Little Axe Indian History Class April 2, 1969

## HISTORY OF THE ABSENTEE SHAWNEES

The history of the Absentee division of the Shawnee tribe can be traced back to the years just following the Revolutionary War when various groups and bands of Shawnees began to leave their Ohic homeland and drift south and west. The Revolutionary War was important in the history of the Shawness and many other Indian tribes because it signified the establishment of a new nation, the United States, with a policy of westward expansion and the taking over of Indian lands. Before the Revolution, the British government had checked the expansion of white settlements into the Ohio River region and the region now contained in the states of Kentucky and Tennessee. But after the war the American were free to expand as they pleased and they began to pour into the western territories searching for new homes. All the Indian tribes, including the Shawnees, realized that their lands were endangered. The white men were going to cut down the forests, drive away the game, and build houses and towns all up and down the rich river valleys. way of life in this area was doomed. But nevertheless the Indians did not give up their homeland without a fierce struggle. A number of bloody wars were fought, but finally the combined Indian tribes were defrated by General Anthony Wayne. \_ At the resulting peace treaty of Greenville in 1795, nine Shawnees signed, including the famous (hief Bluejacket.

Some of the Shawness had already moved away from Thio before Wayne's victory. But in 1793 a large number of Shawness accepted the invitation of the Spanish government to settle near present Cape Girardeau, Missouri. This land was on the west side of the Mississippi River, and thus outside the territory of the new United States. After the treaty of Greenville many other Thio Shawness moved here. At this time the government of Spain was pursuing a policy of settling emigrent Indian tribes from the United States on its own morthern and eastern borders. The purpose of this was to prevent the expanish of the Americans into Spanish territory. Another reason was to enlist the aid of these Indians against the hostile Plains Indians, who often raided the Settlements in Texas and Louisiana. Around 1800 some of the Shawness began to leave the Cape Gira dead aron and move toward Texas. Later they were joined by other Shawness who can west to Texas with the conservative western Cherokees, via Arkensas:

Around 1800 and shortly thereby or Spain was eager to have triber such as the Shawness, Michapios, Delayares, Therokees, and Takers to settle on the north Texas border along the Red Pivir. Some Showlers way have reached Texas early in the 1300's. A fairly large group of Shirmars went to lexas with the storn Cherokees in 1817. These Cherokees had conditiving in the White River in what is now the state of Arkanshs. With flow years some Shawnees, Detawares, Kickapoor, and groups from other eastern tribes for the kee loader, thief Fowles, was also the leader of all these affiliated tribes. The large group of Indians under (mief Bowlia moved to Texas in 1817. Soon there was a phain of Indian villages on the Trinity, Neches, Angelina and Sabine Rivers is edstern Texas. In this region those affiliated Indians served as a buffer octor on the Texas settlers and the tald Indians of the Plains. When Merice obtained her independence from Scain in tel, she contimed the classicy of settling friendly design tribes more the borders the Enwhees originally came to Texas by permission of the government of Spain, but they remained by permission of the government of Mexico, and later, by permission of the Republic of Texas.