

## Report for Diocesan Convention 2022 Missioner for Indigenous Engagement

Much of the inaugural year of this ministry has been devoted to study and research. The diocesan land acknowledgement, which addresses the impact of indigenous displacement and impact of slaveholding has been revised with some specifics to our geographic boundaries and approved by the Standing Committee.

The history of Native peoples within our geographical boundaries is rich and deep as the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, for it was our abundance of waterways that undoubtedly drew the first Indigenous people to hunt and settle here as early as possibly 9500 BCE, hunting mastodon and giant sloths.<sup>1</sup> By approximately 1000 CE, the great Mississippian civilization centered at Cahokia and St. Louis began to develop its influence westward along the Missouri as far as eastern Nebraska and along the Mississippi River as far north as southern Wisconsin and as far as South as where the Arkansas River meets the Mississippi. By the time de Soto and his forces reached southern Missouri in 1541, diseases introduced by the Europeans were already spreading in all directions; the Oneata culture that succeeded Cahokia is what these conquistadores encountered.<sup>2</sup> By 1673 Pere Marquette had made contacts with the Illini, who guided him and Louis Jolliet to the Missouri River and encountered Osage villages, as well as Otoe, Missouriia, and Ioways.<sup>3</sup> French traders arrived from the north and established trading posts and forts along waterways, including, of course, Ste. Genevieve and St. Louis, encountering Quapaw and Chickasaw in scattered places in the Bootheel region. These were the primary tribes lived or claimed hunting grounds within what are now the boundaries of the Diocese of Missouri, which was established in 1840, twenty years after statehood.

I am currently preparing a series of posts for Indigenous People's Month in November 2022. Other upcoming presentations in development touch upon Indigenous history, as well as issues around Indigenous peoples currently being addressed by the Episcopal Church, as well as our neighbors in Canada and throughout the Anglican Communion.

The Episcopal Church's expanding engagement and advocacy for Native issues is a growing development over the last several years. One ongoing area of education and advocacy regards the historical attempts at the mandated assimilation of Native children through our [support of boarding schools](#) in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, which often led to abuse, illness, and death. At least eight of these schools have been verified to have affiliations of some kind with the Episcopal Church. Episcopal leadership is also committed to engaging with Indigenous people regarding initiatives in [creation care](#) and environmental justice, as well as [anti-racism work](#). Resolutions passed at the 80<sup>th</sup> General Convention this summer in Baltimore that address Indigenous issues include A127, seeking truth-telling about the boarding school era; A140 supporting the creation of Indigenous Peoples' Day; A141 supporting the creation of liturgical materials for Indigenous people; D080 to provide for the members of the Diocese of Navajoland to elect their own bishops; and D081 highlighting the ongoing crisis of missing and murdered Native women and women of color; not to mention the

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<sup>1</sup> Carl H and Eleanor F. Chapman, *Indians and Archaeology of Missouri, revised edition* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1983), 25-28.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 91-97.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Dickey, *The People of the River's Mouth: In Search of the Missouri Indians* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011), 3-5, 33-37.

election of the first woman of Native ancestry, the Rev. Rachel Taber-Hamilton, as [vice president of the House of Deputies](#).

As the Diocese of Missouri inaugurates in this important work of remembrance, recognition, and reconciliation, we commit ourselves to ongoing listening, conversation, and expanding our engagement with our past, our present, and our future with our Indigenous siblings.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Rev. Leslie Scoopmire  
Missioner for Indigenous Engagement