

Mapping the Imagined: Ideology, Cartography and the Mission to the Western Reserve

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This is an attempt to pull together research for the first chapter of my dissertation, "Moral Geography: The Plan of Union Mission to the Western Reserve." The main question it seeks to address is: what do missionaries and land surveyors have in common? My interest in this comparison is to examine the efforts of missionaries and land surveyors to describe and order the Western Reserve during the first years of settlement. Some of the questions that I am asking as I look at the material include: What conceptions of the region did missionaries and land surveyors have before they arrived? How did they organize the area to map and build religious institutions? How did they negotiate the reality of frontier life with the expectations of their sponsors back East? How did being in the Western Reserve alter their perceptions of the task in front of them?