some of them built lodges of animal hides or bark; others constructed log cabins. They planted corn, squash, beans, and melons; raised pigs and cattle; collected nuts and berries, and hunted buffalo, deer, and other game.

Like the later American pioneers, they fought off Indians who resented the intrusion on their lands. Years of interaction with eastern whites had given these transplanted Indian pioneers a sophistication that most of the resident Osages, Kaws, Pawnees, and Sioux lacked. The indigenous tribes found it difficult to compete with the better armed and equipped easterners, who infringed on their hunting and gathering grounds, introduced smallpox and other diseases that devastated their populations, and brought whiskey that demoralized their people. The eventual winner in this cultural conflict was a foregone conclusion. The intruders, who had faced pressure from whites invading their eastern lands and destroying their game, were well aware that Kansas was an ideal location. The rich soil, numerous streams, sufficient timber, and abundant wildlife made eastern Kansas especially attractive; anyone who had inspected the region thoroughly realized that it was not part of the mythical Great American Desert.

Critics of the government's Indian removal policy have expressed the opinion that nineteenth-century federal officials intended to resettle the tribes on lands considered worthless by whites. It was never the expressed intention of Washington bureaucrats or politicians, however, to exile Indians to desert wastelands. Although those involved in the removal process had varied and often questionable motives, some were sincerely concerned for the Indians' welfare. Men such as the famous explorer William Clark and the Baptist missionary Isaac McCoy believed that Indians were capable of advancing to a level of civilization comparable to whites. If these "red savages" could only be exposed to the proper agrarian environment, they might be individually assimilated into mainstream American society.

Since each assimilated Indian family would need only a small farm when the tribes were dissolved, there would be vast "surplus" lands available for white settlement. If civilizing the eastern Indians proved difficult, their removal west to provide more time for assimilation
might be necessary. In the West, Indians could be resettled on fertile lands, instructed in agriculture, and isolated from the "vices" of white society. The area just beyond Missouri and Arkansas, in present-day eastern Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma, seemed a perfect place for "civilizing" America's original inhabitants. How tribes who were far removed from white settlements would learn to live like whites was never satisfactorily explained, and Kansas could not remain out of the public's eye for long. Businessmen, speculators, and settlers would soon appreciate the vast potential of Kansas.

That Kansas was more than a desert wasteland became more obvious as the years went by. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, on their expedition to the Pacific in 1804, were among the first Anglo-Americans to record observations of the region. Favorably impressed with the land along the Missouri River and its tributaries, the explorers noted the flourishing game and vegetation on the Kansas side. Crossing Kansas in 1806, Zebulon Montgomery Pike observed numerous "buffaloes, elks, deer, cabrie [antelope], and panthers" along the Cottonwood and other rivers. But Pike doubted that white settlers would find the prairie of the more western region desirable. "These vast plains of the western hemisphere," he wrote, "may become in time equally celebrated with the sandy deserts of Africa." His views contributed to a growing belief that an immense wasteland lay between Missouri and the Rocky Mountains.

When visiting the Kaw (Kansa) Indian village near present-day Manhattan, Kansas, five years later, trader George C. Sibley was more favorably impressed. Sibley observed numerous deer, elk, and antelope on his journey from Fort Osage, Missouri. "This [is] a very wild but extremely beautiful and high prairie country," he wrote, "pretty well watered and variegated with strips of woodland, ranges of lofty rugged, naked hills, overlooking extensive tracts of meadow ground." He found the land "delightful to the eye of the mere rambler, and [it] may at no distant period offer inducements even for Christian settlements."

In 1819 Maj. Stephen H. Long led an expedition up the Missouri River en route to the Rockies. Edwin James—a botanist, geologist, and surgeon who accompanied the group—noted the rich soil, lush forests, and wild animals along the Missouri between the Kansas and Nemaha rivers. A separate exploring party trekking westward toward the Kaw village, however, reported a "want of trees, these being confined to the margins of the watercourses, while tracts of valuable soil
... have not a single tree or bush upon them." This led James to speculate that white settlers would avoid the region until forests could be planted, it being a common misconception of the day that treeless land was not arable. Maps published after Long and James's expedition invariably labeled the lands west of the one hundredth meridian the "Great American Desert." Although only the western part of Kansas fell within this category, many easterners remained convinced that the entire region was desolate. 

Long and James did not explore the Kansas hinterlands personally, but other whites as well as Indians were aware of its tremendous agricultural potential. If the indigenous Kaws, Osages, and others could be persuaded to move farther west, the way would be clear for the eastern tribes to emigrate. All that remained was finding a sufficient moral justification for the federal government to set in motion a general removal policy. The Indians' future would be decided in the East; policies evolved there by men who may never have seen an Indian would profoundly affect their fate.

Determined to get control of the Indians' domain, politicians and settlers in the plantation South and the farmlands of the Old Northwest argued that Indian hunters did not use the land as God had intended. Truly civilized people, the argument continued, were self-sufficient and farmed intensively, whereas "red savages" remained idle or lurked menacingly in the forest. Whites also asserted that because of the Indians' alliance with Great Britain in the War of 1812, the tribes should be removed beyond the Mississippi. But even those Indians who had been neutral or allied with the United States must go, for they also wasted land and hindered the growth of the nation.

Federal officials sympathized and sought ways to solve the Indian "problem." Although treaties of peace signed by tribes in the Old Northwest following the War of 1812 did not call for land cessions, they helped pave the way for an eventual mass Indian removal to the West. Between 1815 and 1818, several tribes settled their differences with the United States and agreed to reject British influence. Peace assured, governmental agents immediately urged them to sell part of their lands. In response, cession treaties were signed by the Shawnees, Delawares, Miamis, Weas, Wyandots, Potawatomis, Kickapoos, and others in 1818 and 1819. These agreements were among the first of many that would result in the resettlement of thousands of Indians in Kansas.
Although most of the treaties allowed the tribes to retain reduced reservations in the East, their eventual removal had already been decided. In October 1817 President James Monroe informed General Andrew Jackson, then in charge of the United States Army's southern division, that Indian removal was a governmental priority. "The hunter or savage state," Monroe wrote, "requires a greater extent of territory to sustain it, than is compatible with the progress and just claims of civilized life, and must yield to it." Two years later Secretary of War John C. Calhoun stressed the urgency of placing Indians "where a more extensive scope is afforded for the indulgence of their barbarous propensities and habits."\(^\text{11}\)

These pronouncements signified that the government's long-standing policy of obtaining lands for an expanding nation while gradually absorbing Indians into the dominant society was nearing an end. In fact, by the 1820s acquiring lands to satisfy the needs of white settlers far outweighed the importance of "uplifting the savage."\(^\text{12}\)

Under the banner of states' rights, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi began to clash with the federal government over jurisdiction in Indian matters. Southern politicians charged that Indians controlled too much valuable territory and demanded immediate removal of all tribes.

When President John Quincy Adams took office in 1825, he was acutely aware that the removal issue was more complex than most people realized or would admit. The government's civilization program had proven embarrassingly successful in the South, where many Cherokees, Creeks, and others had taken on the trappings of white society. These tribes employed modern agricultural methods, sent their children to school, and adopted white models for their tribal governments. A prosperous few owned plantations and slaves. Since these tribes were rapidly becoming acculturated, President Adams could find no reasonable grounds to justify their forced removal. Indeed, he should have protected them, but because of demands by southern politicians, he reluctantly adopted a policy of persuading and pressuring the Indians to move voluntarily. He refused to eject them by force even to please southern voters.\(^\text{13}\)

President Adams's liberal approach angered the Georgia and Alabama legislators who wanted to abolish tribal governments, deal with Indians individually, and place them under the jurisdiction of state laws. Intent on taking over Indian holdings, state leaders
criticized Adams's diffident course of action. They began looking to the 1828 election for a candidate who would take the steps they demanded. Farther west, pressures to remove the Indians were also mounting. The growing populations of Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Missouri were eager to rid themselves of Indians and to divide their lands. As in the South, impatient officials demanded federal action, arguing that federal policymakers were duty-bound to move the tribes before war broke out between Indians and the settlers.

In St. Louis, the superintendent of Indian affairs, William Clark, the erstwhile explorer of Lewis and Clark fame, realized that he had to act soon to avoid a possible outbreak of violence against the Indians. Clark began to apply gentle pressure on the eastern tribes to abandon their homes. But before removal plans could proceed, the superintendent had to soften the resistance of the western tribes who were reluctant to sell their lands or to share their hunting grounds with outsiders, even if those outsiders were Indians. Fortunately for Clark, the Kaws and the Osages had already indicated a willingness to negotiate. George Sibley reported that the Kaws were ready to part with thousands of acres “for a mere trifle as compared with the immense value of the land, and I am very sure there can be no good reason urged why the govt. should refuse to purchase it.”

By early June 1825, Clark had persuaded representatives of the Kaws and Osages to meet with him in St. Louis for treaty negotiations. In exchange for annuities, agricultural implements, and other considerations, the two tribes agreed to relinquish claims to their lands in Missouri and Arkansas. They also ceded much of eastern Kansas, paving the way for the relocation of thousands of Indians. That fall the superintendent induced the Shawnees of southeastern Missouri to move farther west; they were among the first newcomers to arrive in Kansas.

Over the next several years, bands of Delawares, Piankashaws, Weas, Peorias, Miamis, and others relinquished their eastern holdings and resettled in Kansas. Many tribal leaders had agreed to take their people west only after federal officials offered bribes of land and money in exchange for their signatures on removal treaties. Miami Chief John B. Richardville, for example, received title to over twenty thousand acres as well as thirty-one thousand dollars for selling his band’s valuable lands in Indiana.
Despite such tactics, some bands still refused to move, asserting their legal and moral right to remain. The Rock River, or Mississippi, Sacs and Foxes of Illinois, for example, insisted that they would never leave, and they justifiably denounced an 1804 treaty that called for their eventual removal to Iowa. They pointed out that federal officials had negotiated that agreement with Indians who had no right to speak for the tribe. Filled with deep resentment, the resolute Sacs and Foxes vowed to expel white intruders from their territory. 

In central Illinois, a Prairie Band Kickapoo leader named Mecina also refused to bow to the wishes of federal officials. When an Indian agent demanded that the band move to Missouri in accordance with its 1819 treaty, Mecina responded that he had never placed his mark on a paper to sell Kickapoo lands. Those who did, he said, had violated the commands of the Great Spirit, who had caused an earthquake to show his displeasure with the treaty. Along the Wabash River near the Indiana-Illinois border, Kenekuk, the prophet of the Vermillion Kickapoos, also cited divine strictures against selling tribal possessions. The Great Spirit owned the earth, the prophet insisted; mere men were forbidden to buy or sell any part of it. “When I talked to the Great Spirit,” Kenekuk told Superintendent Clark, “he did not tell me to sell my lands.”

While tribal leaders were resorting to moral suasion to save their homes, many whites sought ethical justifications for the tribes’ removal. Self-appointed humanitarians, many of them New Englanders with little firsthand knowledge of Indians, were sincerely concerned for the Indians’ welfare. Some demanded that the United States abide by its treaties; others advocated isolating the tribes from the “vices” of white society by removing them to a separate colony in the West, where they could slowly become assimilated, Christian citizens. This solution was supported by several missionaries, including Isaac McCoy, a Baptist preacher from Michigan who would play a leading role in determining the future of the Indians of the Old Northwest.

A staunch removal advocate who was also dedicated to improving the Indians’ way of life, McCoy had gained influence among politicians and federal officials by the mid-1820s. He championed the establishment of a separate Indian colony outside the limits of American states and territories. In such a colony, isolated from white society, missionaries could help resettle, educate, and Christianize the emigrant
tribespeople. "Indians are not untamable," McCoy asserted. "Give them a country of their own, under circumstances which will enable them to feel their importance, where they can hope to enjoy, unmolested, the fruits of their labours, and their national recovery need not be doubted." 20

In June 1828 McCoy secured orders from Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas McKenney to lead a party of eastern Indians in a search of suitable land for a colony in the West. With six Potawatomis and Ottawas and two white assistants, McCoy left St. Louis in August, headed for the territory directly beyond the Missouri line. He was pleasantly surprised by what he found. "Timber is in plenty to admit a tolerably dense population for 75 miles west of Missouri state, afterwards more scarce," he wrote. "The soil is almost universally fertile, and the whole supplied abundantly with limestone . . . the most sightly country I ever saw." After a return visit late in 1828, McCoy was sure he had found his "Indian Canaan." 21

For McCoy's plans to become reality, the federal government would have to make Indian removal mandatory; the Adams administration's cautious approach would not produce the desired result. As the 1828 election neared, the appeal of Democratic presidential candidate Andrew Jackson became irresistible to the advocates of removal. Citizens of Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, the Carolinas, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan knew that with "Old Hickory" in office, Indian lands would surely be opened to white settlers. The South and the West, therefore, rallied to the Jackson banner. With only New England voters supporting Adams, a Democratic victory was assured.

Jackson's victory signaled bad times for eastern Indians, for his administration immediately developed strategies for pushing all of them west of the Mississippi. In his March 1829 inaugural address, Jackson asserted that he would never abuse Indian rights and maintained that he intended to follow a liberal and humane Indian policy. The president realized, however, that the source of his political power was centered in the South and West. To retain the loyalty of those voters, he appointed John H. Eaton secretary of war and John M. Berrien attorney general; both were outspoken advocates of removal. 22

In the South, the Cherokees, Creeks, and others actively opposed all attempts to evict them from their farms and plantations. Because Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi had already passed laws of ques-
tionable constitutionality assuming state jurisdiction over Indians, Jackson acted quickly to avoid trouble. Seeking universal support for an aggressive removal policy, his first step was to ask the popular Thomas McKenney to continue as head of the Indian Office. McKenney agreed and enthusiastically assumed the task of winning approval of the proposed Indian removal bill, for he firmly believed that the survival of Indians depended upon their separation from whites. To achieve his goals, he organized the New York Board for the Emigration, Preservation, and Improvement of the Aborigines of America, which pledged full cooperation with the administration.23

As the chief disseminator of governmental removal propaganda, the board immediately sought endorsements from church leaders, newspaper editors, and concerned citizens. It achieved considerable success even in the Northeast, and several missionaries became active in the movement. Isaac McCoy, for one, proved a valuable ally. In May 1829 he made a tour of eastern states to rally public support for removal. Many other men of the cloth firmly believed that Indian contact with lower-class whites hindered education and Christianization efforts. In the West, Indians would be free of white "vices" and other harmful influences and, under the tutelage of missionaries, could become educated Christians.24

President Jackson insisted that removal was the only way to save the Indians from destruction, and he asked Congress to set aside "an ample district west of the Mississippi" and outside of the states and organized territories. It was "to be guaranteed to the Indian tribes as long as they shall occupy it, each tribe having a distinct control over the portion designated for its use."25

The debate on removal was brief. Soon after it began in April 1830, Congress voted in favor of the removal legislation. On May 28 Jackson signed into law a bill that would open to white settlers "large tracts of country now occupied by a few savage hunters." The president announced that the new law would

separate the Indians from immediate contact with settlements of whites; free them from the power of the States; enable them to pursue happiness in their own way and under their own rude institutions; will retard the progress of decay, which is lessening their numbers; and perhaps cause them gradually, under protec-
tion of the Government, and through the influence of good coun-
sels, to cast off their savage habits, and become an interesting, 
civilized, and Christian community.

More to the point, it would allow the states "to advance in population, 
wealth, and power." The president ignored the fact that many eastern 
Indians had already "cast off their savage habits."²⁶

Ostensibly, the removal bill did not force Indians to relinquish their 
lands, for the lawmakers had stipulated that treaty agreements must be 
negotiated before removal could proceed. But the subsequent treaty 
process had the same result. Federal agents resorted to deception, 
threats, bribery, and other devious methods to cajole Indians into ac-
cepting land cessions and removal. Treaty commissioners signed 
agreements with pro-removal elements of a tribe, ignoring legitimate 
tribal elders who opposed land cessions, then declared the agreements 
binding on all.

Because federal administrators awarded contracts for food and trans-
portation services to the lowest bidder, many Indians suffered from 
improper diet and exposure on their removal to the West, and hun-
dreds died.²⁷ Such hardships were of little concern to most Americans; 
the Indian question, it was assumed, was forever settled to the satisfac-
tion of those who wanted their lands as well as those who believed 
relocation was the first step toward civilization.

While McCoy hailed removal as the "first efficient step" toward 
tribal colonization, this solution to the Indian "problem" encountered 
difficulties from its very inception.²⁸ Most Indians resented the plan 
and resisted deportation. As a result, the process took more than 
twenty years, and when it ended there were still Indians in the East. 
Lack of foresight coupled with governmental ineptitude, moreover, 
doomed the civilization program that removal was supposed to facili-
tate. Most important, the trans-Mississippi country set aside for a 
"permanent" Indian home—the area beyond Arkansas, Missouri, and 
Iowa, west to the Rockies—blocked the natural lines of American 
expansion to the Pacific. Frustration over any obstruction to expansion 
had already begun to appear. With the entire continent as the ultimate 
prize, the cries of "Reannexation of Texas!" and "54-40 or fight!" soon 
made it obvious that federal Indian policy conflicted with the forces of 
Manifest Destiny.²⁹

Meanwhile, despite the new removal law, most Indians stubbornly
insisted on their rights and refused to leave their ancestral homes. It would take coercion or the threat of violence to convince the tribes of Indiana, Illinois, and other Old Northwest states that it was in their best interest to leave before they were crushed. The Black Hawk War provided the catalyst needed to make those Indians amenable to governmental demands. In May 1832 war erupted between the followers of a Sac warrior named Black Hawk who were determined to stay in Illinois and state militia and United States Army troops bent on eviction them. Black Hawk's followers hoped that other tribes and the British from Canada would come to their support, but they were sadly disappointed. Although the white troops lacked field experience and effective leadership, they quickly routed Black Hawk's poorly armed warriors—but not before the Indians had aroused considerable hysteria among settlers from Missouri to Michigan.

This episode prompted angry demands from citizens in Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and Michigan for the immediate removal of all Indians. By the fall of 1832, the shock of the Black Hawk War, together with the pressures of the removal bill, began to overwhelm Indians who were determined to stay in the East. In October Superintendent Clark summoned leaders of both the Prairie and Vermillion Kickapoo bands to his St. Louis home to negotiate their removal to Kansas. Clark advised them not to "neglect this opportunity of leaving a country where you have long been looked upon with suspicion, and where you will shortly be treated as enemies."

Clark assured the Kickapoos that although he had not visited Kansas personally, he knew it was ideal for resettlement. "Your Great Father, the President, does not wish your people to be permanently placed on land incapable of supporting them comfortably," he intoned. "He wishes to see his Red Children contented and happy." With whites clamoring for their removal, the Kickapoos signed the Treaty of Castor Hill on October 24; the Prairie Kickapoos relinquished their Missouri lands and the Vermillion people gave up their homes on the Wabash. Later, their advance parties found acceptable locations near Fort Leavenworth, and in early 1833 the first Kickapoos began arriving at their new Kansas reservation.

The Potawatomis, with over fifty villages in Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana, also faced intense pressure to abandon their lands for homes in the West. It mattered little that several bands, including the Prairie Potawatomis, had fought alongside American troops
A sketch of a Potawatomi man, woman, and child made on May 21, 1851, by the Swiss artist Rudolph Friederich Kurz. (Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives)

against Black Hawk's warriors. It was of no consequence either that most sought only a peaceful accommodation with white neighbors and were willing to share their lands with the increasing numbers of Americans. To whites, the Potawatomis would always be Indians with "savage" habits and "red" skins. Intent on taking their lands, whites would never accept them as equal members of the same social system; nothing could stop the process of removal.

In the summer of 1833, over six thousand Potawatomis assembled outside Chicago to face the inevitable. Meeting with governmental commissioners on September 14, Potawatomi chiefs at first insisted that they would not move before inspecting the lands west of the Mississippi. After stalling for several days, however, the leading spokesmen for the Indians agreed to relinquish an immense territory in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Illinois. In exchange, they were to receive five million acres of the Platte region just northeast of Fort Leaven-
worth. Unfortunately, Missouri politicians and settlers wanted this area, and they were able to annex it as part of their state. In 1834, therefore, federal officials substituted lands in the present state of Iowa for the Indians' future home. Many Potawatomis, however, shunned Iowa and moved in with the Kickapoos near Fort Leavenworth, while others claimed lands to the southwest of the fort along the Marais des Cygnes River. In 1847 those who had settled in Iowa would sell their lands and move to Kansas.

Meanwhile, in 1834 several small Potawatomi bands still holding out in northern Indiana also faced eviction, but it took three years for officials to badger them into giving up their homes. Finally, in February 1837, the last of the treaties was signed and the Indiana Potawatomis began their trek to new homes along the Marais des Cygnes. Blatant fraud and deception marked the Potawatomi negotiations, as officials ignored many of the legitimate tribal elders who opposed land cessions. Chief Menominee of the Indiana bands best expressed the feelings of the elders. "The President does not know the truth," he said. "He does not know that your treaty is a lie. He does not know that you made my chiefs drunk, got their consent, and pretended to get mine." Insisting that he would never leave, Menominee was certain that President Martin Van Buren "would not by force drive me from my home, [or] the graves of my tribe and children, who have gone to the Great Spirit." On August 29, 1838, the chief's faith in the president's sense of justice was shattered when troops arrived to escort his band to Kansas, whether they were willing to go or not.

The experience of the Sacs and Iowas, longtime residents in the Platte region, was much less traumatic. Although the Sacs and Iowas came from different cultural backgrounds, they had been closely allied for many years and both had adopted the characteristic traits of the Plains Indians. The Sacs, known as the Sacs and Foxes of the Missouri, had already separated from Black Hawk's people by the turn of the century. Since that time, they had explored and hunted in Kansas, and a few bands had even established villages south of the Great Nemaha, near the eastern border of present-day Kansas and Nebraska. By the 1820s, their bark wickiups sat on the Kansas lands later deeded to the Kickapoos. The young Mokohoko, one of those independent Sac pioneers, eventually arose as a dynamic leader who would have a lasting impact on the entire Sac and Fox tribe.

In September 1836 the Sacs and Iowas met William Clark at Fort
Leavenworth to cede claims to the Platte country in exchange for small reserves on the present-day Kansas-Nebraska border.\textsuperscript{38} By the following year, most had migrated across the Missouri and reestablished themselves on long-familiar territory. Over the next several years, the two bands developed a deep fondness for Kansas that made them stubbornly resist all future efforts to dislodge them from their lands.

While the Sacs and Iowas signed their treaties, federal authorities attempted to pressure the Michigan Chippewas to move west of the Mississippi. Most of the Indians refused and some fled to Canada; but a tiny band of Swan Creek and Black River Chippewas who lived near Detroit succumbed to governmental persuasion. Their leader was the opportunistic Eshtonoquot, known to whites as Francis McCoonse.

Touting himself as spokesman for all Michigan Chippewas, Eshtonoquot had traveled to England in 1835 to ask Parliament for compensation for dubious claims to Canadian lands. Insufficient funds forced the chief and his party to perform “shuffling dances” at the Victoria Theater in London to raise money. Later, one of Eshtonoquot’s wives and a nephew died of “pulmonary disease” and were buried in England. The chief himself was allegedly found cavorting with a London prostitute, but the \textit{Times} assured readers that he appeared to be “entirely innocent” of that “infamous charge.” Nevertheless, the mission failed, for Parliament refused even to consider Eshtonoquot’s claim.\textsuperscript{39}

Returning to Michigan, Eshtonoquot became a favored “treaty chief” of federal officials intent on removing the Chippewas. Because he spoke English, other chiefs occasionally asked him to intervene with white authorities, but the tribe never considered him a chief. Accepting bribes and other concessions, Eshtonoquot agreed to sell tribal lands. When the Chippewas finally started for Kansas in 1839, however, the government’s promises of money had been withdrawn because Eshtonoquot could persuade only sixty Indians to accompany him. Those gullible Chippewas found no money or provisions waiting for them at the new reserve in present-day Franklin County. “How are we to live,” Eshtonoquot wondered in November. “We have no guns [and] no shoes to keep our feet from freezing. . . . These things make me sick in my Heart. We have nothing left to sustain life.”\textsuperscript{40}

But Eshtonoquot and the Chippewas were resourceful, and within a few years they had developed relatively prosperous farms. The chief missed few opportunities to enhance his personal wealth and prestige,
and his followers soon learned how to fend for themselves. White settlers would find the sophisticated Chippewas difficult to swindle; these Indians also successfully resisted all efforts to expel them from their adopted land.

The Chippewas' defense of their possessions met its most serious challenge after a treaty allied them with a small band of Munsee Delawares, or Christian Indians, whose culture and religion differed radically from those of the Chippewas. The Munsees began migrating from Canada in 1837. Most continued to associate with the Delawares, but a small number, adherents of the Moravian Church, eventually severed their tribal affiliations. Although they retained many of their traditional ways throughout the 1840s and 1850s, widespread intermarriage with whites led to rapid acculturation. Like the Kickapoos, Potawatomis, Iowas, Sacs, and Chippewas, members of this small Munsee band were obstinate in their resolve to retain their Kansas farms.41

By 1850 Kansas had become home to thousands of Indian immigrants. The Missouri Sacs, Iowas, and Kickapoos had been given separate reservations between Fort Leavenworth and the Great Nemaha River; the Delawares and Shawnees each had their own reserves just southwest of the fort. During the mid-1840s the Sacs and Foxes of the Mississippi, then under Black Hawk's arch-rival Keokuk, had exchanged their Iowa holdings for 430,000 acres in present-day Franklin and Osage counties. The Potawatomis also relinquished Iowa lands during the 1840s to resettle on an immense tract west of the Delaware reserve; they were joined by kinfolk who had lived along the Marais des Cygnes for many years. The Chippewas, Ottawas, Munsees, Kaskaskias, Peorias, Piankashaws, Weas, and others lived south of the Kansas River.

The immigrants, as well as the indigenous Osages and Kaws, faced troubled times by mid-century. The Mexican War had opened California to American settlement, and with the discovery of gold there, hordes of gold-seekers passed through Indian country on their way west. As a result, Jesuit missionary Pierre Jean De Smet predicted that the Indians would soon be removed from Kansas. "As the white population advances and penetrates into the interior," wrote De Smet in 1851, "the aborigines will gradually withdraw. Already, even, it is perceptible that the whites look with a covetous eye on the fertile lands of
the Delawares, Potawatomies, Shawnees, and others on our frontiers, and project the organization of a new Territory—Nebraska." Federal officials had already mapped plans for a new general policy that would confine all the Indians of the West to reservations; as a result of this new policy, the Indians of Kansas would be expected to sell much of their lands to the government.42

By the 1850s, therefore, these Indians again had to protect their homes from invading whites. How well they had prepared themselves for this eventuality would have a profound impact on the success or failure of their struggles to survive. Although those living in Kansas shared many outward cultural characteristics, and most were of the Algonquian linguistic family, there were distinct differences between the bands. Most were unable to adapt to changing conditions and quickly succumbed to white demands; but a few had mastered the techniques for survival and had the will to remain in their adopted homeland. Although whites held the upper hand in the ensuing struggle, those Indians who survived did so on their own terms, not those dictated by missionaries or Indian agents. For the small bands who were able to retain their lands and resist all efforts at forced removal, their triumph would prove a remarkable achievement.