A TRIP TO QUAPAW IN 1903.

By Sister M. Laurence, Order of Carmelites

TRANSCRIBED FROM THE ORIGINAL JOURNAL AND ANNOTATED

By Velma Nieberding

Foreword

Writers delving into the factual past seldom listen to the individual heart-beats of a people. They must eye effort and analyze accomplishment, circumscribed within a rigidity of date and data. The result is a smooth, unsparkling surface on the facet of truth, called history.

But the poetry and legend of the Indian has a way of insinuating itself into the most prosaic reports. This happened in the account of "A Trip to Quapaw" by a Carmelite Nun, Sister M. Laurence. After three years in the Indian Territory the sheltered aura of the cloister still surrounded Sister Laurence when, with the sweet dignity that bespeaks convent training, she detailed the events of a visit to the Indians.

In June 1903, a group of Carmelite Nuns were invited to spend a few days visiting the mission and school of "St. Mary's" located in the Quapaw nation. The Sisters were from the Motherhouse in New Orleans, Louisiana. They had conducted schools from 1899 to 1903 in the Territory. In Tulsa they taught at St. Theresa Institute (later Holy Family) and in Vinita, at the Sacred Heart Academy.

Sister M. Laurence set down with exquisite attention to detail and with naive wonderment, the incidents of this trip. Occasionally the account, particularly the early history of the mission, is sprinkled with inaccuracies. Nevertheless the Journal is historically important. The Indian legends, the account of tribal ceremonies and above all the events occurring during the visit of two great Catholic missionaries to the Quapaws, are worthy of note.

No historian, searching the records for Catholic contribution to the civilization and education of Indians and to the formation of Oklahoma, will ever fail to thrill to the accomplishments of Bishop Theophile Meerschaert and his first-ordained priest, the Reverend William Henry Ketcham. The writer, never intending that her Journal would be read by other than a few Religious, has managed to bring into sharp focus the simplicity and sincerity of those two great men.

For many years the original record herein annotated has been in the files of the Diocesan Historian, Dr. Urban de Hasque. It
A Trip to Quapaw in 1903

was found during a routine search for material on another project. It is herewith presented as a contribution to the early history of Oklahoma.*

—Velma Nieberding

JUNE 1903

Quapaw is a small town of the Indian Territory—named so perhaps on account of the tribe of Quapaw Indians which occupy its locality and its vast stretches of solid ground covered with all kinds of oak, maple and many other trees. Under these trees, fat and healthy cattle herds, horses, mules, sheep and hogs are raised and are the riches of the civilized Indians living there.1

The log houses standing yet are a curiosity to the visitors; but on most of the farms, throughout the whole country-places of the Territory, nice and comfortably-built houses are to be seen.

Quapaw Station is about seven miles northeast of Miami (Indian Territory) but the Quapaw Mission is about three miles from the station. There, on the very top of a beautiful hill stands St. Mary's Church; near it the presbytery, and about one hundred feet further, the school-house built some ten years ago for the Sisters of St. Joseph who were brought there by Rev. A. Herenthals.2

Two years ago Rev. M. D'Haenens reopened the school with a lay teacher with the hope that the following year we Sisters of Mt. Carmel would take charge of it. But he was very much disappointed as we had to leave our dear missions of Vinita and Tulsa, Indian Territory.3 Actually he has again lay teachers and expects Sisters of Divine Providence next year. As they are now to be in charge of

* The text of the Journal is here presented as in the original with the exception of the deletion of a few sentences that involve tedious detail and repetition. Changes in punctuation and new paragraphing have been made in some places for clearness.

1 It was not until 1912 that the ore strike was made near Quapaw, in Ottawa County, on the lands of Benjamin Quapaw, tribal elder. This strike led to the thorough development of the Picher Mining field in Oklahoma. It is one of the richest lead and zinc fields in the world. Drilling had begun as early as 1901 but at the time this Journal was written, the Quapaws never suspected the wealth that lay only a few feet beneath the grassy lands of their allotments.


3 Records of the Motherhouse of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, New Orleans, Louisiana, show that Carmelite Sisters conducted schools from 1899 to 1903 in Tulsa and Vinita. In Tulsa, they taught at St. Theresa Institute; in Vinita, at Sacred Heart School. The schools were given over to the Sisters of Divine Providence, San Antonio, Texas, because this Order was specializing in the teaching of Indians.
the missions of Vinita and Tulsa it is much better for the same community to be also in Quapaw—it being a distance of about twenty-five miles from the former. Communications are facilitated by the M. K. and T. Railroad as by the Frisco, up to the station; from the station to the mission one must go either on foot or in a conveyance.

Now I will relate what I have seen and learned regarding the Mission of Quapaw, also the interesting details and legends in connection with photos of that place, which were given to me by Rev. Father M. O. D'Haenens. 4

Members of our party were the four Sisters of Vinita, Sisters Clare, Mechtilda, Maurice and Laurence; Mother Ambrose, Sister Superioress of Tulsa, a good friend of ours, Mrs. C. Skelly with her two sons, Charles and Joseph; one of our boarders, Annie Davenport, whose papa wanted her to be with us as long as we remained in the Territory; two of our altar boys, orphans to whom we were attached. Other friends were to accompany us but being in business were deprived of that pleasant trip.

As we boarded the train we joined our Sisters M. Agnes and Leo of Tulsa, with their little helping girl. . . . . The priest of Tulsa, Rev. Theo Van Hulse was also of the party. At Afton Station about twelve miles east of Vinita we had to change train. It was about 7:30 when we reached Quapaw Station.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF TRAVEL IN 1903

There two hacks were awaiting us. In one of them was our old Mr. Bowlling, who used to work for Reverend Father A. Versavel and also for us before he went to stay with Father D’Haenens at Quapaw. As soon as he saw us, he came to welcome us. We had a trunk full of provisions, and gave him the check to get it as soon as it would have been taken from the baggage coach. . . . . As Mr. Bowlling’s hack was the largest, the greatest number went on his; in the other were Mother Ambrose, Sisters Maurice and Laurence. Mrs. Skelley went in front by the driver, an Indian boy named Frank Buck.

We started the small hack ahead. As rain had fallen incessantly for several weeks, the roads were almost impassable. We were no sooner out of a mud-hole than we were thrown into another. In some we would sink so deeply that we’d scream out for help, but this was only fun for the whole crowd. For a while we had a fine road but that did not last long; as we were reaching its end, we sighted a large creek. We trembled as we approached it. Our fears

4Father Maurice D’Haenens, an alumnus of The American College, Louvain, Belgium, had been sent to the Indian Territory in 1900. He was commonly called “Dannis” by the Indians and in later years signed his name with the simplified spelling.
redoubled as our careless Frank instead of exciting the horses to prevent them from stopping let the bridles go loose. The little ponies were not strong enough to pull us out. They began to jump and kick and the water was almost touching the seats and we could not jump down. . . . Mr. Bowlling . . . unhitched both teams, put his strong horses on our hack and with a blow made them pull us out of this dreadful hole and go up the worst of that steep pass.

We were not yet very far when we saw the big hack with difficulty crossing another mud hole. What were we going to do? Thanks to the ability of Mrs. Skelley who had taken the reins from the Indian boy, we crossed without incident, although I already saw myself thrown in the mud and all the others with me.

At last we had only one more small creek to pass. The rest of the trip was on rocks so it made a big change. Now the inconvenience was altogether different. We were awfully shaken, knocking and bumping each other.

It was about nine o'clock when we perceived lights in a house. As we approached we knew we had arrived by the sounds of the voice of our Dear Bishop Meerschaert who, with Father D'Haensens came to meet us and even helped us to get down and bring in our bundles and trunk. . . .

While we were cleaning and refreshing ourselves, Father D'Haenens was helping his housekeeper and school-teacher to prepare our supper. Bishop was back with Father Theophile and the boys before we came down. We hurried so as not to make them wait for us. We were yet covered with mud and ashamed to appear thus in a dining room before a Bishop and priests, but we soon forgot this. Bishop placed us at table and waited on us while Father D'Haenens waited on the youngsters. The long and jolting ride had acted as an appetizer, so we put all shame aside and did honors to the copious supper.

While eating we related all the frightful incidents of our trip. Bishop enjoyed very much our narration to which we added fresh exclamations at the mere thought of the trip. He said he was very grateful to God for having inspired him to take the other road for stout and heavy as he is, no horse-power could have taken him out of the mud holes. He then compared the dangers we had run to the dangers of this life and as our perseverance on the way to Quapaw was crowned with a safe and happy arrival, so if we persevere in virtue, in courage when we are tried, in prayer when tempted, we will get to Heaven.

* * * * * *

The next morning while we were working [after Mass and breakfast] our attention was drawn to the thrilling of a drum. Father
D’Haenens told us it was the Medicine Man giving the signal of his presence at the Medicine house. Generally the Indians assemble there every Saturday and eve of Feasts. At six or seven o’clock in the morning they all go in procession into that house. After having lighted the traditional fire they take place all around the tent and receive their ration of opium from the Medicine Man who is considered by his tribe as a man of great power and who exercises among his fellowmen a mysterious influence. As soon as all are helped with opium singing begins; they mark time by the beating of the drum and this is what we had heard. But of this I will speak again later.

We asked Father if we could go there. He told us yes, that we could. But he would not take any responsibility on himself as he could not answer of our lives once there. . . . By the way Father spoke we understood he only wanted to frighten and tease us. We made up our minds to go after dinner.

Though the sun was terribly hot, we did not go back on our determination. Soon after dinner we were on our way to the woods. . . . Mother Ambrose, Sister M. Agnes, Sisters Clare, Maurice and Laurence. Father wished us “good luck” and said we’d find ice cream if we were smart enough to come back. We laughed and went on, daring his warnings.

---

5 This writer finds no evidence of drug addiction among the Quapaws, other than the taking of the narcotic peyote as a sacrament of the Native American (Indian) Church. The account of the ritual witnessed by Sister M. Laurence agrees with the accounts of peyote rites by other authors—Frederic W. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians, Bulletin 30, Bureau Amer. Ethnol. (Washington, 1910); Robert Hamilton, The Gospel Among the Red Men (So. Baptist Convention, 1930).

Peyote is a small cactus, botanically identified as Lophophora williamsii. The plant grows abundantly in a wild state along the Rio Grande and southward and is gathered by the Indians who use the dried top called a “button.”

Peyote worship was introduced to the Osages in 1898 by Moon Head, a Caddo-Delaware. The Quapaws, according to Victor Griffin their present Chief and a “peyote priest” were using peyote “ten years before the Osages.” (Personal interview, March 15, 1953)

6 Early missionaries were opposed to the drug, not so much for its physiological effects upon the Indians but for its connection with certain superstitious rites connected with their primitive religion. Eating the peyote was declared by the early padres to be almost as grave a sin as eating human flesh. In a little religious manual published by Fray Bartholomé García in 1760, for the use of the missionaries to the Indians of San Antonio, Texas, the following questions to be used in the confessional are printed: “Has comido carne de gente?” (Hast thou eaten flesh of man?) and “Has comido el peyote?” (Hast thou eaten the peyote?).—(Fray Bartholomé García, Manual para administrar los Santos Sacramentos, 1760, p. 15).

“The effects of the drug have been compared to those of Indian hemp (cannabis indica) which has found its way from the Eastern hemisphere to Mexico and the southwest United States where it is known as marihuana but instead of the exciting effect of the latter, Lophophora produces rather a state of ideal content with no tendency to commit acts of violence” (S. J. Safford, “An Aztec Narcotic”, The Journal of Heredity, Vol. 6, No. 7, p. 302).
At the limits of the school ground we had to go down the hill which was steepy and rocky. At the foot, under solid rocks was a spring of the finest and clearest water. Now we had to get to the other side but Rock Creek was between the two hills. . . . After walking some hundred steps we found a place where it was narrower. We rolled a big stone and pushed it into the water; thus it was easy to cross over. We were as merry and happy as school children. We'd run up and down the hill to gather wild flowers, here bending in two so as to pass under low trees; there stopping to take a cool drink at a spring, trying not to lose sight of our guides, Miss Halping and Miss Mary.

* * * * *

Though we had trodden already a long distance the sounds of the drum seemed to be just as far. Our guides told us it was because we were down the hill while the Medicine House was up the hill and far from the creek. After walking again for about half a mile we came to a kind of path ascending gradually to the summit of the hill. We followed it, and soon found ourselves on a plateau. . . . We perceived smoke rising into the air and some persons moving among the trees. Miss Mary told us we were near the end of our walk. . . . We met with a kind of prairie schooner full of Indians coming from another way but falling into ours. At our sight they seemed scared to death. They kept staring at us and we at them!

In a few minutes we arrived at the wire fence which protects a large place where our Indians had set up their camping tents. Under one of them we could see a whole family—men, women and children, some running, some sleeping on a blanket on the ground. Here and there some men wrapped in blankets were lying under trees and seemed to be sleeping. These had already been in the Medicine house and were under the influence of Opium.

From that family tent a big, stout woman seeing us stood at the entrance. Her breast, neck and arms were covered with nickel-plated pins and beads of all kinds. She looked at us with her savage air. We were afraid to go any further but Mrs. Skelley and myself decided to pass under the wire. . . . The nearer we got the fiercer

---

7 On October 10, 1918, a charter for the incorporation of *The Native American Church* was obtained from the state by Oklahoma Indians. The articles specify the use of peyote as a sacrament, "as commonly understood and used among the adherents of this religion in the several tribes of Indians in the State of Oklahoma." The organization had as its purpose to establish a central or General Church at El Reno, Canadian County, Oklahoma, with branch churches to be organized in each of the Indian tribes of Oklahoma.

According to *Time Magazine* (June 18, 1951) the Bureau of Indian Affairs, wary of a "religious freedom" issue has refused to interfere in peyote rituals. In a statement to *Science* magazine (November 30, 1951) five anthropologists issued a protest against current propaganda to have peyote declared illegal. "Peyote is used sacramentally in a manner corresponding to the bread and wine of Christians" they stated.
the woman appeared to us. . . . When we were from her at a distance of about thirty or forty steps she disappeared, running as fast as she could into the tent. When she came back a stout man came too, his long black hair was floating on his shoulders. It was divided on the head with a red stripe about one and one-half inches wide; his cheeks also were painted red, but he was so red from the heat that we could hardly distinguish the paint.

He had long beads on his neck and arms. Around his waist he had a belt made with little cases all around it for shots. He got ahead of her and came straight to us. Though of real Indian type his face had something milder than the woman, his wife. He smiled with us and as he got near enough he handed us his right hand and we handed him ours. But what was not our astonishment when we saw him pass only the inside of his fingers over ours, then raising his hands at the level of his head he opened it wide before us, then turning it to him he passed it all over his face, straight down to the abdomen, then finished by opening it again towards us. We were told afterwards that this was a sign of welcome.

After doing this he turned to the woman who imitated his example. He then brought us near his tent, told us that these children were his and the stout woman his wife. On his sign they all came in and touched our hands as said here above. The other Sisters were still watching. We made them sign to come so they did. We were not over our fright. . . . We tried to conceal it by petting the babies who were anything but attractive. We coaxed the grown folks and soon we were surrounded by every one of those we had seen around.

Suddenly the thrilling of the drum resounded to our ears and seemed to come from a large round tent opposite where we were. We asked if that was the medicine house. They answered yes, but we hesitated to inquire whether we could go in or not. We had made friends with all but the stout woman who did not seem to approve of our presence there. The man had gone back under the tent. It was he who was beating the drum. His daughters spoke English pretty well, they had learned it with the Sisters of St. Joseph, who, two years previous had the Quapaw school in charge but had to abandon this field for want of means.

Those young girls took us around, to show us different ways of getting to beautiful places of this country. Tired of walking, we did not go far. We came back and sat down on the grass; their conversation was quite interesting.

After awhile we expressed our wish to see the medicine house. They told us that it was exclusively for the Quapaw Indians. They had never seen any white people entering there. Still, the eldest one got up and went to speak about it to her Mama, but the latter seemed
to be still more doubtful whether her husband would consent or not. To our great surprise she looked very glad of our request. Her face brightened and cheered up. She made us sign that she was going herself to ask the Medicine Man, her husband, for the favor.

As she heard the last words of the song—they were singing their "great song to the Almighty"—she raised a corner of the tent and penetrated inside. We were very near and could hear a man's voice. One of the girls told us it was her father asking the others if we could enter. Though he was some kind of a chief, being medicine man, they all had to sanction his permission. It was soon done and the medicine man came out with his wife to get us. Mother Ambrose had remained out of the premises. She was watching us from far, probably praying that nothing might happen to us. Now the man raised the same little corner of the tent and made us sign to get in. His wife passed first, then Mrs. Skelley, myself, Sisters M. Agnes and M. Clare, Miss Halping and Miss Mary. The man after getting in put down the tent and tied it down, like all the rest, on the poles. Then our hearts began to beat hard and fast.

In the center of that tent was a kind of square made of clay, in the middle of which was a hole about eight or ten inches deep, made for the purpose of building a fire. This fire was made of branches as we use in our stoves and was sprinkled with some aromatic herb-powder. The interior of that tent was about 16 x 16 ft. at the base, diminishing in size gradually until the very top was hardly 6 x 6 inches, leaving a small opening for the smoke.

All around the tent were the Indians, men, women and children, all seated on blankets or on their clothes thrown on the ground. Some had valises by them; other had bundles, others little baskets. Some were barefooted, others had leggings and mocassins trimmed with beads; some of them had a little pack of candy—some stick candy, others home-made candy, etc.

There were small bags full of beads, crucifixes of different sizes; some men had their shooting arrows and bows—all that was by each one's side. The men had their long hair divided on the forehead by a thick stripe of red paint and hanging down on their shoulders. All had also, like the medicine man, their cheeks painted.

---

8 Sometimes cedar, sometimes sage. This Indian sage is also known by the common term of "horse mint" and has an aromatic odor. The use of sage seems to have a symbolic meaning. When the meetings are held in a tipi, the earth is first swept clean, then a layer of hay is put down followed by a layer of sage. This is covered by a layer of canvas on which people sit. (Interview with Joe Fritts, loyal Shawnee, Quapaw, Oklahoma, March 15, 1953)

9 "Anything good, like candy or fruit, can be taken into the peyote meetings" according to Mrs. Lillie Tyner, Quapaw, who stated that she has been taking peyote for 52 years. *Time Magazine* (June 18, 1951) states that canned peaches and candy help straighten the Indians out after "peyote jag" otherwise they would have a dismal hangover.
A perfect silence was reigning there. The medicine house is regarded by the Indians as very sacred. In front of the fire opposite the entrance there was a crucifix standing on the ground. Every Indian who entered there and as many times as he re-entered, had to stand by the fire, facing the Crucifix. Then the medicine man or his assistant came with big feathers and passed them from head to foot over the one who was standing, so as to shake all the dust off. This dusting is done in the same way over anyone who leaves the tent. By this action they firmly believe that they are purified and that they render honor to God. Everything they bring there has to be held over the fire while they make a few motions with it toward the Crucifix.

Once in, we sat like them on the ground but the nearest possible to the entrance. Some of those people seated at the extremity made us sign to go by them but none of us dared to go as far, though we were not safer where we were as everything was shut. They were all looking at us with a curious, but peaceful look. The medicine man took his place at the right side of the entrance. We were at the left. He sat down and took what we thought to be a drum, but it was a stone or earthen jar, half-filled with water, covered with sheep or buckskin (I don't know which) and trimmed with bird and fowl's feathers. This kind of instrument gave a sound similar to that of a drum when beating on it with the sticks.

By the medicine man a fellow of high stature with a small bearded face, little eyes shining like diamonds, took in his left hand a long rod trimmed with game heads and feathers, also with some kind of fish-like skin. In his right hand he took a little racket on which handle were attached a few small toy bells. Then he bent one knee to the ground and both blew on their instruments. The medicine man shook his jar three different times while the assistant made the same motions with his gourd. Both started in a very low tone the Uba-ist-Tal-lo-a or "Song to the Great Spirit." It was so low

10 The Quapaws, as well as other Indian Tribes, having been christianized by Catholic missionaries, adopted many of the sacramentals of the Catholic Church into the ritual of the native church. The crucifix is used today according to Indians who attend the peyote rites. Another use of a Christian symbol is the cross surmounting the "Medicine House" where peyote rites are held.

11 The tending of the fire is very important and the fire-tender is given a special blessing. The fire is kept burning enclosed within a crescent-shaped mound on the top of which is placed the sacred or "king" peyote.

12 The objects used in connection with the peyote worship have a distinct, decorative character of their own. The most typical color is yellow, with which their wood and skin portions are almost always painted. The feathers most frequently used are those of the yellow hammer and other species of woodpeckers.—A. I. Krolher, Bulletin Am. Museum of Nat. Hist., Vol. 18, pp. 398-409

13 Within the pages of her Journal here, Sister Laurence has added as a separate short leaf an eight stanza poem entitled, "U-ba 1st Tal-lo-a (Singing to the Great Spirit)" by Jessie E. Sampier, New York City, apparently printed in a church magazine, probably The Indian Magazine, early in the 1900's. The "U-ba 1st Tal-lo-a" in the title of this poem is Choctaw, properly "Vba Isht Taloa," an expression mean-
A Trip to Quapaw in 1903

that with all our attention we were unable to catch a single word. All the others were listening attentively, their arms folded, their eyes fixed upon the fire or the ground. Not a word, not even a whisper was heard. After each stanza our two chorists blew on their instruments and shook them as before beginning.14

At the third one the assistant asked for a glass of water. The medicine man filled a glass from a large jar which was behind him and passed it to his companion, who drank it only after having held it over the fire, which at that moment he kindled adding branches and sprinkling the aromatic herbs. He knelt again and the singing continued. We thought it would never end. We were almost roasted not only by the heat of the fire but also that of the atmosphere which was intensely hot. Big drops of perspiration were rolling on all present there.

After awhile we made a motion to get up but the woman near us told us we could not get out before the song was finished. It was to be soon over. We found that time terribly long but at last we heard it was all and saying this the medicine man took a glass of water, performing the same ceremony as the one before. A woman placed at the other end passed a stick of candy to the two singers. Both held it over the fire before biting on it.

The medicine man got up and made sign to the others to do the same and invited them to come and touch our hands, which they all did, even the babies whose mamas held the hands to make the traditional signs. It took a little while before those twenty or twenty-five Indians could do this. All expressed by signs how glad they were to have us under their tent; it was a great honor for them. They looked upon us as angels fallen from Heaven and kissed not only our hands but our dresses. As we were ready to get out a man entered. The chief asked him if he had slept enough; he answered

ing a hymn found before each song in the old Choctaw hymnals of missionary days. For example, “Vba Isht Taloa 9. L.M. God’s mercies are renewed every day,” is found as the heading of a five stanza hymn in Choctaw that appears on page 9 in the Choctaw Hymn Book (6th ed. Presbyterian Committee of Publication, Richmond, 1872). It may be that Father William Ketcham indirectly had something to do with Sister Laurence’s interest in the poem with its Indian and parenthetical English title for he became a fluent speaker and a translator in the Choctaw language as the founder of St. Agnes Mission at Antlers, Choctaw Nation, in 1897. Sister Laurence unaware of the differences in Indian languages was impressed with the poem she had read and used the title as that of the chant which she heard during the ceremonies in the Quapaw Medicine House. This note is made as an explanation for the appearance of a Choctaw expression in her description of the visit among the Quapaw Indians. It may be added, also, that the Choctaw Indians have never been known as devotees of peyotism with its ceremonial such as were witnessed in the Quapaw Medicine House.—Ed. (M.H.W.)

14 The sacred or “peyote” songs. Each man sings four songs to the accompaniment of drum and rattle. It is quite probable that because of the presence of visitors that the whole ceremony was not finished. In a regular peyote meeting the tea made from brewing the “buttons” is drunk after singing and the buttons themselves are passed around and chewed.
"yes" then stood by the fire. We went out as the tent was opened, glad to breathe the fresh air and be out of that hot oven!

It was after half-past five. As we had a long walk to reach home we did not remain any longer. The stout woman had come out of the tent with us. Now she was all smiles. She promised to come see us at the school and told us to call again the next Saturday. We left her and the others as happy as they could be to see us so intimate with them. All our fears had vanished.

We could not get home quick enough to relate all to Bishop Meerschaert and show Father D'Haenens we were living yet.

It was near seven o'clock when we reached the school ground. The Ice Cream was made, and Father was waiting for us to serve it. The children were back long before we came, very much displeased because we had not told them where we were to go; they, too, wishing to see the medicine house. We succeeded in quieting them by telling them they could go some other Saturday while we had no more chances. We all entered the school room and soon Sisters, ladies and children were feasting on the cool treat. . . . .

Though very tired we had yet to go rehearse our singing. We took our books and music and directed ourselves towards the church while the others attended to the clergymen’s supper. It was pretty hard to make the organ give its sounds as since over two years no one had played on it. Our good Father D'Haenens heard us and fearing it would be too hard a work came up in a hurry to blow the organ for me while I was playing, putting all the strength I could in my fingers to get the instrument in a better vibration. After more than an hour of practice we stopped. . . . . At that time one of the little boys came to get Father D’Haenens for supper and while the clergymen were taking supper we remained in Church to say our office and night prayers. . . . . After that we went home to supper, too. . . . .

We were hardly seated at the table when we had a big and agreeable surprise. All at once we saw at the door Rev. Father William K. Ketcham with our dear old friend, Mr. Rea and Felix Miles, brother of our little Johnnie and Eddie. The feast would have been complete had dear Father Versavel only been with us. He had gone to be a Jesuit and was as happy there.

* * * * *

At six [next morning] Masses began. We divided ourselves so that all would have a share in the devotions as well as the work. But for the Bishop’s Mass all Sisters managed to be present. We Sisters and all our band had communicated at the first Mass. The children were to be confirmed that day. At nine o'clock all the priests were to take breakfast, except Father Ketcham who was
officiate at High Mass and Father Theophile who did not feel well enough to take breakfast with the others.

We all helped in the kitchen, dining room, etc., so as to enable every one to assist at high Mass. We would have worked much quicker had we not been attracted outside by the full-blooded Indians arriving from all directions for Mass. We recognized those we had seen at the medicine house, the Medicine man was there with his wife and children. At 9:30, . . . . we went out to see those poor people closer. As soon as they saw us all came to touch hands (not shake hands) with us and hold their children's hands to do the same. We petted the babies but could not decide ourselves to kiss them. . . .

I had brought with me a box of colored pictures to give them but as it was near ten o'clock I told them to come back after Mass. Those who did not understand English and they were many, were told by the others what we had said. We made them sign it was time to go to church. Immediately they fixed themselves and went ahead of us then stopped at the church and signed themselves as we passed by as if we were Gods.15

A few minutes after the bell rang and all entered the church. Then the clergy and the altar boys came in procession by the back door. As they entered the Church the organ pealed forth its sounds. Then those poor people were like electrified by the music and by the sight of their beloved first pastor, Rev. Father Ketcham who founded this mission and christianized most all of the old ones who were present. Some were weeping, others laughing but all expressed their feelings out loud in Church. They were not as recollected and as quiet as in their medicine tent.

Men and women had their hair plaitsed; some of the latter had it twisted around on the head and had a colored handkerchief fixed somewhat like the old colored women. . . .

Two of those Indians were to make their first Communion, a man and Frank Buck, our famous little driver. Many others who were also for the first-Communion were obliged to give it up on account of sickness. Most all of them had had smallpox which is always harder on those people. Others had the measles not less dangerous.

For the first time there was a Mass with Deacon and sub-deacon. . . . [The Bishop] spoke on Holy Communion and Confirmation which Sacraments the children were about to receive.

Immediately after the last gospel, Bishop took his place kneeling at the foot of the altar while we sang the "Veni Creator." After the last stanza, he sat on the chair prepared for him on the highest

---

15 The Sign of the Cross.
step of the altar. The little gates of the holy table were opened wide and two by two our young folks ascended to the Minister of God to receive from him the Sacrament that was to make them perfect soldiers of Jesus Christ. Many of the grown folks followed the little ones. Bishop told Father D’Haenens, who was trying to dissuade them, to let them come. He gave them his ring to kiss and had a kind word for each so they were all satisfied. At the end of the ceremony Bishop rose and told them that they all had to be back for the evening service at 3 p.m. . . . consisting of the recitation of the rosary and Litany of the Blessed Virgin, a sermon by Father Ketcham and Benediction. Then he dismissed them all.

We waited until the last one was out to come downstairs. But what was not our surprise to see them all by the church. They were watching on both sides for fear Father Ketcham would escape them. But he himself loved them too tenderly to play them that trick. Most all of them stopped us again to touch our hands. Though few only understood what we said, all would nod their heads and smile as a sign of approval and contentment. . . .

At last we witnessed a scene that we very seldom do in civilized countries. Father Ketcham appeared on the church doorstep. It was like magnetism. In a moment the whole crowd of about one hundred and fifty men and women were at the feet of their beloved Father. We could read the emotion of that powerful man whose heart was powerless against the demonstrations of his first spiritual children. As a good Father he let them take his hands, pull on his cassock. He was almost as happy to see them as they were to see him.

We were so much touched at that scene that tears were rolling on our cheeks. How happy we would have been to be commanded to make our dwelling there! What good could have been accomplished by those ignorant but affectionate, loving and grateful hearts! But this was not for us.

We went home though we could have remained there longer. This scene was the subject of our conversations that day.

At about 12:30 Bishop, the priests and Mr. Rea came for dinner. Bishop told me to make the Sisters take dinner also as he wished to give them a little conference right after. He was to leave that day at 5 p.m.

All was done as he had said; the ladies and the children dined while the Sisters were with his Grace. Afterwards all were called in for a little while. . . .

Perfect happiness does not belong to this world. Clouds of sadness passed over the sun of joy and peace that had filled our souls during these previous hours. We realized then that this was our last meeting with our dear and beloved Bishop, that perhaps
A Trip to Quapaw in 1903

it would be the last time we would see him until we reached the eternal shore where "we'll know our own."

The many and strange events of that day had thrown in our hearts such emotions that, as Bishop left, we gave vent to our feelings and all of us Sisters had a good crying before going to church. To hide it all, we had to almost drown our faces in the bowls of water.

At 3 p.m. sharp the bell rang. All those present in the morning had obeyed Bishop by coming back.

Bishop recited the rosary and litany after which we sang one or two verses of the beautiful hymn "Holy Spirit God of light." Rev. Father Ketcham then ascended the degrees of the altar to address the audience, particularly and naturally his Quapaw Indians.

Briefly he related how he had gone to Bishop Meerschaert to become a priest how after his ordination Bishop had sent him to the vast Indian Territory where only two or three priests had come to announce the Gospel of God; how Bishop pointing to the hills northeast of the Territory had enjoined him, Father Ketcham to go there to those good Quapaw Indians to teach them how to know, love and serve their Creator. He had answered the Bishop's desire and had come to that hill of Quapaw. Many present now in church were there when he first came.

They were not long to see that he wanted to do no harm but all the good he could. Soon he had won all their hearts. They looked upon him as a good, kind father and he received and treated them like his children. Then he reminded those old people how they came together to listen to his instructions and with what eagerness they asked him to speak again about the Great Creator.

But there came a big sacrifice for the pastor and his flock. One day he, Father Ketcham, received a letter from his Bishop commanding him to go and take charge of some other Indians at another part of the Territory. Another priest was to come to Quapaw where already Father Ketcham had a nice church built and also a presbytery. He had worked hard with his Indians to have that much done.

It was with sorrow that he read that order of the Bishop, who no doubt wanted to reward him and give him a better place. He had to obey and abandon his faithful children who wept bitterly on hearing the sad news. Since then he had never returned to Quapaw until that happy day, June 7, 1903, where he met at his surprise, Bishop Meerschaert and us Sisters.

---

16 Actually, the Quapaws had been ministered to by Jesuit and Benedictine priests from the time they came to their present home in Oklahoma in 1833.
17 Father Ketcham was transferred to Antlers, in 1897, to work among the Choctaws.
Then he begged those Indians to continue to be good and faithful as they had been since and to love and obey their devoted pastor, Father D’Haenens as they had loved and obeyed him, their first pastor, this being the best proof of gratitude they could ever give him and the Bishop.

This is about what Father Ketcham said in his simple allocution to those people who were afraid to move for fear of losing a syllable of what he was telling them. We were in admiration seeing them so attentive.

After this Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given by Right Rev. Bishop Meerschaert and the service was over.

Then all again waited outside to see their first Father. Bishop too came and told them “good-bye.” Soon after both came to bid us also “good-bye.” Bishop gave us his blessing and left us with the hope of meeting us again some day in Louisiana. All hearts were made heavy by the thought of our departure, the hour of which was to strike too soon.

On leaving us, Bishop forbade Father D’Haenens to let any of us leave before the coming Wednesday. Father had told him that Mother Ambrose and I wanted to leave the next day, Monday. We had to submit and remain until Wednesday.

Bishop added, “Father spare no expenses, give them all the treats you can; and if you get short of money, draw on me. I will pay all.” He had already given fifty dollars the first day. How many Bishops would be so generous, so kind to sisters? He may be the unique one.

Father D’Haenens came back to us as soon as he had shut the big gate on Bishop Meerschaert and Father Ketcham. We saw the carriage go off and our eyes followed it until we could not see it any more. The thorn of separation was cruelly stinging our hearts. Father D’Haenens knew it, hence his haste to come to us; he called us all down,—we had gone up stairs to be able to see the Bishop better on his way to Baxter Springs. We came down, trying to smile. Father had pop on ice and hurried to pass a bottle to each one,—he knocked the stopper off before we had time to get a glass—so as to dispel all sadness. He succeeded for soon the echoes of the children’s screams, the exclamations of the grown folks, resounded through the whole house. Now to crown all, Father suggested a big picnic for the next day at the “Devil’s promenade.” There was no excuse to be given; it had to be and we had to make the best of it. He had bought lots of chickens from the country people, and was to send, early the next morning, the old Mr. Bowlling at Baxter Springs for bread and fresh meat, so that we could have it cooked before leaving. All the arrangements were made; we pre-
pared as much as we could that night, and left the rest for the next morning.

* * * * * *

The remainder of Sister Laurence's Journal is taken up with an account of the picnic to the "Devil's Promenade" on Spring River about two miles and a half southeast of Quapaw, in Ottawa County. Seventeen of the students and the Sisters before mentioned in this article, were on this picnic. The account follows:

The next morning we were up before five o'clock. We hurried up and while some saw that everything was put in order in the sleeping rooms, the others attended to the preparations for breakfast and the picnic. At six o'clock we all went to Mass except Miss Mary and Mrs. Skelley, who stayed on account of the cooking.

At seven all took breakfast; then Father and the boys went to see about hitching up the buggy, as Father did not want me to walk so far. At the same time it was a means of carrying the baskets and all that we wanted.

At about 8:30 the little caravane [sic] was ready to start, seventeen in all. The school teacher having to teach on that day was obliged to stay home, also the old Mr. Bowlling.

We took the baskets and a case of bottles of soda in the buggy, then Mother Ambrose not able to walk much either, got in with me and we followed those that were on foot. Father D'Haenens walked along side of us so as to watch where were the best places for us to pass as the roads were almost unpracticable. We had to go through timbers and creeks, or be terribly shaken on the big rocks that we met on the way and which could not be avoided.

After we had traveled over a mile—pretty near two—we were blockaded altogether by the thickness of the low branches of the big trees, and by many small trees. We passed a nice little Indian log-house. Father knew who lived there and told us to wait a few minutes while he went to the house. We were very much surprised to recognize the daughter of our famous stout woman. She came to us and told us this was their home and as she brought us, in the buggy, nearer the house we saw her papa, the Medicine Man, and the whole family. They told us that it was impossible to go any further in the buggy but to leave it there that it would be well taken care of, as well as the ponies.

Those who were on foot were far ahead of us; but Father had told the boys to mind when he would whistle, that would mean for them to look for him. He then whistled, the echo answered and a few minutes later our five youngsters were in sight and came
running to Father D’Haenens, who showing them the baskets told them why we had stopped.

They understood quickly what that meant and taking first the dinner provisions ran again ahead of us. We had about one-half or three quarters of a mile to walk but had such a nice breeze that we did not feel any fatigue. The boys had already brought their load to the place of the picnic shown them by Miss Mary, who with Mrs. Skelley and the Sisters and girls was walking fast too.

Now our five little men were going back to get the pop and the ice and a few other bundles. They passed us again coming back as they wanted to be the first ones to reach the place. They had that satisfaction too, as they got ahead of all. They sat on the rocks waiting for the whole band, as glorious as soldiers sitting on the cannons after a victory.

We all met pretty soon. The first thing that struck our curious looks was an immense rock much higher than all the others. Father saw how we were admiring it so he told us to climb up with him, but forbade anyone to take another way of climbing up or go ahead of him, as it was very dangerous. The rocks being covered with moss and creeping plants one could slip down to the very bottom into the Spring River, where he could not be found were he or she drowned in it. We arrived at the summit which is not less than one hundred and fifty feet above the Spring River. Father threw some big stones into the river to show us more the height of the rock. He then repeated to us the legend attached to the rock. He had heard it himself from the old Indians of that place.18

THE LEGEND ATTACHED TO THE ROCK KNOWN AS “LOVER’S LEAP”

Many, many years ago, two young Indians fell in love and asked their parents permission to get married. But as the young girl was not of the same tribe as the young boy the parents could not consent and offered other parties to each one. Their love for each other was so strong and reciprocal that no other seemed to be able to replace the beloved. After many solicitations [sic], seeing that they could not get the consent of either one’s parents, they went to the chief of their respective tribes, but were not more successful. Then disappointment gave place to despair. They resolved to finish with life; they went home put on their finest dresses and adornments, probably all trimmed with beads and feathers. They were to meet on the rock where we were seated then, listening to Father D’Haenens, as the moon would enlighten the earth with its full light. Both met at the appointed time; they climbed up at the very top and there, swearing fidelity to each

18 A similar legend is common among the Osages. —Arthur H. Lamb, Tragedies of the Osage Hills (Pub. by The Osage Printery, Pawhuska, Oklahoma).
other, tied themselves together with a rope and holding each other’s hands leaped down into the river as their parents were reaching the summit of the rock. When the latter reached the top they looked down and saw both bodies [fall] into the water. It was too late! No one would nor could dare to dive there, it was too dangerous on account not only of the rapidity of the current of the river but principally because it was full of pointed rocks, on which one would be killed if striking on them while plunging into the water.

The poor old parents spent the night on the rock. They called it afterwards “Lover’s Leap” in remembrance of the young couple. They did not want to believe their children when they said they would be united in death if not in life but both had remained faithful to each other.

The next morning as the sun sent its first rays over the river the faces of the old Indians were bent over the water and in their fascinated imagination they saw the bodies of their regretted children floating under the water. They looked at them until the water stirred by some evil spirit became troubled.

Then they returned home and told the sad story to all the others. All went in turn at the top of the rock and looking into the river thought they could see the floating bodies of the two lovers when the water was clear. Until now they imagine that they see the couple under the water.

"THE DEVIL’S PROMENADE AND THE BISCUIT WALK"

Now, said Father, the story is told, and we must descend more carefully and still slower that we ascended. We all gathered stones as souvenirs of that Lover’s Leap Rock.

Once down we turned to the right and walked towards the Devil’s promenade. The distance between the two places was about a quarter of a mile through beautiful woods. We gathered pretty wild flowers all the way long, fearing we would not have time to do so at night.

Father went ahead with the boys. We heard them calling us from under the rocks, yet we could not see the rocks as their tops were covered with trees and grass, about thirty feet over the Spring River. We were wondering where our men were when at a little curve we found ourselves before a kind of path made in the rock and not of very agreeable appearance. This path seemed to lead straight to the water. At first we hesitated to descend. Father saw our fear and came to help us along; hands and feet had to work hard to avoid the dreaded false steps which in a moment would have thrown us for an eternal sleep in the river.
Fortunately, at half-way there was a turn that favored us for the rest of the descent, probably it was to encourage us for the terrible ascension we had to make afterwards to get on the Devil's promenade. "It bears well its name."

We were now at the very bottom of the pathway and on the very edge of the Spring River. Here was the "Devil's Promenade and the Biscuits Walk." Father and the boys were up on the latter making us sign to get on too; but my! how to get there?

For children again it was passable but for ladies, and more so for Sisters, we thought it was terrible. There was a long walk on rocks right in the middle of these so that one-half—the one on which we were to get on—was rooted into the water and the other half was hanging over the walk.

At the place where we stood, the walk was about four feet high; there was no other means but to jump up and again that was not all: getting on the rock, both halves of it were separated by a space of not more than ten inches, about eighteen inches wide. This was a risky attempt. Sisters Clare, Agnes and Leo being very thin and small, except the latter who is tall, passed like children. But after all my experiences of the year in bed and at the hospital I did not feel like making those athletic exercises. Yet, Mother Ambrose and Sister Maurice would not go without me and the others wanted to come down.

Father came to see what was the matter and hearing the objections, jumped down and disappeared for a few minutes, after which he returned with some kind of a ladder which he fixed into the water as far as he could to avoid us the crawling between the rocks. But we could not avoid it as the water was too deep for the small ladder to be pushed any further. However, we were satisfied of not having to jump on the rock; we crawled between the two as all the others had done and to their great satisfaction.

The boys were running up and down the walk which was not less than three hundred feet long, except at a few places where the space was narrower, the width was about eight to ten feet. Therefore, there was plenty of place to stand and walk without exposing one's self to falling into the river, as this walk was right on the border.

As we could see on the upper rocks, by the names and dates of other picnics, many had visited this place and many years before us.\textsuperscript{19}

It is a curiosity as well as a splendid place for a picnic. It is called the "Devil's Biscuit Walk" and on our inquiry we were told

\textsuperscript{19} The place is today a favorite picnic spot. What Sister did not mention, nor may have known, the Indians speak of a cave beneath the big rock which they enter by boat when the water is low.
that it is another supposition of the imagination of the poor Indians holding so much to their ancestors' traditions.

It seems that in older times their forefathers when first discovering this place, used to hide in the cavities of the rocks—some look as if worked on by the sculptor. Then if their purpose was bad, as for instance to kill or rob the travelers, the devil would appear and either encourage them from the top of the rocks or come and walk along to warn the Indians of the approach of the white people who dared to step on their grounds.

Then they supposed this to be the devil's best place when he was tired to come and take a good rest of mind and body. Hence they called it the "devil's promenade."

For the other name "Biscuits walk," according to another imaginary Indian belief, it seems that one day the devil took a fancy to come and cook biscuits on those rocks; he addressed the rocks in his own language and the rock became hollow as to facilitate the kneading. The bottom of the rock got as hot as an oven, and Sir Devil was delighted with his work. But as the biscuits were almost cooked, the river rose and in spite of all the Devil's commands and supplication to the water and the rocks, the biscuits were soon covered by the flood and the Devil had to run off to escape being drowned too. He came back at night but the river was high yet. He came again the next morning and several times during the next day but no sight of the biscuits. The day after this he came again; the water had gone down, but the biscuits were transformed into stones and breaking one he recognized his own eye engraved in the middle of it.

This is one of the many superstitious beliefs of those poor, ignorant Indians; but the fact is that these stones are shaped like biscuits; we wanted to see if we could find the devil's eye in them and breaking many we found eyes in all. The upper and lower parts of the rocks were like jelly-cakes. We were ready to break some when Father reminded us it was time to see how and where we would take dinner. We walked to the very end to examine well where would be the best place and decided to fix up at the very beginning, after the famous crawling spot. All agreed to this as it seemed to be the coolest place, the rock itself being suspended over our heads forming a roof or shelter.

The children amused themselves breaking biscuits; At every one they would run to show them to us, making collections for us all. While gathering stones they were very much amused and we were to hear the double echoes repeating all they said; then Father would go at a distance to call the children who would answer and the contrast of the voices was really wonderful.
When ready we called for dinner. All came quickly as hunger was knocking at the door of all, especially the children.

Father said the "Benedicite" and took his seat on the rock. We all imitated his example, forming a large circle around him. I had brought him one hundred of those small Chinese napkins which were very handy on that day. Mrs. Skelley built an Indian fire on the edge of the rock to heat the coffee while we were taking dinner.

Did Sir Devil come to blow on it, or shake the thin branches? We could not tell as we saw no one, but as we were eating we heard something crack and tumble behind us. As we looked we saw the fire and the coffee pot go down into the water. A long "oh" was heard; but had to do without coffee; and the most grieved about this loss was Mother Ambrose who can not do very well without coffee, suffering as she does with headache. We had a hearty laugh over that and teased Mrs. Skelley for her fire.

After dinner Father took a sheet of paper and wrote down the names of all present on that day at the Devil's Promenade, not failing to relate the accident about the coffee pot, making a little report very interesting. Then he took an empty bottle of pickles, rolled his paper and fixed it into the bottle which he corked hermetically and threw into the water. We watched it until the current carried it out of our sight. To this day we wonder where it might have stopped and who could have picked it up.

After that Father said Graces, then we picked up the dishes and put everything away for supper. We then walked up and down admiring the height and enormity of those rocks, ready at every instant to bury us under them as many of them have already fallen and filled the bottom of the Spring river. Still this did not seem to scare us so much. What we feared was to see some of our young folk miss their step and fall into the water, especially our little Johnnie who was so fidgety. We were opposite the "Lover's Leap" and had a full view of this tremendous rock when suddenly the children took a notion of going back of it. They asked Miss Mary to take them so as to be sure of obtaining our permission. They begged so much and promised to behave so well, that it was difficult to refuse them. Father went also so as to leave us free for a while. During that time as nearly all of us owed letters to our friends we sat and wrote; some just for the pleasure of doing so from that place. We had thought of this beforehand and had brought with us all that was necessary. But as soon as the others reached the "Lover's Leap" they began to call us, one after the other; we had to give up our correspondence to answer them and return their signs.

Our little Johnnie had succeeded in getting a whole one [biscuit] and it was not easy to make him consent to give it to Father although the latter promised him all sorts of things, as he wished to have a whole one to have it sawed in two and keep as a curiosity. We coaxed
our little man so much that he finally gave it to Father on condition
that he would show it to him, once sawed, which was accepted.

During that time, the other little boys, seeing that we were busy
with Johnnie, disappeared. What were our surprise and terror when
we perceived them in a small skiff going down the river! We called,
Father whistled, but they were unable to stop or answer. They had
just succeeded in turning the boat towards the rocks when Johnnie
flew to them, but what did he do? he got in, too, and we saw them
again, except little Joseph, in the middle of the river and finally
they reached the other side where they had a first-class fright. There
was an Indian, the owner of the boat watching them but hidden among
the bushes; as soon as they landed he caught them and made them
give him all they had. Felix had fifty cents in his pocket. He
hurried to give it. Johnnie and Charlie were crying, Eddie was
half-dead with fright. The worse was that the man talked only
by signs. He showed them the skiff and the place where they had
taken it, making them understand that they could get in to come back
and tie the boat, but making at the same time, threatening signs to
them if they did not obey him. Our little boys did not lose time
to get in the skiff and come back; they considered themselves happy
to escape the Indian's anger so easily; they were ashamed and afraid
to come to us.

As they arrived they pretended to be tired and hungry; asked
us if we wanted some fresh water and offered to go and get it for
us; all this to get over their scare. We did not suspect anything
and were too glad of their offer. They went off jumping and
laughing and soon were back with a bucket of water as cold as ice
which they had gotten from a well on an Indian family's ground,
not far from where we were. We drank, filled our empty pop bottles
with water and sent the boys to return the bucket. Joseph and
Johnnie remained but the latter could not keep any longer what had
happened to them. As we represented to them the danger they had
run they told us then how they had been scared and that they wanted
to hide it from us because they were ashamed to have been afraid, and
on the point of crying at the thought that they could have been
killed by that angry Indian. They were very nervous and it was
no trouble to make them promise to be more careful and obedient
in the future.

Meanwhile the others returned and seeing the consternation
of the two young ones, understood that their escape had been made
known to us. They were not in a hurry now to run to us but slowly
reached where we were seated. On our request they told us how they
had gotten into the skiff and what a hard time they had to row.
They wanted to cross over only to see what the other side looked like,
ever suspecting they would be met by that Indian who scared them
out of their wits. Poor boys! they had not gotten over their fright
while relating their experience with that red faced man. Father D’Haenens arrived and hearing what had happened gave them a good lecture. They promised that they would never do such a thing over again. At Father’s suggestion supper was served, then it was time to think of returning home. The boys grabbed the empty baskets and started ahead, jumping, screaming and shouting to hear the reverberation of that double echo before leaving that wonderful Devil’s Promenade. They had already forgotten the terrors of the crossing of the river. Happy age! When hearts are young and light, ignoring what the great future has in store for them! They crawled beneath the rock and jumped down like rubber balls, watching to see us when it would be our turn to get under the rock and jump down, but we sent them away....

On Father’s whistle the boys immediately appeared at the winding of the road. Their quick appearance confirmed our opinion that they were watching us. They did not try to conceal it either for when spoken of it, burst into a big laugh. Boys will be boys! Father gave them the ladder to be brought back to the same place where they had gotten the bucket of water. We went up the same little road we had been through before with a last look at all the beauties we had admired all day, especially that Lover’s Leap rock which had attracted our first gaze in the morning.... Our youngsters were already ahead of us, we could watch their frolics and hear their merry laughers and songs. We kept on picking here and there pretty wild flowers, moss and stones, gradually arriving at the place where we had left buggy and ponies. Those good Indians were hitching up, guessing well that we could not be very long before returning. When we got there they wanted us in their home but Father made them understand that we had far to go and could not stop. They all came, grown and little folks to give us their traditional mark of welcome and friendship. Now we were great friends with them!

Mother Ambrose and I took our same places in the buggy as in the morning. Mrs. Skelley got in to drive. Father walked along with the others. We drove slowly so as to keep up with those on foot. The buggy and the ponies were covered with wild greens and flowers. We arrived at the hill opposite the St. Mary’s of the Quapaws Church and School. We uttered a big exclamation of relief as we knew then that we were only at a short distance from our destination. Those walking were especially happy to arrive to rest, though we all felt the fatigue of the day and were glad to get home.

The children had reached the house a good while already when we arrived; they were relating all the events of the day, giving an account of their adventure in the skiff.... As they ended the story, Father told them to help Mr. Bowlling with the cleaning and unhitching of the ponies and buggy as he had to go to Baxter Springs the next morning to get some provisions, and his mail. They went
A Trip to Quapaw in 1903

on as though they had not made a step that day, happy youth, while they were as tired as could be and soon had retired, yet not before playing tricks on one another.

Father had told us to sleep late and rest well the next day. He said his Mass early that morning and we were scarcely down stairs, had just taken our coffee that he was at the door already, back from Baxter Springs. He laughed at our surprise when he told us that his Mass had been said since 4 A. M. Felix Miles had gone with him to be able to take the early train and return to Vinita as he had promised his big brothers.

We went to Church to say our prayers and on our return helped to prepare the table. Breakfast was ready, all did honor to it; then all got together again to clean up and put everything in order. Father had left the buggy ready intending to go later with the boys to return the empty pop bottles to Baxter. We stayed home that morning helping with the preparations for dinner and other details then in our spare time did a little writing, taking notes of all the legends we had heard about the Devil's Promenade and other incidentals. At noon Father returned with the boys, loaded with bread, meat, canned goods, etc. Poor Father D’Haenens! he surely did not spare anything to make our stay of pleasant memory. He said he was to spend every cent of the fifty dollars Bishop Meerschaert had left him for our sojourn, yet we had brought so much that he feared he could not spend that amount so he said that there was only one thing for him to do and that was to keep the Sisters until the last cent was gone. But we felt convinced that he had even spent some of his own and yet was afraid he had not done enough.

At about one o'clock dinner was served. . . . After dinner we all went to take a nap until about three o'clock; we then got up refreshed ourselves and went down to enjoy a big freezer of ice cream and fine cakes. The children had gone to bathe and play in the creek down the hill but at Father's whistle they were soon in sight and back to get their share of the delicious treat, but as they were barefooted and not in their Sunday attire, Father sent them to eat their cream in the yard which was not minded in the least by the youngsters. After all had had their heart's content of the fine delicatessen we congratulated Father who had made the cream, the first we tasted without being cooked, then cleared everything and went to church for our visit, the recitation of the rosary, office and our meditation. . . .

When we had finished, . . . we came down and joined the others who were taking a walk down the hill. The water in the creek was so clear that Mrs. Skelley who had just returned also, suggested wading, which was adopted by all and in a jiffy shoes and stockings were off and all were enjoying the sport. We were alone, Father and the boys being in another direction, so we played just like
children in that creek. We then dried our feet on the grass, put back our stockings and shoes and returned to the school grounds refreshed, light and merry as birds.

Father called for supper, we took it cold even those who drank tea. The others enjoyed the rich, creamy milk.

We spent the evening on the gallery talking, joking and enjoying Father's talk as he related all about his happy days of college and at Louvain where he too played many an innocent trick. It was soon time to say our night prayers and retire. The next morning when the alarm went off no one felt like rising. But we braced ourselves and soon the sound of bells came to our ears. Father had collected as many as he could find and was ringing them in order to wake us up. But we were up already, then at the pitch of his voice he announced that in ten minutes he would say his Mass. "All right" came our answer "we'll be there" and we were too. We all received Holy Communion, being Wednesday, our day. After our thanksgiving we went home where breakfast was ready and served. Those who were to leave did not have much time to lose, consequently did not talk very much.

Our valises were brought down, we left the trunk for the other Sisters who were to leave a week later. The little hack was ready for us. Before leaving his house we thanked him [Father D'Haenens] for all his kindness, for all the pleasures he had procured us during our sojourn at the mission. "That's enough, that's enough" was his reply to all we said "the pleasure was mine as well as yours. I enjoyed you being here more than you did yourselves. I only wish you could come and take charge of my school." It was with great emotion and tears in our eyes that we uttered the word "Good Bye" which was to be a farewell for this world, awaiting the big "welcome" when we shall all meet on the other shore.

We told goodbye to Sisters Clare, Mechtilde, M. Agnes and Leo, to Teresa, Eddie and Johnnie, to our little Annie who wanted to follow us so as to see her dear papa; then, as I said above, Father got in the hack with us and drove us to Quapaw station where we arrived just on time for the train. We said a quick, last Adios to Father and got on where we bought our tickets from the conductor. At 10:30 A.M. we were in Vinita. Some of our children greeted us at the station, our faithful Willie Lemon was there also and took

---

20 Father D'Haenens was born in Belgium, near Ghent. He was educated in the American College of Louvain, which he entered in the autumn of 1897, and was ordained priest there July 15, 1900. The same year he came to Oklahoma and was appointed assistant at Vinita, where he stayed until November 26, 1901 when he became rector of the Indian Mission at Quapaw, Indian Territory.—The Orphans' Record, Vol. 1, No. 9 (September 1915), p. 270.

21 The Sisters were leaving Indian Territory to return to the Motherhouse at New Orleans, Louisiana.
charge of our baggage as he walked home with us. The Sisters and children named above remained one week longer and enjoyed trips through the country places around Quapaw, gathering wild flowers which they pressed for souvenir pictures, as some are found in this very copy.

Here ends the story of our delightful trip to Quapaw. I will love to read it from time to time and live again the happy hours spent on that beautiful Indian Territory Hill. It might interest also some friends who perchance may read it.

May our Good Lord and our Blessed Mother, St. Mary of the Quapaws, bless the dear Reverend Maurice D’Haenens, beloved pastor of those good and simple Indians! May they bless his flock and make his work fruitful among those souls confided to his care! God grant us the happiness of meeting our dear Bishop and all our devoted priests of the Territory here once more in this world but if this be denied us, may He reunite us all in Heaven where there will be no more adieus, no more separation.