

Descriptive Summary:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Creator: | Jotham Meeker, John Gill Pratt, Johnston Lykins, Moses Merrill, and Edwin James |
| Title: | Baptist Missionary Publications: Indians of North America |
| Inclusive Dates: | 1832-1850, undated |
| Bulk Dates: | 1832-1850 |
| Abstract: | This collection contains religious and educational publications in American Indian languages, most of which were translated and printed by Baptist missionaries in the Midwest. |
| Accession #: | 1091 |
| Extent: | 0.45 linear feet (1 box) |
| Language: | Collection is in English, Cherokee, Ojibwa, Delaware, Oto, Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Shawnee. |
| Repository: | The Texas Collection, Baylor University, Waco, Texas. |

Biographical Note:

Jotham Meeker was born in Hamilton County, Ohio, on 1804 November 8. He worked in the printing industry in Cincinnati before becoming a Baptist missionary at age twenty-one to the Potawatomi Indians at Carey Mission Station in southern Michigan. In 1831, Meeker moved to a missionary station along the Arkansas River, where he began developing phonetic American Indian orthographies based on the Roman alphabet. Two years later, Meeker bought a printing press and moved to the Shawanoe Baptist Mission, a few miles southwest of today's Kansas City, Missouri. Because his American Indian alphabets did not require any special letters, Meeker was able to print in at least ten American Indian languages. Meeker translated and printed many Christian works—like the Gospels of Matthew and John, hymns, and prayers—in American Indian languages. He also printed spelling books and readers to help American Indians learn the orthographies he developed.

During the next three years, Meeker published dozens of items for American Indians, including books written by other missionaries. In 1834, he printed Moses Merrill's fourteen-page hymnbook written in the Otoe language. Merrill and his wife were the first missionaries to the area that is today Nebraska.

On 1834 February 24, Meeker printed the first issue of the *Sininowe Kesibwi* (*Shawnee Sun*), the first periodical in Kansas and the first entirely in an American Indian language. The paper's editor was another Baptist missionary, Johnston Lykins (1800-1876). Lykins founded and operated the Shawanoe Baptist Mission and also engaged in translation work. He later served as mayor of Kansas City, Missouri.

Meeker left the Shawanoe Baptist Mission in 1837 in order to join a group of Ottawa Indians near today's Ottawa, Kansas. He left the printing press in the hands of John Gill Pratt (1814-1900), a Baptist missionary who had just arrived from the east. In the summer of 1846, Pratt took the press to Stockbridge Baptist Mission, a Shawanoe Baptist Mission outpost. After Pratt gave up printing, Meeker moved the press to the Ottawa area; there he printed the code of Ottawa tribal laws in both the Ottawa language and English. Meeker died on 1855 January 12.

Sources:

- Aitchison, Robert T. "Early Imprints." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (February 1935): 54-60.
- "Cool Things – Hymnal in the Ottawa Language." Kansas Historical Society. <http://www.kshs.org/p/cool-things-hymnal-in-the-ottawa-language/10225>. Accessed 2012 June 6.
- Dary, David. *Red Blood & Black Ink: Journalism in the Old West*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998.
- Hill, Esther Clark. "Some Background of Early Baptist Missions in Kansas." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (February 1932): 89-103.
- McMurtie, Douglas C. "The Shawnee Sun: The First Periodical Publication in the United States to be Printed Wholly in an Indian Language." *The Kansas Historical Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (November 1933): 339-342.
- McMurtrie, Douglas C. "Pioneer Printing of Kansas." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (November 1931): 3-16.
- Mechem, Kirke. "The Mystery of the Meeker Press." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (February 1935): 61-73.
- "Moses Merrill, 1803-1840." Nebraska State Historical Society. <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/lib-arch/research/manuscripts/family/moses-merrill.htm>. Accessed 2012 June 6.
- Pilling, James Constantine. *Bibliography of the Algonquian Languages*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1891.
- Schoolcraft, Henry Rowe. *A Bibliographical Catalogue of Books, Translations of the Scriptures, and Other Publications in the Indian Tongues of the United States: With Brief Critical Notices*. Washington, DC: C. Alexander, 1849.
- Sheldon, A. E. *Semi-Centennial History of Nebraska: Historical Sketch*. Lincoln, NB: The Lemon Publishing Company, 1904.

Scope and Content:

This collection consists of original copies or photocopied selections of eleven publications, written in English and/or one of seven American Indian languages. The publications were translated and printed by Baptist missionaries concerned with teaching both Christianity and literacy. Thus, this collection contains both religious and educational publications. They coincide with the first few decades of Baptist missionary work in the Midwest, spanning from 1832 to 1850. The items are in good condition.

Organization and Arrangement:

This collection has one series: literary productions. The publications are separated into folders according to language and the folders are alphabetized.

Restrictions: The collection is open for research.

Literary Rights Statement:

Unpublished materials authored or otherwise produced by the creator (s) of this collection are in the public domain. There are no restrictions on use. Copyright status for other collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials

protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

All requests for copying of materials must be submitted to The Texas Collection in writing. Please use the Request Form for Copying Materials sheet.

Index Terms:

- Baptists--Missions.
- Cherokee Indians.
- Cherokee language--Texts.
- Chippewa Indians.
- Delaware Indians.
- Delaware language--Texts.
- Indians of North America--Indian Territory.
- Indians of North America--Kansas--19th century.
- Indians of North America--Missions.
- James, Edwin.
- Johnston, Lykins, 1800?-1876.
- Meeker, Jotham, 1804-1855.
- Merrill, Moses, 1803-1840.
- Ojibwa Indians.
- Ojibwa language--Texts.
- Oto Indians.
- Oto language--Texts.
- Ottawa Indians.
- Potawatomi Indians.
- Potawatomi language--Texts.
- Pratt, John Gill.
- Shawnee Indians.
- Shawnee language--Texts.

Related Materials: None.

Separated Materials: None.

Custodial History:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Acquisition: | This collection was transferred from uncatalogued holdings of The Texas Collection archives on 1975 February 7. |
| Citation: | Baptist Missionary Publications: Indians of North America, Accession #1091, Box #, Folder #, The Texas Collection, Baylor University. |

Processing Information: Finding aid completed by Jonathan D. Riddle, 2012 June 7.

Container List:

Series I: Literary Productions

This series consists of religious and educational publications in American Indian languages. Most of the items were printed by Baptist missionaries Jotham Meeker and John Gill Pratt. This series contains a few original copies as well as photocopied selections. It is in good condition.

| BOX NUMBER | FOLDER NUMBER | FOLDER TITLE | DATES |
|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | 1 | Literary Productions: General | undated |
| | 2 | Literary Productions: Cherokee | undated, 1842 |
| | 3 | Literary Productions: Chippewa | 1832 |
| | 4 | Literary Productions: Delaware | undated |
| | 5 | Literary Productions: Otoe | 1834 |
| | 6 | Literary Productions: Ottawa | 1838, 1845, 1850 |
| | 7 | Literary Productions: Potawatomi | 1834 |
| | 8 | Literary Productions: Shawanoe | 1834, 1838 |