

☆ THE CHRONICLES

OKLAHOMA'S FIRST BOOK: "ISTUTSI IN NAKTSOKU," BY JOHN FLEMING

By Guy Logsdon*

The leaves were turning to the multi-colored hues of autumn in Indian Territory around the deserted, decayed buildings of Union Mission. It was October, 1835, and two men, one a missionary-publisher and one a printer, had been slowly printing the pages of a small book. The buildings had not been used for over a year when, during the summer, the men moved a printing press into one of them. Nonetheless, in late October, when they completed their efforts, a number of printing "firsts" in Oklahoma had occurred—the first printer on the first press within the first mission buildings had produced Oklahoma's first book.

The book, entitled *Istutsi in Naktsoku* or *The Child's Book*, was by the Reverend John Fleming, a missionary representing the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Creek Indians in Indian Territory. Published in 1835 by Samuel Austin Worcester, at Union Mission, which housed the first printing press in the territory, the book was printed by Fleming, Worcester and James Perryman, a Creek Indian.

The Child's Book, a primer for elementary education containing single words, illustrations and simple sentences, was sixteen centimeters in height and twenty-four pages in length, with paper covers and a stapled binding. The text was entirely in the Creek language, but following the title page there was a Creek alphabet with upper and lower case letters accompanied by a pronunciation guide in English. On page four the vowels were listed along with "nazalized vowels" and their pronunciation, together with a list of diphthongs.

The title page was illustrated with a farm scene depicting two men flailing wheat in a barnyard containing animals, fowl and trees. Through the door of the barn, a house could be seen. The text was written by Fleming in the Creek alphabet, which he had created after spending much time learning the language with the assistance of Perryman. Fleming's original purpose was to reduce the language to writing in order to provide religious tracts and hymns which the Creeks could more easily understand.¹

The Creeks belonged to the Muskogean linguistic stock, which also

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¹ James C. Pilling. *Bibliography of the Muskogean Languages* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889), pp. 34-35.

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MUSKOKI ISKIHLETV.

A	a	a as in father.
A	a	a as in wash.
E	e	a as in paper.
F	f	fe
H	h	he
I	i	ee as in meet.
K	k	ke
L	l	le
M	m	me
N	n	ne
O	o	oo as in note.
P	p	pe
S	s	se
T	t	te
U	u	oo as in wood, mood.
U	u	ou as in tough, or u in but.
W	w	we
Y	y	ye
Ts	ts	tsə

ISTUTSI IN NAKTSOKU.

PUNAKU INHAKI.

A	A	E	I	O	U	U
a	a	e	i	o	u	u

Nasalized Vowels.

A	a	ang.	O	o	ong.
A	a	awng.	U	u	oong
I	i	oeng.	U	u	uing

Diphthongs.

Ai	ai	i as in pine.
Au	au	ow as in now.
Iu	iu*	
Ui	ui	oui as in Louisville.

* This diphthong has no corresponding sound in the English language. The sound of the latter is used (this diphthong) as noted in the above in which they stand but occupy only the time of a simple vowel.

The alphabet, nasalized vowels and diphthongs as they appeared at the front of an original copy of *Istutsi in Naktsoku*

included the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Alabama, Koasati, Hitchiti, Natchez and a few smaller tribes. The original home of this linguistic group was the Southeast and the Gulf Coast of the United States. The name Muskogean had been derived from the largest tribe, the Muskogeans, who were given the English name of Creeks.²

Fleming was interested only in the Creek language, among the many Indian dialects. In order to adapt this language to writing, he adopted the system of orthography that had been devised by John Pickering and first published in 1820.³ This system assigned conventional sound values to the

² Angie Debo, *The Road to Disappearance* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1941), pp. 3-4.

³ John Pickering was born February 7, 1777, in Salem, Massachusetts, and died May 5, 1846. He was a Harvard University graduate and later studied and practiced law. However, his greatest efforts were directed toward philology. He spoke five languages, was well acquainted with four more, and had studied over twelve more, including Indian languages of North America. He was considered a leading scholar of the English and Greek languages and the leading authority on the languages of the North American Indians. In 1820, his "Essay on a Uniform Orthography for the Indian Languages of North America" was published in the *Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*. Others of his works about the

letters in the Latin alphabet and applied the letters to various Indian languages. As a result, the system eliminated the necessity of creating a non-Latin letter alphabet or syllabary—such as the Sequoyah syllabary for the Cherokee language—and instead, attempted to make a uniform system of orthography available for scholars of all tribes. Thus, Fleming reduced the sounds to existing letters after he obtained a working knowledge and glossary of the language.

About the grammatical structure, he declared that:⁴

The Muskogee language is not a difficult language to acquire. It is remarkably regular in the construction of its verbs, and having secured the root of the verb, it can be run with ease through its persons, moods, and tenses.

In his alphabet, Fleming removed the letters B, C, D, G, J, Q, R, V, X and Z which had no sounds in the Creek language. This left only sixteen letters to comprise his Creek System, but he included two forms of the letters A and U and a new letter combination of Ts. This brought the total of alphabetic symbols to nineteen. Also, he indicated that the diphthong "Iu" had no corresponding sound in English.

While Fleming's reader was the first known book to be published in present-day Oklahoma, there were two other items that were probably printed earlier. The first was a broadside of the Cherokee syllabary, and the second was possibly an eight-page children's booklet by Worcester. However, no copy of this booklet has ever been found; whereas, a copy of the broadside is owned by the New York City Public Library.⁵

Indian languages were later published. For additional information about Pickering see: William H. Prescott, "Memoir of Hon. John Pickering, LL.D.," Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Vol. X, Third Series, 1849, pp. 204-224.

⁴ Pilling, *Bibliography of the Muskogean Languages*, pp. 34-35.

⁵ Carolyn Thomas Foreman in *Oklahoma Imprints, 1815-1907* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1936), p. 1, listed Fleming's book as the first item to be published in Indian Territory. In *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XIII, No. 3 (September, 1935), pp. 251-254, Fleming's book is again cited as the first item printed in present-day Oklahoma; this article was published in observance of the centennial of printing in Oklahoma. However, Althea Bass in the article "Oklahoma's First Printer," *Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City), October 6, 1935, Section C, p. 16, challenged the Fleming book when she wrote that Worcester's *A Child's Book* was actually the first book printed in the state. In 1936 she again supported her statement in *Cherokee Messenger* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1936), p. 186. In 1951 Lester Hargrett in *Oklahoma Imprints, 1815-1890* (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1951), pp. 1-3, with strong bibliographical and documentary support, supplied evidence that places Fleming's book as the third item printed by Worcester. However, Hargrett's *Not Seen* fails of the bibliographer's ultimate proof, and it is possible that Worcester cast his booklet in proof form only, without actually printing it, because he did not have much paper but wanted to impress the Western Cherokee leaders with his press.

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The establishment of a press at Union Mission came after fifteen years of missionary work in Indian Territory by various denominations and organizations. The first activities were under the direction of the United Foreign Missionary Society, which had been organized by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church and the General Synod of the Associated Reformed Church on July, 1817, in New York City.⁶

The declared purpose of the organization was "to spread the gospel among the Indians of North America, the inhabitants of Mexico and South America, and in other portions of the heathen and anti-Christian world."⁷ In order to accomplish some of these objectives, on May 5, 1819, the society sent Epaphras Chapman and Job P. Vinal to explore the missionary needs west of the Mississippi River. However, the more specific desire of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was to establish a station among the Cherokees in Arkansas. Chapman and Vinal traveled westward into the Osage country where they decided to work among that Siouan people. They selected a mission site on the west bank of the Grand River, approximately twenty-five miles above the Arkansas River.⁸ However, during the return trip to New York, Vinal died, leaving the task of establishing the station under the direction of Chapman.

On March 3, 1819, the United States Congress enacted legislation that authorized the president to spend \$10,000 annually for the purpose of employing "persons of good moral character to instruct the Indians in agriculture, to teach their children reading, writing, and arithmetic."⁹ This concept of education was an extension of the activities and writing of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi who, in 1775, opened his Orphan House at Neuhof, Switzerland, believing that every man had the power and means to provide adequate self-support and that exterior circumstances were not insuperable. Pestalozzi thought that a moral home, farm life and technical skills were of value in developing character in paupers and criminals. By 1800, his ideas were being applied in the United States, and missionaries were utilizing manual labor education and moral training theories in their Indian missions. It was the missionaries who encouraged Congress to enact this early legislation for Indian education, a task to which they were subsequently assigned.

⁶ Joseph Tracy, "History of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," *History of American Missions to the Heathen* (Worcester: M. Spooner and H. J. Howland, 1840), p. 138.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁸ Morris L. Wardell, "Protestant Missions Among the Osages, 1820 to 1838," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. II, No. 3 (September, 1924), p. 288.

⁹ Grant Foreman, *Beginnings of Protestant Christian Work in Indian Territory* (Muskogee: Star Printery, 1933), p. 1.

IQTUTSI IN NAKTSOKU.

7



WA-KU.

WA-ky hi-hli to-mis; i-pi-sin is-ti-min
 wá-ku-pi-i in ni-hán is-ha-yit, wá-ku-
 pi-si trk-lá-kin is-ha-bo-yis. Ho-fu-ní is-
 ú tsá-vel-ai wá-ku o-tse-ki ká-tis. H m-
 pái-bo-tsi h-hlá wá-ku-pi-si sul-kin jo-
 ti-mis.



One of the pages of *Iqtutsi in Naktsoku* from which the missionaries hoped to teach at Union Mission

While moral education and Christian conversion were the predominant motivating factors for establishing a mission station among the Osages, the United Foreign Missionary Society wanted to provide skills that would assist in civilizing the Indians as well. This required a variety of abilities among the missionaries, who were recruited primarily from Connecticut. Thus a farmer, a physician, a steward, a carpenter, a blacksmith and women who could teach the skills of home making were the first recruits for the western venture in Indian education.

Under the direction of Reverend William F. Vaill and Reverend Ephras Chapman, the group of seventeen adults and four children left New

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York and started for Indian Territory on April 20, 1820.¹⁰ They traveled by boat to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and thence by wagon to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where they boarded two keelboats to carry them southward on the Ohio River to the Mississippi River. On June 29, they reached the mouth of the White River and followed it to the Arkansas River; thereafter they slowly poled, sailed and cordelled their way upstream to the mouth of the Grand River. They reached their final destination on the:¹¹

Lord's Day, February 18th. About 10 o'clock this morning reached the long looked for Station, after a journey of nearly ten months, attended with many delays, and disappointments.

The problems that occurred during the trip were many: they stopped to preach and to solicit donations; they were confronted by low water and flood water; they suffered sickness, including intermittent fever, for long periods of time. Two female members died after they entered Arkansas, and the boatmen were often unreliable or sick. In the end religious fervor, dedication and bravery enabled them to reach Indian Territory.

When established, Union Mission was one of the most remote white settlements in the Southwest. As such, it had to be self-sustaining. Cabins were constructed, ground was broken for crops and men were hired to assist with the settlers' labors. There were Indian traders and a few isolated white settlers living in the area.

Twenty-eight miles to the east was an Osage settlement, and the mission quickly began trading with the village. The mission, being easily accessible, was frequently visited by the Osage while on raiding parties to the Cherokee settlements.

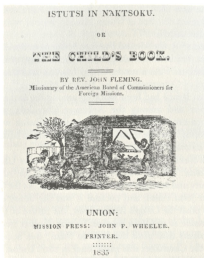
On August 11, 1821, the missionaries agreed to build a school that would be eighteen feet by twenty feet. The Osage confidence in the missionaries was such that on August 27, 1821, four children were brought to the mission, and the first school in present-day Oklahoma was started, thus accomplishing part of the missionaries' objectives.

Adult education at the station had started earlier, however, for on May 26, 1821, the first church in Oklahoma was organized when the mission members agreed to accept the rules and regulations of a document they had drafted. During the summer they "kept up a Sabbath school" for "our hired men, some of whom have never learned to read."¹² The Sabbath or

¹⁰ William F. Vaill, "Union Mission Journal," April 20, 1820, Library, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, September 2, 1821.

¹² Newton Edwards and Herman F. Richey, *The School in the American Social Order*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), pp. 234-236.



The cover of *The Child's Book*

Sunday-school movement was very popular among the denominations at this time, and the chief purpose of the gatherings was to teach reading from the Bible and writing.¹³

For several years, education at Union Mission could be considered only moderately successful. The Osage parents would bring their children, but in a short time they would return and take them home. When the youngsters returned to school, it was often for the food that could be had, not for the education. If a school had been established in the nearby Osage village, the influence of white education would possibly have been greater, particularly through reading and writing.

Constantly confronted with hardships, the missionaries were plagued by fever and other frontier maladies. Nonetheless, they harvested abundant crops, discovered a nearby coal deposit and processed salt from a saline

¹³ American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *Report* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1835), p. 97. Foreman, *Beginnings of Protestant Christian Work in Indian Territory*, Tracy, "History of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," *History of American Missions to the Heathen*.

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spring. Still, the new lifestyle reaped a heavy toll. Abraham Redfield and his wife buried seven children at Union Mission, four of whom died within a few days of one another.¹⁴

On August 15, 1825, the United Foreign Missionary Society proposed to its members that they be absorbed by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.¹⁵ As a result, Union Mission was transferred to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.¹⁶

The American Board had been working among the Indians west of the Mississippi River and among the Arkansas Cherokee, where Dwight Mission had been established shortly after Union Mission was started. No problems developed from the transfer; instead, the Union Mission personnel anticipated an increase in financial support.

In 1817, the Federal government allowed the Arkansas Cherokees access to the Osage lands. This new arrangement created a confrontation which resulted in enmity and warfare between the two tribes. As the Union Mission land was under joint claim, and because it was the desire of the Federal government to push the Osages further west, the future of the station was always questionable as an Osage mission. In 1825 another treaty was signed with the Cherokees that gave the land to them; this acquisition of the Osage land by the Cherokees was made final in 1828. Union Mission thereafter was inside the Cherokee Nation, West.

In 1827, the removal of the Creeks was begun from Alabama and Georgia, when members of the McIntosh faction started their trek to Indian Territory. By the end of 1828, nearly 1,300 Creeks had arrived in the lands south of the Osages. This number grew to 3,000 by 1830, and Union Mission served as the school and missionary agency for them. That year the school had fifty-four students, seventeen of whom were Osages, thirty Creeks and seven Cherokees. The Osages were no longer interested in Union Mission, but the Creeks utilized its education facilities.¹⁷ The mission family was encouraged by the Creek interest, but they were missionaries to the Osages. Other problems were that the mission buildings were decaying because of poor quality logs used for construction; and that the mission family was

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

¹⁵ American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *Report* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1826), p. 110-111; see also, *Memorial Volume of the First Fifty Years of the ABCFM*, 5th ed. (Boston: by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1862), p. 350.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-76; Tracy, "History of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," *History of the American Missions to the Heathen*.

¹⁷ American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *Report* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1830), pp. 87-89.

in disagreement over the relative value of education and preaching the Gospel.¹⁸

Union Mission continued to deteriorate. The Creeks and the Cherokees could be better served at different locations, and the Osages, for whom the missionaries came, were slowly moving farther west. The American Board decided to close the mission in 1833, but to reserve the land for:¹⁹

the families connected with the printing establishment which they intend to set up at that place for printing books and tracts in the Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, and Osage languages.

After thirteen years of labor and privation, Vaill, his wife and the other surviving members closed the mission. From Union Mission, May 6, 1833, Vaill wrote to R. E. Selden in Connecticut that they were "closing the mission."²⁰ On May 15, again to Selden, he wrote that in "5 more weeks the Indians will leave."²¹

The American Board decided to provide missionary service to the Creeks in Indian Territory who were congregated in the region around the "Three Forks" area. This was the settlement at the junction of the Arkansas, Grand and Verdigris rivers. The government had purchased some buildings from A. P. Chouteau in 1828 for use as the Creek Agency.²² The Creeks settled within a few miles around this area for military protection against the marauding Plains Indians. In 1831, Abraham Redfield moved with his family to the Creek settlement from Union Mission in order to serve as a teacher. Some Creeks had erected a log school building thirty feet long and nineteen feet wide containing two rooms. Redfield stayed through the winter and then returned to Union Mission.²³

The American Board then assigned John Fleming, a graduate from the Princeton Theological Seminary who had been ordained on October 24, 1832.²⁴ Fleming and his wife arrived at Cantonment Gibson on December

¹⁸ Hope Holway, "Union Mission, 1826-1837," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XL, No. 4 (Winter, 1962-63), pp. 373-374.

¹⁹ American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *Report* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1834), p. 26.

²⁰ Letters from W. F. Vaill to Colonel R. E. Selden, Union Mission Collection, Library, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Grant Foreman, "The Three Forks," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. II, No. 1 (March, 1924), p. 41.

²³ "Missionary Correspondence," Grant Foreman Papers, Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma, p. 87.

²⁴ Frederick T. Persons, "John Fleming," *Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol. VI (35 Vols, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), p. 460; also, *Biographical Catalogue of the Princeton Theological Seminary, 1815-1932*, compiled by Edward Howell Roberts (Princeton: By the Trustees, 1933), p. 61.

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24, 1832, and on the following day they started their work with the Creeks. Their station was seven miles above the junction of the Arkansas and Verdigris rivers, two miles from the Verdigris River and three miles from the Arkansas River.²⁵ The Baptists and Methodists also had many missionaries working in the area, and competition among them was strong.

The other two denominations had worked with the Creeks in the Southeast, whereas the American Board had not. The efforts in the Southeast had been terminated after 1828, because the opposition by the Creeks in Alabama and Georgia had become hostile in character.

Before October 29, 1833, Fleming obtained the services of James Perryman, a Creek mixed-blood who was a Methodist preacher. Perryman had studied at Union Mission and had worked as an interpreter for William Vaill, but because he wanted to learn to write, he agreed to serve as an interpreter for Fleming, who was to pay him \$15.00 a month and tutor him. He was considered to be the best interpreter in the Creek Nation.²⁶ With Perryman's assistance Fleming subsequently wrote two books in the Creek language before writing *The Child's Book*. They were: *The Muskoḵi Imuaitsv, Muskoḵee (Creek) Assistant,*



Samuel A. Worcester who objected to the location of Union Mission as not "favorable for exerting an influence upon the Cherokee people"

²⁵ "Missionary Correspondence," Foreman Papers, p. 102. Fleming was born on April 17, 1807, in Millin County, Pennsylvania. He graduated from Jefferson College and then attended Princeton Theological Seminary. He was ordained a Presbyterian missionary; Holway, "Union Mission, 1826-1837," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XI, page 376, mistakenly refers to "John Fleming, a Baptist." Following his ordination, he married Margart Scudder on November 1, 1832, and shortly thereafter they started their trip to Indian Territory; see: Alice Robertson Collection, Library, University of Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

²⁶ "Missionary Correspondence," Foreman Papers, p. 97. Perryman came to the Creek Nation in 1828 with his father, Benjamin, five brothers and two sisters. They settled in what is now Wagoner County. James became a Baptist minister during the last thirty years of his life; he served in the Confederate Army in the Civil War; his death occurred at Coweta in approximately 1882; see John Bartlett Meserve, "The Perrymans," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XV, No. 2 (June, 1937), pp. 166-168.

published in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1834 and *A Short Sermon* also printed in Boston the following year.²⁷

Fleming did not become a popular man in the nation, but he did have a small, loyal following whose members were interested in his alphabet. However, by January 30, 1835, John Davis, a Baptist, had prepared a book in Creek and had it published at Shawnee Mission in Kansas.²⁸ Fleming thought that competing publications would be confusing and was extremely discouraged.

However, on December 24, 1834, Dr. R. L. Dodge arrived at the Creek station to assist in the religious activities and to serve as a physician.²⁹ These two men were the only missionaries ever to be assigned to the Creek Indians by the American Board.

In the eastern Cherokee Nation, printing had been established in 1828 and had thrived for many years. Samuel Austin Worcester had established the *Cherokee Phoenix*, a newspaper, and a Cherokee press. He had successfully printed many items in the syllabary of George Guess. In 1834, Worcester was forced to leave Georgia, and the Board decided to continue his work in the western Cherokee Nation. The abandoned Union Mission, it was thought, was the logical place to ship the necessary equipment to begin operations until a better site could be obtained. On September 18, 1834, Abraham Redfield wrote the Board that it would be better to establish the press nearer Fort Gibson and the post office, but that it would "be best for Mr. Worcester to come and examine for himself."³⁰

In 1835, the Board sent a new press and type, including fonts of the syllabary, to Union Mission, while Worcester and his family traveled by land to Dwight Mission. Worcester visited Union and wrote to the Board.³¹

²⁷ "Missionary Correspondence," *Foreman Papers*, p. 105.

²⁸ *Missionary Herald* (Worcester, Massachusetts), January, 1836, p. 25.

²⁹ "Missionary Correspondence," *Foreman Papers*, p. 336.

³⁰ This letter, no date, was reprinted in Bass, *Cherokee Messenger*, pp. 182-183. Worcester was born January 19, 1798, at Worcester, Massachusetts. His father, Leonard Worcester, was a printer who turned to the ministry. When he was young, the family moved to Peacham, Vermont, where his father served as the Congregational minister. Worcester attended the University of Vermont and, after graduating in 1819, he taught for one year. He then entered the Andover Theological Seminary, where he graduated in 1823; he was ordained as a Congregational minister on August 25, 1825. On August 31, 1825, he and his wife traveled to the Brainerd Mission for Cherokees in Tennessee, which was operated by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. They worked at Brainerd until 1828 when they went to New Echota, the Cherokee Capital, in Georgia. It was here where he established the press; he and his family worked at New Echota until he was forced by the Georgia authorities to leave in 1834. Nevada Couch, *Pages from Cherokee Indian History*, 3rd ed. rev. (Vinita, Indian Territory: Worcester Academy of Vinita, 1884).

³¹ Bass, *Cherokee Messenger*, p. 188.

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It is not a favorable location for preaching . . . The place cannot be said to be favorable for exerting an influence upon the Cherokee people. The buildings are not sufficient, in the present state and form, for permanent use for the object in question, and the location is very unfavorable for building at moderate expense. . . . It is certainly not a spot which would be chosen, if the buildings were not already there.

The new press, a Tufts Standing Press,³² was damaged when the boat that carried it sank in the Arkansas River. Books, paper for printing and personal items of the Worcesters were also lost or damaged in the accident.³³ The press was recovered and taken to Union Mission where, sometime after August 1, Worcester printed the syllabary broadside. Because the western Cherokees were unacquainted with him, Worcester had to print an item to impress the leaders about the importance and possibilities of a press.³⁴

Worcester had become dependent on the ability of the Cherokee, Elias Boudinot, as an interpreter and for the revision of the printed material, but Boudinot had not arrived at Union Mission. Worcester was therefore forced to delay any large amount of Cherokee printing.³⁵ He turned to Fleming for Creek material in order to utilize the press, and as Fleming had *The Child's Book* ready for printing, Worcester and John F. Wheeler, his printer, published 500 copies sometime between October 1 and October 31.³⁶

Wheeler had previously worked with Worcester in New Echota, Georgia and had removed to Union Mission in order to continue his trade. He had married Nannie Watie, the sister of Stand Watie and Elias Boudinot, and as an intermarried member of the Cherokee Nation, he was forced to leave with them. He was the head printer for the Cherokee press when it was closed in New Echota, and when he arrived in the new Cherokee Nation, he became the first printer in Oklahoma.³⁷

Worcester and Wheeler at Union Mission printed another primer for Fleming in 1836—*The Maskoke Semhayeta, or Muskojee Teacher*. Again the primer was based on the Pickering system, and Perryman was the Creek assistant.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 185-188.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 183-185; Hargrett, *Oklahoma Imprints, 1835-1890*, pp. 1-2.

³⁴ Bass, *Cherokee Messenger*, p. 185.

³⁵ Hargrett, *Oklahoma Imprints, 1835-1890*, pp. 2-3.

³⁶ John Fisher Wheeler or, as listed by Hargrett, *Ibid.*, p. 1, John Fisher Wheeler, was a white man who was born in Danville, Kentucky, in 1808. He went to New Echota in 1827 and by 1830 had become the head printer. He printed thousands of pages in Indian languages before moving from Indian Territory to Fort Smith, Arkansas, in 1847, where he established the *Herald*, Fort Smith, Arkansas, first newspaper. He died there on March 10, 1880. See Muriel Wright, "John F. Wheeler," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXXV, No. 1 (Spring, 1957), p. 69.

³⁷ "Missionary Correspondence," Foreman Papers.

In 1836, hostility toward missionaries in the Creek Nation had grown unbearable for Fleming, and the denominational competition had created more problems. His most successful preaching had been among the slaves of the Creeks, which made him unpopular. As early as 1833, he had curtailed some of his work among the blacks as a result of pressures applied by the Creek leaders. His alphabet had been improved by the Methodists with his assistance, and by August 18, 1836, in discouragement, Fleming was ready to leave the Creek Nation.³⁸

All of the missionaries were in constant strife with the traders in the area. In the fall of 1836 the latter persuaded Roley McIntosh to force all of the missionaries to leave the Creek Nation. On September 29, 1836, Fleming accused Chouteau, Seymour Hill, Kendal Lewis, Eli Jacobs and other traders, all of "the same stamp of character," of charging the missionaries with teaching abolition and one of seducing an Indian woman.³⁹ It is probable that the missionaries had opposed the sale of liquor. Most of them were from the North, while the Creeks were slave-holders from the South. Told to leave immediately, Fleming departed in such haste that he failed to take any of his books with him. Therefore, only a few copies of *The Child's Book* survived, of which the Oklahoma Historical Society owns one copy, the Library of Congress one copy and Pilling placed two copies in private collections before 1889.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 116; Fleming to Pilling, *Bibliography of the Muskogean Languages*, p. 34.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 35. Fleming went to Kansas and worked with the Wea Indians. In 1839 he traveled to Michigan and served among the Chippewas and Ottawas. Thereafter he worked for the Presbyterians as a home missionary in Illinois from 1849 to 1875. In 1875 he moved to Nebraska, where he served small Presbyterian pastorates until his death in 1894.