

**Momis Komet (“We Will Endure”)**

**The Indigenization of Christian Hymn  
Singing by Creek and Seminole Indians**

By

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## Preface

Creek and Seminole<sup>1</sup> churches in Oklahoma constitute a unique form of Christianity in America. Their distinctiveness derives from a particular history, set of religious beliefs, and cultural practices shared among church members. Congregations are overwhelmingly Creeks and/or Seminoles whose ancestors were part of the massive forced migration — the late 1830s to early 1840s “trail of tears” — from the southeastern United States to Oklahoma. During the summer months of 2001 and 2002 I visited three Creek and Seminole churches in east central Oklahoma — Spring Baptist Church (Seminole) in Sasakwa, Saltcreek Methodist Church (Creek) in Bearden, and Eufaula Sandcreek Baptist Church (Seminole) in Wewoka. I also conducted several formal and informal interviews with church members both in person and over the telephone, and I made audio recordings of church services and hymn rehearsal sessions. Based on my observations and interviews with church members, visitors — when they do attend — are generally from neighboring Indian tribes who come for the four-day Big Sunday interchurch services.<sup>2</sup> I was the only complete “outsider” in attendance during all my visits to these churches. The communities themselves are located in clusters of rural

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<sup>1</sup> The terms “Seminole”, “Creek” and “Muskogee” require a preliminary explanation. Creek and Seminole Indians share a common history and culture. The Seminoles, prior to acquiring their name in the early nineteenth-century — a corruption of the Spanish Cimarron, meaning “wild or runaway” — were “Upper” Creeks who inhabited the northwestern portion of Creek lands in present-day Alabama and Georgia. In this thesis, I use the contemporary terms that Oklahoma Creeks and Seminoles use to refer to themselves, i.e. Creeks, Seminoles and when it is most convenient in describing both Creeks and Seminoles together, the term Muskogee is used. Apparently, use of the term “Muskogee” to define Creek and Seminole people is a fairly new phenomenon. Two key Creek respondents, Ted Isham and Margaret Mauldin state that they grew up referring to themselves as Creeks; however, they recognize that primarily younger Creeks and Seminoles today refer to themselves as either Creek, Seminole or Muskogee (Isham, personal communication, 21 March 2004; Mauldin, personal communication, 7 March 2004). I will also use the term Muskogee to refer to the indigenous language spoken by Creeks and Seminoles.

<sup>2</sup> Big Sundays are held by each traditional church four times per year. I give a more in-depth description of the three types of Muskogee church services in Chapters I and III.

Creek and Seminole towns which seldom interact with “outsiders.” The churches are even more isolated from “outsider” influence than are the Creek and Seminole towns. Thus, in my first two weeks in the towns, I was clearly the center of keen curiosity and treated with respectful politeness during my visits.

It was evident through my research that the relative isolation of the Christian church community results from conscious maneuvering by congregational members and that maintaining exclusive communities ensures the continuity of Creek and Seminole Christian traditions. At the core of these communities is the Muskogee language; the Muskogee hymns; community interaction, support and memories of those “gone on” (to heaven); and belief in Christian doctrines, sometimes mixed with traditional<sup>3</sup> (pre-Christian) Creek-Seminole religious beliefs and practices. Many Creeks and Seminoles are deeply concerned with the preservation of their hymn tradition. While Muskogee Christians have conceded to assimilation into mainstream American society in several ways,<sup>4</sup> I hope to demonstrate in contrast to previous research (Merriam 1955<sup>5</sup>), how the Christian churches and the hymns sung therein have become a key site for the preservation of the distinct Creek and Seminole cultures. My objective is to explore why this is so and the ways in which Creeks and Seminoles maintain traditions through singing hymns.

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<sup>3</sup> I use traditional in this study not to infer “an original state of being” or “lack of change” but rather a community or communities of people who consciously maintain selective cultural practices and beliefs that are inter-generationally passed down and a unique and separate identity that is maintained as distinct from other societies. Traditional practices within Muskogee churches are embedded in performance rituals practiced during church services, in beliefs and in the congregations’ collective memories of their forebears. See Schultz (1999: 3-9) for a more expansive explanation of this use of the term “traditional”. It may be necessary to point out further, however, that among Muskogees the term “traditionalist” is broadly used to define those Indians who practice the contemporary pre-Christian Stomp Dance religion.

<sup>4</sup> For example, many Christians no longer attend traditional, pre-Christian ceremonies.

<sup>5</sup> See page 6.

In Chapter I, I summarize previous research conducted on Indian hymn singing, which emphasizes how indigenous, tribally specific musical patterns have been retained or renewed in native hymn singing and I present an alternative theoretical view. Then, I give an overview of the Muskogee hymn singing tradition. The importance that Creeks and Seminoles attach to hymn preservation is examined, along with why the hymns are key preservation sites for Muskogee culture. Queries are posited. What are the contemporary dilemmas in maintaining the Muskogee hymn singing tradition? How will indigenous cultural patterns and the Muskogee language be used to perpetuate Creek and Seminole churches as “insider” communities?

In Chapter II, I give historical background on the Creek and Seminole Indians in the southeastern United States. This section covers the ethnogenesis of the Creek people, including the development of the “Creek Confederacy,” originally encompassing a number of diverse southeastern Indian tribes. I explore how Creek and Seminole identities were affected by various political factions and circumstances of the southeast. Then I address key indigenous cultural and ethnic markers of Creeks and Seminoles, i.e. their towns, intra-town relationships, and their religion – the “busk” or Green Corn Religion. I demonstrate how Creek history and culture were subjected to Creek/Seminole separations and ruptures based on political circumstances. I conclude Chapter II with a section on Creek and Seminole missionaries discussing their role — along with that of Creek and Seminole interpreters —in the creation of Muskogee hymn.

In Chapter III, I examine the religious and spiritual beliefs of Creeks and Seminoles that give meaning to the music and performance practices and I point out the

distinctiveness of Muskogee hymn texts showing a mixture of Muskogee and Western thematic and performance patterns.

I begin Chapter IV by describing the three types of songs and hymns (English and Muskogee hymns and gospel songs) performed in Muskogee churches with special attention to the musical properties and distinctive performance style of Muskogee hymns. I then draw comparisons between the indigenous (pre-Christian) dance-songs, their contemporary manifestation (Stomp Dance Songs<sup>6</sup>) and Muskogee hymns, showing the retention of some musical properties and deviation from the indigenous forms in others. I conclude the Chapter by presenting a model of a traditional church service.

Chapter V is a recapitulation of preceding chapters. I summarize how Muskogee hymns, as negotiated, hybrid realities, are reflective of indigenous and Western practices. They reflect a conflation of Western and indigenous phenomena into something new. My concluding observation is that Muskogee churches, as “insider communities”, while influenced by Western culture, remain under the control of Creek and Seminole Christians who have determined to maintain a distinct Muskogee Christian tradition.

The body of research on Indian hymn singing has been minimal to date. This research will constitute the first ethnomusicological study of Muskogee hymn singing. As such, it is hoped that a basis for understanding the ways in which significant historical and social

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<sup>6</sup> The contemporary term “Stomp Dance”, in addition to referring to the religion itself is a generic term referring to one of several social dances performed between various religious ceremonial rites (Howard 1968: 119). The term “Stomp Dance” came into usage sometime in the late-twentieth century. Therefore, I use an earlier term, “Green Corn Religion” to refer to the pre-Christian Creek and Seminole religion and I use the term “Stomp Dance” to refer to contemporary, twentieth-century practice of the indigenous Creek and Seminole religion. There is no documentation of the origin of the term “Stomp Dance”. The first published uses of “Stomp Dance” and “Stomp Ground” are made by James Howard (Howard 1968: 19, 45, 63, 81-83, 94, 99), who offers no explanation to either term’s origin. Howard, who conducted research in the southeast and Oklahoma uses the terms “Stomp Dance”, “dance” and “Stomp Ground”, “Square Ground” interchangeably.

meanings coalesce for the Muskogee in hymn singing and a basis for a greater understanding of Indian hymns in general will be laid for future studies in this area.

## Chapter I

### **The Ethnomusicology of Indian Hymns**

Since the 1980s ethnomusicological studies of Indian Christian hymns have moved beyond acculturation theories which posited that pre-contact societies existed in a state of isolation and cultural stagnation until contact was made with another autonomous society (*Columbia University Press* 2003). Ethnomusicologists Alan Merriam and Bruno Nettl (Merriam: 1955, Nettl: 1955) pointed to acculturation in the 1950s as a major cause of cultural change. Merriam (1955: 28-34) argues that when cultures with similar musical traits make contact change is facilitated. Merriam compares the traditional music practices of Flathead Indians from western Montana and the urban African musical practices of the Congo to Western music. Whereas similarities are shared between Western music and that of the Congo in terms of harmonies, melodies, instrumental accompaniment, polyphony and timbre, acculturation practices prevail. On the other hand, acculturation is not evident in the music of Flathead Indians, according to Merriam, due to a dearth of similar musical characteristics and practices between indigenous and Western factions. (*op.cit*: 32-34).

Furthermore, anthropologists have historically held a quintessentially Western stance, focusing on “concepts like capitalism, mode of production, world system, class and class consciousness, hegemony, labor power, surplus extraction, [and] technologies of power...”(Biolsi 1997: 16-7). It was presumed that non-Western societies were first and foremost subject to acculturation, and contact with Western society was the catalyst for change for Indians and other non-Westerners (*op. cit*: 3-24, 144-5). The flaws of this theory are apparent to contemporary anthropologists who now realize that societal

interaction has always been a part of social life, that societal change may be based on a wide variety of factors, and that contact-generated change takes place in Western as well as in non-Western societies. However, the wide acceptance of this early view of acculturation, prior to the 1980s, led anthropologists to overlook native Christianity as a “non-traditional” or “non-authentic” Indian practice not among their research priorities.

In response to this theoretical approach post-1980 anthropologists and ethnomusicologists included the voices and views of their “respondents.” The motive was to create a more balanced account where the merging of ethnology and hermeneutics could occur through dialogue between researcher and respondent rather than as a researcher’s monologue explaining or interpreting “native” cultures after the fact (Tedlock 1983: 312-321; Tedlock and Mannheim 1995: 1-33, 253-289). A survey of post-1980 ethnologies reveals that the general interest among researchers shifted to queries on how indigenous practices and beliefs have been retained or renewed in native Christianity. Research reveals that such practices and beliefs are retained or renewed in a variety of ways. Creek and Seminole efforts to retain or renew indigenous languages – often through hymn singing – are one such example. Is retaining indigenous language through hymn singing, especially in the midst of widespread change in other cultural arenas, only important to Creeks and Seminoles? Kiowa Christians interviewed by Luke Lassiter express similar sentiments. One of Lassiter’s respondents stated that “[t]he use of Native language ... communicates a connection to that which came before, that which is traditional, and, for many, that which is godly” (Lassiter 2002: 81). Is the precise retention of the spoken language sought in hymn singing or is it the overall feeling and memories that singing the songs in the indigenous languages evokes which holds

importance? One of my key respondents, Margaret Mauldin expressed, “it’s just the overall sound... when you hear these songs... you know what they are. It kind of takes you back to a memory of security. We were very, very secure” (Mauldin, personal communication, 6 November 2002).

### **The Study of Indian Hymns**

A survey of several Indian hymn studies reveals both parallels and contrasts with Muskogee hymn practices. Luke Eric Lassiter’s research (Lassiter 1998:139-52), similar to my research on Creek and Seminole churches, shows that Kiowa society faces the threat of losing its indigenous language. As a consequence, tribal distinctiveness, as expressed in the indigenous language of the hymns, in church communities and in the specific Indian communities at large, is also at risk of being fundamentally altered. Lassiter identifies three main types of hymns sung in the Kiowa church. The first genre is Indian hymns. There are a number of similarities between Muskogee and Kiowa hymns. They are both monophonic, non-antiphonal, sung a cappella, transmitted orally and performed from memory, i.e. “inspired by the Holy Spirit” (Lassiter 1998: 143; 2001: 342, 343). Muskogee and Kiowa hymns also share a commonality of a song leader who starts off hymns and leads the chorus into the repeat of hymn sections (Lassiter 2002: 131).

In other ways, Kiowa hymns differ from Muskogee hymns. Kiowas who migrated to the Northern Plains in the pre-historic era and to the Southern Plains in the early eighteenth century (*op. cit.*: 7-8) compose hymns that share musical traits with other Plains Indians. Hymn melodies are generally terraced, moving from higher to lower pitches; for example, short phrases of generally between eight to twelve notes are

repeated several times with slight melodic alterations at each repeat. The second and third types of Kiowa church songs are English language hymns and gospel. These latter two are sometimes translated and sung in the Kiowa language. Lassiter notes that many of the Kiowa Indian hymns refer to tribally specific or shared community experiences. Largely “composed” by Kiowas, they resemble the Great Plains Indians’ War Dance songs in musical construction of strophic form with terraced phrases and repetition of selected stanzas or the complete order of stanzas repeated several times (Lassiter 2002: 131; Nettl 1954: 32). Thematically, says a Lassiter respondent, Kiowa hymns reflect Ghost Dance songs, too.

Actually, our Kiowa hymns are very similar to our Ghost Dance songs from way back. It’s really surprising, but many of those Ghost Dance songs say almost the same thing as the Bible. Many white people back then in the 1800s, they thought the Ghost Dance was going to lead to an Indian uprising. But those Indians were praying to meet their relatives in heaven — just like the same way that our Kiowas hymns come today. (*ibid*: 92-93)

Michael McNally has conducted research on Ojibwa hymns finding that motifs translated from English to Ojibwa carry a different significance in their meaning. According to McNally “sin” in Ojibwa, for instance, does not carry equal weight to its meaning in English. Whereas the Ojibwa equivalent, “baataaziwin” means “to wrong” or “transgress” the natural order of things, *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* describes “sin” as “an ever-present reality that enslaves the human race and has corrupted God’s created order.” (Achtemeir 1996: 1,026). “Baataaziwin,” which implies that a natural balance needs to be restored, is not as severe a transgression as “to sin.” The notion of living “the Christian life” also takes on new significance among Ojibwas. “The Christian life” is not a strict and narrow road that must be followed to avoid the severest of

consequences. Rather, hymn texts refer to the Christian life as “a life of ‘great work’” and a “journey along a path” (McNally 2000: 63, 65). Thus, for the Ojibwa, when English words are translated into Ojibwa, they take on an indigenous meaning.

Research conducted by Thomas McElwain (1990) on Seneca hymn texts that were in use during the early nineteenth-century produced results similar to McNally’s findings, i.e. English words, take on indigenous meanings, once translated into Seneca. The Seneca language does not lexicalize or grammaticalize in the same way as does English. Words in Seneca tend to be longer than English words, and translations from English to Seneca end up being loose paraphrases. McElwain states that “[a] paraphrase paradoxically stimulates the selection of expressions equivalent to the English ones on one hand, while giving leeway for native elements foreign to the original text (*ibid*: 83).” McElwain infers that those who paraphrased English hymns into Seneca are native and further states that the texts demonstrate a cross-section of Seneca Christian ideology by “individuals ... widely differing in acculturative levels (*ibid*: 100).” McElwain breaks the hymns into 1) a large portion that reflect pre-Christian cosmological and ceremonial phenomena; 2) those that philosophically equate native with Christian ideology; 3) those that include Christian ideas in the Seneca language, and 4) those that express an acceptance of Christian ideas without any accommodation to pre-Christian cosmology or thought (McElwain 1990: 100). The first two lines of the hymn written below entitled “Before Jehovah’s Awful Throne,” illustrate some of these points.

Original English text:

“Before Jehovah’s awful throne,  
Ye nations, bow with joy;  
Know that the Lord is God alone;  
He can create, and he destroy.”

Seneca paraphrased text:

“You nations on the earth, be grateful toward Haweni:yo’,  
who is making us do things.  
He himself Haweni:yo’ has given us sustenance, and breath:  
and he himself has fashioned our lives.”

McElwain points out that in the Seneca text, much of the pre-Christian meanings — “no awful throne, nothing sacred about joy, no uniting of creation and destruction in one divine figure...” have simply been written out. In their place are references that have meanings in pre-Christian Seneca belief, i.e. to be “grateful toward Haweni:yo’” (God) for his sustenance and breath (*ibid*: 86-87).

Studies of Cree hymnody by Lynn Whidden (Whidden 1989) point to changes in performance practices reverting to indigenous ways. The indigenous practice of “owning” songs has resurfaced. Individuals who know the beginning pitches and start hymns off are said to “own” the hymn. According to Whidden “there was no tradition of group singing” among the Cree (*ibid*: 22). Everyone had a right to sing, regardless of vocal quality. Rather emphasis was placed on the exact repetition of words in stories and song. In hymn singing, these characteristics are reflected by a precise adherence to the hymn text rather than a harmonious-choral blend.

David E. Draper’s research on Mississippi Choctaw hymn singing is particularly noteworthy for the queries it raises regarding similarities between the Choctaw and Muskogee hymn models. Choctaw and Muskogee hymns texts were developed by Christian missionaries and indigenous interpreters. Both are monophonic with male and female choruses singing in octave unison. The Choctaw hymnal, “*abba isht tuluwa*” lists hymns according to functionality, i.e. morning, evening, wedding and, funeral hymns

(Draper 1982: 48). Some Muskogee hymns are also separated functionally by time of day (morning, evening hymns) and acknowledgement of life change (funeral hymns). However, as discussed below, today other criteria generally determine which hymns will be sung in weekly Muskogee church services (*Nakcokv Esyvhiketv* 1998: 5, 21; personal communication, Tiger April 1, 2002). As for the hymns themselves, Muskogee and Choctaw hymns are performed replete with grace notes or slurs. Draper describes the timbre of Choctaw hymn singing as “a relaxed throat, with considerable nasality”. I describe Muskogee hymn singing timbre as “open-throated”.

There are also significant differences between Muskogee and Choctaw hymn singing. A Mississippi Choctaw hymn idiosyncrasy not found in Muskogee hymnody is to sing a number of different complete hymn texts (not simply different verses) to the same melody. In other words, hymn texts (which are numbered), 68, and 73 are sung to the tune, “Pilgrim’s Farewell” and text numbers 45 and 117 correspond to “Shed Not a Tear”. Draper describes the song form of Choctaw hymns as strophic, i.e. “one specific segment of music [is] repeated for all verses of the piece” (Draper 1982: 48). This is most often not the case with the Muskogee model where hymns feature sections repeated at the discretion of a song leader. Choctaw hymn singing also uses a song leader; however, while the Choctaw song leader is always male, the Muskogee hymn leader is most often male with women less frequently leading. Although Draper does not elaborate on the role of the Choctaw leader, the brevity of his description leads one to believe that his role is less prominent than that of the Muskogee song leader. Briefly, the Muskogee song leader plays an important didactic role in hymn performance protocol, determining which hymn to sing and which hymn section or chorus to repeat, and his

performance is demonstrative of proper vocal timbre and performance behavior. Some Choctaw hymns are in the stanza-chorus format also characteristic of Anglo-American hymnody. This is not the case with Muskogee hymns. Draper identifies some Choctaw hymn melodies as modeled on Southern Anglo-Protestant hymnody while others, he suggests, resemble native repertoires. This is significant for my research on Muskogee melodies. Approximately two-thirds of the repertoire I have transcribed of Muskogee hymns clearly do not suggest a Western melodic/harmonic format while one-third of the hymns in my transcriptions may embody such a reflection. Further research is needed to compare Southern Anglo-American hymn models to Muskogee hymnody. This may shed light on the origin of Muskogee hymn structure, the derivation of which remains unknown at this point in time.

Charlotte Heth has conducted research on Cherokee hymnody. As with all hymn models discussed thus far, Cherokee hymns have been indigenized in tribally specific ways. Their indigenization is reflective of the Cherokee Stomp Dance<sup>7</sup> in which both hymns and Stomp Dance songs are performed in the responsorial (call and response) format. The hymns themselves are modeled after the stanza-chorus format and they reflect a diatonic harmony with a tonal center. As with Choctaw hymnody, Heth attributes these characteristics to missionary (i.e. Western) influence on the development of the hymns. Similar to Muskogee and Choctaw hymnody, there are both male and female hymn leaders who enact strong didactic roles; however, the Cherokee hymn leader determines the direction a hymn will take in performance by borrowing melodies from other hymns, while he continues to sing the text from the hymn he has begun. One

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<sup>7</sup> Variations of the Stomp Dance are performed by all five of the so-called southeastern “civilized tribes” (the Creek, Seminole, Choctaw, Chickasaw Cherokee), i.e. those tribes which arrived in Indian Territory by way of the forced “trail of tears”.

distinction of the Cherokee hymn is that it is often spontaneously harmonized by the chorus of singers while being performed. There is often piano accompaniment, and the accompanist displays considerable aptitude and dexterity in following the hymn leader's spontaneous decision of hymn choice—selection of the key of the hymn and switching to alternate (borrowed) hymn sections (Heth, personal communication, 12 December 2004).

Post-1980s Indian hymnody studies began to address previously overlooked retentions of indigenous practices and beliefs in Indian Christian hymn singing — and they should be commended for doing so. However, the beginnings of a theoretical alternative is evident in the studies of Draper and Heth where the dynamic interplay between the historical and the contemporary, the indigenous and Western players serves to re-present and create new meanings. Draper and Heth are beginning to explore hybridity as a phenomenon in the domain of Indian hymnody studies.

### **Negotiated Representations**

Hybridity represents neither a purely re-indigenization of the Other nor a hegemony of colonial voices. It is instead the fusion of both and more than that — it is the creation of something altogether new. Furthermore, hybridization often takes place within the realms of covert activity, enabling what might otherwise be subversive actions, to create unthreatening, organic cultural formations.<sup>8</sup> Homi K. Bhabha states,

[t]he language of critique is effective not because it keeps forever separate the terms of the master and the slave ... but to the extent to which it overcomes the grounds of opposition and opens up a space of translation: a place of hybridity, figuratively speaking, where the construction of a political object that is new, *neither the one nor the other*, properly alienates our political expectations, and changes,

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<sup>8</sup> Robert Young is credited for making this insightful comparison (Young 1995: 23).

as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics”. (Bhabha 1994: 25).

As I hope to demonstrate, for Muskogee Christians hybridization has meant oscillating between the Muskogee and English languages, often in the course of the same sermon; it has meant singing English as well as Muskogee hymns; it has meant the conflation of Christian and Muskogee ceremonial beliefs and their fusion into something new; and it has meant the retention of indigenous religious practices within Christian churches. Hybridization, for Creeks and Seminoles, has also meant an ongoing tension between pro-Westernization and pro-indigenization Muskogee factions where they oscillate, negotiate, and challenge one another to fuse an alternative reality – neither purely Muskogee nor purely Western—and it has meant maintaining “insider” Muskogee Christian communities in the face of local and global economies that lure Creek and Seminole youth to the cities. How do Muskogee Christians coalesce indigenous and Western meanings? I asked Samuel Berry, a member of Tallahassee Methodist Church if he practiced the Stomp Dance Religion (referred to as the Green Corn Religion or the “busk” in former times).

No, I don't, but I'm aware of it. I probably know more about what they're doing than they (Muskogee traditional ceremonialists) do, because it's biblical. It parallels the Hebrews and the Jews... I've been wanting to ...tell the story from my perspective and tell about who we are and teach this, because what this does, it helped me to know who I really am and what I really am. If you ask, 'what makes you a Creek Indian? You wear white man's pants, white man's shirt and speak his language, drive his car, live in his house, go to his school. So what makes you Creek Indian?' ... I'd start on how we came to know our ceremonial sense [sic]... [T]here's a word they use in the [indigenous] ceremonial ground that means God — Ohfvnkv [phonetically, Ohfanka]... When we separated ourselves from the ceremonial ground and began churches

there was change in our spiritual lives. When we came to our spiritual lives we had to change the way we called Him God... [W]e did not know nothing about this until the missionaries came and told us. So those who have knowledge have to accept... We Christians call Him Hesaketvmese... You have to understand that this is a process of spirituality. If you cling to the old, then you're not part of the new. But you can still retain this... That's why we have to remember our story and show that God was with us in the beginning. (Berry, personal communication, 6 November 2002)

For Muskogee Christians, hybridization — rather than rejection of Western concepts, practices, language, religion — is acceptance, but it is acceptance on mediated terms. It is also an acceptance that change is inevitable and a coming to terms with the cultures one encounters. As such, hybridization is a potent instrument, empowering Muskogees to intervene and shape new spaces where their voices can be heard alongside others.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In answer to the question, “Why are the hymns important to you?”, Margaret Mauldin replied:

I think that Indian children, back a couple decades ago, maybe a decade ago, you lived in a very secure world. You weren't stressed out. There was a bunch of white people, and we were pretty much communities, even though we might not live right next door to Indians. All of the social activities were with the family... the fourth of July dinners or just any other dinners or get-togethers. It was all Indian. And it was really odd to have a white person in the group. Not so odd that you'd stare at him. He'd be a good friend, and everybody would know him, but it'd still... you'd see this person like they were glowing [laughs]. And then our church life, it'd be the same way when we went to town. My grandmother and my parents, they'd just stand around and talk to Indians. And it was like there were no white people around. And so we grew up in a time... you know no one yelled at us. I don't think we were abused. We might have been overworked, because kids had to work, and we didn't know we could say 'I don't wanna do that'.

No, those words never, never crossed our mind. We were very, very secure in our upbringing. And it's what made it so secure... but in the midst of this security you could hear the language and you could hear the songs. (Mauldin, personal communication, 6 November 2002)

Margaret Mauldin is passionately committed to preserving the Muskogee language and hymns. She was raised in Arbeaka (Creek) Church and today she involves herself in many diverse activities including the co-authoring of *A Dictionary of Creek/Muskogee*; teaching the Creek language at Oklahoma University at Norman and organizing an annual Muskogee Song Festival there. According to Mauldin, World War II affected significant change in Creek and Seminole communities.

Most of the sermons are ninety-eight percent spoken in English now, and it's changing our traditions. Ninety-five percent of the Creek-Seminole young men volunteered for service. I was about six or seven years old then. There were no young men in church. They were in battle. I would say that nearly half of these men didn't come home. Then there was maybe another twenty or thirty percent that took jobs in the coastal cities. These young men married non-Indians. I think that all the Indian men who went to war were fluent Indian speakers. So in the last twenty-five years there's been a big gap that has not been filled. There are now younger men who would like to or are even trying to take the place of the older generations who spoke and sang in our language. I think that in ten years these traditions will be lost if more people don't make an effort to revitalize them now. They don't know the Creek language like they used to. (Mauldin, personal communication, 5 May 2002)

At the same time, I learned that the hymns sung in traditional Creek and Seminole churches are one of the primary sources in which the Muskogee language has been preserved. For traditional Creek and Seminole Christians, church is the center of their social as well as spiritual lives. On average, congregations range in number from ten to

forty or more, depending on the type of service being held. Regularly attending members go to church one or two times per week.

Creek and Seminole Christian churches are distinctively important Muskogee sites. Unlike regular daily activities where English is routinely spoken, church sermons are still partially spoken and hymns are largely sung (fifty percent or more) in the Muskogee language. During contemporary practices of the pre-Christian Muskogee religion known as the Stomp Dance Ceremony, some Muskogee words are spoken as part of the ceremony, Stomp Dances and Stomp Dance songs (that use Muskogee words and non-lexical “vocal” sounds) are performed and, of course, the ceremonies themselves are actual retentions of traditional pre-Christian Muskogee religious culture. However, in Oklahoma, the Stomp Dances are held seasonally in the fall months of the year, whereas Christian church services and various other church functions continue throughout the year.

Since the 1940s the development of powwows has enhanced a pan-Indian, inter-tribal sense of solidarity among Creek/Seminole and other Indian communities. Despite being pan-Indian events that also include content from individual tribes, powwows are not a key site for the preservation or revitalization of tribally specific (i.e. Muskogee) language or musical practices.

While some Muskogee speakers have a vested interest in maintaining the hymns, others perceive that change is inevitable or necessary. Continuously, the problem of a diminishing youth population in the congregations came up in my discussions. Letha King, an eighty-nine year-old member of the Seminole Spring Church spoke of a chasm that has developed between the Creek and Seminole

elders and the youth. According to King, young people are not attending church as regularly as before and they are forgetting the Muskogee language and “Muskogee ways.” “I think that the world in the past forty or fifty years, well a lot of Indian young people, they like the world — the excitement of it. And the youth just don’t want anything to do with the church” (King and Tiger, personal communication, 1 April 2002). Margaret Mauldin also addressed the problem:

[The songs] just invoke memories that... I don’t have those feelings now [laughs]. You’re just in a fight every day world, you know? And I think that’s what our kids are really, really living without. I can see how Indian children, teenagers now, they don’t have that...they don’t hear the language like that. They’re not in the midst of a lot of laughter, a lot of you know...just everyday life... the caring...without people hugging you saying ‘I love you’... And now I guess that’s how all the alcohol and drugs have come in, because they’re just out there. They don’t have anything. They don’t know who they are. They’re not Indian and they’re certainly not white either. And they’re trying to exist and get along and they definitely get off on the wrong track. (Mauldin, personal communication, 6 November 2002)

The paradox lies in the hymns themselves, for while the hymns embody important aspects of traditional Creek and Seminole Christian culture, the youth, who are not carrying on the Muskogee language, are increasingly estranged from the churches and the hymns, where the language continues to be regularly used. A conversation between three Creek and Seminole Christians, who cover an age range of roughly seventy years illustrates this dilemma. Letha King (Creek) was eighty-nine at the time that the following conversation took place, her daughter Louina (Seminole-Creek) was in her sixties, and a family friend, Kevin (Seminole) was in his twenties.

Letha: “Sandcreek Eufaula [Church] doesn’t have programs for the children.”

Louina: “That’s what I’ve been saying. They need to have songs, everything in English for the youngsters who don’t speak the [Muskogee] language. These old people are going to die.”

Kevin: “Or put it [English translations] up on a screen or something. You know how some churches have screens?”

Louina: “Right, or those churches are going to die!”

Kevin: “That’s why a lot of ‘em don’t have no young people in ‘em.”

Letha: “That’s the only thing that makes me sad.”

Louina: “In the white churches today, it’s not the old people that are important. They have everything for the youth.”

Letha: “Well I hope they [Muskogee Christians] never give up their singing. That’s what I always tell ‘em when I testify. I looove their singin.”

Louina: “But the young people are not going to go there and listen to songs that they don’t understand or can’t sing.”

The conversation above illustrates a contemporary dilemma. Letha, on the one hand, yearning for a return to previous times when singing the Muskogee hymns was more prevalent — Kevin and Louina on the other, asserting that change is inevitable, and it is best, therefore, to prepare for it. The encounter demonstrates an oscillation of a society in transition and a negotiation of how the future should be shaped.



Letha King in her home  
(photo taken by K. Taborn)

Photo of Kevin Tiger  
removed to avoid copyright infringement

Regardless of opinions that change is necessary, observation of the subtle dynamics of church protocol reveals that the traditional churches, as important strongholds of Muskogee culture, have been carefully guarded from outside influences. This became evident to me on a number of occasions.

Aside from their regular Sunday (prayer meeting) services, Creek and Seminole churches in Oklahoma hold services called “Big Sundays” and “Fourth Sundays.” According to Margaret Mauldin, the difference between Fourth and Big Sundays is based on denomination and practice. Methodist churches, until recently, rotated Fourth Sundays with other churches within a four-church circuit. In such cases, host churches would invite members (within their circuit) to attend their Fourth Sunday gatherings once every fourth week. Big Sundays, are held by Baptists in which neighboring church congregations are invited to attend (Mauldin, personal communication, 20 July 2003).<sup>9</sup> Big Sundays are held four times per year. My estimate of church attendance when I was present is thirty to forty members may attend Fourth Sunday services; Big Sundays host approximately fifty persons; regular Sunday churches average twenty attendees, and

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<sup>9</sup> Schultz describes Fourth and Big Sundays as practiced among the Seminoles. Differences between Seminole Fourth and Big Sundays are based on practice. Schultz does not mention denominationally-based differences as does Margaret Mauldin mentioned above: “Seminole Baptist churches hold Sunday services at their church grounds once every four Sundays... The [Fourth Sunday] meeting weekend is a series of gatherings that begin the Wednesday or Thursday before the actual fourth Sunday...[M]ultiple camp houses are opened to accommodate the large number of visitors...” (Schultz 1999: 133-5). According to Schultz, Big Sundays among the Seminoles also comprise a number of services, held from the preceding Thursday evening through Sunday afternoon. Pastors and deacons from neighboring churches are invited to speak at Big Services and attendance by the host congregation — considered obligatory — is larger than Fourth or regular Sunday or Wednesday night services. “The distinctive element of the Big [Sunday] Meeting is the ritual blessing and consumption of bread and wine: the Communion service” (*op. cit.*: 143, 155).

Wednesday night services average five to ten in attendance.<sup>10</sup> I attended a Big Sunday church service at Eufaula Sandcreek Baptist Church with Letha King. The service I attended included five different preachers from neighboring churches who delivered approximately forty-five minute sermons each. All of the preachers were Indian except one who was white. Letha King stressed that the lone-white preacher was a novelty that would not have taken place years ago.

I observed another example of the Creek/Seminole church environments as “insider” communities. A white church member of the Seminole Spring Baptist Church was raised as a neighbor and a schoolmate to Seminoles with whom she now attends church. Indian members of the church told me childhood stories of growing up with her and expressed pride that she “sang the [Muskogee] hymns so well, even better than I do” (unidentified Spring Baptist Church member). Unlike the visiting white preacher at Eufaula Sandcreek Baptist Church, she was not an “outsider.” She was culturally and linguistically a Seminole. Rather than introducing outside influences into the Seminole church community, she had adapted to Seminole cultural norms herself and this is what mattered to other Seminole church members.

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<sup>10</sup> Margaret Mauldin states “[t]he largest attendance [sic] at Indian churches are at an all-time low. There are very small congregations and a few larger ones. Membership on the books is much larger than the actual attendance.” (Mauldin, personal communication, 20 July 2003).



Letha King outside Eufaula Sandcreek Baptist Church  
Photo taken by Karen Taborn

These accounts point to choices made by Creek and Seminole Christians as to whom is to be included in Muskogee church communities, what the criterion should be, and how an “insider” Muskogee Christian community should be maintained or altered. Furthermore, what is important is that deliberation takes place within the Muskogee Christian community and power is controlled and exercised from within.

Muskogee hymns hold significance for Creek and Seminole singers because, as I hope to demonstrate — whether through text, melody or repeated performances — they invoke memories enabling the singers to transcend temporal and spatial boundaries and to retain not only a tribally specific identity, but also to distinguish themselves from other Christians of other ethnicities in the broad American community at large. Luke Lassiter has explored this phenomenon in his study of Kiowa Christian hymn singing.

[W]ith regards to meaning, Indian hymns are located within very particular tribal traditions. Hymns belong to larger tribal song repertoires as much as they belong to Christian song repertoires. ‘Every tribe that we have,’ says [a Lassiter respondent] ‘...they have their own songs’. In this way, hymns simultaneously communicate a combination of Christian and tribal-specific experience — pointing us to a deep level of experiential encounter... (Lassiter 2001: 343)

Muskogee hymns are tribally specific experiences, however, more than this, they are manifestations of both the cultures of Muskogee and Western Christianity that express distinct Muskogee-Christian meanings. What are these meanings and how do they manifest themselves? I explore this question in the following pages.

## **Chapter II**

### **Early History of Creek and Seminole Indians**

#### **Ethnogenesis of the Creek and Seminole People**

The native peoples known today as the Creek and Seminole Indians originated in the southeastern United States in what are now the states of Alabama and Georgia. They were originally from various southeastern Indian towns comprising speakers who used diverse languages — Alabama, Koasiti, Hitchiti, Natchez, Yuchi, Shawnee and Muskogee. The towns were located along the Coosa, Tallapoosa, Alabama, Chattahoochee, and Flint Rivers. It was typical for more than one language to be spoken in many of the towns, while the most broadly spoken language, Muskogee, served as the *lingua franca* facilitating inter-town communication (Debo 1941: 3). The degree to which a Creek Confederacy existed in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries has been debated; however, the unity that separated the towns from other indigenous southeastern communities was based on constant communication between the towns and the security of a unified force protecting them from outside attacks. The inter-town affiliations did not interfere with the internal politics of the individual towns which maintained political, and to some degree cultural, autonomy.

The towns (in the Muskogee language *etvlwv*, and the plural *etvlwvlke*) — were based on matrilineal birthright and were distinct southeastern phenomena that deserve some explanation. Much more than a citizenries' locale, the Creek town was the most important ethnic and political unit in Creek society. The concept of a town was closer to the Western concept of a tribe with matrilineal clan affiliation. They comprised and focused on ceremonial squares. The Green Corn Religion or Ceremony (also referred to

as the “busk”) was the highlight of annual ceremonial ground festivities. This continues to be a celebration of renewal – the New Year.

Today, in Oklahoma, the Green Corn Religion is performed during the fall harvesting months of the year. In the early southeastern towns, collective land ownership and a subsistence economy were anchored in production of a variety of crops and hunting deer and fur-bearing animals. Each town appointed a *Micco* (king or chief) who was the political leader, and, in some cases, served as the ceremonial leader. In other cases, the ceremonial leader was a *heles hayv* (medicine maker). The matrilineal clans — of which approximately twenty were known to exist — served as binding ties among towns. Clans were exogamous. Different clans resided within a given town, and clan-kinship relationships reached across towns. Different functions and roles within the towns were determined by clan affiliation and members of the same clan lived together, within groups, in their towns. From an overall historical perspective, however, one’s affiliation to a town superseded clan affiliation. (Opler 1952: 172, 174).

Ceremonial songs performed during the annual Green Corn Festival or at other ceremonies throughout the year were primarily performed to maintain or enact a balance among various human, animal or spirit entities or to ward off illnesses or other troubles. Song performance was also clan-based where members of a clan would dance and sing songs acting out the physical and vocal gestures of the animal associated with their clan (Speck 1911: 163).

Originally there were four towns considered “mother” towns — Coweta, Cussita, Tuckabatsee, and Coosa — from which most of the other towns were offshoots. Once a mother town grew to a certain size, another town would be formed from the

nucleus. The mother towns and their offshoots were divided into moieties of red “war” and white “peace” towns with specified roles for each in war and peace (Opler 1952: 170-4; Sturtevant 1971: 96).

The towns were also divided geographically into two groups which Anglo-Americans came to call Upper and Lower Creek towns. The Lower Creeks resided primarily in towns along the Chattahoochee, Flint and Ocmulgee Rivers in what is now the state of Georgia. Upper Creeks resided further west, along the Coosa, Tallapoosa, and Alabama Rivers in present-day Alabama (Green 1979: 10).

The term *Creek* was introduced by English colonialists who encountered Indian townspeople first along the Ocheese *Creek* in the late-seventeenth to early-eighteenth centuries. To distinguish the various tribal towns, which eventually came to be identified as the Creek Confederacy, from the locales of other southeastern peoples, it was most expedient to simply lump the townspeople who lived along the Coosa, Tallapoosa, Alabama, Chattahoochee, and Flint Rivers together as Creeks. Creeks began to adopt British terminology themselves to facilitate communication with Europeans and with each other. Today, the terms Creek and Muskogee<sup>11</sup> refer to the people who identify themselves as such (Debo 1941: 3). Creek and Muskogee are also terms used today to refer to their indigenous language (Sturtevant 1971: 97-98).

### **The Historical Relationship Between Creek and Seminole Indians**

Seminole and Creek Indians are culturally, linguistically and historically connected. Political separations between Seminoles and Creeks developed out of long-standing conflicts between the various inhabitants of the southeastern region. The

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<sup>11</sup> The term Muskogee originally identified one of the southeastern Indian towns which made up what came to be known as the Creek/Muskogee people, as well as the *lingua franca* between all the early Creek towns.

(Map removed to avoid copyright infringement)

Map: "Creek Lands in the East"

(Compiled from Chas. C. Royce, "Indian Land Cessions" and John R. Swanton, "Early History of the Creek Indians". From *The Road to Disappearance: A History of the Creek Indians*, by Angie Debo. Copyright © 1941 by the University of Oklahoma Press, Norman. Reprinted by Permission in original only.)

southeast, during the eighteenth century, was marked by ongoing competition between European forces to gain the upper hand in colonial control. In the early 1700s, Creek emigrants into Florida, later identified as Seminoles, were encouraged to migrate southward by Spanish missionaries. The term Seminole which came into use around 1804 to define the burgeoning Creek settlements in Florida is a corruption of the Spanish *Cimarron*, meaning to be “wild or runaway”. The term was ill-fitting to describe the earliest Creek-Seminole settlers who might better be described as “emigrants” or “frontiersmen”; nevertheless, it stuck. The Spanish had established missions in Florida and wanted to protect their interests from British expansionists. Creeks (who came to be known as Seminoles) were lured from Lower Creek towns to relocate in the Apalachee (northern Florida) region. Lower Creek settlements would act as a buffer between the Spanish and the British. Further Creek resettlements into Florida were encouraged by “the deerskin trade, the introduction of guns, and the increase of warfare” (Sturtevant 1971: 103).

The 1813-14 Creek or Redstick War was most crucial in accelerating Creek southward movement into Florida. Tensions were heating up north of the Florida border. The American Revolution (1775-83) had replaced the British with the United States at the helm of colonization in the southeast. Social tensions brought on by continued contact with Anglo-Americans, while not overly challenged by some Creek factions, were met with fierce resistance by others. Pan-Indian nativistic movements, were fuelled especially by the Shawnee chief Tecumseh who admonished the Creeks to abandon the ways of whites, “destroy their live stock, abandon their plows and looms, and return to the old ways”. Tecumseh continued, “[t]he white man would turn their beautiful forests

into fields, muddy their clear streams, and reduce them to slavery”(Debo 1941: 77). The Creek or Redstick War broke out when, primarily Upper Creeks, hostile to the ongoing American interventions attacked and killed a group of Americans and “Anglicized Creeks”. In the long run, American forces, General Andrew Jackson (perhaps the most ardent force behind Indian removal from the southeast), proved to be too powerful and overwhelmed the rebel Creeks. Many Upper Creeks (in some cases the majority of whole towns), defeated and antagonistic toward Lower Creeks who had remained neutral or who had supported General Jackson during the War, migrated southward and established towns in Florida (Sturtevant 1971: 100-106, Debo 1941: 76-84, Green 1979: 10, 37-9).

The years following the end of the Creek (Redstick) War continued to be tumultuous for Seminoles in Florida and Creeks in Georgia and Alabama alike. Land and control of the southeast region continued to be at the heart of the struggles. American settlements continued to expand and occupy Creek lands. Seminoles continued to find themselves caught in U.S., British, and Spanish conflicts for control of the Florida region. Archaeological evidence found in the Florida towns reveals that Seminoles had heeded the advice of nativists (Sturtevant 1971: 106). They had rid themselves of the Europeans’ domestic animals and trade materials and returned to the old ways. They also befriended African slave runaways who looked to the Florida Seminole communities as their most hopeful refuge. For the Americans, who wanted runaway slaves returned, at least as much as they wanted Seminoles removed from the region, this made resolution of the Seminole problem in the east imperative (*ibid* 1971: 107-111).

The principal Creek ally of General Jackson, during the 1813-14 Creek War, was William McIntosh. The mixed (white-Creek) Chief of the powerful Lower Creek Town of Coweta, McIntosh acted in his own interests, rather than those of the Creeks, in selling large sections of Indian lands. In the Treaty of Indian Springs, all of Georgia and half of Alabama were sold without the unified consent of all Creek leaders, especially the Upper Creeks (Green 1979: 41-43). McIntosh had been forewarned. Chief Opothleyahola, a leading representative of the Upper Creeks admonished, "I have told you your fate if you sign that paper. I once more say, beware" (Meserve 1931b: 440). McIntosh's action set into motion great animosity between those in the Lower and Upper towns eventually leading to his execution by Upper Creeks in 1825 (Meserve 1932a: 316-317; Debo 1941: 90).

As defeat and subjugation of Creeks and Seminoles began to appear imminent, a shift in U.S. Indian policy was becoming manifest where education and evangelism would be favored over coercion. The first U.S. Secretary of War, Henry Knox, was not alone in his sentiment when, in a 1789 report to President Washington he stated that religion and education should be used to gain control of Indians.

Missionaries, of excellent moral character, should be appointed to reside in their nations, who should be well supplied with all the implements of husbandry, and the necessary stock for a farm. ... Such a plan, although it might not fully effect the civilization of the Indians, would most probably be attended with the salutary effect of attaching them to the interest of the United States. (Beaver 1966: 64)

Missionary societies expressing an immediate concern for the salvation of Indians were in the midst of establishing themselves across the United States between the late 1700s and the early 1800s. Eventually these sentiments culminated in the "Civilization Fund

Act” passed by Congress in 1819. The Fund appropriated \$10,000 annually “to employ capable persons of good moral character, to instruct the Indians in the mode of agriculture suited to their situation; and for teaching their children in reading, writing, and arithmetic.” Further, it provided support for “such associations or individuals who are already actually engaged in educating Indians, and who may desire the co-operation [sic] of the government [to] report to the Department of the War...”. Financial assistance would be “extended to such institutions as may be approved, as well in erecting the necessary buildings...” (Beaver 1966: 69-70). The missionary societies, which were readily available to assume the role of “civilizing” Indians, were the recipients of the funds.<sup>12</sup> By 1826 there were thirty-eight schools, supported by the Fund with a total of “281 teachers, 1,159 scholars, and receiving \$13,550 from the government” (*ibid* 1966: 76).

The shift toward education and missionary work appeased some Creeks, but others continued to resent American interference and remained steadfast to indigenous customs. American sentiments were not unified either. Eventually, the U.S. Government would demonstrate greater zeal for forced removal of Indians from the southeast than they had shown for evangelism while at least some missionaries showed a more sincere concern for the overall welfare of Indians, protesting Indian removal, even to the point of facing imprisonment.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions (PBFM), which merged with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1826 (Beaver 1966: 61) would later prove to be most influential among Creek Indians in Indian Territory.

<sup>13</sup> Samuel Worcester, was the most infamous of a handful of missionaries to the eastern Cherokees and their supporters who were imprisoned for protesting the removal of Cherokee Indians from the southeast. Worcester was sentenced to four years of hard labor in September of 1831 by the state of Georgia. The case went before the Supreme Court, the missionaries won and were eventually released in 1833 (Bass

Following McIntosh's massive sell of Creek lands in 1825, the Creeks moved to the eastern portion of Alabama, despite the Americans' intention for them to relocate entirely outside the southeast region (Green 1979: 44). The pressure was now on for Creek removal from the southeast, whether it be a peaceful removal or not. What was left of Creek lands was largely swindled away in land allotment treaties later shown to be fraudulent and ruinous of Creek interests (*op.cit*: 45). The surmounting difficulties, as well as a continued influx of American settlers, made life unbearable for Creeks who chose to remain in the southeast. In 1830 the Indian Removal Act was passed, and land was set aside for Indian tribes in Indian Territory (Oklahoma).

For the Seminoles in Florida, it was a similar story. They were pursued with the same relentless vigor by General Jackson and forced to accept defeat especially following the Second Seminole War from 1835 to 1842 (Sturtevant 1971: 108). Between the early to mid-1830s most Seminoles in Florida and Creeks in Alabama and Georgia, defeated and humiliated, set out for land set aside for them in the southwest (Mulroy 1993: 27, Beadle 1981: 49). The devastation of this forced migration, famously remembered as "The Trail of Tears", left an undeniable mark, which continues to be evident on Creek and Seminole identity today.

They didn't know how long it was going to take them to get here. Who would make it. What part of the march that they would be on. Anyway, I can just picture a rag-tag group of Indians getting ready to depart barefooted... without any coats or blankets or anything, with winter comin' on. Some of 'um are in chains. The Calvary men are sittin' on their horses [dressed in] big coats, with beards with big ole' [wads] of tobacco in their mouths ... probably a bottle of whiskey up under their belts... Wishin' these Indians

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1936: 137-160). Worcester was the father of Ann Eliza Worcester Robertson, perhaps the most ardent missionary among the Creeks in Indian Territory.

would hurry up so they could get their job done. And maybe there'd be some soldiers up there looking at our women... thinkin', 'I'm gonna take advantage of that one tonight.' [They'd see] an Indian woman that was pregnant and they'd say, 'well, we'll have to watch her 'cause if she has a male child, we'll have to take that child and kill it.'... [They'd say] no more male children shall be born during this time. But they let the female children live. They used to take the male babies and bash their heads upside a tree! So some of 'um [Indians] had to take the male babies and dress 'um up like female babies. All this was going on in these soldiers' minds. And [the Indians] didn't know that the soldiers were intentionally leading 'um at the beginning of winter and that they were going to take 'um through swamps where they would get malaria, yellow fever or getting bitten by snakes or alligators or whatever. But somehow or another they made it to Oklahoma. (Berry, personal communication, 17 April 2003)

### **Relocation to Indian Territory**

The first Creeks arrived in Indian Territory in 1828 and settled along the Arkansas and Verdigris Rivers in the upper section of Creek Territory. The group was comprised of Lower Creeks or members of the McIntosh faction (as they came to be known) who were escaping the infuriated Upper Creeks in the southeast (Green 1979:46-47).

Included in this party of early Indian Territory arrivals were members of the Perryman and Winslett families whose direct descendants were to make important contributions to the linguistic and hymnal developments of Creek missionaries some twenty years later (Meserve 1937: 166). Once in Indian Territory, the divisions between Upper and Lower Creeks continued. In fact, such tensions were explicit among the Creeks through the early 1900s when "The Crazy Snake Uprising" at Hickory Ground<sup>14</sup> — the last Upper

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<sup>14</sup> Hickory Ground was located near the leader's, Crazy Snake's, home. Crazy Snake was an Upper Creek, so it may be inferred that he lived in the region where Upper Creeks originally settled in Indian Territory — the lower portion of the Creek Territory along the Canadian River.

Creek battle against the McIntosh faction — was finally put down. (Morton 1930: 189-194; Meserve 1931a:331; 1931b: 440). Those in the Lower Creek or McIntosh faction were sometimes referred to as “progressives”, because they embraced changes brought on by contact with whites. They tended to concede to U.S. pressures to end communal landownership or to the replacement of the autonomy of the Creek towns with a U.S.-imposed bicameral governmental system reflective of the United States government. And during the Civil War they overwhelmingly supported the Confederate side, with several members of the McIntosh family serving in leading military positions (Morton 1930: 189-194; Meserve 1932a: 322-323; 1931a: 327-332; 1937: 169-181; Debo 1941:149). Presenting a striking ideological contrast to the “progressives” were the Upper “conservative” or “loyal” Creeks. The Upper Creeks began arriving in Indian Territory in the mid-1830s and established settlements in the lower portion of the Creek Territory along the Canadian River (Debo 1941: 111). The resistance of the largely “full-blooded” Upper Creeks at being forcibly removed from the southeast is made clear in that ninety of their town chiefs could only be removed to Indian Territory chained together in pairs. Once in Indian Territory, the Upper Creeks continued living in the way they had before, and they resisted pressures from the Americans or the Lower Creeks to change. Their concerns were to continue living as their forefathers had done with the Creek town structures intact and to maintain their religion, communal lifestyle and land ownership (Meserve 1932b: 50, 58, 62, 68-69; 1931b: 439-443, 452).

Seminole settlements in Indian Territory were west of the Upper Creeks, south of the North Canadian River, and north of the Canadian River. In Indian Territory, Seminoles, who shared many of the Upper Creeks sentiments about maintaining their

traditional Indian ways, established their town governments and social structures as they previously were in the southeast (Spoehr 1941: 337, 339). Today, the Seminoles reside in a strip of land at the southwest corner of Creek Territory.

(Map removed to avoid copyright infringement)

**Map: “Creek Lands in the West”**

(also showing where the Seminoles settled after 1866 at the southwest corner of Creek Territory)

(Compiled from Chas. C. Royce, “Indian Land Cessions”. From *The Road to Disappearance: A History of the Creek Indians*, by Angie Debo. Copyright © 1941 by the University of Oklahoma Press, Norman. Reprinted by permission in original only.)

(Map removed to avoid copyright infringement)

"Towns of the Creek Nation"

(After Speck, "The Creek Indians of Taskigi Town". From *The Road to Disappearance: A History of the Creek Indians*, by Angie Debo. Copyright © 1941 by the University of Oklahoma Press, Norman. Reprinted by permission in original only.)

(Map removed to avoid copyright infringement)

From *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 1941. Vol. 19, no. 4. Reprinted by permission in original only.)

These conflicts between “progressive” and “conservative” factions of Creeks and Seminoles reflect how the intervention of colonial powers had both a cross-cultural and intra-cultural impact. In this case, the antithetical positions of “progressives” and “conservatives” focused on land rights, and struggles for cultural, national, and political autonomy. The admonitions of Chief Tecumseh for the Creeks “to abandon the ways of whites...and return to the old ways”; The Creek or Redstick War, accelerated by growing tensions between Upper and Lower Creeks; the embrace of Christianity and education by some Creeks and the steadfastness to indigenous ways by others; the fierce resistance and determination for cultural and political autonomy of the Seminoles; the animosity between Lower and Upper Creeks following McIntosh’s selling of their lands; and the persistent tensions and battles in Indian Territory between Upper and Lower Creeks were overt manifestations of intra-Muskogee conflict. For the Upper Creek “conservatives” and the Seminoles, these were nationalist struggles to subvert Western autonomy. As full conquest seemed inevitable, the overt gave way to covert actions. Rather than resorting to subversion or rejection, Muskogee Christians embraced many aspects of Western culture. However, as I hope to demonstrate in the following pages, acceptance was

contingent upon maintaining specific indigenous expressions and playing an active role in the fusion of Western and indigenous meanings into new forms.

### **Missionary Work in Indian Territory**

A small number of Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist missions were set up in Indian Territory to administer to the Creeks and their slaves in the early 1830s (Debo 1941: 116, Hinds 1939:51). However, in the early post-removal years, Creeks, far more than the other tribes of southeastern origin in Indian Territory, resisted the establishment of missions on their land.

Creek hostility to missions reached back before removal days. An agent for the “Society for Propagating the Gospel” addressed the situation in 1814: “For the reasons that have been given, a mission among those tribes [Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw] promises more success than one among the Creeks; for their languages are different in different villages, and, above all, their agent is hostile to missions” (Schermerhorn 1814: 21). The Creek chiefs argued that Christian preaching “broke up their old customs, their busks, ball plays and dances” (Lindsey 1958/9: 190). Hostility toward Christianity was also due to the views, of at least some Creeks, that the missionaries were pro-abolitionist — something that the slave-holding Creeks did not welcome (Debo 1941: 117-118, Logsdon 1976:191). Converts were chastised, and at times whipped, by those within the tribe who were against missionary enrollment — the chiefs enforcing the penalty of fifty to one hundred lashings for anyone found attending Christian services (Debo 1941:118).

Nevertheless, the missionaries were persistent, seeing conversion as the main hope for “civilizing” Indians. Reverend John Fleming — with the assistance of James Perryman, a Creek preacher — made possible a major advancement for the missionaries

when, in 1835, he published the first Creek language book and a book of Creek hymns. Fleming's orthography was based on the work of John Pickering<sup>15</sup> who "assigned conventional sound values to the letters in the Latin alphabet and applied the letters to various Indian languages" (Logsdon 1976: 180-181). Fleming's work was continued by Reverend Robert M. Loughridge who, as a representative of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions (PBFM), convinced the Creeks to allow the establishment of Koweta (aka Coweta) Mission in the early 1840s. The Indians, who expressed an interest in the establishment of schools, agreed to comply with Loughridge's wishes only if the mission provided book learning, too (Lauderdale 1948: 286, Debo 1941: 119). It is of interest that according to John Bartlett Meserve (a frequent contributor to the *Chronicles of Oklahoma* in the 1930s), in 1825, twenty-four years after he had vehemently protested William McIntosh's sale of the Creeks' southeastern lands, Chief Opothleyahola demonstrated prescience. The Chief was quoted in a speech delivered in 1859 at Asbury Mission on the North Fork River in Indian Territory. His poetic words advocated Creek education to understand "the white man's ways" in the interest of protecting Creek culture. Opothleyahola recalled a beautiful island in the now abandoned Creek lands of the southeast where, along the Chattahoochee River, game was provided until its sandy banks were worn away by floods.

I have since learned that there is a kind of grass which, if it had been planted on the banks of that beautiful island, might have saved it. This grass strikes its roots deeply into the sandy soil and binds it so firmly that the waters of the flood cannot wear it away. My brothers, we Indians are like that island in the middle of the river. The white man comes upon us as a flood. We crumble and fall, even as the sandy

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<sup>15</sup> Pickering was considered a leading English and Greek language scholar and an authority on Indian languages (Logsdon 1975: footnote no. 3).

banks of that beautiful island in the Chattahoochee. The Great Spirit knows, as you know, that I would stay that flood which comes thus to wear us away, if we could. As well might we try to push back the flood of the river itself. As the island in the river might have been saved by planting the long rooted grass upon its banks, so let us save our people by educating our boys and girls ... in the ways of the white man. Then they may be planted and deeply rooted about us and our people may stand unmoved in the flood of the white man. (Meserve 1931b: 444-445)

It is particularly significant that in the midst of acute societal change, Chief Opothleyahola's aspiration to "save our people by educating our boys and girls in the ways of the white man..." is an acknowledgement that Westernization must be confronted in new ways — that an alternative reality must be negotiated where both Western and indigenous perspectives can be acknowledged. Opothleyahola's words are also an acceptance that, in order to save his people, overt resistance must give way to covert interventions. In this social climate, overt conflict yielded to hybridization and a new mission to accommodate eighty boarding students was commissioned to be built by the PBFM. Tullahassee Mission — which opened in 1850 with expenses shared by the U.S. government the PBFM and the Creek government — was to become the most successful of Creek missions. One boy and one girl attended the mission school from each of forty Creek towns established in Indian Territory (Lauderdale 1948: 286-7). Loughridge was transferred from Koweta to serve as Superintendent of Tullahassee. The Principal was the Reverend William Schenck Robertson who wrote about the disciplined schedule for Tullahassee missionaries and students;

We breakfast at six, then after worship the children work till eight or half past. School begins at nine. Dine at twelve, return to school at one. To labor at 4

1/2. Take tea at 6 1/2. Send the boys to bed at eight.  
(Bass 1959:31)

Reverend Robertson continued, describing the separation of labor for boys and girls at the mission.

The boys are required to work two or three hours daily in the garden, farm or workshop, or in cutting wood, drawing water, &c. The girls, in like manner, are employed in knitting, sewing, cooking, washing, ironing, milking, &c ... The studies pursued are spelling, reading, writing, mental and practical arithmetic, algebra, geometry, English grammar, natural philosophy, composition and declamation. A small class of three boys is engaged in the study of the Latin language. (Bass 1959: 32)

The important work of language studies, translations of the Bible and hymnal “preparations” (to use Loughridge’s term) that Fleming had begun were resumed by Loughridge and Rev. Robertson’s wife, Ann Eliza Worcester Robertson (A.E.W. Robertson).

A.E.W. Robertson came from an important missionary family. She was born at the Brainerd Mission in Georgia where her father, Reverend Samuel Austin Worcester, was missionary to the eastern Cherokees (Holway 1959:36). Impressive strides were made by A.E.W. Robertson in the areas of language studies and Bible translations.

Through her long history with the Creeks she proved herself to be a devoted friend and a respected scholar of linguistics. Over time, Tallahassee attracted an impressive line of future Creek leaders.<sup>16</sup> By 1880, the mission school had enrolled ninety-five students —

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<sup>16</sup> The work at Tallahassee and Koweta Missions was interrupted during the Civil War years. Missionaries, who were viewed as being pro-abolition were seen as a threat to Lower Creek members of the McIntosh faction. Rev. Robertson, for example, was labeled a “Yankee Abolitionist” and forced to leave the Creek nation within twenty-four hours (Foreman:1935: 401). However, regardless of which side of the war one was on (Loughridge supported the Confederates. See Lauderdale 1948: 292), the missionaries at both

more than it was properly prepared to accommodate (Bass 1959: 34). A description of the mission was given by a former student.

The mission building at Tullahassee was a three-story brick [building] with living and bed-rooms [sic] for the Superintendent and family in the south wing, with the lovely high windows furnishing plenty of light. Across the spacious hall to the north was the large dining room where all the school family ate their three meals each day. The boys marched in under the supervision of a teacher through the north door to the dining room, and were seated at the long tables set aside for them near their entrance. The girls were admitted from the south wing, marching to their allotted places near the south entrance. A teacher sat at the end of each long table of both the boys and girls to supervise the children's table manners. Across the hall in the north wing was [sic] the living apartments of the Assistant Superintendent and his family. These two doors leading to the boy's hall and the girl's hall were forbidden ground to the two groups of the opposite sex and a sacred entrance to each. (Lindsey 1958/9:182)

Another observation of the mission was made in 1872 by a white traveler through Indian Territory.

There we spent a most delightful Sabbath, entertained by the Superintendent, Rev. W.S. Robertson, and family... Supper was called soon after our arrival; we took 'visitors' chairs,' and watched with much interest the orderly incoming of some seventy young Creeks, of every age from eight to twenty-two. Nearly all were pure bloods, and the whole scene was a revelation to me. I had seen the savage-painted Indian, and the miserable vagabond on the white frontier; but the civilized, scholarly Indian boy and girl presented a new sight. Supper over, a chapter was read, and the school united in prayers and a devotional hymn. Then we were invited to hear classes, who volunteered an evening recitation for our benefit. (Beadle 1881:46-47)

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Tullahassee and Koweta Missions were forced to leave Indian Territory in 1861 (Debo 1941: 146-7, Bass 1959: 33).

(Map removed to avoid copyright infringement)

“Tulahassee Mission”

(Photo: taken from *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 1948.  
“Tulahassee Mission”, Vol. XXVI, Reprinted by permission in original only.)

Any account of the Biblical translations and the development of Muskogee hymns would be incomplete without mention of the Creek interpreters who played important roles as assistants. The Creek interpreters were “mixed-bloods” (Creek and white), men primarily from the Perryman and Winslet families. They were part of the Lower Creek McIntosh faction. Several Perrymans and Winslets served in prominent political roles as

(Map removed to avoid copyright infringement)

Rev. Robertson and Anna Eliza Robertson  
(seated to the right of the Reverend) at the center of the photograph  
(Photo: taken from *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 1959.  
“William Schenck Robertson”, Vol. 37, Reprinted by permission in original only.)

Creek chiefs or Christian ministers. The most significant interpreters were James Perryman, Sanford Ward Perryman, Thomas Ward Perryman, Legus C. Perryman and David Winslet (Meserve 1937:168). James Perryman assisted John Fleming in translating the first books into the Muskogee language: *The Muskoki Imuaitsv* (*Muskogee Assistant*), *The Child’s Book*, and *A Short Sermon* (Logsdon 1976: 179, 188-190). Later

James Perryman assisted A.E.W. Robertson in translating “Ephesians, Titus, James and two-thirds of the Book of Acts” (Meserve 1937:168). He also composed or translated thirty-two hymns in “the old Creek hymn book” (*ibid*). Virginia Lauderdale, in an article on the history of Tullahassee Mission stated, “[i]n the years before the Civil War, Mr. and Mrs. Robertson, working with Mr. Loughridge and other missionaries, began the task of *translating* the Holy Scriptures, hymns, stories from the Bible, a catechism, and other works into the Creek language”(Lauderdale 1948: 291). Furthermore, Lauderdale continues, “[s]ince none of the teachers [at Tullahassee] spoke the Creek language, it was necessary to use Creek children who spoke both languages as interpreters” (Lauderdale 1948: 290). Implicitly the children used as interpreters would have also been used in the “preparation” of hymns.

Rev. Robertson received assistance from David Winslet in translations of the *Creek First Reader*, published in 1856, and began the work of translating some of the books of the New Testament with the help of Sandford and Thomas Perryman (Bass 1959: 31). It has been expressed that the *Creek First Reader* contributed more toward the advancement of the Creeks than almost any other factor (Lauderdale 1948: 292). A.E.W. Robertson acknowledged the crucial role of Loughridges’ and Flemings’ earlier translations and the assistance of Winslet and Perryman in her translations.

...I had the help of a small manuscript dictionary of Creek words, (prepared by Mr. Fleming, and added to somewhat by Dr. Longbridge [sic], and a few other small books. For the rest I had to depend on constant questioning, as opportunity offered, setting down words as I learned their meaning; and, as soon as I had gained enough knowledge for it, I began writing on different subjects, what I would review critically, with my interpreter’s help. ...We were greatly blessed in our interpreter, Rev. David Winslett, a half-breed

Creek, who was Dr. Loughbridge's [sic] employed interpreter, but whose willing spirit made him always ready to give help to my husband and myself in our work in the Creek. ... My husband...prepared the 'First Reader,' with Mr. Winslett translating, and myself giving and receiving help on it...

Robertson continued,

It will be noticed that I had no grammar of the language to depend on, but a part of the conjugation of a verb in manuscript, which I had been allowed to copy. I filled out to quite an extent with Mr. Winslett's help... [b]ut in the review of all of my own and other work I have been greatly dependent on interpreters and always shall be. (A.E.W. Robertson 1893: 4-5)

The coalescing of Creeks and missionaries in the translation and “preparation” of hymns likely led to hybridization. Their mutual influences explain why Muskogee hymns at times reflect Western or indigenous themes and sometimes a mixture both in texts, melodies, song form and performance practices.<sup>17</sup>

An invaluable contribution made by the missionaries was to help preserve the Muskogee language through their hymn developments and Biblical translations. For A.E.W. Robertson, the importance of translating the Gospel into Indian languages was instilled in her as a child when she witnessed her father's (Reverend Samuel Worcester's)

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<sup>17</sup> Aside from the Creek translators, most of the missionaries had studied the Greek language and stated that Greek held more similarities with the Muskogee language than did English. As such they repeatedly referred to Greek in their translations as well. The first unpublished translations were made by German-American missionaries of the Moravian church who used Greek letters in their development of a Creek alphabet because they thought “the sounds of that language were closest to Creek (Martin and Mauldin 2000: xvii). A.E.W. Robertson made several statements regarding her use of Greek in translations from English to Creek. In a news article dated April 1893 she stated that “two important features of the Creek language make it less difficult to translate into it from the Greek than from the English. First, in the order of words in a sentence it much more nearly follows the Greek than the English... Secondly, the dual is found in a large class of verbs” (Robertson 1893).

commitment to translating the Cherokee language in his own missionary work at Brainerd Mission (Holway 1959:36). To their credit, the Robertsons insisted upon translating the Gospel into Muskogee, at times, against the advice of the PFBM. The sentiment of the PFBM toward a continued focus on translations from English to Creek was made clear in a letter to the Robertsons admonishing that it is "...not likely our Board will consent to incur this expense [payment of interpreters], for there is one consideration of much weight...the probability that most, if not all the Creeks will after a while understand English, rendering it no longer necessary to use the native language, and [the] sooner this can be brought about, the better" (Holway 1959:41-42). Sentiment against the continuation of Indian languages may have been broader than the PFBM. United States governmental policy was likely behind it, too. Bass states, "[i]n spite of the fact that the Government and mission boards alike discouraged the continuance of Indian languages and customs, the Robertsons were agreed on the importance of their learning the Creek language and reducing it to writing. Only a small percentage of the Creek children could be sent to school to learn to read and write English; the rest, and all of their elders, must have books in their own language if they were to become literate." (Bass 1959:30-31).

It, most likely was also of deep concern that without Biblical translations into Creek, they, as missionaries, were unlikely to succeed. Attesting to the worth of their efforts were the Creeks themselves, one of whom wrote to A.E.W. Robertson, "[t]o us Indians who speak only our language, your work in our behalf is equal to preaching the [W]ord to us and for this I love you" (Martin n.d.).

Creek missionaries exhibited great dedication and made tremendous personal sacrifices to live and spread the Gospel in Indian Territory. They were pioneers in a cultural and geographical wilderness without the amenities of urban or southern plantation living enjoyed by many of their white contemporaries. Letters to A.E.W. Robertson and stories of missionary life tell of frequent illnesses and death among the missionaries in Indian Territory (Fleming 1837, 1836). A.E.W. Robertson herself frequently contended with illnesses leading one of her relatives to comment that he “would not place his wife in a position where she would break herself down, as Ann Eliza has and is still doing” (Holway 1959: 37). Althea Bass, author of *Cherokee Messenger*, a biography of A.E.W. Robertson’s father, Samuel Austin Worcester, wrote of the difficulties of life at Tullahassee,

In spite of the beauty and fertility of the location [of Tullahassee Mission], there were disadvantages that might have defeated a less courageous and rugged man than William Robertson: following high waters, malarial fevers prevailed; supplies were expensive and hard to come by, since they must come up the Arkansas River when it was navigable; there was no physician nearer than Fort Gibson or Park Hill. (Bass 1959:29)

And Samuel Worcester Robertson, a son of Reverend Robertson and A.E.W. Robertson, told of the difficulties of traveling to and from Tullahassee.

Traveling was difficult in those days. Ten miles and back in one day was quite an undertaking in a country that had nothing worthy [of] the name of road. Bridges were unknown and it was generally a case of having to ford the river that lay across the path, or now and then employ a ferryman with a flat boat propelled by a long pole. If the depth was too great for poles, then oars would be used. Perhaps the boat would land where it was intended and perhaps it would land way below and have to be pushed back to

the landing band. But most people went around on pony back, for ponies would go almost anywhere, even into swimming water. Wagons were of rope or chain traces, and a band of some kind over the back. Mother took her four youngest kids to visit their aunt and cousins at Ft. Gibson. Two rivers to cross: the Verdigris near where Wagoner now is, and the Grand, with Ft. Gibson just across it... Mother missed the ford, and sturdy old Jim got into swimming water. I stood up and clung to the seat and Grace hung onto the babies. Purchases that were in the wagon bed went floating down stream, but the old horse got us all safely on shore and a frightened mother was long in recovering from the effects of that experience. (Wenger 1959:48)

Missionary work in Indian Territory was subject to low pay, too. When Reverend Robertson began his tenure at Tullahassee in 1850 his annual salary was \$166.00. This was increased to \$200.00 once he married. In 1890, the average salary for ministers outside Indian Territory, at \$794.00, was considerably higher (The United States Bureau of the Census 1976: 152, 168). Addressing the low pay for missionaries, Mr. Lowrie, Secretary to the PBFM, wrote “The Board do not tempt their missionaries to the work by high salaries” (Bass 1959: 29). Despite their hardships, Creek missionaries — and A.E.W. Robertson is singled out as special here — made lasting and profound friendships with the Creeks at Tullahassee Mission.

An examination of the ethnogenesis of the Creek and Seminole people, their often tumultuous pre and post-removal years, and their incipient Christianization up to the present-day Muskogee Christian communities reveals an inclination, of Creeks and Seminoles, to act upon influences brought by contact with the West. When overt actions to resist the Western impact failed, they moved to control selected facets adopted from Western culture. Creek concessions to Christianization co-occurred with meeting

demands for providing “book learning, too”. In many cases, the very names of the southeastern tribal towns survive in the form of Muskogee church names, and Muskogee hymnody is shown to have dual Western and indigenous origins. How are indigenous practices manifested in Creek hymnody? I address this question in the following chapter where I outline Muskogee Christian performance settings and present a hermeneutics of Creek and Seminole Christian beliefs and hymn texts, all of which reveal a specific articulation of hybridity.

## Chapter III

### HYMN PERFORMANCE AND PLACE

It is a moderately cool, autumn Oklahoma morning. I am driving down a rural dirt road outside of Wewoka, heading to Eufaula Sandcreek Baptist Church. Accompanying me are my friends, Letha King and Melvin Bruner. This is my first visit to Eufaula Sandcreek and I am taking in the scenery — modest country homes, open fields, a farm with fenced in cattle. As we turn down the final road to the church, nothing but the open road lay before us and finally, the church. We pull in and park next to other cars on the grassy church grounds and walk up to the church where several people are seated for the morning service. The church is a modest wood edifice about 35 feet long and 20 feet wide. In front, attached to the church building proper, there is an open-sided pavilion used for church services during the warm months of spring, summer and early autumn. Today's service will be held in the open-air pavilion. Although Letha and Melvin are not members at Eufaula Sandcreek, Muskogee Christian communities are relatively close-knit and they recognize and greet a number of church members as we approach our seats. The congregational members and the few visitors — such as Letha, Melvin, and myself — are all adults. I am the only “outsider”, not from any of the nearby Indian communities, in attendance. The atmosphere is friendly and cordial. Following church protocol, Letha and I join the other women seated at the north side of the church. Melvin takes a seat at the south side, facing the women, with the other male church members. There are several people greeting one another with the customary handshake and inquiries “How have you been?”, “How's your family?” After a few minutes, the pastor takes his place at the church pulpit, located at the west end of church,

facing the east. Suddenly, everyone becomes quiet. A long-time church member seated in the men's section starts a hymn, and he is quickly joined by others in the congregation. Service has begun.

Muskogee churches hold three basic types of services: regular, Fourth Sunday and Big Sunday Services. Regular church services (also known as prayer meetings) are held twice a week on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. On average three or four hours are devoted to attending a regular Sunday morning church service, including the congregational "camp house" meals following the service. The larger Fourth Sunday meetings are held in a cooperative rotation with other churches in the area, and Big Sunday meetings,<sup>18</sup> which last an entire four-day weekend (Thursday through Sunday), are centered on the rite of Holy Communion. Placed at the center of the church during Big Sunday Communion is the Communion table. Congregational members and visitors sleep over in one of the "camp houses" or commute back and forth from their homes to church each day. During "Big Sundays" meals are held in the "camp houses" that surround the church and are scheduled after the several church services that are held daily. Ministers visiting from neighboring churches are invited to preach a sermon at the host church (Schultz 1999: 106).

During my visits to Oklahoma as a guest of Spring Church member Letha King, attending church was the highlight of the week. For congregational members, one's social life centers on church. Social and religious parts of life are intricately tied together. During the week, King would often perform "service" by bringing food to an invalid member of the community or by driving a housebound neighbor to a doctor's

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<sup>18</sup> See Chapter I, pages 1 and 20-21.

appointment. Religious life and the bond with one's community are woven into every aspect of one's daily activities.

The reasons that congregational members attend church are stated in the hymns themselves. The most frequently repeated themes are, 1) to speak of "those who have gone on", 2) to encourage one another to endure whatever obstacles that may be encountered and to keep going on, walking along the path toward The Lord, and 3) to praise God and Jesus Christ. There are also thematic references to "the blood of Christ"; to His crucifixion and suffering; to the sins of man; to asking for God's mercy and grace, and to pleading to arrive at God's "town", i.e. heaven. Maintaining one's respectful role within the church and contributing to the overall body of one's church community is seen as the underlying glue that enables the collective to "go on". Whether as a pastor, a church deacon, a woman's leader, a choir member or if one prepares and serves food in the "camp houses", great emphasis is placed on contributing to and maintaining the health of the congregation and that of the general community. Contributing to the common good of the overall community is stressed through every aspect of Creek and Seminole Christian life.

This may be seen as a continuation of the pre-Christian Creek and Seminole Green Corn Religion which emphasized the same purpose — to maintain the common good of the overall community in a celebration of the renewal of life. Ted Isham states,

The main purpose [of the Green Corn Religion] is to continue on with our traditions as a group. It differs from white culture where individualism is emphasized. Especially at the end of the ceremony the theme "to go on" is reiterated. The various parts of the ceremony are reiterated and that theme "to go on" together as a group is driven home. (Ted Isham, personal communication 6 March 2004).

Historian Angie Debo, describing the Green Corn Religion over a half century ago elaborates further:

Every part of this sacred observance [Green Corn Religion] was fraught with deep moral and religious significance. The ritual was followed with the most painstaking exactness. The dances portrayed the town's whole collective experience...the group loyalties and beliefs, the mystic relationship between man and nature. Moral lectures were given by the leading men and were received with respectful attention. The people were profoundly stirred by the whole celebration; they entered it with an air of deep solemnity, which broke into rejoicing over the harvest and their own happy sense of security and power. It was a period of general amnesty when all crimes but murder were forgiven. ... It was the beginning of the new year, the convenient period for reckoning marriage, divorce, and the termination of widowhood, and the time for conferring war names upon the young men. (Debo 1941: 22).<sup>19</sup>

My observations support this view as well. In 2001, I attended the first dance that takes place as part of the Green Corn Religion. The Ribbon Dance features women and girls who dance in a counter-clockwise circle. The women, while not dancing, are seated at the north end of the dance circle, the men are seated at the south and east ends, and the chief is seated at the west end, facing the east. While the women dance in the counter-clockwise circle, they are encouraged by the men who direct shouts and calls at the women to "Dance", "Dance" (Isham, personal communication, March 21 2004). As in the Christian churches and hymns the interaction between the female Ribbon Dancers and the male singers is one of mutual encouragement. The constant underlying theme in

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<sup>19</sup> A particularly vivid account of the Green Corn religious practice is John Howard Payne's description as quoted by John Swanton (*The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 1932: 170-95).

Muskogee Christian hymns — “to endure whatever obstacles one may encounter and to keep walking along the path” — is present in the male-female interaction during the Ribbon Dance.

### **Creek and Seminole Beliefs**

On a number of occasions Creek and Seminole Christians mixed contemporary Green Corn beliefs with Christianity. My conversations with Melvin Bruner were particularly insightful.<sup>20</sup> On a ride to our friend Letha King’s house, Bruner identified herbs and plants on the roadside and commented on their uses. I asked him what he knew about a specific root, “Red Root”, that many Creek and Seminole people believe has important protective/medicinal uses and we set out in search of “Red Root” along the roadside where it grows. Later, after returning to Letha King’s house Bruner explained ways to rid oneself of ill-intentioned persons. The remedy he prescribed was a mixture of traditional Indian herbal medicine and Christian faith healing. He told me to memorize Ezekiel 16:6 from the Bible:

And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood,  
I said unto thee *when thou wast* in thy blood, Live;  
yea, I said unto thee *when thou wast* in thy blood, Live.  
(Holy Bible: King James Version 1992: 749)

Bruner said that the passage refers to the blood of Jesus. Pick a red flower from outside the house. Walk into the house, from outside to where the harmful person’s presence was experienced. Then walk back outside the house again, all the while shredding and dropping pieces of the red flower along the way. At the same time, Ezekiel 16:6 must be repeated, alternating with singing a church song. “Amazing Grace”, it was mentioned,

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<sup>20</sup> Bruner is a great source of knowledge and information on Creek culture, and I found it fascinating to see how he ties traditional Creek and Seminole beliefs into Christianity.

would do. Finally, planting a piece of “Red Root” in a secret place in the vicinity of

**(Photo removed to avoid copyright infringement)**

Photo: Melvin Bruner, 1980 in original only

where the threatening person had been would ensure one’s protection.

Another example of how Creek and Seminole Christians conflate Christian beliefs with the pre-Christian Green Corn Religion was relayed to me in the following interview. Letha King drew similarities between traditional Creek and Seminole and Jewish Biblical customs. King stated her belief that Jesus may have visited Creeks and Seminoles, too, while He was on earth.

King: ...[t]here’s a lot of health rules that the Indians kept that go along with the Israelite people. For one, after someone dies they burn cedar smoke all through the house, and people salt the floors and sweep the floors clean. It’s purification. Some of God’s old people had customs, too. And then when a woman has her period... you know her monthly period? A long time ago they didn’t eat at the table. They had a little table in the kitchen. Also, they had certain dishes, a plate and a cup and utensils that they’d use during that time, and then when their period was over they had a shelf that they set those dishes up on and then used them the next month. And men and women did not sleep together during the period time. And if they did they had separate covers. Rolled themselves up in separate covers... Now that sort of goes along with the health rules of the old people. Now I don’t think that the young people do that anymore either. Well there’s just a lot of things like that the white people don’t understand. They think that the Indians are like heathens. But they weren’t. Cause they think that when Jesus was here that He visited them, too.

That He came to them, too. So I don't think you could ever say that they were heathen. (Letha King, personal communication, 12 October 2002)

Conflation of Christian beliefs with the pre-Christian Green Corn Religion was also apparent in Samuel Berry's account. Berry envisions a completion when the sacred number of four in the pre-Christian Green Corn Religion (i.e. the ritual focus on the four directions of east, west, north and south) is combined with the Trinity in the Christian Faith. For Creek and Seminole Christians, this makes the sacred number seven which Berry says "makes us now complete".

Berry: "These parallels [of Christianity and the Green Corn Religion] go pretty far back... back to the time of Abraham. God made a covenant with Abraham. And so the parallels begin there. You'd have to know the Bible yourself to fully understand what I'm comin' at. The best thing to do is to look at the Tabernacle itself and look at how God said the Tabernacle would be placed in the middle. How Moses and Aaron were to sit. How all the tribes were to be on either side of the Tabernacle... all four directions. How the arc of the covenant was in the middle behind the veil... But you'd have to know all that for you to fully understand what I'm talking about."

Taborn: "Well, the four directions I heard you mention..."

Berry: "It has a lot to do with that. Yes. To know what the significance is of our parallels."

Taborn: "Right, because I know that the four directions are used a lot in the [Green Corn] ceremonial complex."

Berry: "Yeah. See that's our Indian, Native American cardinal numbers. That was pre-discovery. But a lot of our traditional peoples still use four as their number. See we had four, and then after discovery we were given' the

Gospels which is Father, Son, Holy Ghost... they give us the Trinity, which then made us complete. So now our cardinal number is seven and that makes us complete."  
(Samuel Berry, personal communication 17 April 2003)

## **Church and Ceremonial (Green Corn Religion) Parallels**

Explanation of similarities between the church and Green Corn Religion architecture warrants an initial description of terminology surrounding the Green Corn Religion ceremonial complex. Several terms have been used in literary sources and in common dialogue to describe the pre-Christian Creek and Seminole religion, including “Green Corn Religion” (Howard 1984: 104, King, personal communication, 1 April 2002), “Stomp Dance” or “stomp grounds religion” (Howard 1984: 104, 40, 68, King, personal communication, 1 April 2002) and “busk”, (Swanton 1979: 763, Howard 1968:23). There are additional meanings for the terms “busk” and “Stomp Dance” pointing to actual ritual acts performed during religious ceremonies. Howard points out that the term “busk” is a traders’ corruption of the Muskogee word *puskita*, meaning “to fast” (Howard 1968: 81). This definition points to the importance of fasting — a practice that is prominent in Creek and Seminole Christian life today and historically. The contemporary term “Stomp Dance”, in addition to referring to the religion itself, refers to a genre of dance that is interspersed among various religious ceremonial rites (Howard 1968: 119). In Oklahoma, Stomp Dancing — a night-time event — spans a seasonal cycle from the beginning of spring to the end of fall with dances held approximately once per month. The Green Corn New Year celebration, with its own dances and ceremonies, takes place during one week in the fall (Walker 1981: 53, 59). The term “Stomp Dance” came into usage during the late-twentieth century.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, I use the term “Green Corn Religion” to refer to the pre-Christian Creek and Seminole religion and I use the

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<sup>21</sup> See footnote no. 6.

term “Stomp Dance” to refer to the contemporary (i.e. the late-twentieth and early twentieth-first century) practice of the indigenous Creek and Seminole religion.

The Green Corn Religion (Stomp Dance in contemporary times) was performed outdoors on square grounds (or stomp grounds). Central to pre-removal ceremonial practices, the square ground was located at the heart of a town’s center. Today, square grounds are located in rural, secluded areas that are difficult to find without the help of someone to take you there. Amelia B. Walker gives a vivid description of the contemporary square ground beginning with the “paskofv”<sup>22</sup>, the circular perimeter that marks the outer boundary of the ground.

The [*paskofv*] is marked by a circular terrace six to twelve inches high and about two hundred feet in [circumference]. Approximately ten feet inside this circle are up to four arbors [*topv*]. [They] are oriented with respect to the cardinal directions and face inward; the chief [*mēkko*] and medicine man [*heles-hayv*] usually sit in the west arbor (i.e., the one facing east). In the other arbors sit the young men [*cēpvnvke*] and warriors [*tvstvnvke*]. About twenty feet inward from the arbors is a dance area encircling the [sacred] fire [at the ground’s center]. (*ibid*: 58)

Two officials [*takpala*] from the ground select a song/dance leader, who,

... sings while stomping rapidly counter-clockwise around the fire. He is followed by a line of men who stomp and sing in response. Members of the leader’s stomp ground dance directly behind him. As the leader and men enter, the two [*takpalv*] call out [*‘lucv, lucv, lvpecicetv’*] (‘turtles, turtles, hurry’), encouraging the women to join the men. [E]ach woman shuffles behind a man, often her husband or a male relative. (*ibid*: 61)

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<sup>22</sup> The letter “v” in Muskogee sounds the short vowel “a” in English ago. The Muskogee letter “ó” is pronounced as the English long vowel sound in r<sub>o</sub>de. “Ē” sounds as the long vowel English fe<sub>e</sub>d. (Martin and Mauldin 2000: xix-xx).

Changes have resulted from 1) contact with outside forces; 2) the traumatic process of forced removal of the Creeks and Seminoles from the eastern states to Indian Territory; and 3) the hybridity created by Christianity and the Green Corn Religion. Some Green Corn Dance practices have been forgotten or altered over time. Even in pre-removal days, the positioning of clans at the east, south or north varied somewhat among town square grounds (Swanton 1970:199-200) and today seating around square grounds in Oklahoma — based on clan or gender —often differs among square grounds. However, one of the most important beliefs and practices retained from pre-removal days is “[t]he chief’s bed we find almost always to the west...” facing the east during ceremonies (Swanton 1970: 199, 182.). The east in the Green Corn religion has great importance. Ted Isham says “in all of our religious activities we’re paying homage to the sun, the giver of our life which allows us to live and allows crops to grow. So we pay extreme attention to that” (Isham, personal communication 20 October 2002). Earlier documentation of the Green Corn Religion made by James Howard (1984:111-113) points out the importance of the east with the *Micco* (chief) seated at the west facing eastward – to which homage is always ceremonially directed. Likewise, in the “traditional” Creek and Seminole churches, as observed in my own research and pointed out by Schultz (1999: 88-9), the Pastor’s pulpit is located at the west facing the east. The entrances of the churches themselves also are positioned at the east end of the church. Congregations are separated by gender with females sitting at the north end facing south, males sitting at the south end facing north, and at the back or eastern end of the church facing west sit the uninitiated.<sup>23</sup> My data agree with some Creeks, Seminoles and

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<sup>23</sup> There is obviously some leeway with the seating of the uninitiated. When attending church with Letha King, I always sat along the north side of the churches I visited with the initiated women.

scholars (Schultz 1999: 79-104; Isham, personal communication 2002a; Isham, personal communication 2000b; King, personal communication 12 October 2002), that the separations within the churches — primarily that of the Pastor’s pulpit which faces eastward — is a key aspect of the physical layout of the Creek and Seminole church, reflecting and originating from the Green Corn religion.<sup>24</sup>

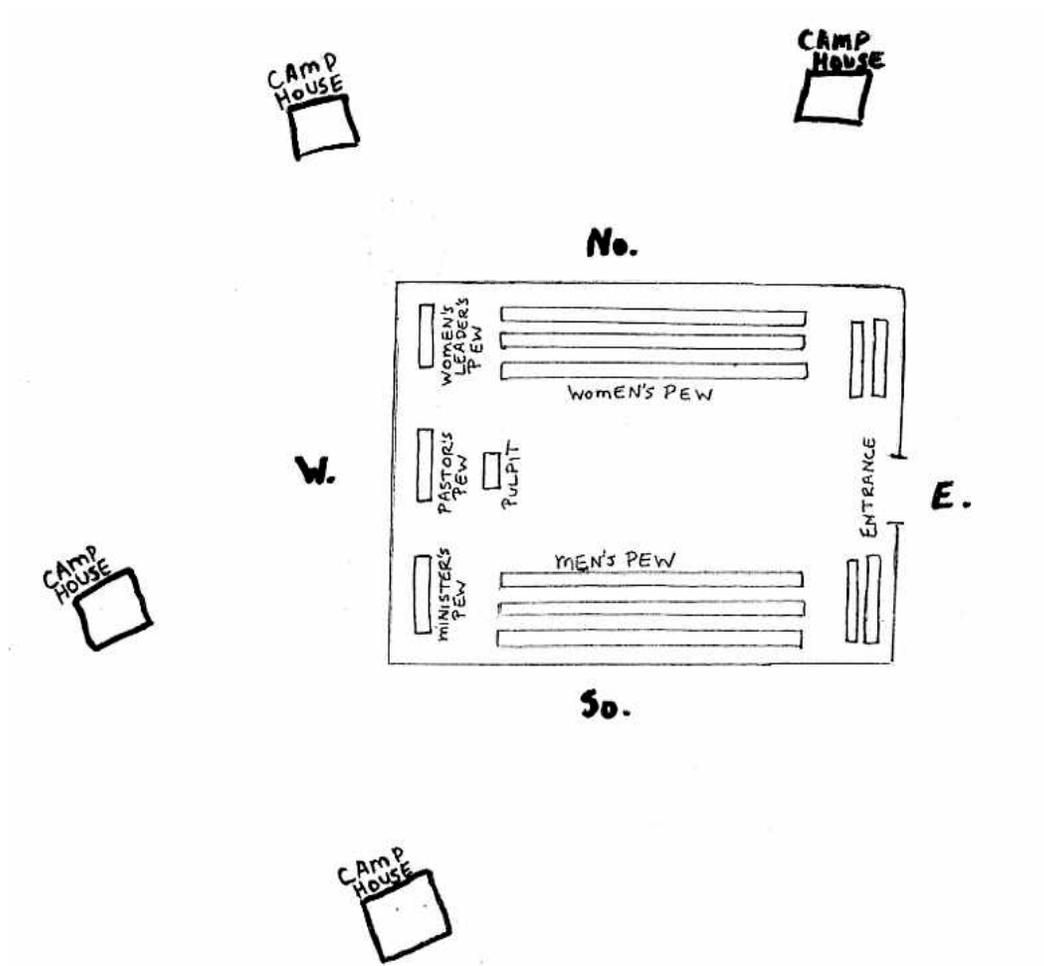
In most cases, in front, but attached to the church building proper, there is an open-sided pavilion used for church services during the warm months of spring, summer and early autumn. Three churches I visited — Eufuala Sandcreek, Saltcreek Methodist and Thewole Baptist Church<sup>25</sup> — include this open-sided pavilion. The same seating layout of the church proper is found in the attached pavilion. Strwn along the peripheries of both church grounds and contemporary ceremonial “Stomp Dance Grounds” are small camp houses which provide cooking and dining facilities where meals are served following church services and ceremonial dances. There are other significant architectural arrangements of the Green Corn religion, but the positioning of the Micco and preacher facing the east is the commonality I wish to point out here (see Figures 1 and 2).

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<sup>24</sup> Not everyone agrees that the eastward direction of the “traditional” Muskogee Pastor was borrowed from the Green Corn religious complex. Margaret Mauldin pointed out that Christians too place significance on the eastern star that signaled the arrival of Christ and that this may account for an eastward focus among Creek and Seminole Christians. However, there is no evidence of equal emphasis placed on the east by missionaries who introduced Christianity to Creeks and Seminoles in comparison to the central importance — exemplified in practice — that it holds in the Muskogee Green Corn Religion.

<sup>25</sup> Today, Spring Baptist Church does not include an open-sided pavilion. The poor quality of the audio recording made at Thewole Baptist Church did not permit in-depth analysis of the music performed there.

Figure 1: Traditional Muskogee church  
 Diagram shows basic seating arrangement and camp houses



Traditional Muskogee church  
 Diagram showing basic seating arrangement and camp houses  
 (Illustration by Karen Taborn, 2008 with alterations from original submission)

Gender division in the churches is another significant retention from the Green Corn Religion and on square grounds today. Walker argues that the separation of females and males—primarily on square grounds and during the female menses derives from the belief that women are “uncontrolled” and disruptive to the harmony of the

square ground and the overall society, unless brought under male control.<sup>26</sup> The veracity of Walker's assessment warrants further analysis. However, while not exact replications, gender divisions in church and Stomp Dance practices are evocative of the Green Corn Religion. The square ground is primarily a male domain. Women, who sit or line up outside the *paskofv* and file in between the male dancers, do not sing or speak while on the grounds. Song leaders were (and continue to be) solely male. In gender specific dances such as the women's Ribbon Dance, the dancers are positioned outside the *paskofv* at the square's north end, while the male singers are positioned at the square's south end, inside the *paskofv* (Isham, personal communication 21 March 2000). On the other hand, the camp houses are female domains. At the Stomp Grounds "[t]hree generations of women usually camp together — a grandmother, her adult daughters, and their children. Although men spend most of their time in the pa:sko:fa [*paskofv*], they sometimes eat, sleep, and visit at the camp" (Walker 1981: 58). At churches women cook in the camp houses, while the entire congregation visits during meal times between and following church services.

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<sup>26</sup> Walker states that the smell of menstruation (referred to as *fámpiwákkín* or "stink lying down") indicates the nearby presence of "a dangerous 'uncontrolled' woman" (Walker 1990: 336). Women's speech or gossip, posing additional danger, is said to be able to "bring down an *i:tálwa* (town), quicker than a Creek perception (sic)" (*ibid*: 339) and, the "female's endogenous, *unbounded* [*italics mine*] generativity (*sic*) forces male ordering" (*ibid*: 332-333).

(Photo removed to avoid copyright infringement)

Spring Church Women Who Prepare Camp House Meals  
(Photo taken by Karen Taborn, in original only)

Several other socio-religious and political aspects of the early Creek town and society have been retained and are evident today in traditional Creek and Seminole Christian practices. An example is the continuation of the pre-removal town phenomenon of “mother” towns and their “daughter” offshoots reflected in contemporary Creek and Seminole churches (Opler 1952:171). For example, Spring Baptist Church, as the first Seminole Baptist church in Indian Territory, is the “mother” church to all other “daughter” Seminole Baptist churches in Oklahoma today. Another example is the names of early Muskogee towns that have been adopted by churches or Christian missions. These churches and missions continue to use the town name from which they were derived. One of the churches I visited — “Eufaula” Sandcreek Baptist — derived its name from a southeastern Creek Town, “Eufaula”. Another church — Thewole Baptist Church — most likely derived its name from Thewarle<sup>27</sup> town, which Debo describes as “one of the oldest of the Upper ‘red’ Towns” (Debo 1941:4, 8).<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> There are several spellings for Thewole. Debo mentions an alternate spelling, “Hoithle Waule”. Martin and Mauldin (2000: 169) mention a third spelling, “Thewahle”, that was used for a Seminole tribal town (or as in Seminole terminology, “band” which was used in place of the Muskogee, “town”) (*ibid*: 195).

<sup>28</sup> Further research on southeastern tribal towns which preceded Indian Territory/Oklahoman churches or missions and which churches derived from Upper or Lower or “red” or “white” towns is needed. Jack Martin (n.d.) and Martin and Mauldin (2000:167-171) compiled lists of Creek Place-Names identifying a total of twenty-four churches or missions with tribal towns (see Appendix D). However, in most cases it remains unknown whether the towns were comprised of Upper or Lower factions. Complicating the matter are examples of more than one

Still another example is the practice of fasting in early Muskogee Christianity — a likely retention from the Green Corn Religion, where it was prominently practiced.

Creek Ceremonial Ground  
Hanna, Oklahoma

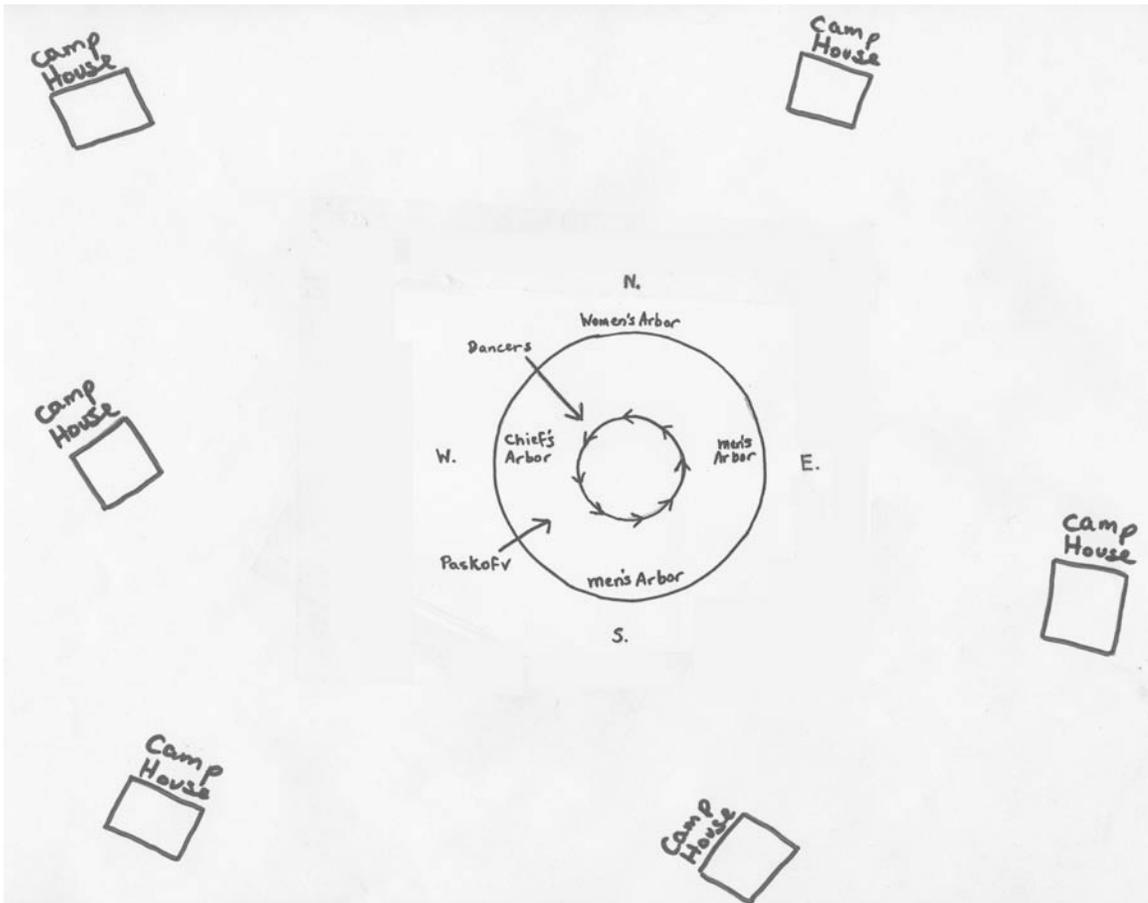


Figure 2: Architectural Layout of Contemporary Ribbon Dance  
(First Dance of the Green Corn Religion)  
(Illustration by Karen Taborn, 2008 modified from original submission)

southeastern town that shared the same or a part of the same name. For instance, there was an “Upper Eufaula (tribal name Yofalv) Old Town” and a “Lower Eufaula Town”. It is not clear, at this time, which town was identified with Eufaula Sandcreek Baptist Church. Other churches or missions named after southeastern towns were Koweta Mission derived from the important Lower Creek Town of Coweta; the Upper Creek Town of Tullahassee (tribal name Tvlvhasse, a daughter town of Coosa) preceded Tullahassee Mission; Arbeka Church was preceded by the Upper “white” tribal town of Apehkv; and Nuyaka Mission derived from tribal town Nuyakv (Martin n.d.).

Letha King elaborated on fasting, as she remembered it practiced in the 1940s, some sixty years ago,

Years ago ... when they [Christians] fasted you know, we used to all go out into the woods for prayer. They didn't eat anything until late that evening. They went all day. They got up before breakfast ... and then they came back in the church and they had prayers and singing and all until late that evening. (King, personal communication 4 January 2002)

### **Interpreting Hymn Texts**

Lilah Denton Lindsey, a one-time student at Tallahassee, expressed her memories and adoration of A.E.W. Robertson when she wrote, “Now I am to tell you of the most precious place in that [living] room, a sacred place. Its site is almost in the center of the room but a little south. It is the little ‘trundle bed’ on which Mrs. Robertson lay day after day, patiently *translating* the English Testament into the Creek language...”(Lindsey 1958/9: 186). However, Loughridge, in a memoir of his early missionary work in Indian Territory wrote, “I *prepared* hymn books, catechism, *translated* the Gospel of Matthews, a treatise on baptism and a Dictionary in two parts, Creek and English and English and Creek” (*op cit*: 193) [Italics mine]. Loughridge uses the word *prepared*, rather than *translated* in his reference to hymns. This may be of significance as Muskogee hymns differ significantly in text from English hymns. A survey of the hymns reveals that they are clearly not literal translations of English hymns, even though references to “translating” hymns are found throughout historical documents.

The Muskogee Hymnal, *Nakcokv Esyvhi ketv*, published by Salt Creek Methodist Church, is demonstrative of hymns sung at Muskogee churches today. The hymnal lists a hundred and twenty-five hymns that were originally “translated” in the 1880s by A.E.W.

Robertson. George (Doug) Scott translated the hymns in the *Nakcokv Esyvhi ketv* hymnal back into English in the late 1990s (Isham, personal communication 17 April 2003). I identify five distinct themes in the hymns, 1) “Praising God and or Jesus”; 2) “To go on” or “Remembering those gone on”; 3) “Pleading for God’s assistance”; 4) Post-contact themes, i.e. addressing man’s sinful or fallen nature, and 5) the theme of encouraging each other to continue on the path toward heaven or the Lord.

Key pre-contact Muskogee concepts have been grafted onto Christian motifs and ideas. The town (*tvlofv* or *etvlwv*) is used in hymns to refer to heaven. And the Muskogee word *Hesaketvmes* — is used to refer to God. The *Dictionary of Creek/Muskogee* defines *Hesaketvmes* — as

God. Modern speakers suggest this word derives from *hesaketv* ‘life’ and *em es* — ‘one who takes away’. In the 1880s the second word had a more specific meaning, however: Gatschet [a seventeenth century Creek linguist] records that *em es* — was ‘one responsible for carrying the battle-charm or war-physic’ (Martin and Mauldin 2000:50).

The theme of praising God — which does not markedly differ from English hymn themes — is ubiquitously displayed in the hymns. The syntax in the Muskogee language would prefer to state the phrase “I honor Your commands” as “Your commands I honor”<sup>29</sup> as illustrated in the following hymn praising God.

**“Hesaketvmeset Likes”  
 (“God our Creator and Preserver”)**

1. Hesaketvmeset Likes  
God Lives (dwells)

Nak omvlkv hahicvtet  
Thing everything he created

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<sup>29</sup> See Chapter II, footnote no. 17.

Em penkalit, mekusapis  
Him I fear, I pray

Cv cukwvn es akvsamis  
My mouth I praise

2. Em vhakv pu mvhayat  
His commandments He taught us

Nak hotcen hahyet pu'mvtes  
Thing written he wrote and gave it to us

Mvhakv mehenwvt omes  
Commandments righteous it is

Cv feken es akvsamis  
My heart I praise

3. 'Mopunvkv herkvt oces  
His words peaceful are

Emestvlke 'mafvetvt  
His people are happy

Vm mvttet os, cem kusapit  
I wrong am you I bet

Cem vhakvn vrakkuecis  
Your commands I honor

4. Vm elkv netvtv ocet os  
My death day there is

Hofunekaranis omes  
May not be long

Este 'svm mvnettakisem  
People me younger

Elkv vkueyvte sulkes  
Death moving many

5. Vn nettv vhoske 'munken  
My day left while

Cesvs vm ehake ‘munken  
Jesus me wait while

Elkv vm oreko ‘munken  
Death me before

Mekusapy hakiyate  
Christian I become

Also ubiquitous is the theme “to go on”. Margaret Mauldin stated,

I would say well over ninety percent. All of the songs are songs of encouragement, that’s what they are. They’re singing about whatever it takes to meet another week and then after church they have the handshaking and they sing these songs ... just keep going. And then we’ll all meet there some day. Regardless of the troubles here, we’ll be there. Our brothers are there, sisters are there ... [Mauldin quoted a short phrase in Muskogee] literally ‘we are those who pray’; you know those who are Christian. (Mauldin, personal communication 2 October 2002).

Ted Isham also stated that this theme is prevalent in contemporary Stomp Dance ceremonies where they sing of those who have gone on to a place in the west.

Remembering the ancestors, says Isham, is what has enabled Muskogees to survive all these years (Isham, personal communication 17 April 2003). However, I was unable to confirm the existence of the expression “to go on” in Frank Speck’s early twentieth century recordings of Creek Ceremonial songs. The closest example that Speck lists is a song entitled “Spirit the Cause”. According to Speck, this song addresses the spirits of the dead who are believed to be caught between the world of the living and the home of the spirits [and] are thought to wander about the earth inflicting fever in its various forms... The song invokes the troublesome spirit, mentioning his defunct relatives with the idea of obtaining his mercy in some way through his affection for them” (Speck 1911:

226). The text of the song, however, is similar to many Muskogee hymns in sequentially addressing different relatives who have died.

**“Spirit the Cause”**

Your mother is dead  
Your child is dead  
Your father is dead  
Your elder brother (or sister) is dead  
Your younger brother (or sister) is dead  
Your clan brother (or sister) is dead  
Your mother’s sister (little mother) is dead  
Your mother’s brother is dead  
Your grandmother  
Your grandfather is dead  
Your withered up  
Your back bone  
Made to crumble, it seems to be  
Your head bone.  
(Speck 1911: 226-227).

Ted Isham states that the era in which the hymns were written — the mid to late 1800s — coincided with an era when Creeks and Seminoles in Indian Territory were suffering tremendous losses due to frequent deaths within their community (Isham, personal communication 17 April 2003). This is also evidenced by letters addressed to A.E.W. Robertson from Creek Christians. The theme “to go on” or “to meet those gone on”, as a pre-contact theme, therefore, may have been especially meaningful to Creeks and Seminoles suffering extraordinary illnesses and deaths in Indian Territory.

**“Peyates Peyates”**

Peyates Peyates Hvlwe mi mm  
Have gone, have gone High there.  
  
Vpeyates Peyates Peyates.  
They have gone. Have gone, have gone.

Erkenakvlke Vpeyates Peyates  
Preachers, they have gone. Have gone,

Peyates.  
Have gone.

Mekvsapvlke Vpeyates Peyates  
Christians, they have gone. Have gone,

Peyates  
Have gone.

Purahvlke Vpeyates Peyates  
Our older brothers, they have gone. Have gone,

Peyates.  
have gone.

Pucusvlke Vpeyates Peyates  
Our younger brothers, they have gone. Have gone,

Peyates.  
Have gone.

Puwantake Vpeyate Peyates  
Our sisters, they have gone. Have gone,

Peyates.  
Have gone.

Hopuetake Vpeyates Peyates  
Children, they have gone. Have gone,

Cesvs Likvn Vpeyate Peyates  
Jesus lives They have gone Have gone

Peyates.  
Have gone.

Before I go, they have gone. Have gone,  
Have gone.

Another hymn theme is to plead for God's help.

**“Vm Vnicvs! Vm Vnicvs!”**

1. Vm vnicvs! Vm vnicvs!  
Me Help Me help

Emekusvpkvn vm vnicvs!  
Praying me help!

Cv'nokiket wakkiyof  
Me sick laying there

Cv'nokiket wakkiyof  
Me sick laying there

Vm vnicvs  
Me Help

2. Vm vnicvs! Vm vnicvs!  
Me Help Me help

Emekusvpkvn vm vnicvs!  
Praying me help!

Cv'stemerket hueriyof  
Me suffer standing

Cv'stemerket hueriyof  
Me suffer standing

Cv'stemerket hueriyof  
Me suffer standing

Vm vnicvs  
Me Help

3. Vm vnicvs! Vm vnicvs!  
Me Help! Me help!

Emekusvpkvn vm vnicvs!  
Praying me help!

Cv'lvrantet wakkiyof, & c.  
Me dying laying there

As shown in the following excerpts, the important Muskogee motif of the “town” is altered to mean “Heaven”.

**“Cesvs Vn Tesem Vc Vnokeces”  
 (“Jesus Loves Even Me”)**

Purke mi hvlwe tvlofv likat  
Father there high town lives

**“Tecakkeyvte Toyatskat”  
 (“I am going to Jesus”)**

Mucv Cesvs oh ayis  
Now Jesus go to

Cesvs em ekvnyv ayis  
Jesus his land I go

Hesaketv tvlofvn  
Life town

**“Cesvs Mekko”**

Cesvs Mekko Hvlwen Likes  
Jesus King high lives Heaven on

Hvlwe Tvlofv [town] min  
Heaven there

Some themes seem to have post-contact, Anglicized meanings. For instance, the theme of “blood” seems to refer to Biblical references of “the Blood of Christ”.

**“Cesvs Alakvtes”**

Eponvkecates Akerricakes  
He loved us let us think about

Mekvasapokes. (Hesaketvmesen)  
Let us pray (God)

Catv Pvlatkvts. Akerricakes  
Blood spilled let us think about

Mekvasapokes. (Hesaketvmesen)  
Let us pray (God)

The following hymn addresses the post-contact Biblical theme of Christ's sufferings at the hand of man, a "fallen and sinful creature".

**“Aeha! Kut! Cv Hesayecv”**  
**(“Alas! And did my Saviour bleed!”)**

1. Aeha! Kut! Cv Hesayecv  
Alas! Did my Saviour

Catv pvlatkvt haks?  
Blood spill did he

Mohmen vm Mekko elvt haks?  
And my King die did he?

Cuntv yomusiyan?  
Worm as I am

2. Vne holwayeciyaten  
My wickedness

Eto vtarkvt haks?  
Wood hang did He?

Estomahe vnokeckv  
Nowhere love

Muntalat sahsekos!  
Greater none

3. Hvseh momvre tetayen  
Sun then in time

Yomucket omvtes,  
Darken did

Hesaketvmese elof  
Jesus dies

Est' en holwayeckvn!  
People wickedness

4. Tohweklepkn heciyofvt  
Cross see

Cv tufofv ehít  
My face hide

Vlsusen: cv feke kafken  
Shame my heart milks

Es hvkihkiyet os  
I cry is

5. Cv turopuswv pvlatkis  
My eye juice spills [cries]

Vm vhuere fekeks  
My debt pay

Tokvs! Mucv cem e wikis!  
Okay now you surrender

Etvh estohmvkos  
Else doing nothing.

Margaret Mauldin and Samuel Berry spoke of another theme addressed in the hymns and in church performance practice in which Creek and Seminole Christians encourage each other to “keep on in their path toward the Lord”. Samuel Berry further explained how the hymn “*Estomen Follivckis*” is sung with the purpose of encouraging one another to “keep on”, as it is expressed in both song performance and in text. The “shaking of hands” is referred to as “the right hand of fellowship”, in Muskogee “*asikitá*”. In “*Estomen Follivckis*”, it involves a female-male reciprocal ritual of encouraging each other “to continue on the path”. Berry’s explanation further reveals how this hymn inspires his imagination to think about what it must have been like for those who walked on the Trail of Tears. The effect of the “right hand of fellowship” and

the text of this hymn not only inspires one to “continue on” but, for Berry, it also reinforces a connection to the past. Remembering the past, along with its trials and tribulations, reinforces one’s focus on the present, helping to direct the course of events in the future.

There are songs where we... well we call it a “right hand of fellowship” and in Creek we call it asikitá [to shake hands with one another in *The Dictionary of Muskogee/Creek*]. So what that song entails is “Estvmvn Estomen Follvckis, Amemekosv-pvcken. Anew. Ceme, Mekosvpvkin”, [Berry recites beginning lyrics to “Estomen Follivckis”]. Meaning, wherever you’re at you pray for me and I’ll pray for you. With this song the women would line up on one side and the men would line up on the other. And as we would start off the song the woman leader would start off first and come and shake the hands of the men and encourage them in their walk toward the Lord. And after they got through, it was the men’s turn to go over and encourage the women. And so this is probably the way they lined up on The Trail [of Tears]. (Berry, personal communication 17 April 2003)

### **“Estomen Follivckis”**

Estvmvn Estomen Follvckis  
Wheresoever you may be

Amemekosv-pvcken. Anew. Ceme  
Me Pray for I will also you

Mekosvpvkin.  
Pray for you

Erkenvkvkle Toyvckvt. Moomis  
Preachers you are although

Komvkes. Etc.  
Desiring etc.

Estvmvn Estomen Follvckis  
Wheresoever you may be

Amemekosv-pvcken. Anew. Ceme  
Me pray for I will also you

Mekosvpvkin.  
Pray for you

Carahlke. Toyvckvt. Moomis  
Our older brothers you are although

With alterations in the performance, the “right hand of fellowship” is a continuation of ritual performed in the pre-Christian Green Corn Ceremony. In the aforementioned Ribbon Dance, men, seated at the south and east ends of the ceremonial dance circle, direct cries at the women dancers to “Dance.” “Dance!” The women dancers, two leaders of whom carry symbolic red (war) and white (peace) knives, cut away at evil or destructive energies as they dance. The purpose is to maintain balance and purify the community from any harmful or negative forces. The shaking of hands replaces the symbolism in the Ribbon Dance and the encouragement of the men’s cries to “Dance”. The meanings in both rituals have remained the same — to encourage one another to keep dancing and walking on the path and to endure in their respective roles in maintaining the sanctity and the unity of the community (Isham, personal communication 21 March 2004).

This examination of Muskogee Christian performance settings and practices, hymn texts, and Creek and Seminole explications of their Christian beliefs makes evident that in many instances Muskogee traditions have been altered, but continue to live on in the Christian church today as hybrid indigenous-Western cultural entities. In Chapter IV we look at hybridity as it manifests in the musical construction and performance of the Muskogee hymn.

## Chapter IV

### MUSKOGEE SINGING

The churches included in this study — Eufaula Sandcreek (Seminole) Baptist, Saltcreek (Creek) Methodist, and Spring (Seminole) Baptist — are representative of traditional Muskogee churches in their leadership and congregations, which are overwhelmingly Creek or Seminole Indian, and in architectural layout as described earlier. In musical performance, prayers, and sermons, however, they are reflective, to varying degrees, of an indigenous-Western hybridity. Creek and Seminole churches use three types of hymns or songs during services, i.e. English hymns, gospel songs, and Muskogee hymns. English hymns may be performed with piano accompaniment or *a cappella* while congregational members are standing or sitting. The performances I observed of English hymns were accomplished by memory. Gospel is performed by an individual or a group, usually at the front of the church, and often with piano, tambourine, guitar or recorded accompaniment. Gospel, like most English hymns, is sung in the English language, although occasionally English hymns are translated and sung in the Muskogee language. Both Gospel and English hymns are harmonized and metrical. Muskogee hymns are sung in the Muskogee language. The range usually expands from a sixth to an octave. They are monophonic and men and women sing in octave-unison without instrumental accompaniment. The timbre is a somber, almost mournful, open-throated sound or they may have a prayerful, “other-worldly” beauty to them. Historically, Muskogee hymns have been orally transmitted and have not

possessed hymn titles.<sup>30</sup> Characteristic of Muskogee melodies are motifs which are repeated wholly or in segments usually with minor melodic alterations. Motifs and motif segments are tied together by other notes of the melody. There are often melodic, upward or downward slurs connecting or leading into the hymn notes.

Example no. 1. Hymn excerpt showing melodic motifs and slurs.

**Eufuala Sandcreek Baptist Church, Hymn no. 1**  
(excerpt)



Accidentals apply to entire line.

Transcribed by K. Taborn

<sup>30</sup> The *Saltcreek Church Songbook, Esvhiketv*, is one example in which hymns are given titles. According to Margaret Mauldin “[hymns] are just a song without titles. ... Some songbooks they’ll have a title but I’m not sure if someone didn’t just give them that title after they started writing these [hymn books], and I think maybe the reason so many of the others didn’t get a title is because they may not have been included in the hymn book being written at that time.” (Mauldin, personal communication 7 March 2004).

Most Muskogee hymns clearly do not reflect a Western harmonic/melodic structure; however, based on my aural analysis, one-third of the hymns may have been conceived upon a foundation of tonal harmony.<sup>31</sup>

These models may also loosely suggest a metrical format. As mentioned earlier (Chapter I, pages 12-13), Southern Anglo-American hymnody presented melodic and harmonic models for some Southern Choctaw and Oklahoma Cherokee hymns (Draper 1982: 49-50; Heth, personal communication, 12 December 2004). However, other than the historical records which show Creeks and Seminoles were involved in the *translation* of Muskogee hymnody there is no evidence of the melodic origin of their hymns. Rather than impose what is at this time a hypothesis about the origin of Muskogee hymn models, I have chosen to transcribe the hymns as I heard them in my field recordings, leaving out possible Western harmonic movement in some hymns, (i.e. chords, metric structures and key signatures) until further analysis confirms or invalidates this theory.<sup>32</sup>

There is a considerable range of variation in performance at the individual level. There is no strict adherence to the rhythmic value of notes, nor is there concern for maintaining pitch values throughout a hymn's performance. At times, by the final chorus or section of a hymn, the congregation has sharpened the pitch by a half-step. Rather than demonstrating a concern for technical "accuracy", the Muskogee singer is concerned

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<sup>31</sup> Although it is not found in historical documents I have examined, it is possible that pre-removal Creek Christians were familiar with southern Anglo-American hymn models through their affiliation with southeastern missionaries. It is also likely that A.E.W. Robertson, who spent the early years of her youth on the Brainerd Mission among southeastern Cherokees, (Robertson's father was Reverend Samuel Worcester, missionary to the southeast Cherokees) was familiar with the southern Anglo-American hymn models. Hypothetically, Robertson or Creek Christians could have applied knowledge of these hymn models to Muskogee hymn development.

<sup>32</sup> My decision departs from the Muskogee hymn analysis of W. Dayl Burnett On the *Creek Language Archive* website where key signatures and meters are included in transcriptions of Muskogee hymns. (Martin n.d.)

with the “spirit” in which the hymn is performed. Samuel Berry, expressed what the desired qualities are for a “good” hymn singer,

As far as I’m concerned, when I began to learn these songs I had a desire. First of all you have to have a desire to want to learn ‘em. And once you learn these songs, you have to know the words and you have the songs. Then there’s another step. The majority of ‘em relate to people who were here before and have gone on to paradise or heaven. So it’s an encouragement to follow in the same type of footsteps, the same type of work. So I always tell my students to “try to picture in your minds someone who’s already gone. Your mother, your father, your uncle, your aunt, your sister... somebody that you knew that was really into the church work. And as you sing these songs ... think of some Christian. Each time when you learn these songs you need to get your recording and play it over and over until you wear it out and then get you another recording. It’s repetition. And once you’ve got it memorized and once you start thinking about these people and I want you to go out and find a place that’s private. Our elders used to tell us to go to the woods and find a bare spot. And then you go out there and pray over it. So you can sing, but it doesn’t mean anything if you’re just singin’. You’ve got to sing it with the Spirit. When you sing it with the Spirit, it ignites something in that other person next to you. And that’s the Spirit that’s within you. We’re trying to kindle the Spirit of God really for Him to breathe into us. You need to pray, you need to go out and ask for this. The Lord always asks us to ‘seek and thou shall find’. That’s what our elders say. A lot of ‘um didn’t read, so these songs were given to ‘um by the Spirit. So there’s Spirit in these songs. You can just lay there and say “ya I got a Creek songbook” but what good is it gonna do ya if ya don’t know the words and ya don’t know the tune and you’re not singin’ in the Spirit? (Berry, personal communication 10 December 2002)

Muskogee hymns are divided into song sections that are often repeated. Saltcreek Methodist Church Hymn no. 1 (Example no 2.), is in three basic sections, “A1” and “A2” and “B”.

Example no. 2. Showing song sections.

## Saltcreek Methodist Church, Hymn no. 1

• = 63

A1 Leader

\*

A2

B

B

B

\*

B

B

B

\* Leader more prominent

Form: Repeated phrases of A1-A2-B. (B section includes phrases from section A placed in different order)

Accidentals apply to entire line.

Transcribed by K. Taborn

Song leaders, most often male (although at times women), start off the hymns and lead into hymn sections by singing the first few notes followed by others within the congregation. The song leader maintains a strong presence throughout the hymn, leading the congregation in song sections or verses, determining the number of sections or choruses to be repeated, and singing above the chorus in volume, especially at the beginnings of hymns and hymn sections. Choice of hymns is impromptu by individual church members led by personal inspiration. Anyone in the congregation or the church leadership may select and begin a hymn; however, the initiative is taken by those who are most familiar with the hymns and with church protocol (King, personal communication 29 April 2003; Mauldin, personal communication 7 March 2004). The song leader, by his demonstration of proper hymn performance holds an important didactic role in the church ensuring the continuance of proper codes of hymn performance practice.

Both Green Corn Religion and Stomp Dance songs include the pronounced presence of a song leader (Bell 1990:333; Speck 1911: 161-2). In *Ceremonial Songs of the Creek and Yuchi Indians* Frank Speck, states,

[t]he leader, who is either self-appointed or invited to lead by a chief, may choose whatever song he wishes, though of course he generally is expected to give a different one each time (Speck 1911: 161).

Speck continues,

A dance is begun by the leader who starts walking around the fire alone, vibrating his rattle. As soon as he is joined by one or two comrades he begins the introduction to his song by shouting *yó hyo* and other syllables ..., which are repeated by the others. As soon as a sufficient number have joined in the leader starts with the song proper... The number of repetitions is optional with the leader. (*op cit*).

Example no. 3. Showing song leader entrances.

## Spring Baptist Church, Hymn no. 1

The musical score is written in bass clef with a tempo marking of quarter note = 58. It consists of seven staves of music. The first staff begins with a boxed letter 'A' and a bracket labeled 'Leader' that spans the first four measures. The second and third staves continue the melody. The fourth staff continues the melody. The fifth staff begins with a boxed letter 'B' and a bracket labeled 'Leader' that spans the first four measures. The sixth and seventh staves continue the melody. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots at the end of the seventh staff.

Form: A, B, B, B

Transcribed by Karen Taborn, 2004

Muskogee hymns, however, differ from Stomp Dance and Green Corn Religion songs in a number of other ways. The latter two are responsorial (call and response).<sup>33</sup>

Hymns are not. Speck's recordings of ceremonial songs from circa 1905 were not recorded during actual ceremonies and only the song leader, without the chorus, was recorded. However, in his text, Speck indicates that call-response was practiced in the ceremonial songs by indicating the leader's part in ordinary print differentiated from the chorus's part in italicized print (Speck 1911: 162). The responsorial nature of Stomp Dance songs is evident in contemporary recordings.<sup>34</sup> An additional distinction between Stomp Dance songs and hymns is in the accompaniment. Stomp Dance songs are performed in a kind of shuffled time created by shell shaker rattles which accentuate an even, rhythmic, downward attack upon each “downbeat” and an upward attack on the “upbeats” of the Stomp Dance singers (see upward and downward arrows in Shell Shaker rhythm markings below).

Example 3

Excerpt of Stomp Dance Songs of the Muscogee [sic] Nation, Vol. 1, track 1 (2000)

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for the Leader, the middle for the Chorus, and the bottom for the Shell Shaker. The Leader and Chorus parts are in 4/4 time with a tempo marking of quarter note = 132. The Leader part has lyrics: Hāy-e - ŋ, hāy-e - ŋ, hāy - yee, hee - ye - e. The Chorus part has lyrics: Hāy-e - ŋ, hāy-e - ŋ, hāy - yee, hee - ye - e. The Shell Shaker part is a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

Stomp Dance call and response and shell shaker rhythm

Transcribed by Karen Taborn, 2004

<sup>33</sup> The responsorial (call and response) characteristic of Stomp Dance and pre-Christian Ceremonial songs is typical of Eastern Woodland Indian music of which the Creeks and Seminoles are a part.

<sup>34</sup> See Selected Discography

Hymns are sung *a cappella*. A distinctive feature of Stomp Dance songs is the occasional shouts often demonstrated at the end of a round of song, also not a shared trait with hymns. Ceremonial and Stomp Dance songs often use vocables (a combination of non-lexical syllables). Hymns are completely texted.

Thus, the pronounced presence of the song leader, who starts hymns and hymn sections, who determines the number of repeated sections in the hymn to be sung, and who usually decides which hymn is to be sung is likely a retention from ceremonial song practices, whereas, the standard co-joining of song leader and congregation, after the song leader's beginning, is a departure from the pre-Christian ceremonial song practices of call and response.

### **Model of Church Service**

Out of three church services I recorded — one service each at Saltcreek Methodist, Spring Church, and Eufuala Sandcreek Baptist Church — a total of fifteen Muskogee hymns, five English hymns, and two gospel songs were performed. Parts of the churches' sermons and most of the singing were performed in the Muskogee language. At Eufaula Sandcreek (Seminole) Baptists' Fourth Sunday all six hymns performed were Muskogee language hymns. At Saltcreek Methodist Church's Sunday morning service there were eight Muskogee hymns, two English hymns and a gospel song sung. The service at Spring Baptist Church was a Communion service where, out of seven songs recorded at the beginning of the service, only one was a Muskogee hymn, five were English songs or hymns sung with piano accompaniment or *a cappella*, and one

was a gospel song sung by a non-Seminole, white church visitor with recorded instrumental accompaniment.

Following is a model of a Muskogee church service based on my visits to Eufaula Sandcreek Baptist, Saltcreek Methodist and Spring Baptist Churches. I break Muskogee church services into six basic sections, 1) the introduction, which begins with a prayer or a hymn, followed by two or more hymns and a few prayers; 2) the welcoming, in which the pastor usually welcomes visitors or members who have been absent for some time; 3) the sermon, lasting thirty or forty minutes; 4) more singing; 5) the invitational section where members make announcements or confessions, 6) the closing of service which proceeds with a distinct Creek and Seminole tradition known as the “right hand of fellowship” (King, personal communication 29 April 2003).

As with the selection of hymns in the churches, prayers are begun spontaneously by one person, with the congregation joining in – reciting their own prayers so that there are several prayers simultaneously incanted throughout the building at once. At the conclusion of the prayer, someone is inspired to begin a hymn. He or she is quickly joined by others in the congregation. This may be followed by a prayer which is recited by the Pastor or someone in the congregation who is joined by others reciting their own prayers simultaneously. Someone is inspired to begin singing an English hymn (a cappella), such as “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” or “He Walks With Me”, and others in the congregation quickly join in. The English hymn is begun the same way as Muskogee hymns — with a song leader selecting the hymn on inspiration. Another prayer is recited which members spontaneously join—reciting their own prayers so that a

textured rendition of overlapping individual prayers is heard throughout the church. The Pastor leads in, adding to the texture of spoken prayer, by introducing another hymn to be sung while the praying continues. The hymn is joined by others in the congregation. The Pastor ends with “Amen”.

The performance of Muskogee hymns and prayers is a collective process. The unison, congregational singing of hymns; the multi-layered performances of prayers; and the prayers simultaneously spoken while a hymn is sung — all demonstrate an emphasis on the collective whole. Creek and Seminole Christians are not only pleading to “keep going on”, they are pleading to “go on together”.

Preceding the sermon the Pastor gives a “welcoming” to visitors or church members who have not been present for some time. The Pastor may ask the congregation to remember to pray for church members who are ill or traveling. The “welcoming” may take about fifteen minutes. At this point, the Pastor may call on the congregation to sing a song such as “Amazing Grace”, which is sung in the same format as the Muskogee hymns, with members seated in their pews, singing from memory. Following this is the main part of the service, the thirty or forty-minute sermon. The sermon portion of the service may begin with the Pastor speaking in English, thanking the Lord for “bringing us together to praise God”. He briefly slips into the Muskogee language and returns to English. The theme of the sermon may address the many obstacles one may face in living a Christian life or the glory that will be obtained when reaching heaven.

The sermon unfolds into a hymn while the Pastor thickens the texture, continuing with the conclusion of the sermon over congregational singing, and finally joining the congregation in the hymn singing. This is followed by additional singing of hymns for

approximately another ten minutes. Again hymns are chosen impromptu or hymn choice is based on the sermon of the day.

The congregation is then invited to make confessions. Although confessions may be included in any church service, they are not obligatory and they, therefore, take place only when congregational members choose to participate (Mauldin, personal communication 17 March 2004). Confessions are made quietly and inaudibly, between the pastor and the church member. Church members who wish to make confessions walk up and stand in front of the pulpit. They may whisper their concerns into the Pastor's ear or speak aloud for the congregation to hear. The Pastor might ask the congregation to pray for the church member.

During one service I attended at Eufaula Sandcreek, there were three persons who gave confession. One female member expressed concern that she had been ill and unable to attend church like she had wished. She wanted Jesus to forgive her and to make her pure to accept Holy Communion scheduled for the following Sunday. Another woman was concerned about an employee on her job who had confided in her that fellow employees were backbiting against him. She wanted to ask Jesus to look after her coworker/friend and keep him strong. She also had felt anger about this and wanted to ask for God's forgiveness for her feelings. After everyone who wishes to do so has spoken, a church deacon may recite a prayer followed by the Pastor, asking the members of the congregation to bear witness to the Lord for all that was said by raising their right hands. At this point the Pastor says a few words, and then each row lines up to give the ritual handshaking known as the "right hand of fellowship" to those who made confessions. While this is taking place, the communal atmosphere is texturally thickened

again with a multilayer of prayers as someone begins a hymn and the congregation joins in singing. Singing continues until everyone has a chance to shake hands with those who gave confessions. Another prayer is kicked off, with the members joining in spontaneously – reciting their own prayers so that there are several prayers uttered throughout the church at once. A moment or so into this and a deacon’s prayer begins to dominate. The deacon offers a prayer using the same melodically-rhythmic pattern that the Pastor used in his sermon. Next, a monetary offering is collected while another hymn is sung by the congregation.

Congregational members are next invited to make announcements. These usually pertain to requests for prayers for ailing or troubled persons or invitations to attend special events or other churches’ Fourth Sundays or Big Sundays. This is followed with three or four more prayers and hymns. The service is finally closed with the encouraging and supportive ritual of the “right hand of fellowship”, concluding with the Pastor inviting everyone to the camp houses for dinner.

The following chart shows indigenous and Western traits in hymn, prayer and sermons from three separate services at Eufaula Sandcreek Baptist, Saltcreek Methodist and Spring Baptist Churches.

Figure 3:

Indigenous and Western traits in hymn, prayer and sermons from three separate Creek and Seminole Church services.

Text in Red = Indigenous trait

Text in Blue = Western trait

Text in Black = may either be indigenous or Western

All hymns and songs are performed *a cappella*, without hymnals and sitting, unless otherwise noted.

Melodic slurs are indicated in melody (see Appendix B).

<b><u>Eufaula Sandcreek (Seminole)</u></b> <b><u>Baptist</u></b>	<b><u>Saltcreek (Creek)</u></b> <b><u>Methodist</u></b>	<b><u>Spring (Seminole)</u></b> <b><u>Baptist</u></b>
<p>Muskogee Hymn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Muskogee language</li> <li>- Non-harmonic</li> <li>- Non metric</li> <li>- Song leader (male)</li> <li>- Through composed</li> </ul>	<p>Muskogee Hymn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Muskogee language</li> <li>- Non-harmonic</li> <li>- Non-metric</li> <li>- Song leader (male)</li> <li>- Form determined by song leader. Repeated phrases of A1-A2-B. (B section includes phrases from section A placed in different order)</li> </ul>	<p>English Song</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- English language</li> <li>- Harmonic</li> <li>- Metric</li> <li>- Piano accompaniment</li> <li>- Sung to the melody of “Happy Birthday to You” using the text “Many blessings to you”</li> </ul>
<p>Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Muskogee language (male leader)</li> </ul> <p>Others join in reciting their own prayers and simultaneously creating a textured soundscape.</p>	<p>Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- English language (male leader)</li> <li>- Multi-layered/textured prayer with congregational prayers in Muskogee and English.</li> </ul>	<p>Prayer</p> <p>English language (recited by a female member)</p>
<p>Muskogee hymn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Muskogee language</li> <li>- Harmonic/Non-harmonic status not confirmed</li> <li>- Metric status not confirmed</li> <li>- Song leader (male)</li> <li>- Song form: A, B, B</li> </ul>	<p>Muskogee Hymn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Muskogee language</li> <li>- Non-harmonic</li> <li>- Non-metric</li> <li>- Song leader (female)</li> <li>- Recording cuts off three minutes into hymn. Form not established.</li> </ul>	<p>English Hymn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-English language</li> <li>-Harmonic</li> <li>-Metric</li> </ul>
<p>Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Muskogee language (male leader)</li> <li>- Others join in recited their own prayers creating a textured soundscape (English and Muskogee languages)</li> </ul>	<p>Welcoming words (Pastor)</p> <p>English (introducing guests)</p>	<p>Welcoming (Pastor)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- English language “We are grateful for all of your attendance today ...”</li> </ul>

<b><u>Eufaula Sandcreek (Seminole) Baptist</u></b>	<b><u>Saltcreek (Creek) Methodist</u></b>	<b><u>Spring (Seminole) Baptist</u></b>
<p>Muskogee hymn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Muskogee language</li> <li>- Non-harmonic</li> <li>- Non-metric</li> <li>- Song leader (male)</li> </ul> <p>Form: A, B, A with A repeated at the end. Chart shows repeated A section with melodic and rhythmic deviations</p>	<p>Muskogee Hymn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Muskogee language</li> <li>- Harmonic/Non-harmonic status not confirmed</li> <li>- Metric status not confirmed</li> <li>- Song leader (male)</li> <li>- Song leader rushes the introduction of new choruses</li> <li>- Strophic (four choruses)</li> </ul>	<p>English hymn “Praise Him”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- English language</li> <li>- Harmonic</li> <li>- Metered</li> <li>- piano accompaniment</li> </ul>
<p>Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Single prayer in Muskogee language</li> </ul>	<p>Muskogee Hymn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Muskogee language</li> <li>- Non-harmonic</li> <li>- Non-metric</li> <li>- Song leader (female)</li> <li>- One chorus</li> </ul>	<p>English hymn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- English language</li> <li>- Harmonic</li> <li>- Metered</li> <li>- Song leader (one male starts each new chorus and is followed by the chorus)</li> </ul>
<p>Welcoming words (Pastor) English language</p> <p>“We want everyone to be saved. But it’s got to come from your selves. If you want Jesus in your heart all you have to do is repent... We’ve come together by the will of the Holy Spirit to say prayers and sing songs...”</p>	<p>Welcome (Pastor) English language (advising the congregation to pray for members who are ill or suffering hardships)</p>	<p>Muskogee hymn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Muskogee language</li> <li>- Non-harmonic</li> <li>- Non-metric</li> <li>- Song leader (female)</li> <li>- Form: A, B, B, B</li> </ul>
<p>Muskogee hymn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Muskogee language</li> <li>- Non-harmonic</li> <li>- Non-metric</li> <li>- Song leader (male)</li> <li>- Form: A, B1, B2, C, C</li> </ul>	<p>Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- English language (Pastor asked one of the preachers to lead in prayer)</li> </ul>	<p>Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- English language</li> </ul>
<p>Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Muskogee language (leader)</li> <li>- Others join in, reciting their own prayers and creating a textually textured soundscape in Muskogee and English.</li> </ul>	<p>Gospel song. “Amazing Grace”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- English language</li> <li>- Harmonic</li> <li>- Metric</li> <li>- Song leader (male)</li> <li>- 6 choruses</li> </ul>	<p>English hymn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- English language</li> <li>- Harmonic</li> <li>- Metered</li> <li>- piano accompaniment</li> <li>- Pastors asked congregation to stand while singing this hymn</li> </ul>

<u><b>Eufaula Sandcreek (Seminole) Baptist</b></u>	<u><b>Saltcreek (Creek) Methodist</b></u>	<u><b>Spring (Seminole) Baptist</b></u>
<p>Sermon (approx. 20 minutes) English language (visiting preacher during a fourth Sunday service) “When we sing these songs, when we worship we are eating God’s food in the sense that we are feeding the Spirit within us so that we will be able to live a Christian life, day by day ...”</p>	<p>English hymn. “He Walks with Me” - English language - Harmonic - Metric - Strophic, 3 choruses</p>	<p>Monetary Offering is taken</p>
<p>Muskogee hymn - Muskogee language - Harmonic/Non-harmonic status not confirmed - Metric status not confirmed - Song leader (male) - 2 choruses - Preaching by individual over singing creates a similar multi-textured effect to the multiple prayers recited over hymn singing.</p>	<p>Muskogee Hymn - Muskogee language - Non-harmonic - Non-metric - Song leader (male) - Second half of hymn repeats three times at sign on chart. Final repeat sung with single prayer recited in English over singing from asterisk.</p>	<p>Gospel song - English language - Harmonic - Metered - This was an individual male singer singing to recorded background musical accompaniment</p>
<p>Monetary Offering is taken</p>	<p>Muskogee hymn - Muskogee language - Non-harmonic - Non-Metric - Song leader (male) - Repeated twice from the sign on chart and ending on the “fine”.</p>	<p>Sermon (20 minutes) - English language</p>
<p>Muskogee hymn - Muskogee language - Non-harmonic - Non-metric - Song leader (male) - Form: short melody (approx. 20 seconds long) repeated 6 times. Each round, melody is embellished to suit the inspiration of the singers.</p>	<p>Sermon (approx. 18 minutes) - English “If we don’t know the mysteries of heaven, there won’t be a place for you. We must not only be Christians, but be active Christians...”</p>	<p>Tape concludes before service ending</p>

<b><u>Eufaula Sandcreek (Seminole) Baptist</u></b>	<b><u>Saltcreek (Creek) Methodist</u></b>	
<p>Announcements - English language The congregation was invited to lunch and to return for following services for the day.</p>	<p>Muskogee hymn - Muskogee language - Non-harmonic - Non metric - Song leader (male) - Single English prayer recited over hymn beginning at asterisk. - End of hymn covered by prayer and unclear on tape. Prayer continues as Hymn ends and “Oh How I love Jesus” begins</p>	
<p>Prayer - English language (by visiting white preacher)</p>	<p>English hymn “Oh How I Love Jesus” - English language - Harmonic - Metric - Praying continues from previous hymn</p>	
	<p>Monetary Offering is taken</p>	
	<p>Prayer (recited by congregation member) English</p>	
	<p>Muskogee hymn - Muskogee language - Non-harmonic - Non-metric - Song leader (male) - Repeats once from beginning to coda sign then to 2<sup>nd</sup> coda and fine</p>	
	<p>Announcements - English</p>	

In this chapter I show indigenous characteristics reflected in the motifs and slurs of hymn melodies and in song sections that may be repeated at the discretion of the song leader. At times Muskogee hymns have been shown to be devoid of Western melodies and meters and, while further research is necessary, at other times they may be present. The indigenous Muskogee language continues to be used in the hymns, while hymn

performance often involves the layering of multiple prayers recited in the Muskogee and English languages recited simultaneously. Thus, hybridity is evident at the level of performance and in the musical construction of the hymns themselves.

## Chapter V

### *Negotiated Realities*

The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. (Bhabha 1994: 4)

The study of Indian hymnody, from the theoretical position of hybridity, is incipient. As shown earlier (Chapter I, pages 8-14) while to a degree, Indian hymn studies have acknowledged some Western-indigenous syncretism, there has been a general propensity to focus on the retention of indigenous practices. In the early stages of my study, I too focused on indigenous customs. I was *looking* for hidden indigenous practices within the Western Christian church. It was not until I was in the thick of my field studies that I began to observe Muskogee hymnody as a hybrid indigenous-Western practice. The change of perspective was due to my respondents who reiterated time and again that while they sought to maintain disparate insider Creek and Seminole church communities, their practices and beliefs embodied key Western perspectives, too. Looking back at the early stages of my research and at the field of Indian hymnody in general, I believe this development presents a definite shift in our theoretical perspectives and reflects the collaborations between researchers and respondents in a dialogic approach.

My key respondents did not always share a unified opinion in their Christian beliefs. Difference was expressed on how much and where change should be accepted in the churches and hymn singing practices. An example was given in a discussion which took place between Letha King, her daughter Louina, and a family friend, Kevin (Chapter I, pages 19-20). Louina stressed the need to increase English spoken in church to attract the (Creek and Seminole) youth, Letha stressed a desire for the Muskogee language to be maintained in hymn singing and sermons, and Kevin saw merit in the continued use of both the English and Muskogee languages in the churches. This discussion reflected historical struggles where indigenous and Western factions eventually gave way to a hybrid Muskogee-Christian community that is neither purely indigenous nor purely Western in form. Rather, it is at times reflective of its indigenous roots; at other times, it displays Western roots, and at still other times, a mixture of both, yielding something altogether new. Resulting from Creek interpreters and Western missionaries, the hymns themselves contain indigenous and tribally specific markers alongside (Western) Christian themes, i.e. soteriological concepts such as textual references to “Christ dying for our sins” sung in the Muskogee language using indigenous musical elements and practices within the Western Christian church.

Homi Bhabha states that hybridity emerges between polarized discourses in a *Third Space* “which constitutes, the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew” (Bhabha 1994:37). It is within this *Third Space*, between indigenous and Western domains — where covert

and organic cultural formations emerge and where the politics of polarity are obscured, even nullified — that Muskogee Christian practices and hymn performance take shape.

Creek and Seminole Christians display an aptitude to resist mere assimilation and, at once, adjust to change while inserting key Muskogee cultural signifiers into hymn performance, Christian practices and beliefs. As Mauldin reminisced, culturally specific memories may be invoked through the aural reception of Muskogee hymn:

[I]t's just the overall sound... when you hear these songs... you know what they are. It kind of takes you back to a memory of security. We were very, very secure (Mauldin, personal communication, 6 November 2002).

Some Muskogee Christians experience Christianity as a continuation of the traditional Muskogee Green Corn Religion.

See we had four [meaning the sacred four corners of the earth in the indigenous Green Corn Religion — east, west, north and south] and then after discovery we were given the Gospels which is Father, Son, Holy Ghost... they give us the Trinity ... [s]o now our cardinal number is seven and that makes us complete (Samuel Berry, personal communication 17 April 2003).

No polarity is demonstrated here. Berry's belief—a *Third Space* formulation—weaves the once disparate indigenous and Western ideologies into one.

Although Muskogee churches and hymn practices result from indigenous and Western elements, and it is clear that present-day negotiated outcomes are “insider” Creek and Seminole determinations. As an “outsider” visiting Muskogee churches, the distinctiveness of the communities is palpable. Clergy and congregations are overwhelmingly Creek or Seminole, the Muskogee hymn comprises indigenous language and performance, and the architectural layout of the church reflects the indigenous religious setting. All of my respondents demonstrated a commitment to the continuation

of the Muskogee language in the hymns and to fostering knowledge of Muskogee church protocol within the churches. Berry addressed the question “what makes you a Creek Indian?”

You wear white man’s pants, white man’s shirt and speak his language, drive his car, live in his house, go to his school. So what makes you Creek Indian? ... I’d start on how we came to know our ceremonial sense [sic]... [T]here’s a word they use in the [indigenous] ceremonial ground that means God — Ohfvnkv [phonetically, Ohfanka]... When we separated ourselves from the ceremonial ground and began churches there was change in our spiritual lives. When we came to our spiritual lives we had to change the way we called Him God... [W]e did not know nothing about this until the missionaries came and told us. So those who have knowledge have to accept... We Christians call Him Hesaketvmese... You have to understand that this is a process of spirituality. If you cling to the old, then you’re not part of the new. But you can still retain this... That’s why we have to remember our story and show that God was with us in the beginning. (Berry, personal communication, 6 November 2002)

Why is the maintenance of traditional culture and language important? The reconciliation of traditional ways with contemporary Muskogee Christian beliefs and practices demonstrates how connections to the past can create stability in the present and sustain one to look forward toward the future.

In spite of the adroitness of Creek and Seminole elders to connect indigenous tradition to contemporary Muskogee Christianity, traditional Muskogee culture which is reflected in the churches and the Muskogee language is diminishing among Creek and Seminole youth. As “insider communities” the transmission of cultural knowledge from elders to Creek and Seminole youth is vital. Letha King and Margaret Mauldin assert, however, that the youth are not attending church as regularly as before and they are

forgetting the Muskogee language and “Muskogee ways.” (King and Tiger, personal communication, 1 April 2002; Mauldin, personal communication, 6 November 2002).

The Muskogee hymn, therefore, as a primary source in which the indigenous language has been preserved, takes on heightened significance for the perpetuation of Muskogee culture.

The study at hand is the first to be conducted on Muskogee hymns and has relevance for ethnomusicology and hymn studies alike. It is my hope that this research leads to a greater awareness of how indigenization takes place in hymns which are developed, in part or wholly, by Indian (aka Native American) peoples and demonstrate further how difference is negotiated in hybrid cultures. Ultimately, the perpetuation of Muskogee hymn practice depends on Creek and Seminole preservation efforts. Among them are Muskogee language and hymn singing classes taught by Margaret Mauldin, and, of course, the varied efforts of the Creek and Seminole people who continue to demonstrate an indomitable will to see their cultural practices survive. I hope that this study lends support to their efforts.

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<sup>35</sup> This is the Salt Creek Church Hymnal. The literal translation of the title inside the *Nakcokv Esvyhiketv* is “Book Song”. The Dictionary of Creek/Muskogee lists another translation of *nakcokv* as “paper” or “older word book” and *esvyhiketv* as “psalm”.

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## Appendix A:

### Personal Interviews and Notes Taken During Field Visits

**BERRY**, Samuel [pseud.]. Dec. 10, 2002. Interview by author.

— Dec. 20, 2002. Interview by author.

**BRUNER**, Melvin. August, 2001. Personal joint interview with Letha King and Melvin Bruner.

**EMARTHLA**, Nan. Nov. 1, 2002. Questionnaire returned.

**EUFALA (EUPHALA) BAPTIST CHURCH**. August 16, 2001. Field notes.

— April 2002. Field notes.

**HETH**, Charlotte. Dec. 12, 2004. Interview by author.

**ISHAM**, Ted. Oct. 19, 2002a. Interview by author.

— Oct. 20, 2002b. Interview by author.

— April 17, 2003. Interview by author.

— March 6, 2004. Interview by author.

— March 21, 2004. Interview by author.

**KING**, Letha. August, 2001. Personal joint interview with Letha King and Melvin Bruner.

— April 1, 2002. Personal joint interview with Letha King and Kevin Tiger.

— Oct. 12, 2002. Interview by author.

April 29, 2003. Interview by author.

**MAULDIN**, Margaret. May 5, 2002. Interview by author.

— Oct. 26, 2002. Interview by author.

— Nov. 6, 2002. Interview by author.

— July 20, 2003. Interview by author.

— March 7, 2004. Interview by author.

**SPRING CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE.** April 21, 2002. Field notes.

**SPRING CHURCH HYMN REHEARSAL.** April 2002. Field notes.

**THEWOLE BAPTIST CHURCH SERVICE.** July 28, 2001. Field notes.

**TIGER, Kevin.** April, 2002. Personal joint interview with Letha King and Tiger.

## Appendix B:

### Selected Discography

- Lassiter, Luke Eric. 2002. *The Jesus Road: Kiowas, Christianity, and Indian Hymns*. CD with accompanying book. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.
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# Appendix C: Music Transcriptions

Eufuala Sandcreek Baptist Church.  
Muskogee Hymn Example no. 1 of 6.

## Eufuala Sandcreek Baptist Church, Hymn no. 1

♩ = 69      Leader solo      (see footnote)

\* Leader volume increased over chorus

Form: through composed  
Accidentals apply to entire line.

(All transcriptions by K. Taborn)

Eufuala Sandcreek Baptist Church.  
Muskogee Hymn Example no. 2 of 6.

## Eufuala Sandcreek Baptist Church, Hymn no. 2

A

3

B

Leader

3

3

3

3

Form: A, B, B

Accidentals apply to entire line.

Eufuala Sandcreek Baptist Church.  
Muskegee Hymn Example no. 3 of 6.

## Eufuala Sandcreek Baptist Church, Hymn no. 3

• = 60

A1 Leader

B

A2

Form: A, B, A with A repeated at the end.  
Chart shows repeated A sections with melodic and rhythmic deviations  
Accidentals apply to entire line.

Eufuala Sandcreek Baptist Church.  
Muskogee Hymn Example no. 4 of 6.

## Eufuala Sandcreek Baptist Church, Hymn no. 4

• = 50

A Leader

3

3

3

B1

B2

C Leader

Form: A, B1, B2, C, C



Eufuala Sandcreek Baptist Church.  
Muskegee Hymn Example no. 6 of 6.

## Eufuala Sandcreek Baptist Church, Hymn no. 6

♩ = 38  
Leader

①

②

③

④

⑤

⑥

Form: short melody (approx. 20 seconds long) repeated 6 times.  
Each round, melody is embellished to suit the inspiration of the singers.

Saltcreek Methodist Church.  
Muskogee Hymn Example no. 1 of 8.

## Saltcreek Methodist Church, Hymn no. 1

$\bullet = 63$   
Leader

\* Leader more prominent

Form: Repeated phrases of A1-A2-B. (B section includes phrases from section A placed in different order)

Accidentals apply to entire line.

Saltcreek Methodist Church.  
Muskogee Hymn Example no. 2 of 8.

## Saltcreek Methodist Church, Hymn no. 2

♩ = 42  
Leader

Recording cuts off three minutes into hymn. Form not established.

Accidentals apply to entire line.

Saltcreek Methodist Church.  
Muskogee Hymn Example no. 3 of 8.

### Saltcreek Methodist Church, Hymn no. 3

♩ = 60      Leader

Repeat chorus 3 times

Form: Strophic (four choruses)

Saltcreek Methodist Church.  
Muskogee Hymn Example no. 4 of 8.

## Saltcreek Methodist Church, Hymn no. 4

• = 60

Leader

Form: One chorus

Saltcreek Methodist Church.  
Muskogee Hymn Example no. 5 of 8.

## Saltcreek Methodist Church, Hymn No. 5

• = 52

Leader

3

Form: Second half of hymn repeats three times at sign on chart.  
Final repeat sung with single prayer recited in English over singing from asterix.

Accidentals apply to entire line.

Saltcreek Methodist Church.  
Muskogee Hymn Example no. 6 of 8.

## Saltcreek Methodist Church, Hymn no. 6

♩ = 48

Leader

§

Fine

*D.S. al Fine*

Form: Repeated twice from the sign on chart and ending on the "fine".

Accidentals apply to entire line.

Saltcreek Methodist Church.  
Muskogee Hymn Example no. 7 of 8.

## Saltcreek Methodist Church, Hymn no. 7

♩ = 60

Leader

\*

\*\*

\* Leader more pronounced

\*\* Preaching begins

Form: Through composed

Accidentals apply to entire line

Saltcreek Methodist Church.  
Muskogee Hymn Example no. 8 of 8.

## Saltcreek Methodist Church, Hymn no. 8

♩ = 60

Leader

To Coda

*D.C. al Coda*

Coda

Fine

Form: Repeats once to the beginning and then to coda and Fine

Accidentals apply to entire line

Spring Baptist Church.  
Muskogee Hymn Example no. 1.

## Spring Baptist Church, Hymn no. 1

♩ = 58

A Leader

B Leader

Form: A, B, B, B

## Appendix D:

### Indian Territory Church and Mission Names Derived From Creek/Seminole Tribal Towns<sup>36</sup>

Tribal Town Name	Church or Mission Name and Indian Territory/Oklahoma location
<b>Arbeka</b> <sup>37</sup> Creek tribal town <sup>38</sup>	<b>Arbeka</b> A Baptist church in Bryant, Oklahoma; A Methodist church in Seminole County, Oklahoma
<b>Artussee</b> A Creek tribal town	<b>Artussee</b> A Baptist church in Eufuala, Oklahoma
<b>Cheyarha</b> Creek tribal town; A band <sup>39</sup> within the Seminole Nation.	<b>Cheyarha</b> A Presbyterian church on the northeast side of Seminole, Oklahoma
<b>Bird Creek</b> A band within the Seminole Nation	<b>Bird Creek</b> A Baptist church in Sasakwa, Oklahoma
<b>Hillibee</b> A creek tribal town	<b>Hillibee</b> A Baptist church in Hanna, Oklahoma
<b>Deep Fork</b> A Creek tribal town	<b>Deep Fork Hillabee</b> A Baptist church near Eufaula, Oklahoma
<b>Concharty</b> A Creek tribal town	<b>Concharty</b> A Methodist church in Okmulgee County, Oklahoma

<sup>36</sup> The information listed in this chart has been abstracted from two sources developed by Jack Martin and Margaret McKane Mauldin (Martin n.d.; Martin and Mauldin 2000: 167-183) and included in support of comments made earlier (Chapter III, pp 68, footnote no. 29), in which I show connections between southeastern tribal towns and Oklahoma Muskogee churches. As previously stated, a thorough survey of Muskogee church affiliations with southeastern tribal towns; their origin as Upper Creek, Lower Creek or Seminole towns; and if possible, their “red” or “white” town status warrants an extensive study of its own. Such a study may also attempt to undertake a more thorough identification of tribal towns of the southeast and with those in Oklahoma.

<sup>37</sup> The Muskogee language was first lexicalized in 1834 by Reverend John Fleming. Since that time a number of missionaries and linguists have made alterations to the language in publications dating from 1835 to the 1940s (Martin and Mauldin 2000: introduction xvii-xix). In this chart, I use only the English spelling provided by Martin and Mauldin for churches and tribal towns.

<sup>38</sup> The lists from which this information is abstracted — while showing numerous Oklahoma church affiliations with “tribal towns” — generally, do not reveal the precise southeastern location of the tribal towns’ origin. Therefore, the location of the tribal towns, pending further research, have generally, been left out.

<sup>39</sup> Martin and Mauldin cite the word “band” as a word used by Oklahoma Seminoles meaning tribal town or *etvlwv* (2000: 41).

Appendix D, page 2 of 3:

<b>Coweta</b> A Creek tribal town	<b>Coweta (aka Koweta and Kowetah)</b> A Presbyterian Mission in Oklahoma (est. 1843)
<b>Mekasukey</b> A band within the Seminole Nation	<b>Mekasukey</b> A Baptist church in Seminole, Oklahoma
<b>Nuyaka</b> A Creek tribal town in Okfuskee County, Oklahoma	<b>Nuyaka</b> A Presbyterian Mission near Okmulgee County, Oklahoma (est. 1882)
<b>Hickory Ground</b> A Creek tribal town in Henryetta, Oklahoma	<b>Hickory Ground</b> Two Baptist churches in Henryetta, Oklahoma
<b>Okmulgee</b> Lower Creek Town in Russell County, Alabama	<b>Okmulgee</b> Baptist church in Okmulgee, Oklahoma
<b>Thlopthlucco</b> A tribal town east of Okemah, Oklahoma	<b>Thlopthlucco</b> A Methodist church near Clear View (state not indicated)
<b>Broken Arrow</b> A Creek tribal town in northeastern Hughes County, Oklahoma	<b>Broken Arrow</b> A Methodist church in Tulsa County, Oklahoma
<b>Thewahle</b> A band within the Seminole Nation	<b>Thewahle</b> A Baptist church in Dustin, Oklahoma
<b>Tuskegee</b> A Creek tribal town	<b>Tuskegee</b> A Baptist church in Eufaula, Oklahoma
<b>Tookparfka</b> A Creek tribal town	<b>Tookparfka</b> A Baptist church in Calvin, Oklahoma
<b>New Tulsa</b> A Creek tribal town in southwestern Hughes County, Oklahoma	<b>New Tulsa</b> A Baptist church in Lamar, Oklahoma
<b>Okfuskee</b> A “band” within the Seminole Nation	<b>Okfuskee</b> A Baptist church in Eufaula, Oklahoma
<b>Tulahassee</b> A Creek tribal town in McIntosh County, Oklahoma; A band within the Seminole Nation	<b>Tulahassee</b> A Presbyterian church in northeast of Seminole, Oklahoma; A Presbyterian mission in Oklahoma (1850); A Methodist church in Okmulgee County, Oklahoma
<b>Muddy Water</b> A Creek tribal town in southwestern McIntosh County, Oklahoma	<b>Muddy Water</b> A Baptist church in Hanna, Oklahoma
<b>Wewoka</b> Capital of the Seminole Nation, named for an Upper Creek (southeastern) town	<b>Wewoka</b> A Baptist church in Wewoka, Oklahoma

**Appendix D, page 3 of 3:**

<b>Alabama</b> A tribal town in Hughes County, Oklahoma	<b>Alabama</b> A church northwest of Weleetka, Oklahoma
<b>Green Leaf</b> A Creek tribal town west of Okemah, Oklahoma	<b>Green Leaf</b> A Baptist church west of Okemah, Oklahoma