A Preface to the Settlement of Kansas

DOROTHY V. JONES

The Removal act of May 28, 1830, authorized the President to treat with any tribe of Indians living within any state or territory regarding an exchange of their lands for land west of the Mississippi. Debate on the bill and subsequent publicity centered on the large Southern tribes, but several thousand Northern Indians were also affected by it and, under its provisions, moved to new homes in what is now Kansas.

COL. JAMES B. GARDINER was tired when he sat down to write a letter to the commissary general of subsistence in the war department in Washington, and his weariness, shows through the courtesies of 19th century correspondence. He was tired of traveling about Ohio to hold councils with the 800 Indians who had agreed to move to new homes west of the Mississippi. The removal treaties had been signed in late summer, 1831, with the understanding that removal would begin early the following spring. Spring, however, was one long succession of difficulties and delays, and it was June 20, 1832, when the weary Gardiner sat down to write yet another letter to Washington. The Indians were, he wrote, at last ready to move.

So was Gardiner. He was tired of waiting. Above all, he was tired of the government regulations that kept him from making necessary preparations. Prices of corn and meal were high and would go higher before the summer was out. The new crop was poor and would not be in the mills in time to do the emigrating Indians any good. If he could buy now what he would have to be bought anyway before the emigrants left Ohio, he could save the government $1,000.

But no. He could not spend one penny, nor could he let contracts for provisions and transportation even though he was in charge of the Ohio emigration. All money matters had to be

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1. July 20, 1831, the mixed band of Seneca and Shawnee Indians living at and around Lewiston, Ohio; August 8, the Shawnee Indians of Wapakoneta and Hog creek; August 30, the Ottawas living on Blanchard's Fork of the Great Auglaize river, and on the Little Auglaize river at Oquawoxie's village.—C. J. Kappler (ed.), Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties (4 vols., Washington, 1904), v. 2, pp. 327-339.


3. Ibid., p. 691.

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handled by a disbursing officer from the regular army. "If I am not to make any disbursements," he wrote, and added stiffly, "(and I have no desire to do so), some person must be continually with me, at all times and places, as my purchases, though comparatively small, will be multifarious, and must be made in a great variety of places, as necessity or expediency may require."  

Then Gardiner’s dignity slipped enough to reveal his exasperation with Lewis Cass, secretary of war. He had clearly understood, he wrote, that each superintendent of Indian emigration would be allowed to disburse his own funds under a system of strict accountability, "... but the Secretary thought otherwise, and his opinions are certainly entitled to the highest respect, aside from the authority to enforce them: yet, I shall be much mistaken if he does not become convinced that his plan in this particular will not operate as much like clock work as he anticipated."

By the end of June, 1832, the plans for the Ohio emigration were already moving like a clock with a wobbly balance wheel. Most of the Ohio Indians had not planted corn that spring, and had sold their cattle and hogs in anticipation of an early move. Some of them were already short of food. As Gardiner traveled among them, counseling patience and economy, he had to buy food and tobacco for them out of his own pocket. On June 23 Gardiner wrote directly to Cass that if the disbursing officer were not already on the way then he himself should immediately be authorized to purchase rations. "I cannot anticipate any impediments which will prevent us from setting out early in August, if we are not delayed by the want of funds."  

Impediments promptly appeared. The summer of 1832 was full of impediments which Gardiner and the war department could neither anticipate nor prevent. There was the Black Hawk war, for one, and Asiatic cholera for another. In May of that year, Black Hawk and a band of Sac and Fox Indians had blundered into open conflict with the militia on the northern Illinois frontier. On the face of it, there was no reason why this should affect the Ohio emigration, although some people worried that the Ohio Indians might be drawn into the war or made restless by it. Gardiner notified the war department in June that there was abso-

4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., pp. 689, 691.
7. Ibid., p. 697.
lutely no cause for alarm: "I can confidently assure you that no fears are necessary on that subject." 8

By the first part of July, Gen. Winfield Scott was on his way to Illinois with regular troops from the Atlantic states, and the effects of the war began to be felt in Ohio and to upset Gardiner's plans for an early August departure. The administrative mills had been grinding away on the problem of a disbursing officer for the Ohio emigration. Special orders were sent to Lt. Joseph Clay at Newark, N. J., but Lieutenant Clay was already on his way west with General Scott's troops. Meanwhile Gardiner had been told to spend no money and let no contracts until Clay's arrival in Ohio. By the time the office of the commissary general of subsistence learned that Lieutenant Clay was not available for duty in Ohio, the lieutenant was on board a steamboat bound for Detroit. And by the time Gardiner wrote to inform Washington that "Lieutenant Clay has not yet arrived," Joseph Clay of the 4th U. S. infantry had been dead five days of Asiatic cholera. The summer of 1832 was getting underway.9

With the appearance of cholera in the West,10 Gardiner's real troubles began. Inadequate communication, as in the case of Lieutenant Clay, had slowed the Ohio emigration to a crawl; cholera brought it to a dead stop. For some time the Indians had been protesting the government's plans to send them west by boat. As Gardiner explained:

They are more allied to their ancient customs than any other people on earth. They scarcely ever change a trail when once made, however crooked or circuitous, and they now wish to travel "in the manner of their fathers." They know nothing about steamboats. They do not wish to "move by fire," nor to be scalded "like the white man cleans his hog." [Boiler explosions were a hazard of steamboat travel in the 1830's.] Some of their little children might be drowned. Their native modesty revolts at the use of the only convenience on board a boat to obey the calls of nature. They have many horses, too, from which they could not be induced to part for any consideration whatever. These, and many other arguments, they use, in the most forcible and importunate manner, in favor of selecting a route by land.11

The reply from Washington was that President Jackson was de-

8. Ibid., p. 689.
10. Asiatic cholera first appeared in America in the spring of 1832. It was carried to Quebec and Montreal by immigrants from Ireland. The disease spread quickly with the dispersal of the immigrants to New York and west through the Erie Canal to the Great Lakes. Accurate mortality records for the whole U. S. are not available but scattered reports indicate mortality was high. Contemporary writers estimated that in New Orleans, alone, 6,000 died from cholera in the fall of that year.—Chambers, op cit., pp. 24-118.
determined that the Indians should go by boat; Gardiner must tell them the plan was unalterable.\textsuperscript{12}

There were good reasons for the policy and for its firm application. By the summer of 1832 the government had had enough experience with emigrating Indians to know some of the problems involved. If the Indians started late in the season, as they usually seemed to do, cold weather overtook them long before they arrived at their new homes. Their inclination was to settle down wherever this happened, and live off the country until spring. This inevitably led to trouble with white settlers nearby. Then, too, Indians traveling by land were far easier prey for the gamblers and whisky peddlers who hung about their camps. The summer was slipping by. For their own good the Ohio Indians must be gotten under way, and for their own protection they must go by boat. Thus, the government’s intentions.

But the Shawnees at Wapakoneta and Hog creek, the Ottawas on the Auglaize rivers, and the mixed band at Lewistown, were not impressed. They had little reason to make plans on the basis of the government’s good intentions. Good intentions had not authorized their removal in time to make crops on their new land. Good intentions had not yet sent them anyone who could spend money for preparations. Besides, Washington and the President were far away. In their own villages were traders, men they had known all their lives perhaps, who assured the Indians that boilers on the Western river boats frequently blew passengers to bits. These were men who had given more than one Indian the medicine he needed when his child was sick, who had lent others money for traps and a gun,\textsuperscript{13} and were very likely lending many of them money to live on while they waited on the government. The Indians knew these men and believed what they said—and they said to go by land.

Then came the news that cholera was on the Great Lakes. There were cases in Detroit and in Cleveland. Most of the river towns were stricken. The Indians refused outright to go by boat. On July 23 Gardiner wrote to Washington and asked that the matter be laid before the President.\textsuperscript{14}

In the midst of this confusion, Lt. J. F. Lane arrived in Ohio. He was Lieutenant Clay’s replacement as disbursing officer, but he also had orders to investigate the land vs. water dispute. On

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 102.

\textsuperscript{13} For this seldom-noted aspect of the trader’s character, see F. E. Leupp, The Indian and His Problem (N.Y., 1910), pp. 185-191, quoted in Laurence F. Schmeckebier, The Office of Indian Affairs (Baltimore, 1927), pp. 266, 267.

\textsuperscript{14} Doc., v. 4, p. 113.
July 31 he reported his conviction that only harsh measures would induce the Indians to go by water. He was sure their attitude was “owing to the intrigues of interested persons,” but matters had gone too far to remedy, and he agreed with Gardiner that the Indians should be allowed to travel overland. In their three months’ association, this is almost the only time that Lane and Gardiner agreed on anything.

For one thing, Lane complained, Gardiner would not furnish him estimates of expenses either by land or water. These he would try to determine himself. Meanwhile: “I shall await here an alteration in the present singular position of the measures for removal.”

The “present position” was maddening but, as Gardiner could have told Lane, it was by no means singular. Communication was, as usual, far behind the event. When Lane arrived in Ohio to get the emigration under way at last, he discovered that the $10,000 supposedly placed to his credit in the United States Bank at Cincinnati, was not there. Bank officials knew nothing about it. Now Lane began composing urgent letters to Washington.

His letters arrived in a city where official channels got longer and slower every day, as more and more government officials left town to escape the heat and the cholera. Lane’s dilemma, which was fairly routine, could be handled by the remaining war department staff. They had only to check the files to discover that on July 23 a letter had been written notifying him that the money had been deposited. Time would take care of the rest, although on July 31, nearly two weeks after his arrival, Lane still had no money.

Gardiner’s request for special permission to remove the Indians by land was something else again. The acting commissary general of subsistence referred the matter to the acting secretary of war, who considered it for a time and then referred it to President Jackson, who was not in Washington but at The Hermitage in Tennessee. In Ohio the Indians waited, and used up their capital.

Two weeks of August dragged by. Then a third. The reservations swarmed with traders, gamblers, whisky sellers, creditors, peddlers of every description. Lieutenant Lane urged the war department not to pay the Indians for the improvements on their Ohio land until after their arrival in the West. “If paid immedi-

15. Ibid., v. 1, p. 725.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., p. 724.
18. Ibid., pp. 127, 725.
19. Ibid., pp. 131, 135.
ately, the Indians will be ungodvable here, and destitute here-
after." He warned that fraudulent acknowledgements of large
debts were being gotten from the Indians in anticipation of the
payment.\textsuperscript{20}

Nothing he said or did seemed to have any effect, and on August
18 Lieutenant Lane lost his official composure. "I will no longer
be silent," he burst out, and launched into a furious denunciation
of the men who were intriguing to keep the Indians in Ohio be-
cause "a thousand little rills of profit flow from them." It was
more than Lane could stand. "I declare unhesitatingly my belief, that
this Indian business, as now proceeding, and as it is likely to pro-
ceed, will be made a profitable job, to the detriment of the Indians,
and the discredit of the Government." Lane suggested a peremptory
order to go by water.\textsuperscript{21}

But August 18 was too late for peremptory orders, or even for
reasonable suggestions. A letter from Jackson granting permission
for the Ohio Indians to travel by land, "... provided the ex-
penses incident to such removal shall not exceed twenty dollars
per head ..."\textsuperscript{22} was already on its way from Tennessee to
Washington. When Lane saw the copy of this letter which was
sent to him and to Gardiner,\textsuperscript{23} he must have thrown up his hands in
despair. He had already informed Washington that if present plans
were persisted in, "twelve thousand dollars will no more than cover
expenses to the end of the month"\textsuperscript{24}—and the emigration had not
even gotten under way. But summer was drawing to a close. If
anything was to be done that year it had to be done quickly or the
Indians would be caught by winter en route. A bustle of frantic
activity began, into which Lane was drawn willy nilly.

Men were sent north to begin collecting the Ottawas who wan-
dered a great deal in the most settled times and who would now
be doubly difficult to find since, as Gardiner had reported earlier,
"certain deluded or mischievous men are trying to persuade them
not to emigrate." The orderly Lewistown Indians were assembled
and vaccinated at their own request. Smallpox had appeared among

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 726.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., pp. 725, 727.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 717.
\textsuperscript{23} In February, 1833, Gardiner sent a special report to the secretary of war explain-
ing the reasons that delayed the start of the emigration. One of the reasons given (ibid.,
v. 4, p. 119), was that he did not receive a copy of Jackson's August 17 letter giving
permission for the Indians to go by land until about September 10, 1832. The conductor of
the Lewistown detachment of Indians kept a "Journal of Occurrences" during the
emigration, and he noted (ibid., p. 78) that Gardiner notified them on September 3 that
they had been given permission to go by land. The letters from the acting commissary
genral of subsistence transmitting copies of Jackson's letter to Gardiner and Lane, are
dated September 1 (ibid., v. 1, pp. 132, 133).
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 731.
the Shawnees in the West the previous fall, and had spread to the Kaw Indians as well, thinning, frightening, and scattering the tribes. Even the unruly Shawnees at Wapakoneta were sobered by the news, and they, too, requested protection. They were assembled and vaccinated—some 400 of them. The confusion can be imagined; children crying, dogs and little boys dashing through the crowd, fearful old women, suddenly become deaf, shaking their heads obstinately at the shouting interpreters.25

A few days later the Indians were assembled again and the treaty goods distributed: 100 blankets, 10 rifles, and $300 worth of tenting to the Lewistown band; 200 blankets and $400 worth of tenting to the Shawnees of Wapakoneta and Hog creek. Twenty-five rifles for the Shawnees had been mislaid in the administrative forest, but Gardiner had already written Washington about the matter and the rifles were being shipped to St. Louis. The arrangement did not improve the tempers of the Shawnees.26

Meanwhile the Indians’ horses must be shod—some 500 of them. Extra horses must be bought by the government. The scent of profit brought in every horse trader from miles around. Seventy-five worn out beasts were bought, and put on rented pasture. Grain costs were high that fall because of widespread crop failures, but grain was bought to try to bring the horses up to traveling condition. (Later Gardiner was to admit that the horses were poor, diseased, and old. “They were not such as were ordered,” he explained, “and were purchased at a higher price than was stipulated by me.”)27

The Ottawas were drawing rations—or at least contractors were being paid for Ottawa rations—but no one seemed to know where they were or how soon they would assemble. The Lewistown band and the Shawnees of Wapakoneta began the agonizing process of deciding what to take with them. There would be some pack horses, and a few baggage wagons. Not many wagons were to be taken because the roads were so bad; conductors, assistant disbursing agents, and clerks would also transport their baggage in those few wagons. The Hog creek Shawnees had their own teams and wagons, but were not yet sure they would go. They were a peaceable, hard-

25. Ibid., pp. 692, 696, 697; v. 4, p. 79; letter of Thomas Johnson, Shawnee Mission, to corresponding secretary of the Missionary society of the Methodist Episcopal church, December 29, 1831, printed in Kansas Historical Collections, v. 16, pp. 236, 237. Regarding the vaccination of the Indians, Gardiner noted in his February, 1833, report (Doc., v. 4, p. 113), that the project was a failure since “the matter procured in Ohio proved useless. . . . But the failure was not ascertained until it was too late to obtain new matter from Baltimore. . . .”

26. Doc., v. 1, pp. 122, 141, 143; v. 4, p. 79.

27. Ibid., v. 1, p. 728; v. 4, pp. 114, 115.
working band and they had no desire to travel with the disorderly Shawnees of Wapakoneta as they had been told they must.\textsuperscript{28}

September was passing. The weather was uncertain. There were a thousand things to do before the Indians could leave. Arrangements which had been put off all summer suddenly had to be made at once. At Lewistown, the Senecas and Shawnees sorted through their belongings for the last time. What they could not take with them, they turned over to a government appraiser for evaluation and sale. The rest was packed for travel, which for most of them meant packed into bundles to be piled behind Grandmother on the family baggage horse. These were the obvious tasks. There were others, equally pressing so far as the Indians were concerned. They devoted one whole day to honoring their ancestors with the Feast of the Dead. This was an annual celebration, the more meaningful now that they were about to leave their dead among strangers.

On September 3, the Lewistown Indians had been told to be ready to leave on the 13th; no delay was to be allowed. Not until the 15th, however, did the money arrive to pay them for the improvements they had made on their land: the cabins, corn cribs, stables, fences, etc., which they were leaving behind. For these, the 200-some Lewistown Indians were paid $6,000 which the government advanced against the proceeds of the sale of their lands. On the 17th they were paid for their personal property. When it became known that the Indians had money, their village was overrun with men determined to make it as easy as possible for them to get rid of it. The talk against moving was renewed. Everywhere the Indians turned they were told of the hardships waiting for them on the road. They were offered whisky and trade goods, and urged to stay where they were, among friends. In the midst of this confusion, they learned of the death of Mrs. James McPherson, wife of their agent. He had been planning to conduct them to their new homes, but after his wife's death he resigned his post. This put a heavy load of sadness and fear on the already over-burdened Indians, a fact immediately seized upon by the men who hung about their camps: You see? The government agents brought cholera with them. They killed Mrs. McPherson, and they'll kill you, too, once you're on the road away from home.

Many of the Indians attended Mrs. McPherson's funeral and then milled about in confusion, afraid to set off for their new homes, afraid to stay in their old ones. By the next day government agents had coaxed some of them into leaving the village and travel-

\textsuperscript{28} ibid., v. 1, pp. 705, 729.
ing seven miles to the crossing of the Great Miami river, where they camped for the night. Gardiner took charge of that group and sent the conductor and his assistant back to bring up the rest of the Lewistown band. The emigration had begun.  

Once united and on the road, the Lewistown Indians moved west at a steady rate of 12 to 15 miles a day. Bad roads, rainstorms, or strayed horses delayed them occasionally, but more frequently they were delayed by the Indians on the road behind. Several times the Lewistown band was halted to allow the Shawnees and Ottawas to catch up. After a day or so in camp, they would become restless. “Nearly all the Indians went into town,” reads one entry in the journal kept by the conductor of their detachment, “some to see the place, some to trade, and some to get intoxicated.” But a more common entry is “order reigns,” or “Indians quiet today.” And usually he recorded the day’s progress: “Struck our tents at 9 o’clock, and marched thirteen miles and a half. . . .”  

The Indians crossed the Wabash river at Clinton, Ind., swimming the horses across to save ferry charges. In Illinois they had good roads and fair weather and they began to make 19 or 20 miles a day. Their spirits rose. On October 28 at Hickory Grove, Ill., their conductor noted: “The Indians remained in camp; quietness was exhibited from every tent; good feeling abundantly prevailed throughout the day. The Indians have not for several days had an opportunity of procuring liquor; they consequently remain sober.”  

At Hickory Grove the Lewistown detachment was to turn south. Their new lands were in the Neosho river in the northeastern corner of present Oklahoma, while the other Ohio Indians were bound for lands just west of Missouri on the Kansas river. So the groups would separate, but not without pain and uncertainty. Many in the mixed band were closely related to the Shawnees of Wapakoneta. Should they go with them, or go south? “Two men, while on the route, left the family of Civil John and joined the Shawnees,” the enrolling agent noted on the muster roll. And again: “Joe White and family joined the Shawnees, while on the route.” But there were some who could not make the change, even to with their families: “Louis Dougherty and family and John Dougherty and family joined the Shawnees, while on the route, with the exception of one woman, who is now with John Smith’s family.”  

It was October 29 when the Lewistown band left the Ottawas and the Shawnees of Wapakoneta at Hickory Grove, Ill. A month earlier the chances of getting these latter groups as far as Illinois seemed almost nonexistent. No one was able to handle them when they were drunk, and they were drunk as often as they could possibly manage it. The last week of September was a nightmare for everyone connected with the emigration. The Shawnees of Wapakoneta in particular seemed bent on drinking themselves to death and laying their bones in the land of their fathers. Gardiner wrote:

They forfeited every promise, and abused every kindness. It seemed impossible to get them to make the least movement towards preparation. They were furnished with every thing promised, and much more. We lent them twenty-five horses, and supplied three light two-horse wagons for their baggage. They abused the horses, rode them off to the neighboring towns, kept in a state of intoxication for several days together, until nature sunk under their beastly intemperance. . . . At length I was compelled to go back from Turtle Creek to Wappaugkonetta [Wapakoneta] myself. . . . I found the Shawnees in a most wretched situation. Many sick, some wounded, their own horses all astray, and all that could still drink whiskey, women as well as men, half-crazy and infuriated. . . .

Whisky was cheap in 1832—about 20 cents a gallon for whites, and whatever the Indian traffic would bear. It was the currency of the West, the most easily transportable form of the section’s huge corn crops. What Westerners didn’t ship out, they drank. Contemporary travel accounts frequently comment on the prevalence of whisky drinking especially among “the lower orders” and the Indians. The lower orders were bad enough when in liquor, but the Indians were a menace to themselves and everyone within gunshot. When the men began to drink, the Indian women hurried to hide guns, hatchets, camp knives, anything that might be used as a weapon. But the men got along without. Ears were torn off, noses bitten until the blood ran, eyes gouged out. Burning brands were snatched up from the cookfire and used as clubs, or the flames were ground out in an enemy’s face. The noise was unceasing: howls, chants, the screams of women, the yipping of a dog kicked out of the way, the moans of a man fallen into a campfire.

The violence and bloodshed that accompanied an Indian drinking spree are recorded by government agents, by traders, mission-

33. Ibid., p. 82.
34. Ibid., v. 3, p. 478.
aries, and anyone who had anything to do with Indians. Everyone agreed that the best thing was to leave them alone till they sobered up. But Gardiner could not wait until the Shawnees were sober. It was the end of September and winter was approaching. The authorities at Washington would be wondering why the Indians weren't on the road.

Gardiner flattered and scolded, coaxed, and threatened. He and his assistants gathered up six Indians at one place and a dozen at another and got them moving. Then they gathered a dozen more and hurried forward to keep the first bunch moving. It was slow and maddening work, but Gardiner kept at it, prodded perhaps by the rumors of his dismissal which had been circulating through the camps. 36

He found the Ottawas sulking in the woods north of Wapakoneta. They were furious because their regular annuities had not arrived, and they were feeding their fury on whisky. Gardiner tempted them with talk of the treaty goods that were waiting for them if they would only go with him. He sent an express rider to pick up their annuity money. Finally they were persuaded to move, and they joined the Shawnees at an encampment on Turtle creek in Shelby county, Ohio. There was one last big drunk—a three-day affair—and then Gardiner and his men got the Indians moving again and marched them hard: 55 miles in two and a half days. They arrived in Richmond, Ind., sick, exhausted, and ready to sit down for the winter right where they were. 37

Back in Piqua, Ohio, Lieutenant Lane took time to write to his superiors in Washington. For the past week and a half he had been trying to keep track of the Indians so that he would know where to deliver their food rations. He would arrange for delivery at one point and find that the rations were wanted somewhere else. When he asked Gardiner to give consistent notice of need, Gardiner replied, “All is chaos. I know not where the Indians will be tomorrow night.” The harassed lieutenant had had all he could stand: “I say, officially and fearlessly, that Mr. J. B. Gardiner, special agent and superintendent is unworthy and incapable. There is but one opinion: I have expressed it.” 38

At the same time the equally harassed Gardiner, just up from a severe attack of fever, was expressing his opinion that Lane was

obstructing the emigration, and conniving with the contractors to make a killing on the Indians’ rations. 39

Inevitably, the two men quarreled—a bitter, public quarrel. Lane immediately wrote to Washington asking that he be relieved of his duties as disbursing agent for the Ohio emigration, and granted a three-months’ furlough. He found the difficulties of working with Gardiner insurmountable: “His drunkenness and destitution of character place him below gentlemanly notice. His age forbids personal chastisement.” 40

Five days later, on sober second thought, Lane withdrew the request. If he left now, he wrote, it would look as if Gardiner’s charges were true. He hurried after the emigrants, hoping, as later letters reveal, to be put in charge of the emigration and, by his successful conduct of it, regain the good reputation that he felt had been lost through no fault of his own. 41

At Indianapolis the Eastern mail caught up with him, but there were no letters from headquarters. Lane was almost out of funds. Contractors, officers, teamsters, all were demanding payment. A steady stream of Indians flowed through his quarters requesting money for services rendered the government, for the hire of their horses on government business, for repairing rifles, mending damaged tents, and filling a thousand other needs. Angry citizens brought in sworn certificates that the Indians’ horses had broken into their cornfields on such-and-such a date, inflicting so-many-dollars worth of damage—and when was the government going to pay? 42

Lane stalled them off, bought on certificate when he could, and finally decided to send to Cincinnati to see if more money had been deposited to his credit, and if not, to borrow what he could. When no express rider would go to Cincinnati where the cholera was then raging and deaths were reported to be 40 a day, Lane went himself. There he found that another $10,000 had been deposited and he turned about and rode hard for the Wabash where he hoped to catch up with the Indians. The emigration had been going forward, Gardiner later reported, with money borrowed from the Indians themselves. 43

39. Ibid., pp. 702, 706.
40. Ibid., p. 730.
41. Ibid., pp. 732, 733.
42. Ibid., pp. 731, 733, 734.
43. Ibid., pp. 734, 735; Maximilian, Prince of Wied, Travels in the Interior of North America (London, 1843), reprinted in Early Western Travels (Cleveland, 1908), R. G. Thwaites (ed.), v. 22, p. 155; Doc., v. 4, p. 115.
As the emigrant train moved through Indiana, the days settled into a routine. The Indians rode in groups of five or ten strung out along the road within sight of each other. Most of them were on horseback. Some of the sick and old, and a few of the children rode in the baggage wagons. According to one contemporary account, the Indians “exhibited a fantastic appearance, their clothing and ornaments being of almost every color and description.” 44 No details are given, but other descriptions of Shawnees and portraits of their leaders suggest some of the details: Calico shirts with the ruffled neck worn open; gaudy sashes; black hair bound by a handkerchief or all but hidden under a turban of brightly-colored calico. There would be some with their ears slit along the outer rim and the lobes pulled down by the weight of ornaments into a loop of flesh that swayed with every movement of the head. A few of the chiefs would be wearing Presidential medals on ribbons about their necks. Others would have blue military coats given them perhaps on state visits to Washington. There would be wide pewter armbands, and pewter gorgets worn at the throat. A few might be wearing nose rings, and have slashes of red paint on each cheek, while next to them rode relatives in the jeans and calico of the white settlers. 45

The long train of Indians passed through Indiana and Illinois in October. Pawpaws were ripe, and acorns covered the ground. The hammering of woodpeckers echoed in the woods where leaves had changed color and were beginning to fall. Bright red Virginia creeper wrangled the trunks of many trees—the tall maples, beeches, elms, ashes, limes, and walnuts of the virgin forest. Even where settlers had cut these out, huge sycamores still stood, some of them with hollow trunks big enough to stable a horse. Deer were becoming scarce, but squirrels, raccoons, possums, and rabbits were still plentiful, and wild turkeys not unknown, so the Indians were able to supplement their ration of beef and pork, flour and cornmeal. 46

The rations were always a problem. After Indianapolis, meat was purchased on the hoof and driven to the Indians’ camp for them to slaughter. Thus, to the usual evening uproar was added the bawl of frightened cattle and the squeal of tethered pigs. Traders drove up to exchange coffee, sugar, and tea for hides and tallow from the slaughtered animals. The inevitable whisky sellers

44. Missouri Intelligencer, Columbia, November 12, 1832, p. 2, quoted in Grant Foreman, The Last Trek of the Indians (Chicago, c1946), p. 84.


hid out in the nearby woods. In some places white people made up sightseeing parties to go out and watch the Indians.47

At Hickory Grove, Ill., within 40 miles of St. Louis, the Indians went into camp. They were moved off the main road to avoid contact with travelers from St. Louis where cholera was epidemic. Here, 80 Hog creek Shawnees, about half the band, joined them. They had finally decided to go, and a conductor had been sent back for them, but all across Indiana and Illinois they had kept well back of the main party. Here, too, Lieutenant Lane came up. Also, Col. J. J. Abert, U. S. army, who had left Washington October 4 with orders to take over the emigration, arrived. Someone had noticed at last that all was not well with the Ohio emigration.48

Abert took charge and the Indians felt the difference at once. He had been granted sufficient authority to get the necessary done when it needed doing, not some time after an answer arrived from Washington.49 The immediate necessity was money: “Money must be supplied,” he wrote, “or the emigration be arrested: there is no half way course.”50 He arranged to borrow $8,000 from William Clark, superintendent of Indian Affairs in St. Louis. He appointed Lane disbursing officer to the Lewistown band, turned over $3,000 to him for expenses, and started the detachment south to the Neosho. These things accomplished, Abert got the remaining Indians under way, and on November 2 he wrote “The Mississippi is behind them to-day.”51

Nothing seemed to ruffle his calm. In Missouri some of the Ottawas went on a drunk. “An excessive use of peach brandy, during a three days debauch, killed the old Ottaway chief,” Abert reported matter of factly, “and two others are rather in a doubtful way.” The sickness gave rise to reports of cholera which Abert promptly squelched.52 There was a great dread of the disease in Missouri, and a fear that the Indians were carrying it. Abert wrote:

You would laugh to see how we are frequently received on the road: doors are slammed in our faces, yet some are bold enough to peep at us

47. Doc., v. 4, p. 114; Foreman, op. cit., p. 76.
49. His instructions read in part: “The department, entertaining full confidence in your judgment and ability, commits the whole subject to your discretion, with power to adopt all such measures as, in your opinion, the honor of the Government and the interest of the Indians may require.”—Ibid., v. 1, p. 341.
50. Ibid., p. 392.
51. Ibid., pp. 392, 393, 396. It is only just to Colonel Gardiner to note that Colonel Abert asked Gardiner to accompany him as far as the Mississippi, which he did. In fact, Abert reported that he “experienced great advantages from the advice and remarks of Col. Gardiner.” He invited Gardiner to continue with him to the end of the journey, but Gardiner declined. He was granted a “leave of absence” to return to Ohio and visit his family.—Ibid., v. 4, pp. 5, 6.
52. Ibid., v. 1, p. 397.
through the windows. However, so long as they do not stop our progress, we don’t care; and yet some of these whites will continue to sell whiskey to our Indians. About twenty of our Ottaways were as drunk as David’s sow yesterday. When sober, these are by far the most orderly and manageable of the whole detachment. But drunk, sober, or sick, we will move them along. 53

In mid-November with winter storms beginning, it was the greatest kindness that could be done. Drunk, sober, or sick, the Indians were moved along, and on November 30 they arrived at the Shawnees’ new reservation 20 miles west of Independence, Mo. 54

These Shawnees and Ottawas were among the first immigrants to settle in what is now Kansas. 55 Like the well-publicized later immigrants, they came with axes and cross-cut saws. They built cabins, plowed the prairie, and planted corn. 56 They did not come singing “We cross the prairies as, of old, our fathers crossed the seas,” but they had their own songs, and their own memories of the days when their forefathers were giants in the land they had left behind.

But it would be foolish to overemphasize their resemblance to later settlers, and it would be unfair to them. Many of the Indians retained as much of their own culture as they possibly could, having seen little to admire in the culture that had pressed for their removal to Kansas and then made such a botch of moving them there. 57 The two peoples, red and white, were a great distance apart on that cold November morning when the Shawnee and Ottawa immigrants arrived on the frozen ground of their new homes. They were closer in Kansas, however, than in northern Illinois or southern Wisconsin where differences between the races had erupted into open warfare. A small step had been taken on the long and difficult road to mutual tolerance. And with it, a settlement of Kansas had begun.

53. Ibid., p. 399.
54. Gardiner remarked (Ibid., v. 4, p. 114) that he never knew how many Indians were in his charge “in consequence of the constant intercourse between the tribes, their habits of visiting each other alternately, for days together, their practice of scattering along the road, or through the woods, or remaining in the villages where whiskey could be procured...” In a letter to William Clark (Ibid., p. 117), Gardiner estimated that there were 250 in the Lewistown band, 100 Ottawas, and 450 Shawnees of Wapakoneta and Hog creek. The enrolling agent for the Lewistown Indians reported 250 in that band (Ibid., p. 77). On December 22, 1832, Agent Richard W. Cummins reported that he had had a count made of the new arrivals and that there were 334 Shawnees and 73 Ottawas (Ibid., v. 3, p. 567).
55. Shawnees from Missouri and Ohio had begun moving to their Kansas reservation at least as early as the spring of 1828. In the fall of 1830 Delawares from Missouri started settlement of their lands north of the Kaw river.—Journal of Isaac McCoy for the exploring expeditions of 1828 and 1830, Leila Barnes (ed.), printed in Kansas Historical Quarterly, v. 5, pp. 260, 576.
57. When the Indians were delayed at Arrow Rock, Mo., by a violent snow storm, Abert commented, “Ah! this weather, this weather—they should have been at their homes before this, and could have been if the business had been properly managed from the start.”—Doc., v. 1, p. 400.