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Review of *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokees, Volume I, 1805–1813* and *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokees, Volume II, 1814–1821*. Edited and with an introduction by Rowena McClinton; preface by Chad Smith.

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*The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokees, Volume I, 1805–1813* and *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokees, Volume II, 1814–1821*. Edited and with an introduction by Rowena McClinton; preface by Chad Smith. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007. ISBN Hardcover 978-0-8032-3266-2, \$99.95.

Angela Pulley Hudson

Noted historian William G. McLoughlin once observed that in addition to mirroring U.S. political structures, the nineteenth-century Cherokee Nation shared two other trends with the young Republic: slavery and Christianity.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, even as Cherokee people fought to retain their eastern lands in the first decades of the nineteenth century, they often adopted the ideologies of the land-hungry Americans they tried to resist. Few sources document this complex and contradictory process more vividly than *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokees*. Rarely do Cherokee, Christian, and slave histories appear in such intimate relation to one another. In the secondary works on this era, these topics are routinely treated separately. But the Springplace diaries make clear that such an approach drastically underestimates the intricate interplay of Indian, outsider, and slave experiences in the early national U.S. South.

In providing a translated and annotated edition of the diaries of Anna Rosina Gambold and John Gambold, Moravian missionaries stationed within the Cherokee Nation from 1805 until 1821, editor Rowena McClinton has done an invaluable service to students of this era. The first volume covers the years 1805–1813, while the second volume covers 1814–1821. As McLoughlin and other Cherokee history scholars have noted, this period represents a time of intense and dramatic transformations within the Cherokee Nation.<sup>2</sup> But it was also the era of the Second Great Awakening, a diverse and powerful religious revival movement that swept the United States for nearly fifty years beginning around 1790. And it was during this period that slavery emerged as the cornerstone of Southern (and by extension, American) economic growth. The Gambolds and their Moravian mission brethren entered Cherokee country in

<sup>1</sup> William G. McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renaissance in the New Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), xviii.

<sup>2</sup> Among others, see: McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789–1839* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984); McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renaissance*; Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700–1835* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); Perdue, *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society, 1540–1866* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1979); Thurman Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy: The Story of the Ridge Family and the Decimation of a People* (New York: Macmillan, 1970).

the midst of these various transformations with a clearly defined goal: bring the “heathen” children out of darkness and into the light of God’s love.

This handsome two-volume set, a recent addition to the University of Nebraska’s *Indians of the Southeast Series* edited by Theda Perdue and Michael Green, chronicles the efforts of Wachovian Moravians to “evangelize the Cherokees” over the course of nearly two decades. It includes the complete journals of Anna Rosina and John Gambold with copious annotations and explanatory notes, as well as additional textual features detailed below. Because of the esoteric nature of the diaries, they have heretofore been largely inaccessible to researchers, particularly those less familiar with the conventions of the Moravian Church, also known as the Unity of the Brethren. Bringing these important documents into wider circulation is significant on a number of fronts, and they are sure to become required reading for scholars in many fields, including but not limited to American Indian history, Southern history, religious studies, African American history, and women’s and gender studies.

With the permission of the Cherokee council and the blessing of U.S. Secretary of War James McHenry, the Springplace Mission was first settled in 1801 in what is now northwest Georgia. It was located in the heart of the Cherokee Nation, near a fork in the Cherokee Federal Road (Old Georgia Road), where one branch proceeded to the northeast into the upper reaches of the Cherokee homelands and the other proceeded to the northwest towards Nashville. To the west and relatively close by was the Conasauga River, and to the east at a somewhat greater distance was the Coosawattee River. In many ways, the mission owed its existence to James Vann, a wealthy Cherokee planter, Upper Town leader, and notorious bully, who owned a nearby plantation. Vann sold the Moravians thirty-five acres of land on which they settled and founded the mission, although until his death in 1809 they lived in constant dread of his explosive temper and their potential eviction.<sup>3</sup>

Conceptualizing the location of the mission is crucial to making sense of the daily exchanges that took place there between Moravians, Indians, and slaves. Much to the reader’s benefit, this edition contains five maps following the statement of editorial policy in Volume I: a map of Springplace Mission in 1819, a depiction of early nineteenth-century ferries and ferry crossings in the Cherokee Nation, a map of the Cherokee Nation in 1830, a map of the Federal Road route through the Cherokee Nation, and a diagram of James Vann’s Diamond Hill Plantation, reputed to have been the largest in the nation. These

<sup>3</sup> In addition to providing the land on which Springplace Mission was founded, Vann frequently lodged and fed students at his home when the school was unable to take additional pupils due to space restrictions. This practice continued and even expanded after his death when his widow cared for upwards of eight children at one time.

maps help visually situate the mission at the confluence of several important travel routes, in the shadow of Vann's massive plantation, squarely within the political province of the Upper Towns, and near several large and important Cherokee town sites. They provide an invaluable frame for interpreting the Moravians' position within the social and political milieu of the Cherokee Nation, vis-à-vis their geographic location.

The Gambolds were not the first Moravians to serve the mission, but their tenure was the longest, and it is their perspective, particularly that of Anna Rosina, that is most prominently represented in the journals. As McClinton explains, the original Springplace diaries were primarily authored by Anna Rosina, although her husband John occasionally and inexplicably wrote entries in her place. The Gambolds were newlyweds when they arrived in the Cherokee Nation in October 1805, and they vigorously invested themselves in making the mission succeed. Like other missionaries in the southern Indian nations, the Gambolds and their fellow proselytizers at Springplace brought practical as well as spiritual knowledge to the mission. John was a carpenter, cooper, and tailor, and Anna Rosina was a teacher, horticulturist, and cook. Nevertheless, their primary aim was to bring "the whole Cherokee Nation that still lay in ignorance" to the true knowledge of the Savior, even if doing so meant also mending the Indians' clothes or feeding an endless parade of hungry travelers.<sup>4</sup>

As McClinton asserts in her meticulously researched Introduction, the Brethren "practiced and believed in peace, but the increasingly turbulent world around them challenged their commitment to nonviolence."<sup>5</sup> For some time, Moravian missionaries had been attempting to peacefully spread the gospel among northern Indians with uneven success, owing in part to conflicts with American settlers intent on occupying Native homelands. Further complicating their efforts, McClinton argues, "The Moravians and other missionaries regarded Christianity as inseparable from civilization."<sup>6</sup> This made the Brethren the target of suspicion among many Cherokees, especially as pressures from white outsiders for Cherokee removal increased. And "civilization" was not an innocuous concept.

According to the Civilization Plan deployed as part of Thomas Jefferson's Indian policy, southern Indians were to exchange their hunting habits for the skills of farming and domestic manufacture. In an 1805 talk to neighboring Creek Indians, Jefferson said, "A little land cultivated in corn & cotton will go

<sup>4</sup> McClinton, ed., *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokees*, Vol. II, 1814–1821 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 98.

<sup>5</sup> McClinton, "Introduction," in *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokees*, Vol. I, 1805–1813 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 16.

<sup>6</sup> McClinton, "Introduction," Vol. I, 37.

further in providing sustenance and clothing for your people, than the most extensive range of Country can furnish by hunting.”<sup>7</sup> As Jefferson openly admitted, this plan ultimately sought to confine Native people to smaller and smaller territories, opening up large tracts that could be ceded or sold to the federal government.

Nevertheless, the conversion of several leading Cherokees, such as influential headman Charles Hicks, eventually “lent the mission effort credibility among the Cherokees.”<sup>8</sup> Several of the most prominent Christian Cherokees, men like John Ridge and Elias Boudinot (both of whom were educated at Springplace as children), would later sign the controversial New Echota Treaty in 1835 and agree to Cherokee removal. But it was not a foregone conclusion that conversion would lead to pro-removal sensibilities, as is sometimes implied.

Take as an example the missionaries’ “first fruit,” Margaret Ann (Peggy) Scott Vann Crutchfield, James Vann’s widow. She was the first Cherokee baptized by the Moravians and was among the “beloved women” who presented their passionate remonstrance against removal at the Cherokee council meeting in 1818. As Anna Rosina observed, “She [Peggy] cannot speak of the appearance of the complete ruin of her distressed countrymen without tears, should it come to the point that they are driven from their fatherland; she prays continually to the Savior.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, for Cherokees like Crutchfield and Hicks and apparently for the missionaries as well, conversion to Christianity did not necessarily mean acquiescence to removal. In fact, as this quote conveys, preserving Cherokee homelands was the subject of intense and fervent prayer.

The Springplace diaries thus restore a valuable sense of historical contingency and social complexity to a period and a people often reduced in scholarly accounts to simplistic categories. The plurality of political positions within the Cherokee Nation during the decades covered in the Springplace diaries is crucial to understanding the events leading up to the Indian removal crisis of the 1830s. Likewise, the multifarious role of Christian missionaries within the Cherokee Nation, as depicted in the diaries, informs our understanding of the controversies that eventually emerged in the foundational Supreme Court cases *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831) and *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832).

For their part, the Cherokees seem to have been more interested in having the Brethren teach their children English than in having the Brethren teach them to accept Christ. This was largely a pragmatic concern of Cherokee par-

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Jefferson, “President’s Talk to the Creeks,” 2 November 1805, Record Group 75 “Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1793–1989,” Section 75.2, “Records of the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1794–1824,” National Archives and Records Administration.

<sup>8</sup> McClinton, “Introduction,” Vol. I, 37.

<sup>9</sup> McClinton, Vol. II, 229.

ents. Realizing that the next generation of Cherokees needed proficiency in English to avoid being cheated in trading or worse, divested of their lands and their sovereignty, Cherokee mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts, and uncles frequently appeared at Springplace imploring the Brethren to take their children as pupils. In her explanatory notes, McClinton has taken great pains to identify not only Cherokee students and their family members, but also a wide variety of Indian and non-Indian visitors, many of whom expressed diverse opinions on the efficacy of the missionary establishment. In addition, the editor has provided two extensive appendices that identify and provide biographical information for both the children who were educated at Springplace and the many Cherokee and non-Cherokee individuals who visited the mission. Taken together, these materials are indispensable for placing the Springplace Mission in its appropriate historical, social, and cultural contexts. They also provide an important counter-balance to the voice of the Moravians, whose perspective necessarily dominates the diaries proper.

The Brethren also operated within another important context: slavery. McClinton is absolutely on target when she says of the work: “While this undertaking centers on the interactions of Cherokees and Anglo-Americans, what makes this edition so unique is that it also reveals a story about early nineteenth-century enslavement in northwest Georgia.”<sup>10</sup> Most of the enslaved people referred to in the diaries belonged to Cherokee owners, either members of the Vann family or various other slaveholders within the Nation. But the Moravians were not averse to owning and “borrowing” slaves themselves, and for many years they kept a female slave to work in their kitchen and assist with the students’ needs.<sup>11</sup> While many striking stories inhabit these two volumes, this reviewer was most powerfully struck by the interwoven experiences of the slaves with whom the Moravians interacted. One African woman, named Patience, had come to the Vann plantation from Charleston barefooted and had lost both feet to frostbite. As the diarist explained, she was forced to “scoot on her knees,” her little children walking along beside her.<sup>12</sup> Many such agonizing images appear in the journals, as the Gambolds recorded the many trials of the slaves in their neighborhood. But they also recorded the attendance of enslaved individuals and families at their various religious services and assiduously catalogued their successes and failures in converting them to their faith.

McClinton largely allows these entries to speak for themselves, although she provides key explanatory notes regarding the fate of certain enslaved individ-

<sup>10</sup> McClinton, “Acknowledgments,” Vol. I, xiii.

<sup>11</sup> For more on these concerns, see: Jon F. Sensbach, *A Separate Canaan: The Making of an Afro-Moravian World in North Carolina, 1763–1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

<sup>12</sup> McClinton, Vol. I, 393.

uals based on related primary sources. Thus, while the Springplace diaries are an invaluable source of ethnographic information about the Cherokees, these volumes also allow the reader to glimpse an interiority of slavery that is often obscured. So much important work remains to be done on the textures of slavery among the southeastern Indians, its relation to slavery as an economic system, and the complex worlds the slaves made across the racial and geographic boundaries that divided the South in this era.<sup>13</sup> The Springplace diaries will undoubtedly provide useful new insights to scholars pursuing this emergent area of inquiry.<sup>14</sup>

Notwithstanding the emotional fatigue associated with studying issues of slavery and colonization, McClinton's work in preparing this edition must still have been utterly exhausting. The diaries were originally written in German script and housed in the Salem Moravian Archives in present-day Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Unlike standard written German, German script is an "archaic cursive convention" that requires hours of additional study to master. McClinton translated, transcribed, and annotated nearly 1,400 pages of handwritten material to produce this scholarly edition. She carefully explains her methods of translation in a statement on her editorial policy preceding the body of the text. Importantly, McClinton endeavored to "adhere to nineteenth-century English conventions in the translations" instead of modernizing them. In addition, she scrupulously annotates linguistic aberrations in the diaries, such as places where the diarist wrote English words that have been exactly reproduced, or moments when the translation of a particular phrase might result in multiple or ambiguous meanings. McClinton also carefully explains her decision to maintain certain ethnographically obsolete or racially sensitive terms in her translations. For example, she translates the German word "Neger" as Negro despite its modern social freight not only because it is the most faithful translation of the word, but also because it reflects the English vernacular of the day. This important historical context is valuably preserved by McClinton's method of translation. Similarly, she uses italics to denote untranslated terms or phrases that appear in the diaries, often corresponding to uniquely Moravian rituals or customs. Again, this choice preserves a useful historical context since, as McClinton notes, the diaries "reflect a distinct Moravian point of view."<sup>15</sup> The

<sup>13</sup> I have borrowed the phrasing from the subtitle of Eugene Genovese's foundational work, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974).

<sup>14</sup> For examples of significant studies of Afro-Native interactions in this region, see: Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., *Africans and Creeks: From the Colonial Period to the Civil War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979); Tiya Miles, *Ties that Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Claudio Saunt, *Black, White, and Indian: Race and the Unmaking of an American Family* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>15</sup> McClinton, "Introduction," Vol. I, 1.

editor also uses italics for the date of each entry. This is quite helpful to the reader since the date is often not used as a heading by the diarist but is instead mentioned in the body of the entry. Thus, the reader can quickly determine the dates covered by simply scanning the page.

This edition likewise contains several added features that enhance its value immensely. Following the conclusion of the diaries proper, the editor has penned a brief but informative epilogue that places the work of the Moravians in its wider context and extends it beyond the final entries in 1821. This section is followed by the three appendices, two of which have been discussed briefly above: Appendix 1: A Catalog of Scholars at Springplace Mission School, 1805–1821, Appendix 2: Biographical List (divided into two sections, “Cherokee Visitors to Springplace” and “Non-Cherokee Visitors”), and Appendix 3: “Moravian Church Calendar.” This last section is particularly useful for those readers unfamiliar with the complicated rituals and feast schedules associated with the Moravian church and around which the Gambolds and their peers structured their yearly calendar. The editor has also compiled an instructive glossary of German-Moravian terms and Moravian customs that appears between the notes section of Volume II and the Bibliographical Essay. This glossary, in combination with the third appendix and the extensive church history found in the editor’s introduction, provide the reader with a thorough education in the peculiarities of the Moravian church, with an emphasis on contextualizing the thoughts and actions described in the diaries themselves.

The Bibliographical Essay is wonderfully rich, focusing on both published and unpublished primary materials as well as secondary materials pertinent to understanding the Springplace Mission. The editor has made extensive use of other Moravian primary source materials, including collections of letters, to explain and expand on the diarist’s entries. Unfortunately, with the exception of the first page, the subsequent pages of the Bibliographical Essay are erroneously labeled “Biographical Essay,” which confuses it somewhat with Appendix 2, the Biographical List.

Following the Bibliographical Essay are the indices. Two indices appear at the end of Volume II and reference the complete edition. Volume numbers are listed in bold with corresponding page numbers in plain text. The first index is a Names Index, as referred to above, and appears to be extraordinarily comprehensive, filling in most of the gaps left by the Biographical List. The Subject Index follows and is truly remarkable in its breadth, covering topics from obscure religious services to herbal medicine references to local place names. By and large the subject index does not take interpretive license in its categories and renders a faithful listing of the topics addressed in the diaries as denominated by the original author(s).



While an edited collection of this length and complexity is bound to contain some errors, this reviewer was pleasantly surprised at the quality of these volumes. A few concerns are worth noting, however. Although the editor clearly invested a tremendous amount of time and effort to identify individuals named in the diaries, including many Cherokee people who had not previously been mentioned in *any* published sources, this reviewer was disappointed that many of the enslaved African and African American individuals who appeared in the diaries were not included in the biographical list. Given the potential importance of this edition to scholars of slavery, particularly those working on questions of enslavement within the Indian nations, including these named individuals would have enhanced the usability of the diaries. However, given the vast scope of the volumes, the editor may have felt that including these individuals in the index was sufficient, particularly since little may have been known about them aside from their occasional appearance at the mission.

In addition, although the vast majority of Cherokee and non-Cherokee individuals in the notes and in the appendices are correctly identified, this reviewer did notice a few inconsistencies and one fairly serious error. The inconsistencies appear to be the result of typographical errors, which are also apparent in the absence of quotation marks at various places. For example, in one instance Cherokee headman Roman Nose is referred to as Roman Rose. In general, these missteps are rare and do not seriously distract from the readability of the text.

A far more egregious error in the identification of named individuals occurs in the explanatory notes. Early in 1814, a white man referred to only as “Hawkins” appeared at the mission. He was reportedly drunk, unruly, and generally unwelcome. The diarist stated that he had been living in the Creek Nation where he had a Creek wife with whom he had recently fled to Hightower [Etowah], a Cherokee town. The editor misidentifies this individual as Benjamin Hawkins, the United States Indian agent assigned to the southern department who lived and worked among the Creeks from 1796 until his death in 1816. Among other pieces of evidence that make this identification erroneous, Benjamin Hawkins was married to an American woman named Lavina Downs and on the date which Hawkins purportedly appeared drunk at Springplace, he was undoubtedly engaged in the last throes of the Creek War, which would come to a bloody end that same year.<sup>16</sup> Although it may seem like a minor error hidden in the notes, Hawkins was in fact one of the most important figures in southeastern Indian history and misidentifying him as such could be terribly

<sup>16</sup> For more on Hawkins, see generally: Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country: the Creek Indians and their World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Florette Henri, *The Southern Indians and Benjamin Hawkins, 1796–1816* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986).

misleading to readers. Hopefully, those already familiar with Hawkins's life and career will catch this mistake quickly and move on.

Despite these criticisms, McClinton's translated and annotated edition of the Moravian Springplace Mission diaries must be recognized as a momentous work for scholars in a wide variety of fields. As the editor notes, "Two hundred years ago, three disparate cultures—Moravian, Cherokee, and African—began this remarkable interaction on the southern landscape."<sup>17</sup> Indeed, this reviewer is not aware of any single source from this era that so dramatically captures the complicated and intertwined lives of the region's multicultural inhabitants. McClinton's exhaustive work in translating, arranging, annotating, and contextualizing this document will undoubtedly render this remarkable interaction legible and meaningful for many future scholars.

<sup>17</sup> McClinton, Vol. I, xiv.