A POSITIVE EXPERIMENT IN ABORIGINAL EDUCATION: THE METHODIST OJIBWA DAY SCHOOLS IN UPPER CANADA, 1824-1833

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Abstract / Résumé

The history of Aboriginal schooling in Canada is marred by accounts of abuse and incompetence, especially in residential schools. But was it always so? In fact, during the 1820s and 1830s in Upper Canada (later Ontario), Methodist missionaries and Ojibwa cooperated to develop a day school system which could have provided a far better model for Aboriginal schools. For example, the schools offered bilingual instruction, Native teachers and pedagogy based on the Pestalozzi system. The tragedy is that this productive and cooperative model of schooling was smothered and quickly forgotten by educators.

L'histoire de l'éducation autochtone est défigueré par des rapports d'abus et d'incompetence. Mais est-ce que l'éducation était toujours ainsi? En réalité pendant les anées des 1820s et 1830s, en le Haut-Canada (plus tard la province d'Ontario), les missionaires Methodistes et les Ojibwa ont cooperés pour créer une système d'education excellente. Par exemple, les écoles offraient instruction bilingue, des professeurs autochtones et le système pedagogique de Pestalozzi. Mais cette système cooperative était suffoquée et oubliée plus tard.

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Introduction

The recent revelations of abuse and incompetence in residential schools make the early history of Aboriginal education seem like an unmitigated experience of horror. But was it always so? In fact, there was a brief period when it seems that Aboriginal education could have gone another way, towards harmony and cooperation rather than coercion. In the early 1800s, the Methodist missionaries and some Ojibwa formed a partnership that produced extraordinary schools—schools of a quality seldom seen again. The schools were a remarkable experiment which demonstrate that the knowledge of how to create positive Native schooling was available, long before residential schools were established in the rest of Canada.[1]

Trevithick (1998:79) calls for more research on the details of Church administration of schools for Aboriginal people. He points out that there were differences between the denominations which may be significant to our understanding of the history of Native education. This point is clearly demonstrated in relation to the Methodist Ojibwa day schools.

The Methodist Ojibwa day schools offered bilingual instruction and used teaching methods suited to Aboriginal learning styles. The schools employed at least some Ojibwa as teachers, and had a goal of producing a cadre of Native leaders educated far beyond the level normal for the European settlers at the time. The schools received substantial support from Ojibwa parents and leaders as one Band after another agreed to accept schools for their children. Sadly, this experiment lasted only about ten years, from about 1824 to 1833. It was strangled by bureaucratic and political manoeuvreing. Yet while it lasted, the Methodist-Ojibwa alliance did much to help the Ojibwa cope with the rapid influx of settlers, and left a lasting legacy of trained and literate leaders, as well as Ojibwa-produced texts and writings.

Unfortunately, this experimental school system was quickly forgotten. No comprehensive description or analysis of the Methodist Ojibwa day schools seems to have been published at the time. As late as 1965, a comprehensive survey of Native education in Canada (The Education of Indian Children in Canada 1965:1, 12) claimed that there had been only a few "meagre attempts" at schools by missionaries in Upper Canada in the early 1800s; and credits the Methodists with starting only one day school (at Davisville, Grand River) during the 1820s and 1830s. When I began research for a Master's thesis on early Native education in Ontario (MacLean, 1978), I was surprised to discover that such an extensive and productive form of schooling had been completely overlooked.

The data on the day schools exists mainly in bits and pieces in the

primary literature[2]. Most information on the actual curriculum and teaching methods is found in personal letters from the teachers working in the schools, and from missionaries. These letters were published in the Methodists' main newspapers, *The Christian Advocate and Journal* from New York and, after 1829, *The Christian Guardian* from Toronto. These newspapers also published letters from Native people, which provide insight into how the Ojibwa parents and leaders regarded the education of their children. The annual reports of the Methodist Missionary Society during the 1820s and 1830s give considerable information on the education philosophies the Methodists were attempting to implement, and on the growth of the schools as an administrative system. Additional information is contained in letters, diaries and reports written by individuals involved in the schools, such as William Case, Peter Jones, and Egerton Ryerson. John Carroll's (1871) compilation of Canadian Methodist history provides further documentation on the growth of the schools. Carroll highlights the role of William Case, and provides valuable reprints of Case's correspondence, particularly with the American Methodists.

I will first review the social and political factors affecting the development of the schools, such as the impact of European settlement on the Ojibwa and the Ojibwa's decision to convert to Methodism. Next I will look specifically at the establishment of the day schools, and their curriculum and teaching techniques. I will assess the schools' success in achieving their objectives, and the Ojibwa's reactions to the schools. Finally, I will explore briefly the political events which led to the dwindling (if not the demise) of the day school system. The major focus will be the period from 1824 to 1833, which was the main era of growth and experimentation in the day schools.

The Background

The story begins in Upper Canada, part of the area now known as Ontario. In the early 1800s, the province of Upper Canada extended no further north than Georgian Bay. After the breakup of the Huron nation, the Ojibwa moved into southern Ontario. They probably emigrated from the area north of Lakes Huron and Superior after 1690 (Paudash, 1905:7-11; Smith, 1987:19). The Ojibwa had little sustained contact with Europeans apart from trading for furs and serving as military allies. Unlike the Iroquois to the south, the Ojibwa had had little experience in dealing with settlers. When British immigration began, the Ojibwa were still dependent on a nomadic hunting and gathering lifestyle and followed their traditional religion (Smith, 1975:11-136).

After the fall of Quebec in 1763, Upper Canada became part of the British Empire. The province was mainly occupied by Native people, fur traders, soldiers, and a few merchants, a situation which changed little for the next ten years (Craig, 1963:2). After the American Revolution, Governor Haldimand originally planned to keep Upper Canada for the Native people but surveys showing the quality of the land, together with the fact that loyalist settlers were already moving in, persuaded him to open Upper Canada to settlement (Craig, 1963:4-5). From 1763 until the 1820s, the British Imperial Government[3] adopted an essentially passive policy of maintaining good relations with the Ojibwa by distributing presents. In this way, the government hoped to ensure the Ojibwa's loyalty and, if possible, retain their services as military allies. Ojibwa allies fought for the British during the American Revolution of 1776 and again in the defence of Upper Canada in 1812 (Smith, 1987:22-23).

Military considerations dictated Imperial policy in Upper Canada. The concern only slowly began to fade after the War of 1812. Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe expressed a view typical of the period when he argued that Upper Canada could not be regarded as "on a Peace Establishment" as long as the threat of invasion from the United States remained (Craig, 1963:21). The government encouraged American loyalists to settle by giving them grants of land, and hoped that they would provide manpower to defend the province. However, at the same time, there was continuing suspicion that the American-born immigrants brought with them "republican" principles to which they might revert (Craig, 1963:47-8). The Imperial administration attempted to counter this possibility by encouraging immigration from Britain and by maintaining strict controls on the growth of representative government in Upper Canada (Craig, 1963:87-8). The preoccupation with military considerations and fear of republican influence were to play a part in the development of Ojibwa schooling after 1821.

The population of Upper Canada increased rapidly. In 1763, there had been approximately 600 English and 90,000 French in all of Canada, most of them living in Quebec or the Maritimes. By 1791, there were 14,000 British settlers in Upper Canada alone; by 1812, this number had increased to 90,000 (Cook *et al.*, 1964:5, 21). Although settlements were thinly scattered throughout the colony and seldom extended more than a few miles back from the lakes (Craig, 1963:51), the tremendous growth in British population in only a few years was to have a powerful impact on the Ojibwa. In only forty years, Upper Canada was transformed from a country where Europeans were seldom seen to a burgeoning agricultural colony with a number of towns linked by military roads and under the rule of English law and institutions (Clifton, 1975:24). The difficulty

for the Ojibwa of coping with this settlement was to be the basic factor in the early development of Ojibwa schooling.

As settlers moved into Upper Canada, the Imperial Government made treaties to formalize relationships with the Ojibwa and open the land to settlement. Major periods of treaty-making occurred in 1790 to 1798, 1805 to 1806, and 1815 to 1822. By these treaties, the Ojibwa surrendered much of the land in Upper Canada, withholding scattered small blocks as Reserves (Scott, 1914:695, 718).

Before the 1820s, the government made little effort to confine the Ojibwa to their Reserves. The Ojibwa continued to hunt and trade for furs as best they could. However, they were being displaced. The settlers cleared the land, depleting the game animals, so that it became more difficult for the Ojibwa to support themselves by hunting. Some unscrupulous traders exploited the Native people, cheating them on their furs and selling them alcohol instead of more useful goods. Alvin Torry (1864:47), later a missionary to the Six Nations, wrote in his autobiography that he "not infrequently saw them lying drunk around huxter [sic] shops kept by white people for the purpose of getting the Indians drunk and then robbing them of all that was of use to them." The destructive effects of alcohol on the Ojibwa were described by almost all observers, both Native and non-Native. One of the clearest statements of its effect in breaking down the moral and social order of the tribes is to be found in an account of his childhood among the Credit Mississauga, written by Native missionary Kahkewaquonaby, "Sacred Feathers," known in English as Peter Jones (1860:1-7).

Diseases such as smallpox and measles and high death rates generally were also taking their toll of the Ojibwa. A high child mortality rate may be seen in a census of Ojibwa Bands, made in 1830 for the Indian Department (see Table 1). Among most Bands, the number of children was just over half that of the adults, demonstrating that the Ojibwa had fallen below the number of children needed for population replacement.

By 1830, there were only about 2,200 Ojibwa left in Upper Canada. They were divided into small Bands, widely dispersed throughout the province. Two Bands lived in eastern Upper Canada, around the Bay of Quinte (216 people) and Rice Lake (267 people). One Band of 200 lived near Toronto at the Credit River. Several Bands (576 people) lived to the north between Lake Simcoe and Matchedash on Georgian Bay. A large group lived in the west along the Thames River (383 people) and in the region of Sarnia, Walpole Island, and the St. Clair River (542 people).

There were other Aboriginal nations in Upper Canada, including the Mohawks at Tyendinaga, the Six Nations at the Grand River, the Delawares at Moraviantown, the Munceys at Munceytown, and some

Table 1: Population of Ojibwa Men, Women and Children in 1830, by Band

Band	Men	Women	Children	Total
Bay of Quinte	53	81	82	216
Rice Lake	68	99	100	267
River Credit	58	72	70	200
Matchedash and Lake Simcoe	127	196	253	576
Thames River	134	141	108	383
Chenail Ecarte and River St. Clair	165	188	189	542
Total	605	777	802	2184

Source: Superintendent Clench (of the Indian Department), "Observations on the Sate of Civilization of the Indians in Upper Canada," 1830, Jarvis Papers, B56:241. The figures given by Clench in his census agree fairly closely with population estimates made by missionaries at the same time.

Wyandots or Huron near Amherstburgh. However, I have confined myself to the Methodist work with the Ojibwa during this period, since the Ojibwa were the major focus of the Methodists during the period (MacLean, 1978:4-6).

Methodist Missionary Activity

During the late 1700s and early 1800s, there was little missionary activity among the Ojibwa. Occasionally, itinerant Methodist preachers (the so-called circuit riders) who were sent from the United States, encountered Native groups and preached to them. The missionaries did manage to interest a few Ojibwa. In 1801, Joseph Sawyer, an American Methodist circuit-rider, baptized several Ojibwa, including Tuhbenahneequay, known in English as Sarah Henry, Peter Jones' mother, and her brother, Nawahjegezhegwabe or "Sloping Sky", also known in English as Joseph Sawyer (Smith 1987: photo caption after p. 142). Nathan Bangs (1832:171-176), another American Methodist, also preached to the Native people on several occasions. However, these contacts were infrequent and depended on chance encounters rather than a sustained missionary effort among the Native people.

In 1821, the Methodists made formal plans to begin mission work

among the Native people. The key instigator appears to have been William Case, one of the senior missionaries in Upper Canada. Case became extraordinarily interested in Native people, and was one of the driving forces behind the Ojibwa schools (Carroll, 1871(2):341). At first, few Methodists believed that missionary work would succeed among the Native people. Alvin Torry (1864:60), the first Methodist missionary to the Native people, reflected this uncertainty in his autobiography:

> I doubt if there was a man in the Genesee Conference excepting Bro. Case, that believed the Natives, in their pagan state, as we now found them, could be Christianized: and I am sure my brethren in Canada did not believe I would succeed in my work. Their theory was, "First civilize, then Christianize."

Nonetheless, Case persuaded the Conference to establish a mission as an experiment. Case stationed Alvin Torry at the Grand River in 1822, on the understanding that he would serve the European settlers and, if possible, gain the interest of the Native people (Carroll, 1871(2):400-401).

Torry initially met with opposition from the Native people, who seemed unimpressed with whatever benefits Christianity might promise. After almost a year of effort, Torry could not report a single Native convert. The breakthrough came at a large camp-meeting held by Case and Torry near the Grand River in the spring of 1823. At this meeting, a number of converts were made among the Native people, including Peter Jones and his sister, Mary.

Peter Jones (1860:1-7) was the son of Augustus Jones, a Welsh land surveyor, and a Mississauga Ojibwa woman. He was raised by his mother, Tuhbenahneequay, a member of the Credit Band. In 1816, he went to live with his father, who had since married a Mohawk woman and had settled at the Grand River. Peter Jones' conversion was a crucial event in the Methodist Native work, for he was to become one of the most influential Native missionaries in the Connection.

The success of the camp-meeting was not altogether as sudden as it might appear. Peter Jones, for example, had been baptized earlier, thinking that he might then be given the privileges which the Europeans enjoyed. However, he confided in his journal that he was disillusioned by the behaviour of the Christians. "When I looked at the conduct of the whites who were called Christians, and saw them drunk, quarrelling, and fighting, cheating the poor Indians, and acting as if there was no God, I was led to think there could be no truth in the white man's religion." Nonetheless, Jones (1860:23) observed that, even before the camp-meeting, there was already an interest in Christianity among the Native

people. It was possible that the Methodists inadvertently reaped the advantage of this interest by appearing at the right time.

By the fall of 1823, the Methodists had made thirty converts at the Grand River. They began a school for these converts almost immediately. Case (Carroll, 1871(2):446) wrote that "A Sabbath school is now in operation where about twenty children are taught the rudiments of reading." By March of 1824, the missionaries opened a day school, built with money collected from the Native people, "where we hope the youth from year to year may learn to read the Bible" (Carroll, 1871(2):463). During 1824 and 1825, the mission at the Grand River made much progress; at least part of it was due to Peter Jones' efforts. In 1824, he kept a small day school and began to speak in public (Jones, 1860:15). During the year, a group of his Mississauga relatives from the Credit heard of his conversion and came to visit. They converted to Methodism and stayed to enrol their children in a school on the Reserve (Carroll, 1871(3):44).

In May of 1825, Jones and Torry went on an evangelizing tour to Munceytown, a large settlement of Munseys and Ojibwa on the Thames River. There they preached for several days. Torry insisted on preaching in English; his insensitivity to the Native people (a possible reason for his early lack of success at the Six Nations) was recorded in Peter Jones' (1860:27-29) journal:

> The Indians sat still for a few minutes, and then began to be very uneasy, talking and laughing, and many walked off. The reason I believe why they were so inattentive, was that they did not understand the English language.

Not until this happened did Torry ask Jones to speak to them in Ojibwa. The Muncey refused to become Christian, arguing that they already had a religion of their own and that it was the Europeans who made them drink. Nonetheless, they agreed to accept a school. This was acceptable to the Methodists, perhaps because they hoped that conversion would be the by-product of schooling.

The pace of conversion picked up rapidly during the next few years. In 1826, the Methodists transferred their attention from the southwestern Native people to those in the east and north. Case and Peter Jones converted most of the Mississauga Ojibwa around Belleville (*Christian Advocate and Journal*, 14 April 1827:126), and persuaded the northern Ojibwa who lived between Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay to consider becoming Christian (Missionary Society Report, 1826:29-20). In the following year, the northern Ojibwa agreed to convert (Missionary Society Report, 1827:9). In 1829, the missionaries converted the Ojibwa at Saugeen (Missionary Society Report, 1831:17). Only the large group of Ojibwa in the Sarnia area held out against the efforts of the missionar-

ies. The Sarnia Ojibwa refused to convert until 1834 (MacLean, 1978:98-99).

The Ojibwa's rapid adoption of Methodism is truly remarkable. In just seven years, from 1823 to 1829, the Methodists succeeded in converting a large part of the Ojibwa population in Upper Canada. By 1830, the Missionary Society counted over a thousand adult Native members and maintained nine missionary stations and eleven schools for the Native people (Missionary Society Report, 1831:9). Before describing the day school system developed for the Native people, I will look at some of the reasons for the Methodists' interest in the Native people and for the Ojibwa's ready acceptance of Christianity.

A variety of factors may have been influential in persuading the Methodists to enter the Native mission field. The first of these was personal interest on the part of individuals, most especially of William Case, but also of men such as Alvin Torry and Peter Jones. However, the personal interest of a few individuals would probably not have been enough to convince the Methodist Connection to devote considerable time and money to the Native people, had it not been for several other characteristics of Methodism at the time.

Perhaps most influential was the missionary and expansionist emphasis within Methodism. As Nathan Bangs (1832:23) wrote in his history of the missions, "Methodism has been missionary in its character from its beginning." Methodism was noted for its proselytizing tradition, seldom waiting for converts to come to the church. In England, John Wesley had taken Methodism to the people, holding services in the mines and fields. In Canada, the missionary character of Methodism was exemplified by the circuit riders who traversed the sparsely settled regions of the colony. Thus, carrying the missionary work to the Native people was not unusual.

The missionary fervour of Methodism was coupled with an expansionist tradition. There was a concern for and fascination with sheer numbers of converts to the Church. This was most clearly seen in the annual reports of the Methodist Missionary Society, in which the yearly rise or decrease of members in each circuit was lovingly detailed. The fascination with numbers may have been a manifestation of a spirit of competitiveness directed towards other churches, or it may have been an honest Christian delight in an increase in souls brought to God. A more political view might be that numbers of converts represented power and a consequent authority and acceptance which the Methodists were trying to establish for themselves in the colony. The concern for numbers helps to explain the Methodist interest in the Native people. In the 1820s, Native converts represented a respectable proportion of the total

number of Methodist adherents in Upper Canada. For example, in 1830, the Methodists claimed 14,000 members, of whom over 1,000 (or 7%) were Native (Carroll, 1871(3):276).

Furthermore, the Native people were converts quickly made. The Methodist interest in them was reinforced by the remarkable and initially unexpected success they had in converting them. The mass conversion of whole Bands at camp-meetings was regarded with awe by contemporary writers (*Christian Advocate and Journal,* 7 April 1827:122; *The Christian Guardian*, 18 October 1845:5). Even Case was somewhat overwhelmed and wrote that the conversion was "beyond all our calculations successful" (Carroll 1871(2):444).

Finally, the Methodist interest in the Native people may be attributed to the extra challenge of converting the "pagan". The Methodists equated paganism with darkness and evil; it was the realm of the devil (*The Christian Guardian,* 24 September 1834:182). Pagans represented an even greater challenge to the missionary than the conversion of a godless European settler or the adherent of a rival church.

The missionary character and the expansionist zeal of Methodism, the interest of individuals, and the challenge of converting the heathen were all factors contributing to the Methodists' interest in missionary work with the Native people.

The Ojibwa's reasons for becoming Christian were somewhat more complex. Their reasons seemed to vary according to individual needs and experiences, although certain features were common. A predominant theme among Native converts was that their old religion and traditional culture were breaking down. The old ways were no longer adequate to provide guidance in a new and confusing world. New solutions, which might include Christianity, needed to be found. George Turkey, a Muncey Chief, told Peter Jones:

> Some Munceys he not like it [Christianity]—he say he want worship old way. But I tell him, lost old way.—Old way was good. But now Munceys get their way from all nations, some from the white people, some from the Chippeways, and some from other nations. Now he think he got the old way, but this is a new way, because he lost the old way. Now I hear minister about Jesus, and it is the same as I used to hear in old times (*The Christian Guardian*, 7 August 1830:300).

Of particular concern to the Native leadership was the effect of alcohol on their people. Christianity, and especially Methodism which advocated temperance, helped the Native people to cope with their drinking. For example, a group of Methodist Native people advised some unconverted Native people to join the Methodists because the Roman

Catholic and the Anglican Churches permitted drinking, while the Methodists did not (*The Christian Guardian*, 9 October 1833:190). The destructive effects of alcohol and the assistance Methodism provided in dealing with it formed a persistent theme throughout the speeches and writings of Peter Jones (1860, 1861). In this he was not alone. Other Native people also equated conversion with abstinence. James Evans, a missionary, reported a discussion with some of the Ojibwa at St. Clair:

> Another said, "I have tried four times, since your talk on that rainy day, which talk I do not forget, to give up drinking; but when I will not drink, the Indians say I am angry, that I dislike them, and they become very cross with me, and then I drink again. I think I want something you Methodist Indians have in your hearts, to help me say No, and not to drink anymore." One old woman observed, "I am very old, I must not drink anymore; but when I see whiskey, I am so weak I must drink. I think I must go to where the Indians live who do not drink; perhaps there I will get that religion which will help me not to drink anymore" (*The Christian Guardian,* 24 September 1834:182).

Some of the Native converts used the missionaries as inspiration to gain control of their drinking. For example, James Evans discovered that one man had built his wigwam near the mission house to be out of the way of temptation during drinking parties (*The Christian Guardian*, 1 October 1834:186). The missionaries also helped in concrete ways by driving whiskey traders off the Native Reserves and by exerting pressure on the government to pass legislation which would control the sale of alcohol to the Native people (*The Christian Guardian,* 31 December 1834:30; Ryerson, 1883:63).

The physical benefits which might be derived from becoming Christian were prominent in some Native people's minds. Pigeon, an elderly convert at Grape Island, attributed a more comfortable lifestyle to his conversion:

> God very good to us now we serve him,—when I first came here from Kingston, I had but one small kettle, my blanket coat all torn,—no shirt-no shoes,—now I got all this, I owe no man, and I got little money too (*The Christian Guardian,* 2 October 1833, 186).

Joseph Sawyer, a chief of the Credit Ojibwa, told Shinguaconse, an unconverted Chief, why he should become Christian:

> I wish you to look for yourself, which star [religion] is best. You see this village built since we got this religion; you see this school house; and the change from drunkenness to so-

> briety (*The Christian Guardian*, 2 April 1834:81).

Sometimes the equation of spiritual and temporal benefits was almost complete, as may be seen in a remark by Shahwundais or "Sultry Heat," (Smith 1987: captions after p. 142) known in English as John Sunday. "Send my poor brothers plenty of Bible, and they will soon have big steamboat, &c., and be happy Christian" (Slight, 1844:140).

Finally, it must also be remembered that the converts perceived primary spiritual benefits in becoming Christian. For many the traditional religion was no longer able to provide comfort or happiness. Oozushkah, a converted *Mede* (or spiritual leader), said of the spirits he had known through his dreams:

> My converse with the strange men of the cave [spirits seen in a dream] made me proud, but it did not make me happy. But I bless God that now a spirit unseen communes with my heart; and though it does not teach me how to destroy my enemies, it teaches me how to forgive and love them (*The Christian Guardian,* 16 September 1835:178).

Kezigkoenene or David Sawyer, Chief Joseph Sawyer's son, described the comfort Christianity provided to him:

> I am thankful that I ever went to the Mission-school, for there I learned the good way. I am sometimes in such great trouble—pain in my body: I do not know what to do, or which way to turn; but I read the word of God—that shows me the way (*The Christian Guardian*, 16 September 1835:178).

Two themes which recurred frequently in Native statements on why they became Christian were a desire to be happy on earth and a desire to see their friends and relatives in heaven. In light of the high death rate in preceding years, the latter wish may not be surprising. Yellowhead, the Chief of the Lake Simcoe Band, told his people that "One thing makes my heart very sorry, and that is, to see so many of our little children taken away from us. I hope to meet them again in heaven and this comforts me" (Jones Letterbook, 12 August 1835).

To understand why the Native people so readily adopted Christianity, it is important to remember that in general Native people did not view different religions or sects as mutually exclusive. A pious person, one who had established a communion with the spirits, was highly regarded in Native society throughout North America and leadership was frequently based on this quality (Black Elk, 1961). The name of the specific religion was much less important. This view has been ably described by Chief John Snow (1977:17) in his history of the Stoney Nation of Alberta:

> Another theory among us is that in creating so much diversity

> in Nature the Great Spirit revealed his love for diversity:... Surely such a Creator would accept more than just one religion.... And so we listened to the missionaries and many converts were made.

While Snow was writing of western Native people, the Ojibwa of Upper Canada manifested a similar attitude. Indeed, one of their greatest difficulties was in understanding why the missionaries insisted that they could not still follow their traditional religion. A Muncey Chief was not unusual in expressing a desire to adopt the new religion while retaining the old. "We Munceys take hold of the white man's worship with one hand; but with the other hand we hold fast our Fathers' worship. Both ways are good" (*The Christian Guardian*, 5 June 1830:229).

The Methodist emphasis on using Native missionaries (which will be discussed further below) may have assisted greatly in the conversion of the Ojibwa. Not only were the Native missionaries fluent in Ojibwa—a skill which few non-Native missionaries possessed—but they were often able to use arguments which struck a responsive chord among the other Native people. The Native missionaries tended to stress aspects of Christianity which bore a resemblance to the traditional religion (MacLean, 1978:50-60). The Native missionaries assumed a role as leaders on the basis of their spiritual knowledge, which was within the traditional framework. They also functioned as role models, showing that Christianity was a religion for Native people as well as non-Natives, which some Native people tended to disbelieve at first. Pahtahsegay or "One who makes the world Brighter," (Smith, 1987: caption after p. 142) known in English as Peter Jacobs (1853:ii), a Native missionary, wrote in his journal of his first impressions of Christianity:

> I first said, "No; that is the white man's God, and white man's religion; and that God would not have anything to do with the Indians."...I thought God could only understand English...I then met with Peter Jones, who was converted a few months before me, and, to my surprise, I heard him return thanks, at meal, in Ojibway. This was quite enough for me. I now saw that God could understand me in my Ojibway, and therefore went far into the woods and prayed, in the Ojibway tongue.

The Ojibwa Day Schools

One of the most noteworthy features of the Methodist work with the Native people was that the conversion of the Native people and the establishment of day schools went hand in hand. As soon as a group of

Native people declared their belief in Christianity, the Methodists responded by sending them a school-teacher. In a few cases, the establishment of a day school even preceded the conversion of the group (see Table 2). The Methodists considered schools essential to the success of the missions. For example, when the Methodists' control of the Native schools was threatened in 1832, Egerton Ryerson argued in a letter to Lieutenant-Governor Colborne that:

> The Schools to the Missions are as important as a foundation is to a building, and I conceive that the Missions may as well be relinquished by the Missionaries, as for them to abandon their schools (*The Christian Guardian,* 22 February 1832).

Why were the schools so important to the missionaries? One answer may be found in Protestant theology. A basic tenet is the acceptance of the Bible as the sole standard of faith. For this reason, Martin Luther had insisted that the Scriptures should be available for people to read in their own languages. To the Bible alone was ascribed the miraculous power of conversion; the main role of the missionary was to provide the Scriptures to be read. Nevertheless, reading the Bible required literacy and, consequently, schools to teach reading (Berkhofer, 1965:3-5).

Becoming a Protestant was a matter of understanding based on instruction. Protestant missionaries seldom counted converts as members of their church until they were satisfied that the converts had learned the teachings of the new religion. In contrast, the Roman Catholic missionaries frequently baptized Native people without any preliminary instruction and sometimes even without their knowledge or consent (Trelease, 1969:49). The Canadian Methodists followed in the Protestant tradition. For all Methodists, Native or non-Native, attendance at class-meetings for instruction was a mandatory condition of membership in the Church (Carroll, 1871(5):170-171). Even Native converts, for whom lower standards might have been expected, were not accepted into full membership until their knowledge of doctrine had been examined by a licensed preacher (*The Christian Guardian* 2 September 1835:171).

In this context, one reason for the Methodist's emphasis on schools becomes apparent. It was not enough that the Native people should profess a belief in the Christian God; they must also be able to read the Scriptures and understand what was said in them. A primary purpose of the schools was to carry out the detailed instruction of the Native people in Christian knowledge and thereby complete the process which began with conversion. This purpose was made explicit in the Missionary Society's annual report in 1825:

> *Native schools*, for the improvement of the mind, must be considered of importance;...to fix more permanently in the

Table 2: Dates of Conversion and Establishment of Schools, By Band

Band	Date of Conversion	Date of First School
Belleville (later Grape Island)	1826	1827
Rice Lake	1826	1827
Lake Scugog	1826-27	1829
Credit River	1824	1824
Holland Landing (later Narrows of Lake Simcoe	1826	attend Newmarket School in 1826: own school, 1827
Mahjedusk (later Coldwater)	1828-29	1829
Saugeen	1829	1831
Munceytown	converted slowly 1825-60	1825
St. Clair	1834-35	1834

Source: Missionary Society Report, 1825-27, 1829-31, 1833-35.

> mind, the principles of Christianity. Where this has been already received, and even where strong religious feelings are experienced, *line upon line, and precept upon precept*, are necessary. A knowledge of reading then, will greatly aid in such a course of instruction. By opening the Bible, and whole libraries to the astonished minds of the Native disciples (Missionary Society Report, 1825:9).

The schools were intended to reinforce the conversion in a second way. The dream of the Methodists was that teaching the children would enable the missionaries to reach the parents more effectively. As Case remarked enthusiastically, "Surely thought I every child at the Indian schools is a Missionary to those who cannot read the word of God" (*The Christian Guardian,* 17 July 1833:142). This hope was encouraged by

the Native people, some of whom declined to learn to read but indicated that they would be happy to have their children learn to read for them. Keketoonce, Chief of the Saugeen Ojibwa, told the missionaries, "Brothers! becoming a Christian I shall desire to see my children read the good book. As for myself, I am too old to learn; and if I can only hear my children read, I shall be satisfied with what I hear from them (*The Christian Advocate and Journal*, 5 February 1830:94).

Day School Curriculum

The initial objective of the Ojibwa day schools was to create a literate Native population who would be able to read and understand the Scriptures. For this goal, a limited course of studies was enough. For the first few years after 1823, the schools concentrated on reading, writing, study of the Bible, and learning to sing hymns (Missionary Society Report, 1827:14). Hymns may have been a particularly important teaching tool, as historian D. Dunn Wilson (1969:153-4) explained:

> Charles Wesley's hymns were as important as John's treatises, sermons and letters in the dissemination of his ideas.... Every aspect of John Wesley's teaching is reflected in the hymns of Methodism, and by means of his hymns, Charles Wesley placed a handbook of sound Christian knowledge in the hands of the humblest Methodist, who learned as he sang.

Within a few years, the Methodists' early success in converting the Ojibwa and in establishing schools in most of the Native communities made them increasingly ambitious in their schooling program. Some Methodists began to view the day schools as a training ground for a cadre of Native missionaries and teachers, through whom the Methodists might be able to reach and convert all the Ojibwa in Upper Canada and to the west. Case (Carroll, 1871(3):155) expressed this hope in a letter to his friend Zachariah Paddock, principal of the American Methodist seminary at Cazenovia:

> A field of many thousands [of Native people] is now opened and are calling for our instructions, both in this country and the United States, and these thousands, too, of the same language as our schools. They must be provided for in Missionaries and school teachers.

In order to convert and instruct these nations, Case urged the employment of Native teachers and missionaries. He firmly believed that the best people to work with the Native people were other Native people. Case's view of the importance of Native missionaries was reiterated in

the Missionary Society's annual report in 1835:

> The knowledge they have of the language, the character, and the habits of their own people, given them an influence among the natives of the forest which no European can exercise (Missionary Society Report, 1835:81).

The Methodists were led to this conclusion by practical considerations. In some cases, the Native people refused to accept anyone but a Native missionary, saying, "they would have no white man, 'he will want our land'." (*The Christian Guardian,* 9 October 1833:190). But even without this objection, it appeared that the Native missionaries were often more effective than the non-Natives. Language was the major barrier. There were few non-Native people who had either the time or the talent to learn the Native languages. Most spoke through an interpreter and were handicapped because of this (Slight, 1844:32). The Native missionaries and teachers could present the Gospel far more effectively.

Nevertheless, the Methodists wanted their Native missionaries to be as well-taught as possible. Academic schooling was considered important, especially if the Native people were to reach the top ranks and be ordained as ministers capable of being sent out on their own rather than merely serving as assistants to the non-Native preachers, who were in short supply. Some Methodists even hoped to send their Native candidates beyond the elementary levels provided by the Native day schools. Case (Carroll, 1871(3):318) wrote to Peter Jones that he was thinking of "the best means of putting several of our promising youths to higher branches of education." Case considered either the grammar school at Belleville or the American Methodist seminary at Cazenovia to be possible locations. In order to prepare the Native students for these schools, it was essential that they be given as good an academic background as possible in the Native day schools. It was also important to improve the elementary schools in order to prepare those Native teachers, interpreters, and missionaries who might not go on to the more advanced levels.

To accomplish this objective, the Methodists turned their attention to improving the day school system. They concentrated their efforts on three schools—Grape Island, River Credit and Rice Lake—which were viewed as seminaries in which to train Native preachers and teachers (*The Christian Guardian,* 24 April 1830:181). Some of the changes which were made affected the other Native schools as well. During the late 1820s, three major changes were made in the schooling program: the development of systematic bilingual instruction and the publication of supporting books in the Native languages; the adoption of the Infant School System, which was believed to be a superior method of teaching Native people; and the inclusion of a wider range of academic subjects.

Thus, after 1830, one finds an increasingly sophisticated day school system with an emphasis on academic skills and an objective of producing a well-instructed cadre of Native missionaries and teachers.

Systematic bilingual instruction was the first step in adapting the curriculum to Native needs and thereby improving the day schools. Before 1830, the teaching in the Native schools appears to have been mainly in English. For example, the Missionary Society's annual report of 1829 stated:

> The education of the Native children, it is believed, should be primarily in the English language, there being so few translations in the Indian tongue. When a knowledge of the English is once obtained, it will be no difficult task for the scholars to read their native tongue. The most effectual means should therefore be adopted which may lead to the pronunciation of the English (Missionary Society Report, 1829:1).

While teaching in English may not have presented an insurmountable problem in the south, where the Native people were exposed to at least some English, it certainly posed a great difficulty in the more remote areas where English was seldom heard. For example, in 1830 James Currie, the teacher at Mahjedusk mission on Georgian Bay, complained about the difficulty he experienced in teaching the Ojibwa children to read in an unfamiliar language (*The Christian Guardian,* 3 April 1830:56).

In order to overcome this problem, the Methodists encouraged some of their bilingual converts, notably Peter Jones and his brother, Tyentennegen or John Jones, to translate materials. A number of Ojibwa translations were published between 1825 and 1833, including the Lord's Prayer; Genesis; Psalms; the Gospels of Matthew and John; a book of hymns; a vocabulary and dictionary which also served as a spelling book; and an Ojibwa grammar (Carroll 1871(3):64, 221, 282-3; (4):129; *The Christian Guardian,* 13 February 1830:102; 5 March 1831:66; Missionary Society Report, 1829:5).

These books were immediately taken up for use in the day schools where they became part of a bilingual instruction program. James Evans, the teacher from Rice Lake, reported that his Native students had recently begun reading the translation of Matthew "with which they were much delighted" (*The Christian Guardian*, 9 January 1830:59). He also noted that he had adopted a policy of having the children repeat their answers in both English and Ojibwa, "lest they should be found not to understand the meaning" (*The Christian Guardian*, 30 January 1830:83). John Benham, the teacher at Grape Island, reported that the children were reading the scriptures to their parents in both English and Ojibwa, and that they could read fluently in the Ojibwa translation (*The Christian*

Guardian, 30 January 1830:83). Several weeks later he wrote that he had begun to teach the children to translate routinely from one language to another (*The Christian Guardian,* 13 February 1830:98).

The evidence suggests that the Methodists did not abandon the teaching of English in the day schools. Instruction remained bilingual. Nevertheless, the Methodists' willingness to adopt the use of Ojibwa demonstrated a flexibility in regard to Native schooling. Systematic bilingual instruction was also an important step in making schooling more widely available to the Native people. It reflected a desire to improve the school system by adapting it to what might be the needs of the Native people.

The second step in improving the day schools was to adopt a more sophisticated philosophy of teaching—one which might be better suited to Native styles of learning. Such a philosophy the Methodists found in the Infant School System (or Pestalozzi system). This system was developed by Johan Heinrich Pestalozzi, a Swiss educator, and was a forerunner of the modern Montessori system. Case probably learned about the system during a trip to New York in 1828. He visited a number of schools including some Infant Schools which were much in vogue among the American Methodists (*The Christian Advocate and Journal,* 3 October 1828:17; Hodgins 1894,(2):12).

The Infant School System was based on several principles which appeared to be well-suited to use with the Native people. The teaching style which Pestalozzi advocated may have been more congenial to the learning styles of Native children than the type of teaching used in the common schools, which tended to emphasize strict discipline and rote work. Pestalozzi attempted to free schooling from the rigidity prevailing at the time. He believed that the child should be allowed to proceed at his own pace and learn from his own experiences, rather than having the one correct way thrust upon him. Pestalozzi wrote:

> My opinion is that such a society [the school] can only succeed if each member of it is free to go astray and to make mistakes, and is able rather through quiet experience than correction to realize himself and to make as much progress as his own character allows of (Heafford, 1967:33)

This principle of Pestalozzi's philosophy accords well with observations of the learning style of Native children, as noted by both 19th century and contemporary observers. In 1837, Anna Jameson (1837:276-277), an English author who visited Upper Canada, described the child-rearing practices of Native parents;

> The Indians, apparently, have no idea of correcting or restraining their children; personal chastisement is unheard

> of...the fixed, inherent sentiment of personal independence grows up with the Indians from earliest infancy. The will of an Indian child is not forced; he has nothing to learn but what he sees done around him, and he learns by imitation.

In 1970, Francis McKinley (1970:14-15), an American educator, described the behaviour of Native children in the classroom:

> Generally, the learner initiates an extended period of observation and attempts performance only when he feels fairly certain of his ability. Premature bungling attempts are met with teasing, and successful attempts with quiet acceptance. The characteristics of learning in the American classroom (i.e. initiation by the teacher, premature public practice, public praise and public correction) are all antithetical to this Aboriginal style.

Pestalozzi also believed that teachers should use the children's own experience and knowledge rather than force alien concepts on them. He stressed that the school should provide the children with direct experience of the information they were expected to learn about (Heafford, 1967:53). This was done through apparatus such as numerical frames (a type of abacus), picture cards, maps, and globes. Illustrating this information may have been especially important for the Native people who were learning in the day schools many facts and concepts which were not a part of their own culture.

The Infant School System was introduced in the Methodists' three major schools—Rice Lake, Grape Island, and the Credit River—between 1829 and 1830. From the beginning the Methodists believed that they were adopting a different and clearly superior method of instruction which was more suited to the needs of the Native people. In January of 1830, James Evans, the teacher at Rice Lake, informed Egerton Ryerson of the adoption of the new system:

> During the first half year, they were taught as before, in the manner customary in our common schools; since which time the Infant School has been adopted; which from its simplicity, appears to be admirably well calculated for the situation of the Indian children; and from the proficiency made in this, and the Grape Island school since its introduction, it appears to be the desideratum in all our mission schools (*The Christian Guardian,* 9 January 1830:59).

Evans' remarks were confirmed by a report from D. Youmans, the teacher at the Credit River:

> Shortly after I commenced teaching these children, the infant school system was introduced, and from its simplicity,

> being particularly suited to the taste and dispositions of Indian children, they have made very considerable improvement in those branches, which that system is calculated with little labour to teach (*The Christian Guardian,* 29 January 1831:46).

The Infant School System was found especially suitable for modification to bilingual instruction, as John Benham of Grape Island described:

> One important object is attained by the adoption of the infant system, in a native school; it is a valuable auxiliary in giving them a general knowledge of the English (*The Christian Guardian,* 13 February 1830:98).

The Infant School apparatus, which illustrated the information which the children were expected to learn, was used extensively, as may be seen in a description of the school at Grape Island:

> They are taught on the infant plan, the elements of arithmetic, geography, astronomy, geometry, English grammar, and natural and sacred history, for which purpose the following apparatus is used. "A numerical frame," in the form of a rectangle, with 144 moveable balls strong on twelve parallel wires.—This is used for various purposes, but principally for teaching the principles of arithmetic. By the map of the world is taught geography. Astronomy is taught by the help of the Globe, and figures on a large slate (blackboard.) By the help of cuts and figures of various forms, is taught the elements of geometry; and by the help of various cuts of beasts, birds, fishes, and reptiles, is taught natural history (*The Christian Guardian,* 13 February 1830:98).

From this description, it may be seen that the Methodists had broadened their course offerings considerably. This too was part of a plan to improve the school system by making the course of studies more sophisticated and academic. The greater range of subjects taught was reflected in exhibitions of Native "improvement." In 1828, Peter Jones (1860:112) described in his journal an exhibition of the Credit children's achievements held at York:

> The Indian children then commenced, exhibiting in a pleasing manner their improvement—first, by singing in both English and Native, then by reading, spelling, reciting the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments. They also showed samples of writing, and the girls sewing and knitting, and closed by singing.

The exhibition reflected the limited course of studies in the Native schools in the early years. Yet just two years later, the Native children demon-

strated a far wider range of knowledge at a similar exhibition:

> The Indian children exhibited specimens of their improvement in reading, spelling, writing, and arithmetic, answered a few questions in geometry, and acquitted themselves to the astonishment of the delighted multitudes in geography.... The children showed themselves well acquainted with the first principles of astronomy as far as it is necessary to a general knowledge of geography—readily stated the shape, motions, artificial and natural divisions of the Earth—the principal political divisions of the continents—the climates, productions, rivers, mountains, and capitals of several countries, states, and provinces, and the religion of there [sic] inhabitants, especially of those Islands of the Seas, where missionaries are established. They promptly answered a great number of questions relative to the time and circumstances of the discovery and settlement of America—likewise of Capt. Cook's voyage to the Friendly Islands, and death there (*The Christian Guardian*, 6 March 1830:126).

The broadened course of studies may have served as background for more advanced schooling; it also may have been instrumental in making the Native people aware of the British Empire of which they had become a part. Moreover it may have served the purpose of breaking down traditional Native views of the world. Some years later, Case pointed out that a knowledge of astronomy was "of especial importance to the Indians, in correcting erroneous views and removing injurious superstitions (Case, 1852). Case's remark may be compared to that of an American missionary who "requested some scientific apparatus from his society to demonstrate that the world was neither flat nor borne on the back of a turtle and that the benevolent forefathers did not create and carry the sun and the moon" (Berkhofer, 1965:33). The Canadian Methodists perhaps hoped that geography and natural history would allow them to substitute Christian concepts for Native cosmology (Berkhofer, 1965:33).

Success of the Day Schools

Were the day schools successful in achieving their goals? Their success may be judged in several ways. One indicator is whether the Methodists succeeded in developing the desired Native missionaries and teachers. A second indicator is whether the Native people supported the schools, by sending their children and by showing enthusiasm for schooling. More concrete indicators such as literacy rates among the

Native population simply do not appear to be available.

The Methodists were successful in enlisting a number of Native missionaries and teachers. Approximately forty active Native missionaries and teachers were recruited in Upper Canada during the 1820s and 1830s.[4] This number includes only those who either participated in missionary tours, taught in the schools, or acted as interpreters for non-Native teachers and missionaries. The Methodists actually had more Native missionaries than they could use. They were able to lend at least nine Native missionaries to the American Methodists.[5] The number is remarkable, considering that there were only about 605 adult men in the Ojibwa population served by the Methodists. It amounts to about 7% (40/605) of the adult male population.

In addition, the Methodists also singled out and developed Native leadership on the Reserves. The Methodist church had a policy of encouraging local initiative in church services and Bible study, by appointing local church officials called class-leaders and exhorters to assist the missionaries. The Methodists followed the same practice on the Native Reserves. The leaders often formed a significant proportion of the adult population on the Reserves. For example, at the Credit, there were seven leaders and five exhorters among the seventy-two adult members in the society (*The Christian Guardian,* 2 July 1834:134). These local leaders were in addition to the forty active Native missionaries and teachers mentioned above.

Only a few of the Native missionaries attended schools beyond the elementary level. Shahwahnegezhik or Henry Steinhauer (later sent as a missionary to the Hudson's Bay Territory, now Alberta) probably received the most advanced schooling during the 1830s;[6] he attended both Cazenovia, the Methodist seminary in the United States, and Victoria College in Upper Canada. Sahgahgewagahbaweh or John Summerfield, an academically-inclined youth, attended Cazenovia and the grammar school at Belleville but died in 1836 after completing an Ojibwa grammar. A third talented student named William Wilson studied at Upper Canada College and Victoria College, with the help of Egerton Ryerson who paid for his tuition; unfortunately, he also died young in 1838 (Smith, 1987:161). Three more students attended Ebenezer Seminary in Illinois: they were Kahgegagahbowh or George Copway, Peter Marksman, and Enmegahbowh or John Johnson. Case tried to persuade Peter Jones to attend either Cazenovia or the Belleville grammar school, but Jones refused (Carroll, 1871(3):318). The evidence indicates that most of the other Native missionaries and teachers received their instruction in the Native day schools. Thus, while the Methodists did manage to send *some* students on to the advanced levels, their ambition to send on *large numbers*

of Native people was not fulfilled.

However, it must be remembered that, in general, the standard of education was not high among Methodist preachers in those years. In 1825, the Upper Canadian Conference lamented "the want of intellectual improvement among our young preachers generally" and advised that in the future admission to full connection would be preceded by an examination on Wesley's *Sermons*, Watts' *Logic*, Mosheim's *Church History*, Murray's *English Grammar*, and Morsel's *Geography*. According to historian Goldwin French (1962:77), these examinations were not strenuous. Therefore, even those Native preachers and teachers who had attended only an elementary school may well have compared favourably with their non-Native contemporaries.

A number of Native people taught in the schools. Information on these individuals' careers is fragmentary. A report or letter may mention that a particular person was teaching in a school, then there may be no reference to the teacher by name in succeeding years. Sometimes the Society moved teachers from one Reserve to another, so that the name pops up several years later at a different Reserve, but it is not possible to determine when the person moved. Still, the fragmentary information indicates that quite a few schools had Native teachers.

For example, in 1828, John Jones, Peter Jones' brother, was teaching at the Credit River (Carroll, 1871(3):201, 382). In 1831, he was working on the translations into Ojibwa (*The Christian Guardian*, 11 January 1831:34). Kezigkoenene, known in English as David Sawyer, Peter Jones' first cousin, taught at Mahjedusk in 1829 (Jones, 1860:255), and at Sault Ste Marie in 1832 (*The Christian Guardian,* 18 August 1832:154). By 1835, he had become the missionary at Saugeen (Carroll, 1871(4):74). Thomas Magee from the Credit River band, taught at Snake Island in Lake Simcoe in 1828 (Jones, 1860:148,151,155). In 1833, he was sent to assist a missionary at Green Bay in the United States (*The Christian Guardian,* 26 June 1833:130), but by 1836, he was back at River St. Clair as an interpreter (Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, 13 July 1836, Miss Corr, Roll 10). John Thomas of the Credit River also taught at Snake Island in 1828 (Carroll, 1871(3):183). He was followed by Henry Snake in 1830 (Carroll, 1871(3):263), and then by Benjamin Crane of Credit River in 1834 (Jones nd. Peter Jones to Eliza Jones August 1834). John Simpson of Grape Island taught in 1832 at Saugeen (Carroll, 1871(3):227,321) and became the missionary to Saugeen in 1837 (Carroll, 1871(4):175). Kawegahpowhen, known in English as Joseph Marsden, taught at Munceytown in 1838 (*The Christian Guardian,* 7 February 1838:54; 4 April 1838:86) but died in 1839 (Missionary Society Report, 1839:15).

These passing references give some idea of how many Native school

teachers there may have been. There may have been others, who simply are not mentioned in the data reviewed. For some, teaching in the schools was a stepping-stone to becoming a missionary to Native people. In some mission reports, it seems that the missionary was also doing part-time teaching. Some individuals had long careers as teachers and missionaries, while the names of others appear only once or twice. Clearly though, the Methodists made a considerable commitment to using Native teachers in the schools.

A further criterion of success is whether the Ojibwa supported the day schools. The data clearly indicate that the Ojibwa parents and leaders did. They showed their support in several ways. The Ojibwa were extraordinarily interested in books and reading, an interest which they manifested even before they were converted. In his autobiography, Egerton Ryerson (1883:74) recorded the story of an unconverted Native woman who asked an non-Native boy at Newmarket to teach her to read her book; as an aside Ryerson commented that "most of them have bought books." The boy instructed both the woman and a Native child in reading. A letter in the *Christian Advocate and Journal* (18 January 1828:77-78) also noted that the Rice Lake Ojibwa possessed books and had picked up instruction in the alphabet before their conversion.

A similar interest in books was manifested by Native people from the northern Great Lakes. In 1830 John Sunday (*The Christian Guardian*, 9 October 1830:371), a Native missionary, converted some Native people from Mackinaw who particularly requested books. Sunday gave them copies of the Ojibwa Scriptures; he commented in his journal that "They seemed much pleased with the books, and said they would go and show their Christian brethren at Mackinaw that what they had heard was written in these books in the Chippeway tongue. They wrapped them up carefully as if they had been gold." Another missionary, Joseph Stinson (*The Christian Guardian,* 24 December 1834:26), was surprised to find that Native people encountered during his northern missionary tour made a point of requesting books although they could not read them.

Some of the missionaries also remarked on the powerful desire of the Native people to learn to read and write. For example, Solomon Waldron wrote from Grape Island in 1828 that "Their progress in lessons is exceeding all reasonable expectations. From the beginning, there has been a very strong desire to learn to read" (*Christian Advocate and Journal* 18 January 1828:77-78). Maungkwendtausz, known in English as George Henry, an Ojibwa missionary, described the St. Clair Ojibwa's perception of writing:

> We have very good Schools, our children are learning to read your books, and to put words on paper as I now do; and it is

> astonishment to their parents to see them put words on paper when the words cannot be seen or felt by the hand, and how their children can handle them and preserve them on paper as long as they please (*The Christian Guardian*, 9 August 1837:158).

One might speculate that this interest in books and reading stemmed from the fact that the Ojibwa may already have had had a system of writing and books in which their sacred traditions were recorded. According to the Ojibwa missionary, George Copway (1850:128-137), the Ojibwa had a system of picture writing which was an effective means of communication. This knowledge was still current when the Methodists converted the Ojibwa; Copway, who was born in 1818, asserted that "When I was young, I was taught this." In their writing, the Ojibwa preserved their sacred traditions and a code of moral laws. The records were deposited at a number of locations throughout their territory and guardians were appointed to watch over them. According to Copway, the Ojibwa hid this information from the Europeans for fear of ridicule.

If one can give credence to Copway's arguments,[7] the interest the Ojibwa showed in books, reading, and writing may be explained by the fact that they traditionally attached much importance to writing and preserved many of their important beliefs in written records. The Christian scriptures offered to the Native people by the missionaries and the European system of writing may have been seen as valuable by the Native people and more readily accepted because the Ojibwa had similar and equally valued practices in their own culture.

In addition, the Native people had practical reasons for an interest in schooling. Some felt that instruction in European skills was necessary if their children were to cope with a changed way of life. A group of Native people at Malden told James Evans:

> We acknowledge that we are very poor, and that the prospects of our children are cut off by the whites settling on our hunting grounds, and we know they must know more than their fathers, would they live by-and-by (*The Christian Guardian,* 29 July 1835:150).

Many Native people were interested in reading and arithmetic, which might help them in their dealings with the Europeans. The St. Clair Ojibwa gave this as their reason for accepting a school:

> They had agreed to have their children instructed that they may understand the weights and measures used by the white people, and that they may be able to read and write and keep accounts, that the white men may not cheat them (Thomas Turner to [unknown] 31 May 1833, Miss Corr, Roll 23).

Thus, Native support for the day schools may also have been based on pragmatic grounds; if they had to live in a world where Europeans made the rules, it would help them to learn through schooling what these rules were.

In the first years of the Methodist missionary work, the Native people were anxious for day schools. The Ojibwa often asked for schools as soon as they converted. On several occasions, the Methodists were forced to decline these requests because they had neither teachers nor funds available (Case to Jones, September 1827; Case to Paddock 15 October 1827; Case to Jones 9 December 1827 in Carroll, 1871(3): 152-159). In some locations, the Native people asked for or agreed to accept schools, although stating adamantly that they did not want to become Christian (Turner to [unknown] 31 May 1833, Miss Corr, Roll 23; Missionary Society Report, 1826:7).

The Ojibwa showed their eagerness for schools by making contributions, in both money and labour, to start and maintain them. At the Credit River, the Ojibwa contributed money to build the first schoolhouse (Ryerson, 1883:58-59). At Lake Simcoe the Ojibwa women presented a "quantity of jewelry" to the missionary for him to sell in order to buy books for the children (Missionary Society Report, 1827:1). At Rice Lake, the Ojibwa built a school before a teacher was sent to them (Carroll, 1871(3):152). Once the school was underway, Case noted that the women were selling their wares in the surrounding settlements to support their children at school (Carroll, 1871(3):158-9). At a number of locations, the Native people offered to leave their women or old people with the children while the men went hunting so that the children could attend school (Carroll, 1871(3):152; Missionary Society Report, 1825:15-16; 1827:9).

By the early 1830s, the Methodist day schools appear to have enrolled a considerable proportion of the school-age Ojibwa children. The 1830 Indian Department census of the Ojibwa population (shown in Table 1) includes the number of children in each Band. These figures may be compared to the school enrolment figures in the annual reports of the Missionary Society; the comparison provides an approximate indication of the proportion of children enrolled in the schools (see Table 3). This comparison must be regarded with some caution. It should be noted that the census figures included all children; therefore, some would have been too young to attend school. The census figures for Rice Lake and Lake Simcoe included several Reserves, at some of which the Methodists maintained no school. However, a rough comparison of these figures suggests that by 1835 the day schools enrolled most of the school-age children at the Credit, Munceytown, Grape Island, Rice Lake, and Lake Simcoe.

Table 3: Day School Enrolments and Population of Children, By Band and Year

Band	Enrollment by Year 1830	1835	Number of Children in 1830
Grape Island	40-50	40	82
Rice Lake and Lake Scugog	70-80[a] no school[c]	37	100[b]
Credit River	50[d]	40	70
Lake Simcoe and Saugeen	50 no school	70 40	253[e]
Munceytown	25	60	108
St. Clair	no school	"a few"	189

Source: School enrolments are taken from Miss Soc Rep, 1830, 1835. See Table one for population of children. Note that not all children would be old enough to attend school. I estimate that if the population of children was 108, as at Munceytown, perhaps two-thirds to three-quarters would be of school-age. This means that about 70-80 might be of school age, compared to the actual school enrolment of 60 in 1835.

[a] In 1830 the Rice Lake school enrolled students from Mud Lake and Lake Scugog.
[b] Population includes Mud Lake and Lake Scugog.
[c] The Ojibwa of Lake Scugog moved back and forth between Rice Lake, Balsam Lake, and Lake Simcoe during the 1830s and attended the schools at those reserves.
[d] In 1827 there were 50 scholars in the Credit School (Carroll 1871, v.3:156).
[e] This population included the Ojibwa at Coldwater and Saugeen. There were probably approximately 100 children at Simcoe since the band numbered slightly over 200 people.

The Methodists appear to have had difficulty in coping with the number of children enrolled in the schools, although there was no indication in the literature that the teachers ever turned children away. For example, Peter Jones (Letterbook 10 July 1834) wrote to his wife that he had visited the school at Lake Simcoe; the teacher there had complained that there were fifty to seventy students—too many for one teacher—and threatened to leave unless another teacher was found. Similarly, Case informed his friend, Paddock, that the Missionary Society had been obliged to start a second school at the Credit in 1827 because "50 scholars are too many in one school" (Carroll, 1871(3):156). The Missionary Society was straining its resources to keep up with the number of Native scholars. This suggests that the schools were well-accepted by the Native people.

On the basis of the evidence available, it is difficult to ascertain how thorough and extensive the instruction given in the day schools was. However it must be kept in mind that the *desired* level of schooling for the Native people—that they should become literate in both their own language and English, that they should learn a range of subjects such as geography, history, and arithmetic, and that at least some should be sent on to an advanced level—was an extraordinarily ambitious plan. In the 1820s and 1830s, the Methodist day schools were attempting a level of instruction for the Native people which was far beyond the level common among the non-Native population, either in Europe or in Canada.

Illiteracy was widespread among the settlers in Upper Canada. Although a Common School Act to promote the formation of schools had been passed in 1816, little money was available to set up schools (Dunham, 1927:15). The lack of widespread elementary schooling, affordable by the general population, was a frequent topic of debate and criticism in Upper Canada during the 1820s and 1830s (Craig, 1963:181-187). Teachers were paid £5 a year at a time when an ordinary craftsperson received £75. As a result, teaching was generally so poor that J.G. Althouse (cited in Wilson, 1970:201) remarked, "a teaching post was commonly regarded as the last refuge of the incompetent, the inept, the unreliable." There were few textbooks, no apparatus, maps, blackboards, or teaching aids, and sometimes even no furniture in classrooms. Pedagogy relied on rote learning, with little explanation. "The Pestalozzian movement with its emphasis on the needs of the child" did not begin to influence school policy until after 1850 (Wilson, 1970:201). There was a higher quality of schooling available through schools called grammar schools; however, these schools were few and mainly served the children of the elite. Most settlers could not afford them (Wilson, 1970:196-200). The reality of the 1820s and 1830s was that most settlers had little

or no access to schooling.

Even in England and Europe, illiteracy and a lack of public schooling were common. In his demographic study of literacy in Europe, Carlo Cipolla (1969:55,61) pointed out that at the end of the 17th century, illiterates made up about 55 to 65 percent of the population in Protestant Europe and 70 to 80 percent of the population in Catholic Europe, and that "as late as 1850 about half of the adult population in Europe could neither read nor write." England was similar to other Protestant countries in this regard.

Against this background, the Methodist ambitions for the Native schools appear remarkable. The Methodists provided what was close to universal access to day schools at a time when many settlers had little or no access to schools. The high quality of teaching, the use of the Pestalozzi system, the generous use of apparatus, and the production of reading materials in the Native languages were all far more ample than the facilities available to the ordinary settler. Advanced education would have been far beyond the means of most settlers. If anything, the Methodist system seems more like the grammar schools provided to children of the elite, rather than the facilities available to ordinary settlers.

The Methodist program may be understood in the light of three factors: the general Methodist interest in schooling as a function of Protestant theology; the personality of William Case who was the force behind much of the missionary work and who was inordinately interested in schooling; and the fact that the Methodists were concentrating a large part of their missionary interest on the Ojibwa, who were both readily available and "pagan." In effect the missionaries' hope was to create in the Native communities an utopia, a "mirror of the ideal world," with the Native people exhibiting all the virtues of the perfect European (Berkhofer, 1965:10). The Native people may have been seen as more plastic and more susceptible to being molded into this ideal than the European settlers.

The ambitious and experimental phase of Methodist day school programming appears to have lasted less than ten years, from about 1824 to 1833. It is probable that a merger of the Canadian and British branches of Methodism in 1833 brought with it a more conservative approach to the Native missions and to the day schools.

End of the Experimental Period

As noted above, even after the War of 1812, the Imperial administration continued to fear invasion from the United States. The administra-

tors were unsettled by the tremendous success which the Methodists achieved in converting the Ojibwa. In 1828, Inspector-General Darling, the head of the Indian Department, voiced to his superiors his fear of the influence which the Methodists were gaining over the Ojibwa; he asked:

> Whether Preachers and Teachers, from a Neighbouring Nation whose great object is to obtain the friendship of the Indians, should not be discountenanced by every justifiable means...if the British Government does not step in between the Indians and the Methodist missionaries, it may be repented too late (Surtees, 1975:266-267).

The Imperial administrators were pleased that the Native people were being converted, and were reluctant to stop the process; but they feared that the Ojibwa might be persuaded to side with the Americans in any conflict.

The administrators' concerns were based on the lingering American ties of the Canadian Methodists. Three groups of Methodists—British, American, and Canadian—were active in Canada during the 1820s and 1830s. The British Wesleyan Methodists were headquartered in England. The American Episcopal Methodists operated from the United States. There was also a growing population of Methodists in Canada. These groups allied in a variety of combinations, and control of the Methodist Church in Upper Canada shifted from one group to another. In 1820, the British Wesleyans and the American Episcopal Methodists agreed to divide the missionary field in British North America between them. The British confined themselves to Lower Canada and the Maritimes. The Americans retained responsibility for Upper Canada as a part of the Genesee Conference in the United States. In 1824, a Canadian Conference was created, although it was still linked to the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. In 1828, the Canadian Conference separated from the American Methodists and formed the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada (Encyclopedia of World Methodism 1974: s.v. "Canada"). Even after 1828, the Canadian Methodists still relied heavily on the American Methodists for funds to support the Native missions, and for other resources, such as advanced instruction for the Native converts in the American seminaries.

A key consideration may have been that the Canadian Methodists were victims of their own success in wide-spread conversion. They were straining their financial resources, trying to keep up with the demand for missions and schools. During the late 1820s and early 1830s, the annual reports of the Missionary society contained frequent appeals for money, and threats that the Society would be forced to cut back its mission work unless more money was donated (*The Christian Guardian,* 29 Febru-

ary 1832:61). Smith (1987:116-7) notes that the Methodists needed £2000 or $8,000 American dollars a year for salaries, buildings, and supplies for their nine mission stations, as well as to finance missionary tours to Lakes Huron and Superior. The Americans supplied a grant of $700 a year (Smith, 1987:114). In 1829, Case supplemented the grant by taking Peter Jones and other Native converts on a speaking tour to raise funds in the United States; but even their best efforts netted only $2,400 or £600. The limited population of Methodists in Upper Canada made it difficult to make up the shortfall.

Therefore, for financial and political reasons, the Canadian Methodists were unable to resist when the British Society proposed a union whereby it would assume control of the Native missions (Dunham, 1927:96-7; French, 1962:134-42). The union of the two groups of Methodists was supported by Lieutenant-Governor Colborne who felt that the loyalty of the British Society was less doubtful. In 1833, the Canadian Methodist church joined with the British Wesleyans, forming the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada. Control of the Canadian Methodist missions was transferred to the British Wesleyans. After the union, the government even provided a £900 grant for the missions (*The Christian Guardian*, 1 August 1832:150; 6 November 1833:206).

The British appointed Joseph Stinson, an Englishman, as General Superintendent of Missions. Stinson had no previous experience in working with Native people (Smith, 1987:151). Case, who had been President of the Upper Canadian Methodists, was relegated to the less powerful position of "General Missionary to the Indian Tribes." French (1962:105) calls Case a "mild and humble man" whose beliefs and habits were somewhat archaic, and whose influence among other Methodists was waning even by 1828. His political marginalization was hastened by his increasing preoccupation with Native missions.

Case's loss of power was unfortunate. The day schools were, above all, made possible by William Case, and his ability to persuade other Methodists to devote considerable resources to the Native needs. The flexible approaches used in curriculum and teaching methods together with the willingness to rely on Native teachers may be largely attributed to Case's initiative, and ability to listen to the advice of Native leaders and missionaries such as Peter Jones.

Stinson appears not to have been in harmony with the somewhat laissez-faire practices of Case. Stinson took a more rigid approach to the Native missions and was highly critical of the way they operated. He decided that the Native converts' Christian practice and knowledge of Christian doctrine were not adequate.

> Only four of these [Indian missions] were occupied by resi-

> dent white missionaries.... Stinson soon discovered how inadequate had been the pastoral care provided for the Indian converts.... The new Superintendent, who made strict inquisition, was compelled to use the pruning-knife; scores of those who had given proof of conversion in the early exciting times of the Mission, had gone back to the wilderness, or were lost to sight for want of sufficient shepherding (Findlay and Holdsworth, 1921-24, (1):460-461).

Stinson seems to have wanted the Native people to be Christians in European terms. In contrast, although Case's ambitions were characteristic of a Christian missionary, his activities suggest that he was willing to allow the Native people more latitude in defining their own needs and how these would be met.

This difference in approach appears to have affected the day schools. After 1833, interest in the day school system dwindled. The missionary reports contain fewer and fewer references to experimentation in teaching practices or curriculum. Discussion of the Infant School System virtually disappeared. In the early years, improving the day schools was a constant subject of debate in the missionary reports and correspondence, and in the Methodist newspapers. By the mid to late 1830s, the improvement of the day schools in any way was seldom discussed.

The Aftermath, 1833-1860[8]

In the next few years, a major crisis claimed the missionaries' attention and set back the day schools even further. In 1836-37, the new Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Francis Bond Head, illegally forced the surrender of several of the remaining Indian Reserves in Upper Canada. This harmed the Methodist missions and schools. The Bands living at Lake Simcoe and Coldwater lost the farms they had cleared and the buildings and schools they had built with their own annuity money. The value of these were considerable, but they were given no compensation for their losses (*The Christian Guardian,* 2 September 1840). At Saugeen, the boundaries of the surrender were poorly specified, so that the Ojibwa did not know whether they would lose their farms or not; eventually they did ("Petition to Sir Charles Metcalfe, Governor General, from the Indians at Saugeen," 18 April 1843, Jarvis Papers, B62:142-143). At St. Clair and Munceytown, the Native people did not know whether they would be the next to lose their lands and consequently refused to farm until a definite commitment was made. The groups who lost their farms or refused to farm had to turn to hunting or other pursuits such as basket-making to support themselves (Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, 24 July

1838, Miss Corr, Roll 23). This meant that many parents left the Reserves on extended hunting and trading trips, and took their children out of school. Only at the three key Methodist stations in the east—Grape Island, Credit River, and Rice Lake—did there appear to be little unrest. At these three stations, the Ojibwa continued to farm and to keep their children in school.

The missionaries and the Native people launched furious protests, and a concerted lobbying effort in London (MacLean, 1978:124-128). By the time the situation stabilized after 1840, attention had shifted in a new direction. Residential schools, called Manual Labour Schools, were seen as the new solution to schooling. The Methodists established two residential schools at Alderville and Munceytown. Most educational efforts were focussed on these schools over the next years. The residential schools were intended to help with the problem of variable attendance of the children in the day schools. They were also intended to take older children and teenagers rather than the very young, and to offer a more advanced, comprehensive educational package.[9]

The Methodists did not close their day schools when they shifted to residential schooling. Over the 1840s and 1850s, day schools continued to operate at the mission stations; however, missionaries complained periodically about uneven attendance at the school because of the parents' travels off-Reserve. Diseases swept the Reserves periodically, forcing the schools to close for a time. Sometimes, the schools were closed for long periods for lack of teachers or students. The new Manual Labour Schools at Munceytown and Alderville accepted some day pupils from the surrounding Reserves, but these schools experienced major problems with disease and runaways, which hampered their operations. The day schools never recovered the momentum that they had during the 1820s and 1830s.

Conclusion

The Methodist Ojibwa schools were an innovative experiment in Native education. Within a few years, the Methodists managed to set up a school system that had the full support of a large percentage of the Ojibwa in Upper Canada. Even those Bands which refused to convert still agreed to accept schools. This degree of Native support and participation is, in itself, a significant achievement.

Clearly, such enthusiastic Native participation was fostered by several factors. One was the desperate struggle of the Ojibwa to find a way of dealing with the settlers. The Ojibwa had already realized that a knowledge of books and reading were a key to operating in a European world.

The schools, which offered instruction in reading and arithmetic as well as relevant European general knowledge, offered the Ojibwa a life-line in making the transition. A second factor was the extent to which their own people taught in the schools. Some of the schools were started by talented Ojibwa such as Peter and John Jones. Within a few years, the Ojibwa saw a number of able Native teachers and missionaries gaining an education in the day schools and going on to responsible leadership positions in their communities and churches. This undoubtedly encouraged support of the schools even more.

The response of the Ojibwa to the day schools demonstrates that the Ojibwa were not opposed to their children obtaining schooling. On the contrary, they were willing and able to support schooling which met Native objectives and which they perceived as a positive experience.

A third factor was William Case's unusual ability to respond to Native aspirations and to act as a mentor to talented young people, both Native and non-Native (Smith, 1987:117-118). Case seems to have taken a personal hand in fostering the growth of a number of young Native students and missionaries, and making sure they had opportunities to go on to more advanced schooling or positions in the Church. It is unfortunate that several talented students died young; however, others went on to make life-long contributions to the Native community. Case also seems to have been able to think about schooling in an innovative and flexible way. He was enthusiastic about trying to modify the schools in whatever way might help the Native students, including using Ojibwa-produced reading materials such as the grammar, dictionary, and gospels as well as providing instruction in both Ojibwa and English. Finally, his adoption of one of the latest teaching innovations, the Pestalozzi System, put him well ahead of most other educators in Upper Canada at the time.

Case's unique role can also be seen in what happened once he lost the power to control policy. Within a few years, all innovation in the day schools ground to a halt. Although a number of talented individuals continued to work in the day schools, never again were their efforts focussed into a dynamic movement.

It is a sad comment on Native education in Canada that such a positive educational experiment could flourish briefly, then die unnoticed. How different the whole history of Native education might have been, if that experiment had continued.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Willard Brehaut and Harold Troper, who supervised the research on which this article is based. I also thank anonymous reviewers of *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* who unanimously recommended this article for publication.
2. Most of the primary source materials used can be found in the National Library and the Public Archives of Canada, the United Church Archives in Toronto, and the Toronto Public Library. I am grateful to the librarians for their help.
3. By Imperial Government, I mean the British Government and its administrative representatives in Canada: the Governor-General, the Lieutenant-Governor, and the Indian Department. The Colonial Office in England retained responsibility for Indian Affairs until 1860. From 1816-29, Indian Affairs were administered by the Commander of the Forces. In 1830, jurisdiction over Indian Affairs was transferred to the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada (Canada, Public Archives, 1975:1-2).
4. See MacLean (1978:247-255) for a detailed list of the names, activities, and education of each of these Native missionaries and teachers. Several of these individuals were Six Nations or Muncey, but most were Ojibwa.
5. The nine Native missionaries sent to the United States were William Doxtader, John Doxtader, Kahgegagahbowh or George Copway, Peter Marksman, John Cahbeej, Enmegahbowh or John Johnson, Thomas Frazier, Saswayasega or Thomas Magee, and John Taunchey.
6. The Methodists did manage to send several more students on to advanced levels during the 1840s and 1850s, including George Blaker and William Wawanosh.
7. George Copway's credibility has been questioned by Donald Smith (1975:330-335). However, other evidence suggests that there may be value in Copway's account. Copway gave examples of the picture writing used and translated the symbols. It is striking that the symbols are almost identical to rock carvings found in the Peterborough area (where Copway was brought up) and described by Vastokas and Vastokas (1973) in *Sacred Art of the Algonkians: A Study of the Peterborough Petroglyphs*. Densmore (1929:89-91) recorded that the teachings of the Midewewin, the traditional Ojibwa religion, were written in picture characters on bark scrolls. There appears to be reason to give attention to Copway's arguments.
8. For a detailed review of this period, including the specific situation on each Reserve from year to year, see MacLean (1978).

9. An anonymous reviewer points out that we must be careful not to evaluate the Methodists' decision solely on the basis of our current knowledge about residential schools. Methodists such as Case and Jones believed that residential schools would be an improvement to the schooling program, and that they would solve certain problems such as variable attendance.

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