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RAISING THE VOICE FOR COMMUNION AND CONQUEST: HYMN SINGING IN CONTACT AMONG THE BRAINERD MISSIONARIES AND THE CHEROKEES, 1817-1838

by

GAVIN MORGAN COOPER

Under the Direction of Isaac Weiner

ABSTRACT

Many scholars have recognized the communicative and emotive power of singing as a ritual performance, and some have argued that hymn singing has played a significant role as a medium of cultural and religious communication and exchange. To better understand how and why singing might facilitate such exchange, this essay explores as a case study, the role of hymn singing in the cultural contact between the Cherokees and the missionaries at Brainerd, near Chattanooga, TN. By examining accounts of ritual singing recorded by both missionaries and Cherokees, the project illuminates how these communities, respectively, may have understood the role of singing in ritual practice. From these different perceptions of ritual singing, one can better understand how the Cherokees may have experienced resonances with the missionaries' practices, which would encourage cultural assimilation and exchange. In turn, this study contributes to a larger conversation about music and religious expression.

INDEX WORDS: Cherokee religion, Brainerd Mission, Hymnody, Culture contact, Sacred Music

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GAVIN MORGAN COOPER

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Georgia State University

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2011

A MEETING OF VOICES: HYMN SINGING IN CONTACT AMONG THE BRAINERD MISSIONARIES AND THE CHEROKEE

by

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1. Introduction

In recent decades, scholars have sought to develop more balanced methods for representing and examining the dynamics of cultural contact and exchange. Scholars like Mary Louise Pratt (1992), William McLoughlin (1994) and Leigh Eric Lassiter (2001) have challenged us to replace old models of domination and acculturation—which have treated subjugated cultures as passive recipients of more domineering traditions—with models that take into account the agency exercised by minority groups in contact. As a result, scholars have begun devising more innovative approaches to the study of cultural contact, which focus more specifically on the modes of contact through which ideas are exchanged. The sharing and performance of ritual music is one such mode that stands to provide a better understanding of how minority cultures adapt, accommodate or reject cultural and religious ideas and practices.

In his work, *How Sweet the Sound*, which explores the role of music in American religious practices, David Stowe has identified hymn singing as one of the most successful means employed by missionaries among various Native American peoples: "Christian hymns have served as a medium of cultural exchange, a currency through which incompatibilities of language and customs could apparently melt away" (Stowe 2004, 117). Such a claim raises the questions of how and why the practice of singing might be an effective medium for cultural communication and exchange, and these questions present an interesting starting point for an investigation of the roles of music in ritual practice, theological discourse and religious conversion.

The accounts of contact between the Brainerd missionaries and the Cherokees provide a valuable corpus of historical evidence in which to explore these questions, and the key to

understanding this mediation of cultural transference and conversion lies in investigating how the missionaries and Cherokees perceived the role of singing in ritual practice. While, admittedly, it is not possible to determine with absolute certainty how any one person—let alone a whole community—perceives something, we can examine how the writers and informants who contributed these accounts discussed the role of singing. Furthermore, by exploring "the place and efficacy of songs in given societal circumstances"—which ethnomusicologist Gary Tomlinson has called "songwork" (Tomlinson 2007, 5)—as they are discussed in these accounts, we can reasonably infer how the missionaries and Cherokees perceived the role of singing.

The Cherokee people have a long history of cultural interactions and exchanges with European and American Christians, dating back to the mid-sixteenth century, when De Soto's expedition encountered the Cherokee in the mountains of Carolina and Georgia. Over the following centuries, contact with French and English settlers alternated between peaceful and violent relations, with the violence usually stemming from territorial disputes. While martial conflicts ceased toward the end of the eighteenth century, political and diplomatic battles over land and sovereignty rights would continue until the Cherokees' forced removal to the West in 1838.

Despite such disputes, the Cherokee leaders embraced the opportunity to learn from the European colonists and American nationals. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the Cherokees' eagerly sought training in European sciences and technologies. Many U.S. government officials saw the Cherokees' (and other indigenous groups') desires to learn as an occasion to reform the native populations in the image of the Euro-American culture and to

assimilate Cherokee lands into the newly founded nation. To accomplish this task, the government enlisted the aid of Christian missionaries to "Americanize" the Cherokees by converting them to Christianity and teaching them Euro-American customs. Through their writings and actions, many of the missionaries displayed less sinister motives than the government officials who sent them, though as Native American theologian George Tinker has observed, despite their acting with the best of intentions, "the missionaries were guilty of complicity in the destruction of Indian cultures and tribal social structures" (Tinker 1993, 4). The missionaries clearly intended to replace what they perceived as the Cherokees' "heathen" traditions with the Christian gospel, and they believed their efforts to be charitable. Yet, as Tinker and others have observed, the missionaries associated Christian salvation with Euro-American culture, and in teaching the former, they imposed the latter. Despite their complicity in the devastation of Cherokee culture, many missionaries proved to be staunch supporters of the Cherokees' claims to land and sovereignty rights.

While U.S. legislative and military actions ultimately outweighed the missionaries' support and stripped the Cherokee of those rights, evidence for the impact of the missionaries' teachings can be found today in the profusion of Christian churches located within the Cherokee territories of North Carolina and Oklahoma and in the number of Cherokees who self-identify as Christian. In recent decades, many scholars have explored the dynamics of power and agency involved in the Cherokee/missionary encounters (Tinker 1993; McLoughlin 1994; Irwin 1997; Churchill 2000), and these studies remind us of the violence and destruction inherent in the missionary process. While we must neither belittle nor ignore such violence, I would like to bracket this discourse on cultural violence in order to look more closely at the

performative and communal aspects of the missionaries' teachings and practices as they were presented to and undertaken by the Cherokees.

By engaging in an historical exploration of the early nineteenth century, when the first Christian mission schools were established in Cherokee territory, we can perceive how the Christian missionaries presented religious teachings and practices to the Cherokees. We can also investigate how and why many Cherokees chose to incorporate those into their own cosmological and religious experiences. This particular exploration focuses on the period between 1819, when the Brainerd Mission was established near Chattanooga, TN, and 1838, when the majority of the Cherokee people were forcefully removed to the West. This period marked a time of profound changes in the Cherokees' experiences of life, religion and culture. In addition, with Sequoya's creation of the syllabary and the emergence of Cherokee literature, it was also a time during which many of the earliest written accounts concerning the Cherokee—from perspectives both within and outside the tradition—were recorded. By examining these accounts, we can gain a better understanding of the complex ways in which Cherokees and missionaries negotiated their lives in turbulent times.

Such accounts convey how the missionaries and Cherokees actively participated in the transculturation process, and they identify the challenges faced on either side of the encounter. The missionaries perceived the Cherokees' desires to learn new technologies and sciences as an opportunity to convert the Cherokees and spread the Christian message. The introduction of new religious and cultural concepts challenged the Cherokees' worldview, and they responded to this challenge with both accommodation and resistance. In turn, these various responses further complicated the missionaries' attempts to convert the Cherokees.

The missionaries initially had most success among mixed-blood Cherokees and their families, who often spoke English and who were familiar with European customs. Reaching out to full-blood Cherokees proved more difficult for a number of reasons. Anti-mission sentiments and reverence for traditional ways among full-bloods presented some of the most difficult obstacles, and historian William McLoughlin (1984; 1994; 1995) has contributed much to our understanding of these challenges. Other full-bloods were open to the missionaries' teachings, but to reach those Cherokees, missionaries still had to negotiate an obtrusive language barrier. Some have argued that the syllabary was responsible for allowing the missionaries to overcome that barrier, and certainly it presented a new and efficient mode of communication for missionaries and Cherokees alike. However, both missionary and Cherokee accounts suggest evidence of success in bridging the linguistic gap long before the syllabary's creation.

The missionaries also employed interpreters and translators as another tactic for navigating the language barrier. However, due to the scarcity of capable interpreters and the difficulties raised in translating religious concepts, this tactic proved insufficient for the missionaries' goals, and they had to rely also on other means to communicate their message. Through an investigation of the accounts it becomes evident that the missionaries found hymn singing to be one of the most effective means for accomplishing this communication.

I begin my investigation by examining the history of the Brainerd mission and the missionaries who lived and taught there. Drawing on accounts from *The Brainerd Journal* and the writings by and about Reverend Samuel A. Worcester, I will explore the missionaries' perspectives on the role of hymn singing as an evangelical Christian practice capable of initiating personal conversion experiences and of communicating and reaffirming religious

beliefs. Many studies have explored the use of singing within nineteenth century evangelical communities—who emphasized personal conversion and salvation through the experience of faith and acceptance of Jesus Christ—and these illuminate how singing can communicate religious ideas within that culture. However, when these singing practices were employed in the contact between two very different cultures, new dimensions came into play. To understand how evangelical singing practices might have bridged the linguistic gap between the missionaries and Cherokees and contributed to Cherokee conversion experiences, we must also question whether the Cherokees may have experienced resonances between those evangelical practices and their own.

To address this question, I will examine accounts from Cherokee informants collected by Reverend Daniel Butrick and historian James Mooney, which discuss traditional myths and rituals of the Cherokees. In effort to illuminate the role of singing in Cherokee ritual practice, I will concentrate on discussions of two Cherokee rituals—the Green Corn Dance and *Atohvna*—and the myths associated with them, which exemplify how singing should be incorporated into the rituals. Although limited resources make it impossible to espouse definitive claims about the Cherokees' experiences, by comparing the similarities and differences in how these accounts discuss the role of singing in ritual practices, we can infer and highlight areas in which the Cherokees may have experienced feelings of resonance with the missionaries' evangelical practices. We can then distinguish, through examination of these perceived resonances, how the teaching and singing of hymns allowed the missionaries to navigate the language barrier and promote cultural transmission and religious conversion. By understanding how singing functioned in the contact between the missionaries and the Cherokee, we can also gain a

broader understanding of how the ritual performance of music and singing functions as a religious expression capable of communicating profound emotions and religious ideas, even in the face of linguistic and cultural barriers that impede doctrinal teaching and homiletic discourse.

2. The Brainerd Mission and School, 1819-1838

Following the Revolutionary War, the early leaders of our nation faced a number of complex issues surrounding its founding. Not least among these was the question of how the new nation would interact with the indigenous peoples around them. From President Washington on, policy-makers' predominant strategy for dealing with the native peoples involved efforts to help them become "civilized"—a term widely understood by Euro-Americans to be synonymous with "Christianized." In addition to Christian education, this process also included the teaching of modern farming and textile industries, as well as promoting a familiarity with mechanical skills. Government officials resolved to allow missionaries the charge of performing these tasks, and the "Civilization Act," which the U.S. Congress passed in 1819, bolstered efforts to "civilize" the indigenous populations by providing funding for the creation of mission schools among the tribes. As a result, leaders from different Christian denominations sought to establish missions among the native peoples (McLoughlin 1994; Phillips and Phillips 1998).

Recognizing that the Europeans possessed knowledge and practices that could benefit their people, some indigenous groups welcomed the missionaries and the opportunity to learn from them. After many years of contact with Europeans, the Cherokee were among those most

willing to trade goods and knowledge with the missionaries and to allow the establishment of missions within their territory. In addition to their desire to learn from their new neighbors, the Cherokee leaders also sought to preserve their people's culture and land by establishing peaceful relations with the United States, as historians and literary scholars and Joyce and Gary Phillips observed: "Years of strife between the American colonists and the Cherokees motivated them to accept the U.S. government's Indian policy which promoted education and Christianity as the basis for relations with the new United States" (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 6).

In 1801, the first successful mission to the Cherokee was established by the Moravians at Spring Place, near Chatsworth, Georgia. Spring Place was both the longest standing mission among the Cherokee and the model for other missions that would follow. Yet, despite its longevity, Spring Place was never able to achieve, in size, nor impact, the success of the mission and school at Brainerd (Phillips and Phillips 1998). The Moravians never held as much influence with the Cherokee as the Congregationalist missionaries who established and ran Brainerd, as historian William McLoughlin observed: "Because the Congregationalists established the most numerous and efficient schools, they were at first looked upon with the most favor by the Nation's leaders" (McLoughlin 1994, 61). Initially, this favor contributed to close friendships between some Cherokee leaders and Congregationalist missionaries.

As part of its "7th Annual Report," the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM)—a Congregationalist and Presbyterian organization founded in 1810—proposed their mission statement and goal concerning the American Indians:

> To establish schools in the different parts of the tribe under missionary direction and superintendence, for the instruction of the rising generation in common school learning, in the useful arts of life, and in Christianity, so as gradually, with the divine blessing to make the whole tribe English in the

> language, civilized in their habits, and Christian in their religion. (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 3)

In accordance with this statement, the ABCFM nominated Reverend Cyrus Kingsbury to the task of establishing a mission and school for the Cherokee on Chickamauga Creek, near what is now Chattanooga, Tennessee. In January 1817, with the approval of the Cherokee Council—including notable Cherokee leaders Major Ridge, John Ross, and Charles Hicks—Kingsbury arrived at the recently purchased farmhouse that would become the central structure for the Brainerd Mission (Phillips and Phillips 1998).

From the time of its inception in 1817 until its closing at the time of the Indian Removal in 1838, Brainerd was the home of many missionaries and Cherokees who would play a significant role in Cherokee history. Kingsbury left Brainerd after only a year to establish other missions throughout the South, but others would take up his charge. Among the missionaries who left their mark on Brainerd was Dr. Samuel Worcester, a founding member of the ABCFM, who died while visiting the mission in 1921 and was buried there. Dr. Worcester's nephew, Samuel Austin Worcester, also would eventually come to live at Brainerd.

The younger Worcester would live most of his life among the Cherokee and would exercise a great deal of influence over the development of Cherokee Christianity through his translation of the Bible into the Cherokee syllabary and his creation of the *Cherokee Singing Book*, which contained a number of Cherokee hymns that continue to be sung in Cherokee churches today. Worcester's enthusiasm and ability to communicate with the Cherokee in their own language inspired them to give him a Cherokee name, following the custom of the Brainerd missionaries who would give the Cherokee students English names. Charles Reece, who was a graduate from Brainerd, and who returned to help the missionaries, was responsible

assigning Worcester his name. Reece observed, “He is wise; he has something to say. Let us call him A-tse-nu-sti, the messenger” (Bass 1936, 50). I will discuss the influence of Worcester’s ‘message’ in more detail in a following section (Bass 1936; McLoughlin 1994; Phillips and Phillips 1998).

Another influential missionary, who arrived at Brainerd in 1818, and who ultimately traveled with the Cherokee along the Trail of Tears to Oklahoma, was Reverend Daniel S. Butrick. Butrick held a unique disposition among the Brainerd missionaries in his belief that their efforts should be directed as much toward the full-blooded, non-English speaking Cherokees as their mix-blooded, English-educated brethren. One contributor to *The Brainerd* Journal noted “he was deeply impressed with the importance of being able to speak in the language of the natives, or at least having a good interpreter” (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 47). This respect for, and interest in, traditional Cherokee customs inspired him to learn the Cherokee language and to gather accounts of those customs from a number of Christian-converted and traditionalist Cherokee informants. His contribution to our knowledge of Cherokee history and culture as it was understood by the Cherokee during his time is reflected in *The Payne-Butrick Papers*, which are housed in the Newberry Library’s Edward E. Ayer Manuscript Collection. This contribution will also be explored further in a following section.

The Brainerd Mission also provided a home and school for a number of Cherokee who would become significant political and cultural leaders. Upon opening the school, Rev. Kingsbury predicted “those who will be first educated will be the children of half-breeds & of the leading men in the nation. On their education & influence the character of the nation will very much depend” (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 4). This prediction would prove true, as many

future political and cultural leaders of the Cherokee people attended the school at Brainerd. Among those who attended was Major Ridge's son John, who would later become a chief and take an active role as the leader of the Treaty Party, which opposed John Ross' party in the political debate surrounding Cherokee land rights and removal to Oklahoma.

Buck Watie, who would change his name to Elias Boudinot, was another influential Cherokee to live and study at Brainerd. Boudinot began his education, with his brother Stand Watie at the Moravian mission at Spring Place, and he later joined the students at Brainerd before attending the American Board's Foreign Mission School in Cornwall, CT.[1] With the help of Samuel A. Worcester, Boudinot would later publish the *Cherokee Phoenix*, the first bi-lingual newspaper written in English and the Cherokee syllabary. Boudinot also assisted Worcester in his translation of the Bible and in the production of the *Cherokee Singing Book* (1946), which Worcester considered one of his most significant contributions (Bass 1936; Phillips and Phillips 1998).

Many of the Cherokee students who attended Brainerd, Boudinot included, would return later to take an active role in the education of other Cherokee youths. One, who contributed significantly to the spread of Christianity among Cherokee, was Atsi, who upon entering the school changed his name to John Arch. After graduating from the school, Arch assisted the missionaries by helping translate parts of the Bible and by acting as an interpreter (Bass 1936). In this role, he would often accompany Rev. Butrick as he preached to and interviewed Cherokee around the territory. Arch was also hailed by missionaries as "one of the

[1] Stand Watie, along with Boudinot, was one of the signers of the Treaty of New Echota, which called for the removal of the Cherokee to Oklahoma, and he would later become the chief who took over leadership of the Treaty Party after the assassinations of John Ridge and Elias Boudinot. He also returned to the South after Removal to become a general for the Confederate Army, and he holds the distinction of being the last Confederate general to surrender. (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 533 n. 88)

finest examples of success in the missionary cause…he was an Indian who took on the culture of the white man" (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 18).

While the Brainerd Mission School admitted over two hundred Cherokee students and housed a number of other missionaries and families during its period of operation between 1817 and 1838, those listed above have contributed significantly to our understanding of Cherokee history and the development of Cherokee Christianity. One of the most important sources of information concerning this development and its impact on the acculturation process can be found in the journal written by the missionaries who lived and taught at Brainerd.

The Brainerd Journal is a hand-written account of life at Brainerd in the words of the missionaries themselves. Rev. Kingsbury began the journal on January 18, 1817, and the missionaries who followed him continued to keep it until the final entry on December 31, 1823. Joyce and Gary Phillips explained why entries into the journal eventually ceased: "In the fall of 1823 several new missionaries from New England arrived at the Brainerd Mission, resulting in a total reorganization of the mission system" (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 19). Following this reorganization, accounts of the mission's achievements took the form of written correspondences between the missionaries and the ABCFM. By examining this journal, we gain insight into the daily lives of the missionaries and students at Brainerd. We see the obstacles they faced as well as the triumphs they experienced. While much of the journal was dedicated to their more secular and administrative daily activities, it was also permeated by the Christian resolve that inspired and guided their efforts. The missionaries expressed through their

accounts evangelical Christian beliefs and practices, which include hymn-singing as a significant form of worship.

To better understand how the Brainerd missionaries perceived the role of music as ritual practice, I will turn in the next section to a discussion of the missionaries' evangelical beliefs and practices, which they shared with the Cherokee, followed by an investigation of the references to hymn-singing within the journal. Following that, I will investigate Samuel A. Worcester's reverence for, and use of music and hymn-singing as both a means for conveying Christian teachings and a profound religious practice.

3. Evangelical Dimensions of the Missionary/Cherokee Exchange

Before exploring the missionaries' use of hymn singing in their approach to teaching the Christian message, it will be helpful to examine some of the beliefs and motivations brought to the project by those involved. It should first be noted that the ABCFM missionaries were operating within a specific denominational tradition, as McLoughlin observed:

> When incorporated, the ABCFM consisted entirely of Trinitarian Congregationalists from Massachusetts and Connecticut. Its first board was elected in 1810 by the General Associations of the two states…Two years later, however, the board expanded to include Presbyterians (and in 1816 Dutch Reformed Calvinists) from the mid-Atlantic states. Eight Presbyterian members were added to the board in 1812, but the New Englanders always constituted the majority. (McLoughlin 1994, 59)

Because the missionaries sent by the Board came primarily from Congregationalist and Presbyterian backgrounds, they brought with them a distinctly Lutheran understanding of Christianity, which included emphasis on predestination and election. As a result of such doctrine, many of the missionaries focused their efforts on the "upper class" Cherokee youth, who were predominantly mixed-blood and whose parents typically spoke English. McLoughlin

observed the missionaries' "concern to reach those of the 'leading families'" (McLoughlin 1994, 66), as they noted the blood-fraction of students entering the school and whether they came from lower, middle or upper-class families. However, it should also be acknowledged that the more successful Brainerd missionaries—such as Worchester and Butrick (as well as the Baptist and Methodist missionaries)—often played down the importance of these Lutheran doctrines in light of shifting nineteenth century theological perspectives, of which hymnologist and literary scholar Mary de Jong observed "the doctrines of predestination and election became increasingly objectionable in a burgeoning society that prided itself on being democratic" (de Jong 1986 471).

Furthermore, the geographic region from which they came also dictated the missionaries' understanding of Christianity—and the salvation it entailed. Althea Bass explained these geographical influences on the Brainerd missionaries' Christianity:

> Indeed, when the American Board set out to carry salvation to the world, it had in mind the particular type of salvation that New England knew; and when missionaries went from the Missionary Rooms to the heathens, the salvation they took with them was inseparably bound up with that definite New England culture of which they were a product. (Bass 1936, 29)

Thus, the missionaries at Brainerd had a dual perception of how converted Cherokees should conduct themselves. In the missionaries' eyes, converts should not only profess belief in the Christian God and salvation through Christ's grace, but also they should embody the personas of New England Christians, as McLoughlin explained: "conversion required a total commitment not only to the theology and doctrines of Christianity but also to the norms of personal and social behavior that prevailed in middle-class white communities (considered to be the God-given norms of any civilized people)" (McLoughlin 1994, 39). Carrying these denominational and geographical ideals with them, Rev. Kingsbury and his fellow missionaries set about

constructing Brainerd in the image of a "pioneer New England settlement transplanted to the outskirts of the Cherokee Nation" (Bass 1936, 29), and they expected the Cherokee inhabitants to play the part.

Still, denominational and geographical ideals were not the only influences shaping the religion brought by the missionaries. In fact, the missionaries' Protestant Christianity can be more widely understood as being distinctly American—as it coincided with most U.S. citizens' sense of national identity at the time—and evangelical—as it emphasized salvation through a personal experience and acceptance of Jesus Christ. In these two regards, the Brainerd missionaries' teachings were far more akin to those of the other denominations—primarily Baptist, Moravian and Methodist—who were also present in the Cherokee Nation.

On the one hand, the missionaries' views were American in the sense that they held the belief that "the United States of America was ordained by God to be the redeemer nation of the world" (McLoughlin 1994, 37). As members of the redeemer nation, many Americans felt it their duty to share Christ's salvation and American civilization with the world. In a more subtle way, the missionaries' Christianity was distinctly American because it coincided with what William Hutchinson has recognized as the "compelling force of a national ethos whose religious elements were heavily protestant" (Hutchinson 2003, 61-2). According to Hutchinson, this ethos permeated and shaped American national identity in the nineteenth century. The missionaries' teachings promoted the textual authority of the Bible, emphasized the importance of the individual's religious experience, and were motivated by a moralistic impulse to share the word and grace of God (Hutchinson 2003; Phillips and Phillips 1998; McLoughlin 1994). They did this with the clear convictions that America was the pinnacle of civilization, and

to be American was to be Protestant. McLoughlin has observed that during this time, "to Christianize was to Americanize" (McLoughlin 1994, 38), and the missionaries sought to accomplish both among the Cherokees.

In addition, this American Protestant ethos fed into the burgeoning evangelical eruption, which historians have named the Second Great Awakening. The teaching strategies and conversionary methods employed by the missionaries reflected the rhetoric and rituals associated with the evangelic revivalism of the Awakening. In particular, one aspect of the missionaries' strategy, which was unequivocally linked to nineteenth century evangelical practice, was the use of hymn singing as an educational, theological and liturgical device. Religious Studies scholar Stephen Marini has recognized the intimate relationship between hymn singing and evangelical Christianity, noting that "American evangelicalism was a remarkably coherent intellectual, social, and spiritual movement whose beliefs found perhaps their most powerful articulation through hymns" (Marini 2006, 137).

Evangelical Christians used hymn singing as a vehicle to promote a "charismatic conversion experience" (Marini 2006, 137), which they understood as being "born again" in Christ. Through this experience, converts cast off their former, sinful lives and committed to their new roles as devout Christians. Mary de Jong observed how nineteenth-century evangelicals understood the songwork enacted through hymnody: "Nineteenth-century commentators on hymnody considered hymn-singing a form of testimony and a formative exercise in role playing" (de Jong 1986, 463). By singing hymns written from the perspective of one experiencing the conversion experience, followers could reenact their own initial conversion experiences.

Furthermore, by sharing in communal singing of such hymns, evangelicals could unite the community around shared experiences of conversion, while communicating shared theological ideals. Hymnody also provided the means for direct transmission of theological concepts through experiential communion with divine Grace. This experiential dimension of religious practice entailed a religiosity that was both intimately personal, yet communally intertwined, as Marini observed:

> highly personal sacred experiences found potent reinforcement in the communal nature of sung spiritual utterance. It is this re-presentation of what believers understood as their common experience of the Holy Spirit that ushered them corporately into what hymnal compilers almost universally characterized as the cosmic harmony attained in sacred singing, the spiritual union of one to all and all to God. (Marini 2006, 148)

By sharing the experience of singing with the community at large, individuals were able to authenticate their theological beliefs through communal approval and corroboration. In his contribution to *Music in American Religious Experience*, Phillip V. Bohlman has also commented on the interplay between individual and communal practices of hymn singing: "The hymn is a musical genre, then, that allows the individual to negotiate between private and public spheres" (Bohlman 2006, 242). According to Bohlman, hymns, and religious music in general, were intended for both private individual performance and communal public performance.

The power of the evangelicals' experiential intimacy with the Holy Spirit through hymnody is closely linked to music's ability to evoke highly emotional responses in both the singer and the hearer. Evangelical Christians possessed a clear understanding of the powerful emotions involved in conversion experiences. Concerning such emotions, Marini has observed: "Evangelical hymn writers placed their lyrics at the disposal of religious emotions as a self-conscious strategy to promote the process of conversion" (Marini 2006, 145). By combining

religious lyrics with emotional music, the songwriters hoped to elicit powerful emotional responses in both performers and audience members that would promote conversion experiences.

From this discussion we can see that evangelical Christians understood hymns to be more than mere songs sung in religious settings. They not only signified and revitalized followers' 'born again' conversion experiences, but were also imbued with a transformative power that could, and often would, motivate conversion in others. Furthermore, hymns provided an experiential medium for the transmission of theological beliefs through a shared communal practice. In the following two sections, I will investigate how the Brainerd missionaries incorporated this evangelical understanding of hymns and hymnody into their missionary exchange with the Cherokee. I will look first at the early years of the Brainerd Mission as reflected in the missionary accounts of *The Brainerd Journal.*

4. Hymn Singing in the *Brainerd Journal*

Accounts of hymn singing appear throughout *The Brainerd Journal.* The missionaries' use of hymn singing can be best understood by examining the three performative settings in which singing is described in these accounts. First, the missionaries discussed hymn singing as a way of demarcating and celebrating special occasions. Second, they recognized hymn singing as a significant liturgical practice, particularly when no ministers or translators were present for services on the Sabbath. Third, they described their responses to seeing and hearing the Cherokees singing hymns, and in these we can see how the missionaries understood the Cherokees' singing as evidence of missionary success. By examining these three settings, we

can better understand how the missionaries perceived the role and use of hymn singing in the missionary process.

In several accounts in *The Brainerd Journal*, the missionaries noted the singing of hymns on significant occasions, such as the parting of resident and visiting missionaries or students. While many of these statements about singing occur in passing, they provide insight into the missionaries' understanding of the role of singing for such occurrences. On these occasions, those present often would say a prayer and sing a hymn in hopes that the parting members' journey would be blessed and that they would arrive at their destinations safely. In the account from November 20, 1818, the missionaries discussed a situation in which one of the students at Brainerd was being removed from the school by her parents who were moving to the western territory. The missionaries sang a hymn to mark the parting: "after she had gathered & put up her clothing &c, the family were collected, a parting hymn sung, & prayer offered. With mingled emotions of joy & grief we commanded her to the grace of God, & they departed" (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 94). Here, the hymn marks the occasion, but it also provides a vehicle for the mingling of emotions—joy and grief—that accompany the parting.

Similarly, the account of May 5, 1818 described the parting of two transient missionaries, Rev. William McFarland and Rev. Nicholas Patterson, who had stayed at the mission:

> As they were about to leave us the family was collected, the brethren gave each an affectionate farewell address to the children, united prayers were offered, a parting hymn sung, & with weeping eyes we commended each other to God & and the word of his grace with the full & certain hope of soon meeting in the world of spirits to part no more. (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 58)

On this occasion, the missionary recording the account also included a verse from the hymn "Blest Be the Tie that Binds our Hearts":

> "This glorious hope revives
> Our courage by the way
> While each in expectation lives
> And longs to see the day." (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 58)

The inclusion of the lyrics in this account suggests the hymn's significance on the occasion, and the lyrics themselves suggest that singing can allow hope to flourish in the face of great sadness.

For the missionaries, hymns were not merely liturgical songs to be used in church services. Rather, they permeated the missionaries' experiences and reinforced the presence of divine grace in all aspects of their lives. Furthermore, the missionaries reveled in the opportunity to join together and sing these hymns, as noted on the parting of Rev. Kingsbury, May 25, 1818: "Here we again had the satisfaction of pouring out our hearts in prayer to God & mingling our songs of praise, with the expectation that our next meeting would be around the throne above" (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 60). Through songs of praise, the missionaries turned their thoughts to heaven and God's grace and a time when all would be gathered together forever.

Hymns might also be sung to mark the occasion of a gathering, as on December 23, 1822, when a number of Cherokee from "different parts" had gathered at Brainerd. The missionary writing the account observed:

> After early supper and family prayers they were seated in the common room, a Cherokee hymn sung, prayer offered by Br. Mills & another hymn. Religious conversation being proposed the visitors listened with solemn attention, but had nothing to say. The three Cherokee brethren spake in turn, a discourse of some length was interpreted, the three brethren again took the subject, and the long evening was concluded by a Cherokee hymn. (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 325)

In this account, we see an occasion of religious discourse which appears less formal than a church service, yet it includes the singing of hymns to mark both its beginning and end. Here

again, the gathering provided an opportunity for those present to mingle their "songs of praise."

While it is clear that hymn singing often marked significant moments in the missionaries' lives, it should also be noted that refraining from singing could also designate significant or ominous occasions. On the day of Dr. Samuel Worcester's death, June 7, 1821, the missionary reflecting on the loss of one of his brothers wrote: "Let the friends of missions hang their harps on the willows, & for a moment suspend their songs" (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 218).

Although many of the references to hymn singing as a way of marking significant occasions were stated in passing as the authors discussed more secular concerns faced by the missionaries, these references again point to the fact that hymn singing was a central element of the missionaries' daily lives and a common form of communion among the missionaries as well as among the larger community of missionaries and Cherokee. The other two settings for hymn singing discussed by the missionaries describe more explicitly how they understood the role of the practice in their interaction with the Cherokees.

In several accounts, the missionaries referred to the practice of hymn singing, in conjunction with prayer, as the central form of liturgy on occasions when no clergy could be present or when no translator was available. The missionaries recognized the efficacy of teaching and practicing hymn singing as a part of the missionary effort. Yet, they also recognized it was most effective when complimented with the translation of religious teachings through interpreters. The account from June 17, 1821 described the missionaries' perception of an ideal service:

> In the afternoon our services were adapted more particularly to the instruction of those who understand only the Cherokee language, the whole of the discourse being interpreted as spoken, and the singing in Cherokee. It is our intention to continue these exercises every Sabbath, br. John Arch being interpreter. (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 221)

While this passage makes clear that the missionaries would have preferred to always have a minister and interpreter present for church services, in practice this was not always possible. On July 26, 1821, the question was raised concerning the "opinion of the brethren respecting the best method of conducting meetings on the Sabbath when no minister is present" (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 228). In response, the missionaries declared:

> as the heathen consider all public teachers of religion as ministers, and as many not qualified may be disposed to act as public teachers without licence [*sic*], to the disadvantage of the cause of religion—therefore resolved that we consider the example not good for the teachers at local schools not licensed to preach to attempt to expound the scripture or speak as a public teacher from the desk. We think it more prudent for them to confine their public exercises to singing, praying and reading. The residue of the Sabbath can be spent either in private conversation, leading the people to a knowledge of the Savior or instructing children. (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 229).

On the one hand, this reluctance to allow non-licensed teachers to expound on the scripture and reflects the Congregationalists' view that scripture and God's grace could be fully understood only by those who were highly trained—a view that distinguished them from the Baptists and Methodists (McLoughlin 1994). However, it also illustrates that the missionaries understood singing as an integral aspect of religious practice. Furthermore, it indicates the view that, along with reading and prayer, hymn singing—as well as its instruction—was more accessible to lay persons than theological discourse. Anyone who could raise their voice in song, whether literate or not, could sing praises to God and could invoke the Holy Spirit.

In addition, the missionaries recognized that hymn singing was also more accessible for those Cherokee who did not speak English. The missionaries taught some hymns in Cherokee and others in English. Logically, one might assume that the songs sung in Cherokee were more

meaningful for the Cherokee, yet as I will discuss further in a later section, accounts from various Cherokee informants suggest that the Cherokee often included songs in rituals for which they did not understand the meaning of the words (Mooney 1992; Phillips and Phillips 1998; Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010). Thus, one might reasonably infer that for the Cherokees at Brainerd, singing hymns in English could have been as significant a ritual experience as singing in Cherokee.

Evidence suggests the missionaries certainly believed that the non-English speaking Cherokees benefited from singing hymns—in either language—and when no interpreter was present, as on June 7, 1822, singing became the primary means of reaching out to the non-English-speaking Cherokee in attendance:

> The two brethren chosen for Deacons last Monday, were this day appointed to the office by prayer and imposition of hands. A number of natives who cannot understand English assembled this afternoon, but Br. Reece not being with us we could only sing Cherokee hymns and say a few words to them by one of the boys. This being done the service was conducted in English without any further attempt to interpret. (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 275)

On this occasion, the appointment of the two Deacons made it necessary for much of the service to be conducted in English. However, at other times when no interpreters were available, the services appear to have consisted primarily of hymn singing and prayer, as noted for the funerary service related from October 4, 1822: “All the exercises we could have, for want of preaching was prayer, & singing” (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 309).

Furthermore, hymn singing was adopted as the primary religious practice by the Cherokee converts in the communities surrounding Brainerd to which the missionaries often visited. The account from July 15, 1821 explained the practice in one of these communities:

> The chief said he thought it good to keep the Sabbath and when he could have no preaching he invited the people to meet at his house & sing the hymns the missionaries had brought them. It is supposed that not a person in the

> assembly except the preacher and interpreter could understand English.
> (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 226).

This passage suggests the converted Cherokee may have understood hymn singing as the most important religious practice taught by the missionaries. At the very least, it suggests that hymn singing was the practice most accessible to those who neither spoke nor understand English. Consequently, Cherokee converts, such as the Brainerd graduate Samuel J. Mills, who sought to spread the Christian message to other members of the tribe set themselves to the task of "as one informant expressed it, preaching Cherokee Hymns" (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 274).

The fact that religious ceremonies often consisted primarily of hymn singing suggests that the singing of hymns was considered a means of circumventing the language barrier between the missionaries and the Cherokee who could neither read nor understand English. It is also indicative that the missionaries believed and attempted to transmit the nineteenth century evangelical perception, espoused by Stephen Marini, that "hymn singing was a primary vehicle of the numinous, the very wind of the Spirit itself" (Marini 2006, 123). This understanding of the significance of hymn singing in religious experience is also expressed in the third performative setting discussed in *The Brainerd Journal*.

Some of the accounts of hymn singing describe settings in which Cherokees performed the songs. These show how the missionaries understood the Cherokees' singing of both Cherokee and English hymns as a means for measuring the success of their missionary goals. Such accounts express the joy and optimism experienced by the missionaries when they heard the "children of the forest sing the songs of Zion" (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 85), or they discussed how the singing of Christian hymns seemed to affect a change on the "savage" demeanor of the Cherokee. In an early account from April 15, 1818 the missionaries recorded

the perceived success of the Brainerd School on an occasion when Chief John Hicks and other Cherokee leaders visited:

> Our children gave us very great satisfaction, by their prompt attention to order, and very respectful behavior in every particular, as well as by the exhibitions they made of their progress in learning. Several hymns, which they had committed to memory, were sung by the children alone, much to our satisfaction…We have reason to believe there is among the natives an increasing confidence in our integrity; and that most of them feel assured of the love and good will of those who have sent us among them. (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 53)

Here we see the missionaries praise for their students' successful learning and performance of hymns as evidence for a successful Christian education. This passage also displays the missionaries' optimistic belief that such demonstrations would promote further missionary success among the Cherokee.

The missionaries' optimism was reinforced on other occasions when Cherokees from surrounding communities came to the mission and joined in with the singing. In the account from June 17, 1821 discussed above, the missionaries related "More than a year ago br. Butrick learned some of them a Cherokee hymn. These placed themselves on a seat together and delighted the ears and hearts of our brethren by singing that hymn with great accuracy and melody" (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 221). Here again, the missionaries perceived missionary success and took great pleasure in hearing the Cherokee sing praises to God through hymns. From the missionaries' perspective, the Cherokee's ability to sing "with great accuracy and melody" is clear evidence of the Lord's presence because they held the evangelical belief that "singing, hearing or praying upon hymn texts frequently mediated the regenerating moment of 'the new birth'" (Marini 2006, 123).

Furthermore, the missionaries believed the Cherokee's singing reflected God's active participation in the spread Christian teachings. This belief was reflected in the account from February 8, 1822, which described another occasion on which Cherokee from the surrounding communities were present at Brainerd:

> In the evening they were again collected. The children of the school were present—We sang a number of Cherokee hymns, and to our astonishment all our visiting friends joined with us—They sang very correctly. A part of the Saviours [*sic*] last words to his disciples were read, after which br. Mills made a long and animated address. How thankful we ought to be that our God is raising up of themselves instruments to communicate his word to the people, and such too, as are able to declare the love of God from their own experience. (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 256-7)

The missionaries clearly perceived the success of the missionary effort in the Cherokee's abilities to sing "very correctly" and to "declare the love of God from their own experience." They attributed much of this success to the conversion and subsequent teaching of Samuel Mills, who, as noted above, employed the practice of "preaching Christian Hymns" (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 274). Furthermore, we can see in this passage that the missionaries believed Mills was guided by the divine presence of God.

The missionaries were not the only ones who perceived missionary success being expressed through the practice of hymn singing. The account from January 1, 1819 detailed an occasion when Pathkiller and The Boot visited the school:

> The old king & one of the principal chiefs, from the southern part of the nation, came to visit the school. They arrived just at evening. Winter evenings our children are collected in one room, where they are exercised in spelling, answering questions, singing &c. When the old king saw the children assembled this evening, he was greatly delighted, & shook hands with them most affectionately. He appeared much pleased during the first exercised, (though he does not understand English) but when they came to singing, he could not refrain from tears. (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 100)

As noted above, Pathkiller was the leader of the Cherokee Council who originally approved of Rev. Kingsbury's request to found the mission at Brainerd. In this passage, the missionaries interpreted his emotional response as approval for the mission and school's progress.

This interpretation is supported by the account from the following day which related an address by Chief Boot to the students at Brainerd in which he encouraged them to learn all that the missionaries wanted to teach them, for he claimed "if they did so they would do much good to their people while they lived, & when they died they would go above & be happy" (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 100). Following Chief Boot's address, he and Pathkiller expressed that they would "tell their people every where [*sic*] that it was very good to send their children here where they could learn good things, &c" (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 101). From these accounts, it appears that the Cherokee leaders may have also understood the teaching of hymn singing to be an important aspect of the education the students were receiving.

Taken together, these three settings for the performance of hymn singing provide evidence of the evangelical missionaries' understanding of the role music played in their own religious practices, as well as the attempts the missionaries made to share that practice with the Cherokee. They also convey the missionaries' understanding of the power of music in worship as a means of praising God and of participating in his plan of salvation. Faced with the seemingly impossible task of sharing the gospel with people who did not understand English, the missionaries turned to music and the singing of hymns as a means to transcend this barrier. The missionaries saw the singing of hymns as both an embodied practice of praise, in which the Cherokee could experience the Divine Grace of God, and as a vehicle of communication, in

which complex religious doctrines could be understood in far simpler and more widely accessible terms.

In this section, I have shown how *The Brainerd Journal* presents a unique perspective into the role music played in the missionary/Cherokee exchange at Brainerd. However, because the missionaries stopped keeping the journal after 1823, one must look elsewhere to understand the exchange as it occurred in the final years of the mission. Therefore, I now turn my attention to the life and work of one of Brainerd's most influential missionaries, Rev. Samuel Austin Worcester, who was the ABCFM's superintendent from 1825 until 1859 (McLoughlin 1994). In the following section, I will explore Worcester's contributions to the missionary work at Brainerd and the role hymn singing played in that work.

5. Music and "The Messenger"

Samuel Austin Worcester was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1798, the son of a Congregationalist minister. He attended the state university in Burlington, Vermont and graduated in 1819. Following graduation, he entered the theological seminary at Andover, from which he graduated in 1823[2]. In 1825, he became an ordained minister, and the ABCFM assigned to a post at the Brainerd Mission, where he served for two years before establishing another mission at the Cherokee Nation's capital in New Echota, GA. Worcester's contributions significantly impacted both religious and political developments among the Cherokee in the

[2] There is some confusion concerning the year in which Worcester graduated from seminary. Althea Bass claims he graduated in 1823 and then worked in the ABCFM offices for two years before being ordained, whereas, Mooney and McLoughlin denote 1825 as the year in which he was graduated and ordained (Bass 1936; Mooney 1992; McLoughlin 1994).

years leading up to the 1838 removal to the West (Bass 1936; Mooney 1992; McLoughlin 1994; Phillips and Phillips 1998).

On the political side, Worcester's convictions concerning the Cherokees land and sovereignty rights resulted in his imprisonment by Georgia authorities in 1831, "for refusing to take a special oath of allegiance to the state" (Mooney 1992, 218). The oath in question required all missionaries working within parts of the Cherokee Nation, for which Georgia had claimed land rights, to pledge allegiance to Georgia as a way of showing their support for Georgia's claims. The resultant case, *Worcester* v. *Georgia* was appealed to the U. S. Supreme Court, and its decision lead to the eventual release of Worcester and his fellow Board missionary, Elizur Butler. McLoughlin observes that as a result of the decision, "Worcester and Butler became, momentarily, heroes of the Cherokee Nation, and the ABCFM was hailed as its savior" (McLoughlin 1994, 71).

Worcester continued to receive praise from most converted Cherokee; however, his popularity among many of the traditionalist Cherokee declined after he resigned to the inevitability of removal and "urged his translator, Elias Boudinot, a leading figure among the mixed-bloods, to organize a party to support a removal treaty" (McLoughlin 1994, 72). The creation of this party resulted in a split among the Cherokee people between those who supported removal—led by Charles Ridge, Boudinot, and his brother, Stand Watie—and those opposed—lead by Chief John Ross. Ultimately, Worcester elected to move his family and his church to the Western Territory, but traditionalists in the Ross party, who continued to constitute the Cherokee council, "did its best to get Worcester expelled from the Nation for this turnabout" (McLoughlin 1994, 30).

With regard to the religious developments among the Cherokee, Worcester proved much more fortunate. Like many of the other missionaries who made Brainerd their home, Worcester understood hymnody to be a fundamental aspect of Christian worship, and he included its teaching among the most important elements of his missionary approach. In an interview with Althea Bass, one of Worcester's granddaughters reminisced about her youth spent at the Park Hill Mission in the Western Territory and observed: "Grandfather loved singing, and made it a part of every gathering" (Bass 1936, 233). Bass' description of the Worcester family's life at Park Hill gives further evidence of Samuel's and his family's intimacy with hymns, as she explains how, at night, the family "sang hymns—without hymn books because they all, except a tramp printer or a hauler to whom the pages of Watts and Select Hymns were not accepted familiarity, knew every word of every stanza; and Samuel's rich, full voice led all the rest" (Bass 1936, 195). In another account discussing one of Worcester's daughters, Bass observes, "Ann Eliza learned to sing almost as soon as she learned to talk; she knew hymns in both Cherokee and English" (Bass 1936, 117-8). This shows that Worcester felt the merit of hymn singing was no less substantial when the hymns were sung in Cherokee. Furthermore, Worcester shared his love of hymn singing with his Cherokee pupils as well as his family.

Worcester differed from many of the American Board missionaries who preceded him in his desire to learn the Cherokee language and, in turn, to present religious teachings to them in their own words. Soon after his arrival at Brainerd, Worcester took an interest in learning the Cherokee syllabary, which was created in 1821 by a Cherokee named George Guess, or

Sequoya. In a letter to the Board written shortly after his arrival, Worcester discussed the syllabary's potential:

> The alphabet is thought by some of the Cherokees to need improvement, but as it is, it is read by a very large portion of the people, though I suppose there has been no such thing as a school in which it has been taught, and it is not more than two or three years since it was invented. A few hours of instruction are sufficient for a Cherokee to learn to read his own language intelligibly…If a book were printed in that character, there are those in every part of the Nation who could read it at once, and many others would only have to obtain a few hours' instruction from some friend to enable them to do so…Probably, at least, twenty, perhaps fifty times as many would read a book printed in Guess's alphabet as would read one printed with the English alphabet. (Walker 1931, 230)

From this, it is clear that Worcester perceived the syllabary as a useful tool in the missionary pursuit, and his use of it would ultimately help overcome what McLoughlin has recognized as the "damaging ethnocentrism embodied in [the American Board missionaries'] determination to teach only in English" (McLoughlin 1994, 66). With the help of Cherokee converts like Charles Reece (who, as noted above, named Samuel "The Messenger" in Cherokee) and Elias Boudinot (who would become his publishing partner), Worcester began translating Biblical verses and hymns into the Cherokee syllabary. He quickly decided that the missionaries were in need of a printing press that could print in the syllabary type.

Working with the consent and encouragement of the Cherokee council, which had assigned Boudinot the task of raising funds in 1826, Worcester set to the task of establishing a Cherokee Press. The council intended to use the press to publish a bi-lingual weekly journal, written in both English and the Cherokee syllabary, and they nominated Boudinot as the editor (Bass 1936). The journal, which was first published on February 21, 1828, was given the name *The Cherokee Phoenix* after Boudinot's prediction that its publication "by the Cherokee nation would offer encouragement to other Indian tribes to 'arise, Phoenix like, from their ashes"

(Purdue 1977, 207). Worcester saw the benefit of such a publication, but he also intended to use the press for the publication of religious materials, and it is interesting which materials he intended to publish first.

In a letter written by Worcester shortly after his arrival at New Echota, he expressed, "I expect to need presently a few reams of paper for printing hymn books; and a few more soon after, I hope, for the Gospel of Matthew in Cherokee" (Bass 1936, 85). Such a request implies that Worcester's first priority was to produce a hymn book from which the Cherokee could learn and sing—even before producing a translation of the Gospel—so they might participate in the religious practice of song. Given the evangelical understanding of hymnody discussed above, which the missionaries incorporated into their practices, it is not surprising that Worcester desired to create a worded hymnal to disperse throughout the Cherokee Nation. As Marini observes, "it Is no exaggeration to claim that for evangelicals only the Bible itself surpassed the hymnal as a definer of religious beliefs" (Marini 2006, 137), and Worcester's desire to produce a hymnal in the Cherokee syllabary clearly exhibits the significance he attributed to hymn singing.

Worcester succeeded in printing the first *Cherokee Hymn Book* in 1829, with which he was pleased, yet like many other hymn books at the time, it contained only the words of the hymns. He would not be completely satisfied until he could produce a hymnal that would contain musical print and instruction for singing. Bass explains his desire and ultimate accomplishment:

> One of the accomplishments which gave Samuel a sense of satisfaction was the publication, in Boston, of a singing-book for the Cherokees, in 1846. Whatever the nature of the gathering, singing had always been the means of making it a success in the minds of the Cherokees and of Samuel Worcester as well. Their voices were musical; their sense of rhythm was marked; their eagerness to sing

> was unfailing. For a long time Samuel had wished to provide them with a songbook that would teach them some of the rudiments of music in a simple manner suited to their understanding and give them the words and the music of the songs they sang. *The Cherokee Hymn Book*, giving words alone was inadequate. (Bass 1936, 307)

From this it appears that Worcester placed at least as much emphasis on the music of hymns as he did the lyrics. In this regard, Worcester was in accordance with Cherokees, who, as ethnomusicologist Marcia Herndon observed, were very particular about how their ritual songs were chanted or sung (Herndon 1987).

Again, such an understanding of the power of music ties into the evangelical dimensions of the missionaries' approach, concerning which Mary de Jong observed, "it was generally believed that both music and poetry express and touch 'the heart' and that a sung text therefore exerts immediate and lasting influence" (de Jong 1986, 463). It seems clear that Worcester and the other missionaries understood the physical and emotional power of music as a means to conversion for mind, body and soul, which functions quite differently from doctrinal teaching or homiletic discourse.

Thus far, I have examined the ways in which the missionaries used and understood hymn singing as a religious practice through which religious ideas are communicated and experienced. Yet, for communication to be successful, it must be received as well as given. If, as it seems, hymn singing was a successful means to overcome the language barrier between the missionaries and the Cherokee, we must also consider how and why the Cherokee would have been receptive to the practice of hymn singing. The best way to go about answering these questions would be to investigate the Cherokee's traditional practices to determine how hymn singing factored into their sacred rites. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, a comprehensive and definitive understanding of traditional Cherokee rites and practices lies

beyond our scholarly reach. However, a conscientious investigation and comparison of the various sources available concerning traditional Cherokee customs should allow scholars to piece together glimpses into this elusive tradition.

6. Cherokee Voices

To gain an understanding of Cherokee traditions, scholars must navigate a variety of obstacles. On the one hand, until recently, Cherokee social, cultural and religious traditions have always been transmitted from one generation to the next orally. As such, scholars seeking to learn about Cherokee traditions have often been at the mercy of their informants' memory as well as their willingness to share those traditions with outsiders. Furthermore, prior to the creation of the Cherokee syllabary, the Cherokee had no means for recording written documents, and by that time, the Cherokee had encountered a long history of interaction with European and American settlers. Undoubtedly, such interaction influenced the nuances of Cherokee traditions and practices. As McLoughlin observes, it is very likely that by the time Cherokee myths and traditions were recorded in writing, "the Cherokee were putting together biblical accounts with their own ancient myths and creating a syncretic approach to religious history" (McLoughlin 1994, 144). Therefore, the written documents that are available for study reflect, at best, the authors' retrospective perceptions of their traditions.

Complicating matters further is the fact that most of the earliest accounts we have of Cherokee traditions were written by European missionaries and settlers, while the few we have from Cherokee voices come either from converted Cherokees and those who were sympathetic to the missionaries or from traditionalist Cherokees conveyed through the hands of

missionaries. Even after the creation of the syllabary, most traditionalist Cherokee were reluctant to discuss their traditions and teachings or to commit them to writing, as Nutsawi, who is one of Rev. Butrick's most cited Cherokee informants, observes: "Old men, who still believe in their old ways, will not make them known, as it will, they say shorten their lives" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 234). Such reluctance is further explained by ethnographer James Mooney as he discusses the Cherokee shamans' attitudes toward sharing sacred formulas: "no formula was repeated more than once for his benefit. It was considered that one who failed to remember after the first hearing was not worthy to be accounted a shaman" (Mooney 1992, 309). Given such an esoteric perspective on the sharing of teachings within the community, we can imagine why few of the traditionalists who possessed knowledge of traditional Cherokee practices were willing to write them down.

Nonetheless, as the missionaries' efforts began to influence more of the Cherokee population in the years preceding removal, and as Cherokee leaders began to fear the disappearance of their traditions and customs, efforts were made by both missionaries and Cherokees to record accounts of those traditions. Rev. Butrick was the first and most persistent missionary to take up this task, and he later shared his collected papers with writer, playwright and actor John Howard Payne, who intended to use them for his publishing of a Cherokee history. While financial difficulties ultimately thwarted Payne's attempts to publish the history, the papers survived the disassembling of Payne's estate and were eventually collected at the Newbery Library.

The Payne-Butrick Papers, as they have come to be known, are one of the earliest and perhaps most significant source on Cherokee traditions and practices available, and they are

recognized by McLoughlin as containing "more primary material on the Cherokee Nation from 1789-1839 than any other source" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, xiii). Collected during the years in which the Brainerd Mission was in operation, these papers offer Cherokee perspectives contemporary with Brainerd's missionary accounts. However, it must also be noted that both Butrick and Payne, in their efforts to collect and interpret information about traditional Cherokee religion, were operating under the presumption that the Cherokee were one of the lost tribes of Israel. This perception of the Cherokee was first introduced in 1775 by James Adair in his *History of the American Indians* (1974), evidence that Butrick and Payne held this belief can be found throughout the *Payne-Butrick Papers* as they make comparisons between the Cherokee and Jewish myths and traditions (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010). Given the long history of Cherokee/Christian interaction and exchange, these similarities observed by Payne and Butrick most likely reflect syncretic elements of Christian (and by relation, Jewish) influences within the Cherokee traditions. Nonetheless, the papers contain the earliest and largest source of accounts from Cherokee voices available, and Butrick's work has contributed significantly to our knowledge and understanding of Cherokee traditions and practices.

While Butrick's efforts played an integral part in documenting and relating Cherokee perspectives on their traditions and practices, the creation of the syllabary also allowed the Cherokee literate to take an active role in recording this heritage. Furthermore, while many traditionalist Cherokee were initially reluctant to inscribe their traditions to the page, eventually the priests and shamans recognized the benefits of committing their traditions to writing for future generations. According to James Mooney, around the time of removal,

Cherokee shamans adopted the practice of creating books filled with sacred formulas, including myths, prayers, songs and prescriptions. Concerning the authors of these books, Catherine Albanese observed in her exploration of Eastern Cherokees, "Assisted by the preservation of their sacred formulas in the Sequoyah syllabary, the conjurers were the acknowledged conservators of the past, the leaders of the spiritual force which opposed and balanced the force of Christianity" (Albanese 1984, 363-4).

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, while living amongst the Eastern Band of Cherokees, Mooney convinced some of these Cherokee holy men, and their families, to share their documents with him. Mooney's initial informant was a shaman named Ayvnini (Ayunini)[3], or "Swimmer." Mooney convinced Ayvnini to reproduce his book of formulas, which Mooney later translated and published, with the help of Frans Olbrechts, as *The Swimmer Manuscript: Cherokee Sacred Formulas and Medicinal Prescriptions* (1923). Mooney also convinced the family members of other deceased Cherokee shamans—Gatiwanasti (Belt), Gahuni and Inali (Black Fox) among others—to share their formula books.

From these manuscripts, Mooney collected the myths and formulas that he would later translate and publish in his volumes *The Sacred Formulas of the Cherokee* (1891) and *Myths of the Cherokee* (1900). While these manuscripts were initially sent to the Bureau of Ethnography, none of these original Cherokee texts have survived to the present (Mooney 1992). Mooney also notes that the origin of these myths and sacred formulas cannot be traced: "it is impossible to fix a definite starting point for the myths. It would be unwise to assert that even the

[3] In Cherokee pronunciation, "a" is pronounced "ah" as in *father*, "v" is pronounced as a schwa sound, and "I" is pronounced as a long e sound. Thus, "Swimmer's" Cherokee name is pronounced Ah-yə-nee-nee, although Mooney's accentuation implies that it might be pronounced Ah-yən-ee-nee. For a full pronunciation guide for the Cherokee syllabary, see Bass (1936) pg. 48.

majority of them originated within the tribe" (Mooney 1992, 234). Mooney acknowledges that the intermingling of Cherokee with neighboring indigenous peoples, such as the Creek, Catawba, Osage and others, entails that myths were undoubtedly shared among these nations, and such an observation may point to a long tradition of the Cherokee incorporating aspects of other cultures into their own cosmology.

Despite the loss of these original Cherokee texts and the inherently retrospective and Eurocentric viewpoint presented in Mooney's two volumes, they offer another significant perspective on traditional Cherokee beliefs and practices. Furthermore, when read in comparison to accounts collected by Rev. Butrick and other missionaries who lived among the Cherokees, we can begin to identify glimpses into traditional Cherokee customs, though such a reading requires we remain conscious of the inherent limitations presented by the accounts.

By the time the available sources were recorded Cherokee traditions and practices had undoubtedly been influenced by contact with Christians, and therefore we must proceed on the premise that a definitive understanding of traditional Cherokee religion is unattainable. However, such an assumption should not discourage attempts to understand how the informants understood their traditions and culture, nor should it exclude us from making observations concerning the rituals practiced by the Cherokee, which are recorded in the accounts. Thus, by examining how music is discussed in the accounts of Cherokee ritual, we should be able to postulate how the Cherokee may have understood the use of music and singing in ritual practice.

According to many accounts, the majority of Cherokee ritual practices occurred in relation to sacred "feasts," or "dances," during which the seven Cherokee clans would gather

together to celebrate and worship (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010; Phillips and Phillips 1998; Mooney 1992). To better understand the role music may have played in traditional Cherokee ritual practices, I will focus on accounts of singing practices performed during two of the Cherokee's most sacred feasts. First, I will examine various accounts of *Anagahvnvsku* (also known as *Selu Tinistigisti*), or the Green Corn Dance, which is the feast most widely discussed and observed by both Cherokee and non-Cherokee informants. I will also examine *Atohvna*, which Butrick observed "has of late years been called the physic dance on account of a certain decoction, called physic, used as a water of purification" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 281).[4] Butrick claims, according to his informants, these two feasts represent the most significant ceremonies practiced by the Cherokees with regard to ritual purity: "Indians are most holy after the feast of green fruits in August, according to Nutsawi, but according to Corn Tassel, they were most holy after the feast of purifying in September when the yo-wa was sung, i.e. the stated annual physic dance the fore part of Autumn" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 238).[5] By investigating the various accounts of these two ceremonies, we can determine how the Cherokee understood the role of music in ritual performance. In addition, by exploring

[4] According to Three Killer, who appears to be one of Butrick's more traditionalist informants, *Atohvna* is not the physic dance, but rather "the feast or fast of atonement or purification" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 221). In other places within *The Payne-Butrick Papers*, *Atohvna* is explained as a friendship dance that can be practiced at any ritual (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 236 and 359, n.23). The distinguishing characteristic for the feast to which I am referring is the singing of the *yowa* hymn.

[5] Religious Studies scholar Mary Churchill has observed that Butrick's (and many scholars who have followed) association of *atohvna* and other Cherokee rituals with ritual purity can be best understood as part of a persistent Western discourse which assumes binary, oppositional relations concerning purity/pollution, order/chaos and the establishing/crossing of categories. She has argued that Native American religious practices are better understood "in terms of an indigenous-based model of complimentarity rather than opposition" (Churchill 2000, 225). As such, *atohvna* seems better understood as a ritual of harmonization than one of purification. However, this different way of understanding the ritual does not detract from the significance attributed to the ritual by Butrick's informants.

the different ways in which these rituals are described we can perceive the assimilation and syncretization of Christian ideas into Cherokee practices.

7. The Green Corn Dance

As noted above, the Green Corn Dance was one of the most commonly witnessed and discussed ceremonies practiced by the Cherokee. One of the earliest accounts of this feast was recorded in 1808, in the diaries of the Moravian missionaries at Spring Place (de Baillou 1961). Another account, given by the Cherokee Chief Charles Hicks, was recorded in *The Brainerd Journal* in 1818, and still others were related to Rev. Butrick by his informants (Phillips and Phillips 1998; Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010). Mooney also observed a version of the ritual among the Eastern Band Cherokee in 1887, which, according to historian George Ellison, "would not be enacted again by the Eastern Band for over a century" (Mooney 1992, 10).

By most accounts, the ceremony was based on a Cherokee myth about Kanati, the Great Hunter, and his wife Selu, the Corn Mother, which relates the origins of hunting and cultivating corn. Mooney recorded two versions of this myth. Concerning the first, which is the most detailed of the three, Mooney claimed: "this story was obtained in nearly the same form from Swimmer and John Ax (east) and from Wafford (west)" (Mooney 1992, 431). The second was related in the Wahnenauhi manuscript, and it is a more concise version with only slight differences. Butrick recorded a third from a Cherokee informant named Sikatowah, who he described as "one of the most aged men in the nation" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010,

219).[6] In the Sikatowah version, Kanati and Selu are not named, but it is clear they are the man and woman discussed in the story. The differences between the versions can be explained by the fact they originated in an oral culture, and because they were recorded from different informants at different times and places. Despite the differences, one can trace common themes running through all three, and concerning the significance of the myth, Mooney observed: "so much belief and custom depend upon the myth of Kanati that references to the principal incidents are constant in the songs and formulas" (Mooney 1992, 431). Mooney also acknowledged that similar myths had been found among other indigenous peoples from whom myths had been collected at the time: "almost every important concept occurring in it is duplicated in the North, in the South, and on the plains" (Mooney 1992, 432).

7.1 The Myth: Kanati, Selu and the Little Men

All three versions of the myth tell of a man and a woman, who lived shortly after the world was made, and of their children, though the number of children varies among the versions. In each version, the children grow suspicious of how easily their parents supply the family with food, and they decide to follow their parents to find the source of the food. Kanati provides meat for the family and Selu provides corn and beans. To discover the source of the meat, the children first follow their father into the wilderness until they come to a cave in which Kanati keeps the animals that feed the family. After Kanati leaves the cave, the children open the cave themselves so that they too can provide food for the family, but they accidentally release all of the animals within and consequently populate the forests. In the

[6] For the sake of convenience, I will henceforth refer to these three as the Swimmer version, the Wahnenauhi version and the Sikatowah version.

Swimmer and Sikatowah versions, Kanati then explains that because of the boys' actions, people must hunt for animals in order to provide food (Mooney 1992; Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010).

In all three versions of the myth, the children have a similar experience with Selu when they attempt to discover the origin of the corn and beans. The children follow their mother to a storehouse, and watch as she performs a dance and magically summons the corn and beans into a pan or basket. After witnessing their mother's dance, the boys determine that their mother is a witch, and they must therefore kill her. Once all have returned home, Selu confronts her children explaining that she is aware of their intentions to kill her[7]. She explains that once they have, she will not be able to supply them with corn and beans, but she also describes what must be done in order for the children to grow corn and beans themselves (Mooney 1992; Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010). In the Swimmer version, Selu explains:

> When you have killed me, clear a large piece of ground in front of the house and drag my body seven times around the circle. Then drag me seven times over the ground inside the circle, and stay up all night and watch, and in the morning you will have plenty of corn. (Mooney 1992, 244)

A similar description of what must be done with Selu's body is related in each of the versions, but in the Sikatowah version, the mother also explains to her sons (and transitively the Cherokees) not only how to plant the corn, but also how to tend it.

All three versions of this myth explain how and why the Cherokee must hunt for and cultivate their food. However, the Swimmer and Sikatowah versions also contain elements that describe how the Green Corn Feast should be conducted to celebrate the myth in accordance

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[7] In the Wahnenauhi version, Selu is not killed by the children. Instead, she dies because the children have discovered her secret. Before she dies, she gives a similar explanation of how the children should prepare the ground to cultivate corn.

with the Cherokee's hunting and farming practices. Furthermore, these versions are significant for this study because they also teach the songs that should be sung as a part of that ceremony.

In the Sikatowah version, when Selu explains how her children should cultivate corn, she also demands that they think about her as they tend the crop.[8] She explains how this should be done, stating "remember I am your mother, and call upon me with songs" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 121). Selu instructs her sons to remember her by singing:

> Heyh-hooh, heyh-hooh
> Ugh!
> Heyh-hooh, heyh-hooh
> Ugh!

She also instructs them to invoke her by singing:

> Hay-oh nee-kay
> ~~Hay-oh nee-kay~~ Nay-hoh
> Hay-oh nee-kay
> Nay-hoh
> Hayay tallungh-steyh
> Haht'tah-noolah-kah
> Hoo-ayel-~~lee~~-lee-uh
> ee'way-lee-yooh![9] (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 122)

After teaching her sons these songs, Selu further explains that her sons must continue to watch over the corn until it is fully grown, and that they should then hold a feast in remembrance of her. She describes how the feast should be conducted:

> And when you discover that my bosom is full of nourishment; and when my head towers so high that no foot can step over my crest, waving towards the Heavens, then are you to set apart seven days and seven nights; and on the next morning which shall follow, at the rising sun you are to cut deep lines upon your limbs like those between the grain rows of my spikes; and then your are to take me by the hand and to draw me towards you and to 'prepare me for' a feast. (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 123)

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[8] While Sikatowah explains that he does not recall the name of the woman, the similarities between his version and the ones related by Mooney, along with the fact that her body is the origin of corn, make it clear that the woman is Selu (*selu* also being the Cherokee word for "corn"). Therefore, I refer to the man and woman as Kanati and Selu, even though Sikatowah does not.

[9] The literation cited here is that of Butrick himself, including his strikethroughs.

She further instructs the boys to make their invocations to her toward each of the cardinal directions, beginning with the east and ending with the south. Since she has already instructed them to invoke her through songs, one can reasonably conclude that the boys are meant to sing the above song in each direction. After explaining these procedures Selu tells the boys: "Then you are to stand in the centre [sic] of the four points and to call to me above…and when I hear you, I will take fast hold upon your mind and bring it back to what it ought to be" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 123). Selu concludes by warning her sons—and the Cherokee by extension—should they make use of corn without following her instructions, she will curse them with *ulsketa*, which Sikatowah translated for Butrick: "it means disease—distress—anguish—the Destroyer" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 123).

The Sikatowah version of the Selu myth explains the Cherokee understanding of corn and its relation to the Corn Mother, and it also relates the origins of the Green Corn Dance and the songs that should accompany it. Within his recording of this account, Butrick interjected that he asked Sikatowah what the words of the songs would mean in English, to which Sikatowah responded "the words which in Cherokee convey our sacred songs and traditions are many of them little understood now even by the Cherokees themselves" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 122). In his account of Cherokee customs and traditions recorded in the Brainerd Journal, Chief Hicks also noted that many of the Cherokee's rituals and ceremonies were conducted "in a language that now is very little known" (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 54). Furthermore, with regard to the language found within the sacred formulas he collected, Mooney also recognized the formulas were "full of archaic and figurative expressions, many of which are unintelligible to the common people, and some of which even the shamans

themselves are now unable to explain" (Mooney 1992, 343). From these observations, one might infer a significant aspect of the Cherokee understanding of the role of singing in ritual. It appears that the meaning made through the act of singing was not tied to the literal denotations of the words. This implies that how one practiced the ritual act of singing or speaking words was more important than the meanings of the words themselves. Given such a technique for making meaning through vocal performance, it is reasonable to assume that some of those who did not speak English would have no concerns about participating in ceremonies conducted in English or about singing sacred songs in English.

The manner in which the boys receive the sacred songs can also tell us something about how the Cherokee perceived the role of singing and of songs. In a note discussing the myth, "The Rattlesnake's Venom," Mooney observed: "Many of the Indian ceremonial prayers and invocations are in the form of songs or chants" (Mooney 1992, 463). In the Sikatowah version, Selu—who is one of the "original people" who later become spirits that live beyond the Cherokee's realm—teaches the boys the sacred songs to use when they invoke her, and this method of receiving sacred songs is one that appears in a number of the myths of the Cherokee. The Sikatowah version also relates that Kanati "imparted wise instructions to them" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 127), which must be followed before they hunt. Butrick noted in his account that he further inquired about these instructions, but Sikatowah refused to share them. Butrick concluded concerning Sikatowah's refusal: "these instructions are held very sacred among them, and only imparted with great solemnity to the young men when initiated into the greater mysteries of their religion" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 128).

The theme of receiving sacred songs from the original people is also evident in the Swimmer version, though in his version, it is the boys rather than Selu who teach the sacred songs.

In the Swimmer version, once he realizes that the boys have killed their mother, Kanati leaves them and goes to the village of the wolf people, whom he asks to play a ball game against the boys. In his account, Mooney interjected that Kanati actually wanted the wolf people to kill the boys, but the boys learn of their father's plans and prepare for the wolves. After successfully killing the wolves, the boys go in search of Kanati. When they find him, he leads them into other perils, but the boys continue to triumph. Ultimately, Kanati gets away from the boys, and they cannot find him anywhere. The Wild Boy rolls a gaming wheel to the West, the North and the South, but it returns to him.[10] When he rolls it to the "Sunland," the East, it does not return, and the boys know Kanati had gone in that direction. When the boys find catch Kanati, they find him with Selu, and they stay with their parents for seven days before returning to the "Darkening lands." At the end of this version we learn that the boys are also original people, whom the Cherokee call "Anisga'ya Tsunsdi (The Little Men)" (Mooney 1992, 248). The Swimmer version also tells us that at some point latter, once the Cherokee have multiplied and dispersed across the land, the Cherokee hunters could not find game and called upon the Little Men to help. The boys return to the Cherokee and sing seven songs that lure herds of dear to the village, where the hunters kill as many as they need. Before leaving the Cherokee again, the boys teach them the songs to sing before hunting. The myth ends by

[10] In his notes, Mooney describes this as "the stone wheel or circular disk used in the wheel-and-stick game called by the Cherokee *gatayûstĭ* [*gatevsti*]" (Mooney 1992, 434). He also noted that in some versions of the myth, from the Cherokee as well as other nations (the Sikatowah version included), the boys shoot an arrow in each of the directions, which returns to them. Ultimately the boys shoot the arrow straight up, and it does not return, so the boys know their father is in the realm of the Great Spirit above. These variants exhibit differences in cosmology. And the different versions within the Cherokee tradition could be a result from encounters with other nations' cosmologies, or possibly from encounters with Christians who held a belief in Heaven above.

telling us that only two of the songs are remembered, but that they are always sung before going on a hunt (Mooney 1992, 245-8).

In both these versions of the myth, the Cherokee learn sacred songs from the original people, which are to be ritually performed before completing certain actions. Concerning the account of the Sikatowah version, Butrick observed "it is remarkable that preparatory to every thing undertaken among the Indians, there is inculcated upon them a religious rite" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 128). We have seen above that the songs taught by Selu must be performed when planting and reaping the corn lest disease and distress fall upon the tribe. In his notes concerning the deer songs taught by the Little Men, Mooney observed:

> The Indian hunters of the olden time had many songs intended to call up the deer and the bear. Most of these have perished, but a few are still remembered. They were sung by the hunter, with some accompanying ceremony, to a sweetly plaintive tune, either before setting out or on reaching the hunting ground. (Mooney 1992, 435)

Mooney's "Myth 75" concerning the origin of bears tells of similar songs being taught to the Cherokee by the spirits, and in his relation of that myth, Mooney recorded two of the bear songs. He also briefly observed the ritual that accompanied the songs: "The bear hunter starts out each morning fasting and does not eat until near evening. He sings this song as he leaves camp, and again the next morning, but never twice on the same day" (Mooney 1992, 326).

We see in these songs, like those taught by Selu and the Little Men, that the songs are a means of invoking the spirits of the plants or animals, but at the same time, they are a way of both showing respect for the lives and spirits of those plants or animals and of giving thanks for the gifts they bestow. Thus, by singing these songs, the Cherokee performed rituals they understood to be efficacious in communicating—invoking and giving thanks—with beings that lived both within and beyond their world. In addition, the Cherokee understood that such

communication would have tangible results and consequences within their world, and they further understood the songs and rituals as a way to control those results. From this it seems that the Cherokee believed the songs, when ritually performed, could do work. Mooney observed that other myths, such as his myths 32 and 42, which explain the origins of the Groundhog and Pheasant dances, also contributed to the songs and rites performed during the Green Corn Dance (Mooney 1992, 279 and 290). By turning to examine the Green Corn Dance, which was built on the myth of Kanati and Selu, we can better understand how the Cherokee put these songs to work.

7.2 The Ritual: The Feast of Green Corn

It should first be noted that traditionally two feasts of green corn or green fruits were celebrated each year. The first occurred in August as the first crops of corn were fit to eat, while the second was observed forty to fifty days after when the corn had hardened and was ready for harvest. Mary Churchill observes "it is not always possible to determine to which of these ceremonies an observation refers, though it is important to note that the rites resembled each other" (Churchill 2000, 227), and furthermore, different scholars have identified each as the official Green Corn ceremony (Gilbert 1943; McLoughlin 1994). The difficulty is further complicated by the fact that by the early 1800s, as Butrick observed, the latter ceremony appears to have been conflated with *Atohvna* among some Cherokee groups (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010). Many scholars have observed the feast was performed as a ritual of thanksgiving for the blessings of Selu, but given the Sikatowah version of the myth, it seems the

feast was also a ritual of propagation to ensure the success of future harvest and ward off disease and distress.

As with the different versions of the myth of Kanati and Selu, the many accounts of the Green Corn Dance present variations on certain themes. According to the account given by Chief Hick in the *Brainerd Journal,* the feast itself lasted four days (Phillips and Phillips 1998). According to the account given to Butrick by Terrapin Head and Three Killer, which he understood to represent the most traditional way of observing the feast, it appears that the first feast lasted only two days, while the second lasted four. Butrick observed that both feasts were performed in a similar manner (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010).

Prior to the feast, according to most accounts, the *Ukv* (priest), along with his attendant and the seven counselors from each of the seven clan villages, fasted for seven days—the seventh being the first day of the feast. Also, during that time, the hunters from each of the clan hunted, and on the sixth day, after cutting off a piece of deer's tongue for sacrifice, they brought their venison and skins to the largest town where the national council house stood. Though the accounts do not discuss the ritual surrounding this particular hunt, it is reasonable to assume that the cutting of the deer's tongue for an offering was part of the instructions given by Kanati. The people from the villages also assembled on the sixth day and brought crops they had harvested, which "consisted not only of green corn, but also of beans, peaches, and every species of green fruit, which they used for food" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 269). On the night before the feast, everyone gathered together in front of the council house and stayed awake all night singing and dancing (Phillips and Phillips 1998; Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010).

On the first morning of the feast, the seven counselors gave one ear of corn each to the *Ukv*, and the *Ukv* "gave orders to all the people not to perform any labour [*sic*], nor whoop, nor laugh, nor make any kind of noise during the day but keep entirely still" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 269). From these orders, it is apparent that silence was as much a significant part of the ceremony as the songs and dances, and there were designated times within the ceremony for both. The Moravians' observations of the feast support this notion: "On the whole the affair is orderly; the noise is not too wild, and more quiet prevails than one finds on similar occasions among an equal number of White people" (de Baillou 1961, 97).

After giving these orders, the *Ukv* took the deer's tongue provided by the hunters and a kernel from each of the seven ears of corn provided by the counselors and held them before an alter upon which a newly kindled fire burned. Concerning the fire, Churchill observed "in the particular case of the Green Corn ceremony, an essential element is the sacred fire. At the Green Corn, for instance, the ceremonial fire is rekindled, and from this new fire, all hearths in the community are relit and renewed" (Churchill 2000, 210).[11] Terrapin Head and Three Killer described for Butrick the ritual performed by the *Ukv* before the fire:

> The priest then took the end of the deer's tongue between the thumb and finger of one hand and seven kernels of corn from the seven ears in the other & held them up as a thank offering to God. He gave thanks for the fruits of the earth which had been brought forward and which they had been permitted to see. He also prayed that God would unite the corn and meat and make them healthful and nourishing to them during the year and also bless them during the future years of their lives. In this thanksgiving and prayer they make use of a certain form of words handed down from generation to generations. Having ended his Thanksgiving and prayer, the priest put the meat and corn on the fire, & then sprinkled on some tobacco. (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 270).

[11] It should be noted that it is unclear from the accounts gathered by Butrick whether the ceremonial fire was kindled for the Green Corn Dance or for *Atohvna* or for both. The association of the ceremonial fire with the Green Corn Dance may be a result of a conflation of these two ceremonies.

In another account given to Butrick, by Nutsawi and Corn Tassel, it was added that after the *Ukv* sprinkled the tobacco, "his right hand man and seven counselors then watched the ominous sacrifice. As many deaths as were to occur during the year, so many times it is said, the corn and meat would pop" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 272). Given the myth of Selu discussed above, it seems that in his translation of these accounts, Butrick has taken liberty to replace Selu with God as the recipient of thanks, and also, one might reasonably infer that the "certain form of words handed down from generation to generation" is a reference to the invocations taught by Selu, which might have been chanted rather than spoken.

Following the sacrifice, all those present feasted on the food that had been collected, except the *Ukv*, his attendant and the seven counselors, who did not eat anything until evening. Terrapin Head and Three Killer also related that during the night that followed the feast, "all kept awake while the women danced a slow dance all night, and in the morning the ceremonies closed and all retired" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 270). The account from Nutsawi and Corn Tassel related that a similar sacrifice was offered on subsequent days of the feast, and the people continued to dance and sing at night.

From different accounts, we can begin to get an idea of how the dances were performed. In his translation of the Moravian Journal, Clemens de Baillou observed that the Moravian account presented a "highly unprejudiced" description as they explained the setting and performance of some of the dances:

> The dance floor is in front of the Town House and is a big, well-swept area in the middle of which a tall post is erected, with a green branch tied to it to provide some shade. Against this post stands a bench on which two singers sit or stand during various dances, rattling their calabashes and singing. All the dances proceed around or wind up at the central post. (de Baillou 1961, 98)

Terrapin Head and Three Killer gave a similar description of the yard in which the dances took place:

> They cut a branchy, bushy toped [sic] tree, and digging a hole in the yard, set it firmly in the ground. They then got green boughs from the woods to hold over their heads as they danced. The dance peculiar to that feast was performed by the men alone…they stood around the tree they had planted, each holding his bough over his head, with the right hand. At length the leader struck the music and commenced the exercise, followed by all the company. The object in this dance seems to have been to express in every possible manner and degree the feelings of joy and rejoicing. (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 271)

Though it is not explicitly stated in either of these accounts, one can reasonably infer, given the Selu myth, that the "well-swept area" in front of the Town House in the Moravian description was likely a recreation of the area outside the Little Men's house, and in addition to providing shade for the dancers, the post with the branch and the planted tree might signify the corn stalks.

While the account from Terrapin Head and Three Killer describes one of the dances performed, the Moravian account provided further insight into the performance of the songs and dances:

> They had five kinds of dances, all very different from one another. But in all of them one or two men rattled calabashes filled with small pebbles to mark the time and sang in accompaniment. None of the words of these songs could be clearly recognized except: Hanji, Hanjo, hanani, johani, which occurred again and again. Brother Steiner asked what the song was supposed to mean. But everybody, even those who understood the language very well, assured him that they could make nothing of it. That the song was never sung except at the Green Corn Dance and was supposed to express their joy and gratitude for the new corn. (de Baillou 1961, 97)

Here again, we can see that the Cherokee did not always understand the meaning of the words in the songs they performed, but the meaning of the words did not seem to matter as much as the meaning behind singing them, which was "to express their joy and gratitude for the new corn." As noted above, this disposition, which places more significance on the act of the singing

than the content of the songs, might have allowed for more Cherokees to be open to performing Christian hymns, particularly if they understood the Christian practice of hymn-singing to be a means of both invoking and praising God.

In their explanation to Butrick, Nutsawi and Corn Tassel described different aspects of the ceremony, though Butrick observed that some of what they described may have traditionally been part of the *Atohvna* instead of the Green Corn Ceremony. They related that before the sacrifice, the *Ukv* ordered all the people to "go to water," during which "he uttered a short prayer and then directed all to wash. This they did, by wading in, and then plunging entirely seven times, first toward the east, then toward the west &c" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 272). This practice was not mentioned by Terrapin Head and Three Killer, but Churchill observed "the occasion of going to water varied among the Cherokee. In addition to communal rites, families went to water at dawn and after the burial of a relative, and the practice was used in private rituals involving a curer and a patient" (Churchill 2000, 210). Thus, it is possible that going to water was not always practiced as part of the ceremony, or that it was such a common practice that Terrapin Head and Three Killer did not think it necessary to mention.

Concerning the differences between the accounts, Butrick concluded that Nutsawi and Corn Tassel described a way of observing the feast that developed more recently in order to combine the *Atohvna*, which he called the "feast of expiation," with the Green Corn Dance. Butrick's conclusion is supported by the fact that in their account, Nutsawi and Corn Tassel observed that during the night following the feast, "all stayed awake while the women danced the A-to-hv-na dance" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 273). While the inclusion of this

dance appears to be clear evidence of the blending of the Green Corn Dance and *Atohvna*, it should be noted that for the Cherokee, the word "*atohvna*" may have had multiple meanings. On the one hand, as noted above, Three Killer used it as the name given to one of the ceremonies. However, according to another account given to Butrick by one of his oldest informants, Raven, and two Cherokee-Christian converts, Thomas Smith and Zachariah, the *Atohvna* was a "friendship dance" through which two people could "enter into the strongest bonds of perpetual friendship" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 234). While these informants locate this dance within the feast of atonement, others have noted that friendship dances were included in a number of ceremonies (Speck and Broom 1951; Albanese 1984; Mooney 1992). Furthermore, in his general description of feasts, Butrick also observed, "anciently they had but one kind of dance at all their feasts which was called Atohvna" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 263).

Butrick further offered three points as evidence for his conclusion:

> First, those who observed this form are ignorant of the feast of expiation, and say that the people were, or considered themselves, purer immediately after this feast than at any time during the year. Second, they introduce into the ceremonies of this feast the prayer for cleansing from all the pollutions of the year past, which has no necessary connection with this feast. And, third, the washings &c introduced here properly belong to the latter feast, i.e. of expiation. (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 274)

Given these observations, Butrick appears justified in his conclusion. However, on Butrick's first point, it should be noted that one of the informants, Nutsawi, who gave this account also contributed to the accounts of the *Atohvna* feast. In addition, there was no discussion in this account of the singing of the Yowa hymn, which by all accounts was a central component of the *Atohvna* ceremony. Nonetheless, Butrick observed that as the Cherokee people became more dispersed toward the end of the eighteenth century, the practice of the Green Corn Dance grew

more localized within the different villages, as he observed, “for near fifty years past each town has taken the liberty of celebrating the feast of first fruits separately, without any special order from the national council” (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 276). Given that it was becoming more difficult to convene the entire tribe for ceremonies, and that such modifications in the feast were made, it is not unlikely that the leaders of some towns might choose to fuse ceremonies together.

Despite such modifications in the practice of the ceremony, it is clear from these accounts that singing and dance were essential aspects of the ceremonies, through which the Cherokee communicated their joy and thanks to the spirits who controlled the cultivation of food. From the various descriptions of the Green Corn Dance we can see how the Cherokees understood the role of singing in ritual practice as an emotionally charged means of invoking and praising the spirits, and we can also infer that they placed more significance on practice of singing than the meaning of the words sung. By turning now to the accounts of the *Atohvna*, and looking particularly at the Yowa hymn associated with it, we can gain further understanding in this respect.

8. The Feast of Atohvna

According to Three Killer and Terrapin Head, *Atohvna* was celebrated at the first of autumn. Traditionally, it shared some features and practices with the Green Corn Dance.[12] For instance, as with the Green Corn, the feast lasted four days, and the *Ukv*,[13] his attendant and the seven counselors from the tribes fasted for seven days prior to the ceremony. The attendant, whom Butrick called the "right hand man," also selected various members of the tribe from each of the clans to assist with different parts of the ceremony. Those selected also fasted prior to the feast. Into this account, Butrick interjected that articles of purification and healing were collected, which the Cherokees called "nv-wo-ti, which we translate medicine" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 222). According to the account given by Thomas Smith, the right hand man also appointed "one to wait on the Yo-wa-ti-ka-no-gi-sti, i.e. the singer of the Yowa" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 283). The *yowatikanogisti* was the only person permitted to sing the *yowa*, and if the previous one should die during the year, Butrick observed "the seven prime counselors created on this occasion a substitute, who retained the office for life" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 46).

On the sixth day of fasting, the *nvwoti* and meat procured by the appointed hunters were brought to the council house and stored in the nearby treasure house. Afterwards, everyone gathered, and "the women danced, while four musicians, each in his turn, sang for them" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 283), before all went to sleep. A little after sunrise

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[12] One account attributed to Terrapin Head and Nutsawi related that in September (roughly the same time as *Atohvna*) there was a hunter's feast. The description of this feast is also similar to that of the Green Corn, and it involved going to water and the application of the physic to the body. It seems possible that this was part of the larger *Atohvna* ceremony, and the three feasts may all have connections to the myth of Selu and Kanati.

[13] The *Ukv* who presided over this feast was also referred to as *Unawisanvhi* and *Ulistuli*, which Butrick translated respectively as "one who renews heart and body, or clenses from mental and bodily defilements" and "one who has his head covered, because he officiated with his cap or bonnet on" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 280).

on the morning of the seventh day—the first day of the feast—those appointed by the right hand man attended to their duties, while others rekindled the ceremonial fire upon the alter.[14] At the same time, the one appointed to assist the *yowatikanogisti* "went to the holy place, took his [the singer's] white dress & put it on him, and put a rattling goard [*sic*], white washed in his hand, and then took his seat" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 285).

Once properly adorned, the *yowatikanogisti* could begin the ceremony. After receiving the gourd, he stood silent for a moment in the middle of the council house. Then with the shake of his gourd, he began to sing "'You,' as he walked round the fire and to the door, where he changed his note to 'i' (e long) and ascended the roof, not drawing his breath till he arrived at the top of the house" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 286). Once on the roof the singer began to sing the *yowa* hymn, which consisted of seven verses. Each verse had a unique tune, and they were each repeated four times. Between each verse, the singer again sang "i," before starting the next. Butrick recorded the verses:

1. Hi-yo-wa-ya-ka-ni
2. Hi-te-hu-yu ya-ka-ni
3. Hi-wa-ta-ki-ya-ka-ni
4. Hi-hi-wa-sa-si-ya-ka-ni
5. Hi-a-ni-tsu-si-ya-ka-ni
6. Hi-yo-wa-hi-ye-yo ya-ka-ni
7. Hi-a-ni-he-ho ya-ka-ni (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 286)

After singing the song, the singer again hit the "I" note and descended from the roof without drawing a breath. He re-entered the council house and again walked around the fire, returning to his original place. There, he announced "I am heard," and those present responded with a whoop. The attendant then removed the adornments and returned them to their proper place. Butrick observed that the *yowa* was sung in the morning, around noon and in the evening on

[14] See note on ceremonial fire above.

the first and fourth days of the ceremony, but it was not sung on the second or third (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010). The announcement by the *yowatikanogisti* of "I am heard" seems to have been an acknowledgment that the *yowa* hymn had been received by the Great Spirit, and that the singing of the *yowa* had achieved the desired effect.

After the *yowa* was sung for the first time, the *Ukv* began preparing the physic. He then directed everyone to go to water, which was practiced as it is described above. Around noon, everyone congregated again in the council house, the *yowa* was performed in the manner described, and the *Ukv* offered a sacrifice in the same manner as in the Green Corn. After the sacrifice, the physic was distributed in whitewashed gourds to each person. Each person drank the physic and also rubbed it on their chest. After the physic was consumed, infants were permitted to eat something, but everyone else continued to fast until evening. The *yowa* was performed once more in the evening, and following that, the *Ukv* offered a prayer, and everyone partook in the feast, except the *Ukv*, his attendant, the *yowatikanogisti* and those appointed to assist in the ceremony. According to most accounts, the people danced until midnight on the nights of the feast, although Butrick observed that some accounts claimed that the women danced all through the night. On the fifth morning since the start of the feast, another sacrifice was offered, and everyone returned home (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010).

In his account, Nutsawi acknowledged that the *Atohvna* ceremony would also be observed "at any time of the year when any mortal disease was feared. But when it was observed as a mere preventative of sickness, there was in some respects a little variation" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 290). Nutsawi also noted that such diseases were the

result of "the displeasure of God" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 290). Missionaries, like Butrick, and converted Cherokees like Nutsawi, who had been taught the Christian doctrine concerning sin, would likely attribute God's displeasure to sinful, impure behavior. Yet, there is no indication that Cherokee impurity provoked such displeasure. McLoughlin has observed the Cherokees believed "harmony was the highest ideal, for it was necessary in all spheres of life" (McLoughlin 1994, 15), and given this ideal of harmony, it is possible that the Cherokee would have recognized disharmony as the leading cause of God's displeasure. If so, the performance of *Atohvna* and the singing of the *yowa* may have signified a rebalancing of harmony for the Cherokee people.

While the actual purpose behind the *Atohvna* remains open to debate, the *yowa* hymn and its performance represent a fascinating component of Cherokee ritual practice. The similarities between the *Atohvna* and the Green Corn Dance suggest that the ritual is a traditional one; however, the accounts collected by Butrick that describe the origins of the ceremony suggest Christian influences. Butrick recorded two major descriptions of the ceremony, though they are identical in many parts—including the description of the yowa. Concerning the hymn, Butrick's informants asserted:

> This hymn was made by God, Himself, who gave it the name, Yo-wa, for Yi-ho-wa, and commanded when and how it should be sung. Yi-ho-wa was the most sacred Name of God, which no one must speak except on certain occasions, and then only such as were appointed for the purpose.
> So also the hymn called Yo-wa, must never be sung only by persons selected for the purpose, and on particular occasions. (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 224)

Though Butrick did not clearly cite from whom he received this account, it likely came from Corn Tassel, or reiterated in another section "Yi-ho-wa was the most sacred name of God"

(Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 205). Another account given by Nutsawi and Pine Log related:

> Ye-howa was a great King. He was a man and yet was a Spirit. The song or hymn called yowa was sung to him. His name must never be mentioned only by persons selected, & by them, only on the Sabbath day. (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 208)

This account gives a slightly different picture of the Cherokee understanding of God, who was understood to be both a man and a spirit. Such a view could be attributed to the Christian teaching that Christ was both human and God, but it also fits in with the Cherokee understanding of the original people, who were considered both human and spirit. In either case, accounts such as these that use the name *Yihowa* for the Great Spirit have contributed to a long discourse on Cherokee (and Native American) origins.

Butrick and Payne both ascribed to the theory that the Cherokee were one of the lost tribes of Israel, and they recognized such accounts of this ceremony that used the name *Yihowa* for God as evidence supporting that theory. James Adair had first recorded the use of a similar word, *"Yohewa*," among the Cherokees in his *History of the American Indians* (1974). Like Adair, Butrick and Payne equated the name in Cherokee with the Jewish name Yahweh, which many Christians have transliterated as Jehovah. It remains unclear whether either *Yohewa* or *Yihowa* originated in Cherokee (or any other Native American) language or if it was picked up from the European settlers in the early years of contact (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010).

Those Cherokee who were sympathetic to Christian conversion and missionization, such as Chief John Ross, often affirmed the connection between *Yihowa* and Yahweh. However, McLoughlin observed others, such as Chief Major Lowrey, were skeptical about connections between the Cherokees and the Jews, particularly after "he discovered that anti-Semitism was

almost as pronounced among many white Americans as Indian hating" (McLoughlin 1994, 145). These Cherokees thought associating their own traditions with those of the Jews would likely hinder more than improve relations with the American nationals.

One respondent to *The Cherokee Phoenix*, identified as W., attempted to clarify the issue in a letter written to Elias Boudinot that was printed in the April 29, 1829 edition: "The Cherokees have only two names of God, one of which, (5 Cherokee letters) U-ne-la-nv-hi, signifies the Creator, and the other (6 Cherokee letters) Ga-lv-la-ti c-hi, he who dwells above" (*Cherokee Phoenix* 1829).[15] Concerning the name Jehovah, W. related further, "as to the Cherokees, the name Yehowah is now known to some, but only those who learned it by means of Christian missionaries" (*Cherokee Phoenix* 1829).

The origin of the term *yowa* likewise remains unclear; according to the editors of *The Payne-Butrick Papers*, "Yo-wa is said to be the original Cherokee word used to indicate reverence to God, long before the Protestant term was introduced" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 340 n. 10). However, the editors cite no specific source for this claim, and it remains unclear whether use of this term predated the collection of Butrick's papers. The most likely explanation for the inclusion of the name *Yihowa* in the accounts related to Butrick is that some Cherokees, such as Nutsawi and Corn Tassel, had incorporated the name into a syncretic religious tradition that could answer questions raised by encounters with Christian teachings.

This explanation is supported by the fact that like the other songs discussed above the words of the *yowa* hymn had no distinct meaning, as the editors noted "the words of the

[15] The *Phoenix* did not make It clear who authored this letter to Boudinot. However, the author's use of third person pronouns when discussing the Cherokees implies it was most likely written by a White author. In addition, given his association with Boudinot and the *Phoenix*, it seems likely that the author was Samuel A. Worcester.

Yowah hymn are vocables, sounds with no meaning" (Anderson, Brown and Rogers 2010, 346 n. 91). Because the origin and meaning of the words were no longer remembered when the informants communicated with Butrick, it is possible that the informants contributed their own interpretations—which, for Cherokee-Christian converts like Nutsawi and Corn Tassel, would undoubtedly have been influenced by Christian teachings.

Regardless of the actual origin of the *yowa* hymn, it is clear from the accounts that singing the hymn was part of Cherokee practice as late as the end of the eighteenth century, and furthermore, it continued to be sung after the memory of the meaning of the words had been forgotten. Again, the hymn's inclusion in Cherokee ritual and the regulations that govern its performance imply that the act of singing it was more important than the meaning of the words. Furthermore, it is clear that the Cherokee understood that by singing the *yowa* a desired affect could be achieved. Thus, the performance of the hymn was considered an efficacious ritual.

From the accounts of the Green Corn and *Atohvna* ceremonies, it is clear that the Cherokee understood these ceremonies to have profound religious significance with regard to their place within the cosmos. However, it should be noted that many outsiders, and perhaps some of the Cherokee themselves, also considered the ceremonies to be social gatherings that strengthened communal and family bonds within the nation. McLoughlin observed that while many conservative Christian missionaries may have viewed the singing and dancing aspects of the ceremonies with distaste, attending and participating in the Green Corn Dance "was seldom a reason for censure or excommunication in the Baptist or Methodist mission church, much to the horror of the Congregationalists or Moravians" (McLoughlin 1994, 213).

This apparent indifference to the Cherokees performance of the Green Corn Dance among some missionaries implies that they perceived is as merely a social event or a generic expression of Thanksgiving. Indeed, within the Euro-American tradition of the Christians, there was a long history of similar social gatherings for celebrating bountiful harvests. Ultimately, even the Congregationalist missionaries of Brainerd made concessions to the Green Corn Dance, as they noted in the account from August 9, 1819 in the *Brainerd Journal*: "from the commencement of the school many parents have fixed on this season of the year to take their children home to visit…We therefore thought best to have something like a vacation at the time" (Phillips and Phillips 1998, 128). Yet, the missionaries' indifference ultimately proved to be foreshadowing for what was to come.

Following removal in 1838, according to Mooney, the ceremonies lost much of their religious significance for many of the Cherokees in the East, and in the West, many of the ceremonies were abandoned altogether: "The ball play was neglected and the green-corn dance proscribed, while the heroic tradition of former days became a fading memory or tale to amuse a child" (Mooney 1992, 146). Nonetheless, from the accounts collected concerning these ceremonies and rituals, it is evident that the Cherokees traditionally possessed a rich, religious tradition, in which singing played a significant role as they sought to communicate and connect with the spirits en masse, and with the Great Spirit itself. Furthermore, it is clear from the accounts available that the performance and practice of singing outweighed the verbal meaning of the songs, and it was through that practice that the Cherokee brought themselves into harmony within the cosmos, the spirits within it and the Great Spirit beyond.

9. Conclusions

In this essay, we have explored the role of singing in ritual settings as a mode of cultural contact in which the missionaries and Cherokees intermingled and exchanged cultural and religious ideas and practices. By exploring each community's perception of singing as ritual performance, we are able to highlight certain areas in which the Cherokees may have experienced resonances with the missionaries' practices, which contributed to a collective space in which the two cultures could converge and communicate.

Through this examination, we have seen that the Brainerd missionaries possessed an evangelical understanding of hymn singing, through which they believed singers could both relive their own conversion experiences and motivate conversion in others, while communicating and authenticating their theological beliefs. In addition, the missionaries displayed an understanding of the emotional power inherent in hymn singing that distinguished it from doctrinal and homiletic discourses as a practical and performative religious expression. As a result, the missionaries taught both English and Cherokee hymns in order to circumvent the language barrier by modeling how one should praise God and invoke the Holy Spirit through the ritual practice of singing.

We have also seen how the mythic paradigms that shaped the Cherokees' understanding of singing in ritual practice likely contributed to their experience of resonances with the missionaries' hymn singing practices. Based on myths like that of Kanati and Selu, singing was used in traditional Cherokee rituals as a means for praising and invoking the spirits. In addition, through the performance of the *yowa* hymn during *Atohvna*, the Cherokees displayed an understanding of singing as a way in which they could realign themselves with the

harmonious balance of their cosmos and with the Great Spirit from whom all things were created. Given these practical uses of singing in Cherokee traditions, it seems likely they would be sympathetic to the missionaries' use of singing to praise and invoke the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, their concept of the Great Spirit presented an analogous figure to the missionaries' God, which likely provoked more resonances with the missionaries' practice of praise and invocation through song.

In addition, the performance of songs in ritual settings also represented a system of meaning-making for the Cherokees, which was independent from the semantic connotations of the words within the songs and which emphasized the emotional power of singing. This indicates the possibility that the Cherokees could have had significant personal, religious experiences while singing hymns in English without knowing the meaning of the sung words. Thus, the feelings of resonance with missionary singing practices and the Cherokees' system for making meaning through performance contributed to the communal space in which the two cultures could interact.

Through this study, we can also perceive a potential among Cherokees to incorporate and assimilate other people's myths and traditions into their own. Both Mooney's observations that the Cherokee shared certain myths with other Native American communities and the presence of Christian influences in the accounts of the *Atohvna* and the *yowa* hymn provide evidence for this potential. From this, we can hypothesize that some Cherokees likely welcomed the creation of a collective space in which they could exchange ideas and practices with the missionaries. However, we must remember that this process of exchange occurred within a setting of cultural contact that was highly charged with dynamics of power and

violence. These dynamics influenced relations both between the two communities and within each group, and they affected how the Cherokees exercised agency in their decisions to adapt, accommodate or resist the missionaries' teachings and practices.

Within the Cherokee community a rift formed between those who resisted the missionaries' efforts to replace the Cherokees' traditions and those who participated more willingly in the exchange. Even for the Cherokees who converted to Christianity and participated in the Christian hymn singing ritual, it is highly likely they chose to do so for their own purposes and to their own ends, and those who participated—particularly those who did not understand English—probably would not have experienced and understood the ritual exactly as the missionaries intended. Rather, those who participated more actively by attending or sending their children to the missions no doubt selected aspects of the missionaries' teachings that suited them best. For instance, as noted above, many Cherokees chose to identify the Christians' God with their own theological concept of the Great Spirit, and in doing so, they adapted the hymn singing ritual to fit their own religious cosmology.

In his exploration of the history of the Eastern Band of Cherokees, John Finger (1984) offered descriptions of nineteenth-century Cherokee-Christian revival meetings that displayed similarities to the Green Corn and *Atohvna* ceremonies, and concerning Cherokee religious leaders he observed, "a man could be a shaman one day, reciting traditional incantations, and a hell-fire preacher the next" (Finger 1984, 64). Such depictions speak to the Cherokees exercise of agency in their contact with the missionaries, and further studies of the development of Cherokee Christianity stand to highlight more evidence of Cherokee selection.

The works of Michael McNally among the Ojibwa (1989; 2001) and of Luke Eric Lassiter among the Kiowa (2001) represent two noteworthy examples of such studies involving other Native American communities who have re-imagined Christian hymn singing in uniquely Native American terms. From these studies, we can perceive the agency possessed and employed by converted Native peoples in shaping their own religious experiences. These studies also display the same potential for hymn singing to convey powerful emotions and religious ideas within and between religious communities that we have seen in this investigation of the missionary/Cherokee encounter. This potential marks the ritual performance of singing, and religious music in general, as a significant subject for Religious Studies scholars to explore because through such investigations we can perceive an experiential dimension of religion that stands apart from doctrinal and rhetorical religious expression.

Singing represents a form of religious expression that simultaneously provokes deeply personal religious emotions and allows the communication of those emotions within a larger community. From this study, we can see that when that practice occurs within cultural contact scenarios, this form of communication is capable of transcending linguistic and cultural divides. Further studies of the ritual practice of singing as a mode of cultural contact stand to reveal how singing can create a culturally shared space in which religious ideas and emotions can be communicated across such divides. In addition, by examining singing as a mode of contact, we gain a better glimpse of how this transcultural expression of religious and cultural ideas can contribute to the development of new religious practices and traditions.

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