**Appendix 5: Quakers, Native Americans, and Boarding Schools**

As they have around the world, missionaries in North America played an important role from the earliest days of colonization in the task of subduing and assimilating indigenous people. The education of children in schools on and off the reservations occupied much of the missionaries' time. Attitudes and methods varied widely among religious groups and over time, but the consistent aim of these schools was 'uplift' or 'socialization' of people viewed as wild, savage, or, more romantically, childlike. Though perhaps a more humane approach than that of those who favored outright genocide, most missionaries nevertheless sought the suppression of indigenous culture and language and the total assimilation of indigenous people to Anglo-Saxon culture and society. In the words of Richard Henry Pratt, one of the leading advocates for Indian education and the founder of the influential Carlisle Indian School in 1879, the goal was 'Kill the Indian in him, and save the man.'

The 1819 Indian Civilization Act of the U.S. government provided for $10,000 annually to support Quakers, Baptists, Methodists, and other denominations in running schools for indigenous children on and off of the reservations. Treaties between tribal authorities and the government generally included annuities to support education, though, like so many treaty provisions, that money was not always forthcoming (DeJong 35). During the 1830s, several acts of Congress forced the removal of thousands of Native Americans from their eastern homes to reservations in the west, opening the way for an expansion of these missionary schools. Quakers had allied themselves unsuccessfully with the Shawnee in Ohio against the U.S. government to prevent their removal to Kansas. In 1837, when they were forced to move, Indiana Yearly Meeting, to which the Aldersons' own Cincinnati Meeting belonged established the Shawnee Mission School on the new reservation (Kelsey 142–150, Adkins 81).[1] This collaboration between religious organizations and the government continued as the foundation for European-sponsored Indian education until the 1870s ushered in the era of government-run boarding schools, principally off of the reservation so as to further separate the children from the culture, language, and influence of their families.

[1] For more recent work on the history of Quakers and Native Americans, see also the collection of essays edited by Gallup-Diaz and Plank, especially those by Batchelor and Palmer.

Although Quaker dealings with Native Americans are often represented as having more respectful of indigenous language, religion, and culture (DeJong 61; Reyhner and Eder 51–2, 62–3) the three accounts included here of Quaker education demonstrate a strong European chauvinism and assimilationist agenda. Paula Palmer makes the case that in the drive to "Christianize and civilize" the original inhabitants of North America, Quakers were distinguished from other denominations, not so much by a greater degree of compassion or respect for indigenous lifeways as by an emphasis on the latter of those two imperatives. While Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, made conversions their primary goal, Quakers believed that native people would fully embrace Christianity only after they had learned to embrace the English language along with English customs, values, and ways of thinking. These were the fruits of Christianity, an appreciation of which would naturally lead indigenous people to seek out and embrace Christianity as their seed (Palmer 297-8). To Quakers like the Aldersons and Mary Howitt, removal of Native Americans from their homes to reservations far out west was not only cruel, but contrary to their aims of total cultural assimilation.