FAIRFIELD MISSION

By Carolyn Thomas Foreman

It was fortunate for the Cherokees that Dwight Mission was removed to the west when the Indians left Arkansas for their new home. The Cherokees were so desirous of hearing the gospel preached that they built houses, cleared and fenced a garden for missionaries; agreed to furnish meat and corn for a teacher and to board their own children; thus Mulberry Mission was commenced under the supervision of Doctor Marcus Palmer. The station, a branch of Dwight, was first located on Mulberry Creek in Pope County, Arkansas, but it was removed in 1829, to fifteen miles north of Dwight Mission, and its name was changed to Fairfield with Doctor Palmer still in charge.

Doctor Palmer, a native of Greenwich, Connecticut, born April 24, 1795, was a member of the intelligent company of missionaries who left the East in 1820. He arrived at Union Mission February 18, 1821, and was subsequently stationed for several years at Harmony Mission. He was transferred to Fairfield in November, 1829. Doctor Palmer and Miss Clarissa Johnson of Colchester, Connecticut, came west in the same party of missionaries and they were married at Harmony Mission by the Reverend William F. Vaill on Sunday, August 24, 1824, "in the presence of family, laborers, & all the Indians present, who manifested great interest in seeing a christian marriage."

Fairfield Mission was located by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in the southern part of the Cherokee Nation, on Sallisaw Creek. The station was fifteen miles from Evansville, Arkansas, thirty-five miles from Fort Smith and about the same distance from Fort Gibson. The locality was then called Flint, but is now Stilwell.²

The original buildings at Fairfield consisted of a double cabin, sixty feet by twenty-six, a story and a half high, with two stone chimneys; a school house, with a stone chimney, was twenty-two by

¹History of American Missions to the Heathen (Worcester, Massachusetts, 1840), pp. 182, 335; Missionary Herald, vol. XXVI, p. 351; Grant Foreman, Advancing the Frontier (Norman, 1933), p. 312, note 2; Union Mission Journal, Oklahoma Historical Society. Dr. Palmer was granted a restricted license to preach on November 7, 1825, by a conference held at Union Mission, and he was ordained in 1830.²The location of Fairfield Mission was given as near the south end of Adair County, now near the present Bunch or Lyons, Oklahoma (Indian-Pioneer History, Foreman Collection, Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, vol. 90, pp. 193-4). (The original location of Flint and site of Fairfield Mission are about five miles southwest of Stilwell, Adair County, on the east side of Sallisaw Creek. -Ed.)
twenty-six feet, and there were also several out-buildings—all built at the expense of the American Board, except for eight or nine hundred dollars contributed by the Cherokees.\(^3\)

Walter Webber, an intelligent and energetic Cherokee, offered help to the missionaries and he was the outstanding supporter of Fairfield the remainder of his life. According to Thomas Nuttall, who met him on the Arkansas in 1819 and wrote of him in his *Journal of Travels into Arkansas Territory*, Webber was a valuable man in his nation; he was a trader who lived “in ease and affluence” on his fine farm. It is said that he did not know much English and kept his accounts in the Cherokee language. He sold better and more reasonable goods to the Indians than they were able to buy from other traders. His store was burned in 1824 with a loss of $10,000.

The best description of Walter Webber, his wife, and their home is given in Captain Bell’s *Journal* of his tour to the Rocky Mountains.\(^4\)

“On the 22d Sept. 1820, we halted at the house of a Cherokee Chief, by the name of Watt Webber, a half breed. His place is beautifully situated on a high bluff upon the bank of the Arkansas river, secure from inundation and is a great thoroughfare of travellers from the Missouri, to the country south of the Arkansas, above the Cadrons. Webber is tall, well-formed, dresses in the costume of the whites, is affable, and of polite manners. Though he understands English, he would converse only in the Cherokee language.

“His wife is a large, fleshy woman, a full-blooded Indian, dressed in every particular like genteel, well dressed white women. She attends diligently herself, to all her domestic concerns, which are conducted with the strictest order and neatness. She also spins, and weaves, and has taught these arts to her domestics. Her black servant acted as our interpreter, in conversing with her husband. We dined with this family. Their table was handsomely prepared, with China plates, and corresponding furniture. The food was cooked and served after the manner of well bred white people; and Mrs. W. did the honors of the table in a lady like manner, with ease, and grace, and dignity.”

From Dwight Mission, August 9, 1821, an account was written which evidently describes Walter Webber, although his name was not mentioned.\(^5\)

“A half-breed Cherokee, brother of Catharine and David Brown, called to make a visit. He can speak English well; has had considerable acquaintance with the whites; and is a young man of some intelligence; but appeared notwithstanding, deplorably ignorant of all spiritual subjects. He said he had never been told, and never knew, but that men died like the beasts;—he knew not that man has a soul, which exalts him above them, and would exist after death; or that there was a beloved book, which informed us of a future state. He said he rather thought in himself, that

\(^3\) *Missionary Herald*, vol. XXVI, p. 312, note 2.
\(^4\) Jedidiah Morse, *A Report to the Secretary of War...* (New-Haven, 1822), pp. 74, 75.
men did not die as beasts; but that they lived somewhere after death, but how, or where, he knew not.

"While describing to him the two different places, where the righteous and the wicked will forever dwell in a future world, he appeared very solemn; but when told of the way by which the wicked might become righteous, escape from sin and misery, and finally go to the happy place, he appeared to be much interested and pleased; said he would come again, and hear more good talk."

Webber had not always been a man of peace. On June 24, 1821, he headed a war party of Cherokees that killed Joseph Revoir, who lived fifteen miles above Union Mission, because, like many Frenchmen, he lived with the Osages, whom Cherokees considered their mortal enemies.6

From Creek-Path in Alabama, on January 18, 1823, Catharine Brown wrote to her brother David who was in school at Andover, giving him news of members of their family in the West:7

". . . . Brother Walter [Webber] was expecting to set out in a few days for the city of Washington, and had thought of visiting some of the northern States before he returned. It is likely you may see him in New-England. He has placed brother Edmund in the Missionary school at Dwight, to continue there three or four years. . . .

"Brother Walter has given up trading and has commenced farming. He has purchased land in the Osage country, at the Salt Springs. Whether he intends removing his family to that place, I know not. . . ."

Catharine Brown, born about 1800 at a place now called Wills Valley in Alabama, was a child of John Brown and Tsa-luh whom the whites called Sarah. Tsa-luh was the second wife of Brown and her former husband was Webber and their son was Walter Webber. By Brown Tsa-luh had three children, John who died in 1822, Catharine and David. The comely daughter was educated at Brainerd Mission and later had charge of the mission school at Creek Path. She died July 18, 1823.8

Webber located on the Arkansas in 1829 and the hamlet and the falls in the river became known by his name. He operated the salt works on the old Military Road about seven miles north of the present Gore, Oklahoma; the plant was about one and one-half miles west of the Illinois River on salt branch.9

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6 Grant Foreman, Pioneer Days in the Early Southwest. (Cleveland, 1926), pp. 59, 66.
8 Ibid. This edition, issued in Philadelphia in 1831, was prepared by the Rev. Rufus Anderson for the American Sunday School Union.
9 Grant Foreman, Indians and Pioneers (Norman, 1936), pp. 227-8, note 31; American Board of Commissioners, Report for 1834, p. 110; Foreman, Advancing the Frontier (Norman, 1933), p. 313; ............................ A Traveller in Indian Territory (Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1900), p. 65, note 42.
A committee of Cherokees at Tahlonteeske, on December 3, 1833,\(^1\)

"Resolved further that if a slave or slaves are caught gambling or intoxicated, or if they should in any way abuse a free person, he, she, or they [Negroes] shall for either of the above offenses, receive sixty lashes on the bare back for each and every such offense to be inflicted by the Light Horse.

Approved:
John Jolly
Black Coat
W. Webber

Chiefs"

An important visitor to the clearing at Webbers Falls in 1829 was the ex-governor of Tennessee, Sam Houston, who arrived aboard a steamboat and was welcomed by the stately old Cherokee, Oo-loo-te-ka. Walter Webber was president of the committee which granted Houston "all the rights, privileges and immunities of a citizen of the Cherokee Nation . . . as though he was a native born Cherokee."

"Even Dr. Marcus Palmer, of the Fairfield Mission, for whom Houston formed a warm regard, failed to 'convert' The Raven or to change his habits, which the local clergy found a fertile subject of criticism." In December Houston, accompanied by Walter Webber and John Brown, an eastern Cherokee recently come west, slipped away and when they arrived in Washington early in 1830,\(^1\) Houston was clad in turban, breech-clout, leggins and a blanket to the great scandal of his former associates in the capital.\(^1\)

From Fairfield Station on December 28, 1829, Dr. Palmer wrote to Houston in Washington:\(^1\)

"You took leave of us I thought, rather abruptly. I had hoped for the pleasure of seeing you at our humble dwelling before you started for Washington but undoubtedly you had the best reasons for doing as you did. If I had not been exceedingly pressed with business I think I should have seen you again at Mr. [John] Jolly's before you left. Mr. Flowers\(^1\)

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\(^{12}\) Grant Foreman, Pioneer Days in the Early Southwest (Cleveland, 1926), p. 184.
\(^{13}\) Office Indian Affairs "1830 Schools (Cherokee West), Palmer and Vaill (App. endorsed by Gen. Sam Houston)."
\(^{14}\) John W. Flowers was an intermarried citizen of the Cherokee Nation. In 1820, with James Rogers and James L. McCarty, he was authorized by the tribe to operate the salt springs on Salt Branch, formerly operated by Mark Bean and a man named Sanders. In 1827 Flowers served as counselor to a delegation of Cherokees sent to Washington to negotiate matters between the government and the Indians. During the removal of the Uchee Indians conditions were so bad among a band on the Illinois River that Sam Houston wrote to the Secretary of War from "Wigwam, Cherokee Nation 3d October, 1829: they were nearly all sick, famished, and most of them unable to turn themselves on their blankets. They subsisted principally upon what fish they could catch, and Mr. Flowers, a Cherokee countryman, furnished them some provisions on his own responsibility." Grant Foreman, Indians and Pioneers (New Haven), pp. 68, 259, 299.)
Fairfield Mission

and his lady were here a few days ago, and he informed me of your kind remembrance of us, and of your very generous offer—your friendly influence with the President in favor of our Mission Station.—I thank you Dear Genl. for your condescension and goodness.

"Col. Webber will present to the President a short statement of my school, which he requested of me before he left, for that purpose, which please to examine. It was made hastily, and before the school was opened. The school has now been in operation more than a month, and it numbers about thirty scholars; and many applications must necessarily be refused for the want of room & accommodations. We have received into our family 18 little promising girls, whom we shall treat as if they were our own. We may perhaps, receive two or three more this Winter. But we shall be far better able to accommodate our little boarders next Summer, when I hope to be able to finish the balance of our Dwelling. The Boys all board at one of our neighbors, according to arrangements made by Col. Webber and his associates. . . .

"... the cost of erecting the necessary Buildings was about $700 Dollars. I find by looking over my accounts, and by an estimate of the unfinished work, that the cost will not be under a Thousand. . . . For this amount I shall be in debt. To meet the immediate demand I have been obliged to draw, unauthorizedly, for $700. upon our patrons at Boston (The American Board of Commission for Foreign Missions). I should not have presumed to incur so great an expense—but for the hope of securing some assistance from the Cherokee School Fund, placed at the disposal of the President. And I could not have started a School that would have promised much good to the nation on any cheaper plan. . . .

"The Cherokees themselves are disposed to do all they are able to do towards the support of the School. They furnish all the clothing, bed clothes &c. for the children—and some of them would perhaps be able to pay something toward their board.

"And we are constrained to use the utmost economy in our expenses, and labor with our own hands, both Mrs. Palmer and myself, to save expense, but after all, judging from the experience of the past month, that the annual expense of the School will be at least from 6 to 800 dollars. And I must still add to the expense of the Estabt. by putting up some necessary out houses; but this must be done or left according to the assistance received. . . .

"Now, Dear Sir, after this statement, you will be able to judge what assistance I need. And I am happy in the thought that you take such a lively interest in our school. And I do most cheerfully and confidently rest these interests on your friendly management and influence with the President. Endorsement on above letter.

To the President: 22d March 1830.

"Dr. Palmer is a useful and intelligent Gentleman, and worth all the Missionaries in the Nation of the Cherokees. If he can be assisted it will be well for the Indians.

Sam Houston."

Many of the Indian families in the vicinity of Mulberry followed Doctor Palmer to Fairfield, and soon after the school was opened twenty little girls and ten or twelve boys, all neatly clad, were in attendance. A few of them lived in the mission house but their parents supplied provisions for them. Walter Webber provided food for several of the students.
Early in the spring of 1830, an epidemic broke out in the neighborhood of Fairfield, and although Dr. Palmer rode long distances to visit the sick, many Indians died. The doctor did not wish to interfere with his school work, and so made his calls at night. In addition to the above duties, which kept him fully occupied, Doctor Palmer had two preaching places:  

“At one of these meetings in the neighborhood of Fairfield, the Cherokees built a long shed-like bower, and set long tables, upon which were placed the dishes of cooked meat and other articles of food which the people brought with them. These tables were surrounded by seventy or eighty persons of all ages, colors and conditions of life. . . . Among the converts of that deeply interesting revival among the Cherokees of the Arkansas, were two of the men who took little Lydia Carter captive. There were two Osage girls in Dr. Palmer’s family, who moved from Mulberry to Fairfield with him; but in October, 1832, one of them named Theodosia Johnston [Johnson], died, aged eleven years. The whooping cough entered the family and school, and occasioned the death of several children, among them Theodosia, the poor little [Osage] outcast orphan.”

From Fairfield, February 15, 1831, Doctor Palmer wrote: “When I wrote you last summer, I expected to have opened the school again before now, but the difficulty of obtaining meal has prevented. The mill streams in this region have been dry ever since last summer.” Colonel Webber and other Indians met at the Webber home to consult about the school and the Palmers agreed to take fifteen boarders to instruct at fifty cents each per week, paid either in money or provisions. The Cherokees promised to defray the expenses and the school was to start as soon as meal could be secured.

Doctor Palmer wrote from Dwight Mission August 25, 1831, “Our echo was kept up till the 10th of July, when it became expedient to vacate it. About twenty children, including our three Osage girls, boarded at our house, and seven or eight more attended from the neighborhood.”

When Palmer made his report from the station on May 24, 1832, the school was in operation with about thirty students. Two other schools had been opened that spring within fifteen miles of Fairfield and they took away more than half of the former pupils.

An added interest was manifested in the work in May and June, 1832: “In September, 13 were propounded; making more than 30 who gave evidence of conversion in that neighborhood within a year. The temperance society advanced,” but the most astonishing feature

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15 Sarah Tuttle, *Conversations on the Missions to the Arkansas Cherokees* (Boston, 1833), pp. 55, 56, 59, 63, 64, 110. The other Osage child was Jerusalem Palmer who was one year old in 1828.
at the station was the circulation library of one hundred fifty volumes set up by "a female society" and these progressive women expected to add two hundred more books within the year. A society of men was procuring and distributing Cherokee Testaments, hymn books and tracts, so the mission was in an encouraging state.19

The *Religious Intelligencer*, New Haven, March 16, 1833, copied a letter from the *Philadelphian*, written by Doctor Palmer to the Reverend Ezra Stiles Ely, D. D., in which he said that the health of his wife had been very bad. This letter, dated Fairfield, January 1, 1833, reported:

". . . We had concluded to have a meeting Christmas day, at our house, provide a dinner, give a general invitation to our Cherokee neighbors, and . . . present the Temperance Constitution . . . But before the appointment was made public, our chief, Col. W. Weber sent me a notice that he had made an arrangement for a meeting on Christmas at his house, and had sent round invitations to all his friends. . . . his wish the meeting should continue two or three days. . . ."

"This man . . . has a good mind, is dignified, and may be considered as a leading chief in the nation. . . . His wife, a woman highly respected and beloved . . . was received with others, into . . . the church, at our place in October last. . . . Brethren [Cephas] Washburn, and [Henry R.] Wilson from Dwight attended the meeting with us. There were perhaps 150 or 200 persons present, all comfortably and handsomely provided for by the chief. . . . When the anxious were invited, the chief was the first to present himself, and about forty others followed his example. . . . They were nearly all fullblood Cherokees, and numbers of them persons of distinction and importance in the nation. . . . M. Palmer . . ."

"P. S. 10th Jan. Sister Jerusha Johnson arrived the other day [January 3] after a tedious journey."

Mr. Wilson, a young minister, wrote to his former pastor in Connecticut telling of his impressions upon his arrival at Dwight Mission and a further visit at Webbers Falls where he spent his first Christmas in the Indian country in 1828.

Colonel Walter Webber had called a meeting to celebrate Christmas at his home. In the newly settled condition of the country in an almost trackless territory and sparsely settled community, there was no building large enough to hold an assemblage of a hundred or more people, so a brush arbor was erected near Col. Webber’s house and though the December weather was spicy, with the aid of log heap fires for warmth and plenty of food for man and beast provided by Col. Webber assisted by Mr. Wilson, the young minister, newly arrived at Dwight Mission Presbyterian school, preparatory religious services were held for three days, followed by Christmas festivities.
and cheer provided by Col. Webber. Mr. Wilson's letter is as follows:20

"Reaching Ft. Smith, Arkansas, December 20, 1828, on Friday, I remained over night, and in the morning of the 21st I set out for Dwight. Ft. Smith was just a village of half a dozen log cabins bordering the Arkansas river and the terminus of steamboat transportation. From there to Dwight, my field of labor, I journeyed on horseback through a desolate uninhabited country thirty miles inland to Dwight Mission School, arriving after a tedious ride at twilight, and just as we emerged from the dense forest we heard a church bell, a church bell in a savage land! It thrilled my inmost soul and stirred up feelings I shall never forget.

"It was the closing of the year and communion season at the school when the Lord's Supper was celebrated at the Sabbath service. After a hasty supper I hurried to the Church or rather the schoolhouse where services were being held, and met Rev. Washburn who was in charge and saw for the first time converted Indians, as I entered they were singing a Cherokee hymn. . . .

"On Monday morning, after a season of prayer, twenty-five or thirty of us set out on horseback to the home of Col. Webber, who though not yet a christian, had invited the missionaries and christianized Indians to spend Christmas with him. Our time was to be spent in preaching and singing, instead of drinking whiskey and in fighting as had been their custom.

"The distance was some fifty miles through forest and swamps. Unable to make the journey in one day, we were obliged to camp out. This was the first time in my life that I had ever been compelled to sleep on the ground with the broad canopy of heaven for a covering. As it was very cold we built big fires of logs around which we gathered and managed to keep warm.

"When morning came we resumed our journey, and well along in the afternoon reached the home of our kind hearted host. Here we greeted more than a hundred Indians, assembled to hear the things which were commanded of God. We held our meetings out-of-doors during the day and in the different cabins at night where we remained three days and nights, and many had their hearts opened and turned to God, among these Col. Weber. This was the happiest Christmas I ever spent, though far from home and friends and destitute of the luxuries and comforts to which I had been accustomed."

In May, 1833, the mission schools were in good condition. The chiefs of the Cherokees decided to appropriate half of their national school fund, or about $750 annually to carry on the work at Fairfield, under Doctor Palmer. That sum was expected to support thirty pupils who were selected by a Cherokee committee specially appointed to receive and dismiss students.21

20 Oklahoma Historical Society, Indian-Pioneer History, Foreman Collection, Indian Archives Division, Vol. 11. The above account was furnished by Mrs. Edith Hicks Walker, granddaughter of the Rev. and Mrs. S. A. Worcester of Park Hill Mission. She described Webber as "a most trustworthy and kind-hearted character, loved by his tribesmen and all who knew him. He died at his home near Fairfield, November 4, 1834, but his memory is perpetuated by the Falls, and the town which bears his name, also by the good example of christian manhood he set while he was here on earth. . . ."

21 History of American Missions to the Heathen, op. cit., p. 241. According to the report of Elbert Herring, commissioner of Indian affairs, Fairfield had thirty-
The Reverend Jesse Lockwood wrote from "New Dwight, Cherokee Nation, April 6, 1834," to D. Greene in Boston: "... Col. Webber the most influential and pious chief is now lying at the point of death with the consumption. ... (about 25 or 30 miles from Dwight) Col. W. has taken great pains to give his children a good education. He has a wife and 2 children."

Webber died on April 11, 1834, "Much regretted, he was a half brother of David Brown, and a great friend of schools and missionaries. When we came we brought him letters from ... David Brown." 22

In 1834 Fairfield, supported principally by the Cherokees, was successfully managed by Doctor and Mrs. Palmer and the teacher, Miss Jerusha Johnson. "The death of the distinguished chief, Col. Webber is a heavy loss both to the mission and the Cherokees." 23

The Missionary Herald of December, 1835, reported the death of Mrs. Clarissa Palmer at Granville, Ohio, on September 4, saying that she had been ill for two or three years.

From Ipswich, March 7, 1839, Mrs. C. C. Lockwood, in a letter to some of her friends, wrote that on the fifteenth of April, 1835, arrangements had been made for her to return east to her friends, and that "Mrs. Palmer of Fairfield station, 15 miles from Dwight, who was rapidly declining of consumption, asked and received permission of the American Board to accompany us to Ohio, once more to see her friends, & die. ..." The baggage belonging to the party was sent by ox wagon to Fort Smith where the travelers expected to board a steamboat. On their arrival they learned that there was no boat within two hundred miles as the water was so low that large boats could not ply upon the Arkansas. It was finally decided to proceed, and two log canoes were bought and fastened together; low chairs were placed in one of the canoes for Mrs. Lockwood and Mrs. Palmer, and the men of the party rowed by turns, making twelve miles the first day. The nights were passed in log cabins shared with the family owning them. After three days the men became too exhausted to row and two athletic strangers were employed to assist in the arduous work.

Five pupils in 1833, and the American Board of Foreign Missions had expended $14,128 at Dwight, Fairfield and Forks of the Illinois stations. The buildings and improvements at Fairfield, valued at $1,628, had been purchased by the Cherokees and were to be used as a school, under their own direction, and at their own expense.

22 David and Catherine Brown were among the first students at Brainerd Mission converted to the Christian religion by the missionaries. David visited Webber in the spring of 1816 and worked in his store. He returned to the old nation in 1819.

23 Religious Intelligencer, New Haven, November 8, 1834, p. 370. The Missionary Herald, Vol. XXXI (January, 1835) in writing of the death of Walter Webber, describe him as a "patriotic and worthy man; intelligent and enterprising ... engaged in agriculture and trade."
After five weary days the party boarded the commodious Nemho, but the hardships of the journey had reduced Mrs. Palmer so much that she was compelled to remain in her berth most of the time until her arrival in Cincinnati. "... Mrs. Palmer lived until August & then her spirit left its tabernacle of clay & I doubt not ascended to inhabit the mansions prepared for it in Heaven."  

Another death reported was that of the Reverend Samuel Aldrich at Fairfield, on November 22, 1835, at the age of twenty-seven. He had been cared for by Dr. Palmer since he was taken extremely ill on September 23 and repaired to the Mission. Aldrich, educated at Hamilton Literary and Theological Institute, arrived among the Cherokees December 24, 1834.  

Accounts of Fairfield state that toward the close of the year 1835, "the presence of the Holy Spirit was again made manifest at Fairfield, at Dwight, and in the vicinity," and that another revival took place during the winter of 1836, when eighteen members were added to the church at Fairfield.  

The New York Observer, September 22, 1838, published a resume of the twenty-ninth report of the American Board, in which it was stated that Mr. and Mrs. Palmer (his second wife) were still in charge at Fairfield, and that about seventy students were enrolled at Dwight and Fairfield.  

On December 28, 1939, Elizur Butler, one of the most famous missionaries among the Cherokee Indians, sent a report concerning Fairfield Mission to Hon. William Herring, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in answer to a circular sent him in July. He reported that most of the pupils were from the neighborhood of the school, but that five orphans lived with the mission family. The station was supported entirely by the American Board, and nothing was contributed by the government or the Indians. He gave the address as Flint Postoffice, Cherokee Nation.  

There was only one teacher for the twenty-two male "scholars" and fourteen girls and the average attendance was about twenty. Materials were very high at the time the buildings were constructed; the school building had gone to decay. In one report, Butler wrote:  

24 Typed copy of letter in collection of Grant Foreman.  
26 Ibid., pp. 265, 277. There were sixty students in the school in 1835. Organization of the churches were originally Presbyterian, but Dwight and Fairfield later became Congregational. When the latter place was visited by the Rev. Amory Chamberlin, he was detained there by high water in Sallisaw Creek (Les R. Baker, "The Rev. Amory Nelson Chamberlin," Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. XII, No. 1 [March, 1934], pp. 100, 102).  
27 Miss Jerusha Johnson, who was born at Colchester, Connecticut, October 14, 1804, was probably a sister of the first Mrs. Palmer. She came to Fairfield Mission January 3, 1833, and was married to Marcus Palmer on February 7, 1836, just five months after the death of his first wife.
"Since I came here in 1840, the dwelling house has been repaired, with additions. And a meeting-house and school-room, both under one roof have been built. The whole building is fifty by thirty, with a movable partition. The labor of hewing, collecting materials, making shingles, and putting them on for this building was mostly done by the neighbors—but the plank, nail, glass, and carpenter work was at the expense of the American Board."

Butler considered the buildings suitable for the present, although a good barn was needed. He wrote that for the last thirty years or more there had been a good understanding between his Society and the Cherokee Council, and that they had been accorded full permission to reside in the nation, and labor for the promotion of civilization and Christianity among the people.

A small stock of cattle and horses was kept for the use of the station, and thirty acres were under cultivation. Eighty members belonged to the Presbyterian church and Doctor Butler wrote: "So far as my health will permit, my time is spent in superintending the business of the station, preaching and practicing medicine. Some seasons the practice of medicine occupies much of my time; and this is a great addition to the current expenses of the station."

Fairfield was fortunate in having two physicians in charge of the mission. Dr. Butler, a native of Norfolk, Connecticut, was born June 11, 1794, and he was twenty-seven when he joined the missionaries at Brainerd Mission. He remained there three years until he was transferred to Creek Path, subsequently known as Guntersville, Tennessee. In 1826 he removed to Haweis Mission near Rome, Georgia, and in 1831, because he was living in that state without swearing allegiance to the government, he was arrested and marched in chains to prison in company with Samuel Austin Worcester, a missionary who devoted his whole life to the service of the Cherokees. These good men were confined to prison for four years, at hard labor, at Milledgeville, where they were compelled to wear prison garb. On being freed, January 14, 1833, Butler returned to his family at Haweis, but was obliged to go to Brainerd to escape more persecution. He was ordained a minister at Kingston on April 14, 1838, and in that capacity he accompanied the Cherokees when they were driven out of their nation in 1839. He first stopped at Park Hill until 1840, when he assumed charge of Fairfield Mission and that was his station for the next ten years.

Doctor Butler first married Miss Esther Post of South Concord, Connecticut, in 1799. She died at Haweis, November 21, 1829. The following August 14, 1830, he married Lucy Ames, formerly of Groton, Massachusetts, at Brainerd Mission, and she survived him until 1888, at West Aaron, Connecticut.28

Doctor Butler reported to Governor Pierce M. Butler, Cherokee Agent from Fairfield, on June 19, 1843, that the staff was then composed of himself and wife and Miss Esther Smith, who was in charge of the school. For the past two years forty children had attended the school, and at that time there were eleven girls and fourteen boys in daily attendance. In his family there were four children of his own; one Cherokee young woman who had been educated at Dwight Mission; an orphan Cherokee girl who could read and write, but who was almost blind at times; in addition there were three Indian girls who attended the school. The farm of thirty acres had not been enlarged and labor on it was performed by Cherokees.

In 1842, a building for public worship was erected in spite of some opposition of white people in the neighborhood. The church was fifty by thirty feet, and the labor on the building was furnished gratuitously, besides thirty days' team work. In 1844 Butler reported no change in personnel. "A charitable society has been formed here, a committee select[ed], and caused to be printed and gratuitously distributed, sermons in English and Cherokee."

The church at Fairfield, located south of the site of the present Stilwell, Oklahoma, had seventy-two members in 1845. Being so near the Arkansas line large quantities of liquor were sold to the Indians, and Walter S. Adair, president of the national temperance society, called meetings of that body at Fairfield schoolhouse and on one occasion, after a prayer in Cherokee, an address was made by Adair. A Cherokee hymn was sung before a speech by one of the missionaries from Dwight, and that was followed by a talk by Major George Lowrey. At that meeting seventy-four persons signed the temperance pledge.

On July 12, 1850, the fifth anniversary of the organization of the Flint District Auxiliary Temperance Society was fittingly observed at Fairfield when an interesting program was rendered. The Cherokee mission held its annual meeting at Fairfield on September 10, and services were continued through the twelfth, on which day the time was devoted to "prayer for the success of the American Board, and for the universal diffusion of the Gospel; the communication of missionary intelligence; and the celebration of the Lord's Supper, in concert with the Board itself, and its Missions generally in various parts of the world, who hold similar meetings at the same time."

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29 One of the most faithful and devoted missionaries in the Indian country was Miss Esther Smith who taught at Fairfield from 1841 until September 6, 1853. She died at Fort Gibson in January, 1865, and was buried in a local cemetery until her body was interred in the National Cemetery among the unknown dead.
30 Grant Foreman, The Five Civilized Tribes (Norman, 1934), pp. 365, 382.
31 Cherokee Advocate, July 30, 1850, p. 2, col. 2.
32 Ibid., August 27, 1850. This notice was signed by S. A. Worcester, Clerk of the Mission.
When Doctor Butler was appointed as superintendent of the Cherokee Female Seminary, Fairfield was left destitute according to the Reverend S. A. Worcester, who wrote from Park Hill, August 30, 1853, that the school at Fairfield Station had been much smaller than the surrounding population would lead one to expect. There were seventy-four members of the church and that number had probably diminished since.33

On December 27, 1852, Edwin Teele, Mrs. Sarah E. Teele and Miss Esther Smith arrived to take charge at Fairfield, with one native assistant. The Reverend Mr. Teele was a native of Medford, Massachusetts, and his wife was from Thetford, Vermont. Mr. Teele, a graduate of Harvard and Andover Seminary, had been convinced that the presence of a missionary was greatly needed.

"... At first he was much discouraged. ... From the time of Dr. Butler's removal to the Cherokee female seminary, there had been no resident missionary among the people; it is not strange that to our young brother the field seemed to be 'grown over with thorns and briers.' Now, however, he says that 'a few things brighten the prospect.'"

The number of communicants was sixty-nine, the Sunday school had increased to forty children. Two prayer meetings were held, one weekly and the other fortnightly, the latter being held exclusively for women whose attendance was encouraging.34

Mr. Teele wrote, on May 3, 1853: "Sabbath before last we had a very pleasant 'big meeting,' as the Indians call our two days' communion seasons. We have strong hopes that the services have not been in vain."

The Missionary Herald noted, in November, 1853, that the Reverend Horace A. Wentz of Oswego, New York, had left Cincinnati for the Cherokee Mission. He was a graduate of Lane Seminary and he planned to remain at Dwight Mission for the present. He was accompanied by Miss M. Elizabeth Denny and Miss Lucina H. Lord of Thetford, Vermont; Miss Esther Smith, late of the Cherokee Mission, was also a member of the party. Miss Denny was to take charge of the school at Fairfield and Miss Lord was to assist Mrs. Teele.

In 1855 Fairfield was still in charge of the Reverend Horace A. Wentz, assisted by Mr. James Orr and Mrs. Orr, while Miss M. E. Denny was the teacher. The church had seventy-two members and the school continued "to prosper in a good degree."35

33 Althea Bass, Cherokee Messenger (Norman, 1936), p. 305.
34 The Missionary Herald, January, 1853, pp. 11, 29; ibid., October, 1853, p. 310.
The faithful Miss Esther Smith, "a worthy lady, who had long been in the employ of the American Board, has but recently dissolved her relation with that establishment, and taken a public school of the nation."\footnote{W. A. Duncan, superintendent of Public Schools, Cherokee Nation, to George Butler, Cherokee Agent at Tahlequah in \textit{Missionary Herald}, 1857, p. 143.}

The Reverend S. A. Worcester wrote to Cherokee Agent Butler in 1858, that the Fairfield school had been closed for want of a teacher, but that year the Rev. C. C. Torrey, his wife and Miss Sarah Dean moved to the station, and Miss Dean became the teacher.\footnote{\textit{Missionary Herald}, 1858; \textit{Report} commissioner of Indian affairs, 1859, p. 502. According to that report Fairfield was twenty-five miles southeast of Tahlequah \textit{(ibid.),} p. 541.}

Soon after his graduation from the Theological Seminary at Andover, Massachusetts, the Reverend Charles Cutler Torrey was married on September 5, 1855, and the young missionaries left in the autumn for the Indian Territory to take up their work and residence at Fairfield Station. Doctor Torrey kept a journal of their life among the Indians in which he wrote:

"We rested at Fairfield until my horses' heels were healed. A[dle] [Mrs. Torrey] was much better after a little rest and took charge of the school as there was no teacher. . . . We remained at Fairfield during the winter, I doing missionary work and A______ teaching school, awaiting further orders. We had a very uncomfortable winter, boarding with Mr. and Mrs. Orr, lay missionaries, who gave us very poor food at uncertain hours, and very poor lodgings in the upper half story of the log house."

Torrey made an extensive trip through the Indian country, and during his absence Mrs. Torrey remained at Dwight with the Rev. and Mrs. Worcester Willey. They finally settled at Fairfield for their permanent station:

"The condition was very discouraging. My predecessor had alienated the people in various ways and they were unwilling to come to church or to the Mission premises. . . .

"We had a comfortable log house and out-buildings with about twelve acres of ground and all the wood we chose to cut within easy reach. The land was sown to corn and oats for our horses and cows. I had three horses, a herd of cows and young cattle . . . . I also had many hogs . . . . killed six giving us twelve hams and shoulders and many pounds of bacon. . . . I used to sell or exchange some of the bacon for venison which was very common. I milked nine cows, but had to keep the calves sucking all summer to entice the cows home from the range. . . . A______ with my help made butter and cheese enough for our own use. . . . I rigged up a cheese press so that A______ could make cheese.

"Much of the time, both Sundays and other days, we had to keep open house. . . . We had a melodion and the people were fond of singing their Cherokee hymns, while A______ played for them. We had two little Cherokee girls, Polly and Lizzie Glass, who lived with us until we went to Park Hill."
On August 20, 1856, a baby girl was born to Mrs. Torrey. Both mother and daughter were seriously ill, and their lives were saved by the skill of Doctor D. D. Hitchcock of Park Hill.

Mrs. Torrey conducted a prayer meeting for the women, and one Cherokee walked three miles to attend. Once a month Doctor Torrey went to Pea Vine, twenty miles distant. It was there that Miss Esther Smith of Royalton, Vermont, was teaching, and Torrey wrote in his diary.

"She was a devoted Christian woman who had the confidence of the Cherokees to an unusual degree.

"The spiritual results of my work at Fairfield seem very meager. There were few conversions. All improvements on the mission were swept away by the war. I had no difficulty in making my way about, as the Indians were apt in the sign language. . . . I found it so in the Choctaw country; when looking for a Choctaw house the people I enquired of could not speak English, so I simply gave the name of the family, indicating that I wanted to reach them. In reply my informant placed his fingers in the shape of a roof and held up one hand with the five fingers erect, indicating that there were five houses more to pass, which I found to be true.

"Fairfield was the birthplace of my two older children. . . . the house was one of the best in that region, built in the usual style—a double log cabin, and a space between, all under one roof. . . . The space between . . . afterward closed in and finished for a room. There was an ell running out to what was, when we lived there, the road; . . . a little room about eight feet square was built out from the ell, and was the private room of the teacher. The ell was kitchen, pantry, etc. There was a piazza in front and back of the house, and a half-story was built over the cabin, giving two unfinished chambers in one of which we spent our first uncomfortable winter . . . . It was a fine place for a successful mission . . . .

The Cherokees have erected statues to Sequoyah and Will Rogers in the Capitol of the United States; people of Oklahoma have preserved the birthplace of Sequoyah by covering the log cabin with a handsome stone house; but no memorial of any description has yet been raised to the splendid missionaries who came from the universities and colleges of New England to instruct these Indians until they were driven out by the Civil War. Surely some recognition is due those brave people who sacrificed so much to improve their red brethren.

Among the settlers at Fairchild Mission was a part Cherokee named Mose Alberty. He arrived with the Old Settler Cherokees when the station was started. Two years later his wife, on her way to join her husband, died about where Fort Smith is located. Her

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The Committee on Marking Historic Sites, of which Gen. Wm. S. Key is Chairman, selected Fairfield Mission as one of the first fifty historic sites in Oklahoma to be marked in the Committee's program in 1949. A handsome plaque will be erected near Stilwell, Adair County, indicating the site of Fairfield Mission about five miles southwest of the City, and giving a brief historic sketch of the Mission and names of some of the missionaries who served there.—Ed.
remains were brought to the mission and buried in the missionary cemetery and a monument was erected to her memory bearing the inscription:

"Erected by Moses Alberthy in memory of his wife Sarah Alberthy, who departed this life June 18, 1830. Age 37 years."

The first person interred in the cemetery was "Polly, wife of R. McLemore. Born Feb. 10, 1820. Died March 21, 1883. She professed religion in 1840." F. Daly was the man who hewed these two stones.39

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