

Native Americans: Deculturalization, Schooling, Globalization, and Inequality

Throughout the world from Australia to Africa to the Americas, indigenous peoples have been subjected to a variety of forces attempting to destroy their cultures. As discussed in Chapter 1, these destructive actions are based on a belief that some cultures and languages are superior to others. This has resulted in many cases in inequality of educational opportunity.

Also, as a result of globalization and imperialism, indigenous peoples have been forced to undergo extreme cultural change, resulting in many becoming socially and psychologically dysfunctional. Native Americans are part of the world's indigenous peoples. The International Labor Office defines indigenous peoples as "populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization."¹ The United Nations provides the following description:

Indigenous peoples are descendants of the original inhabitants of many lands, strikingly varied in their cultures, religions and patterns of social and economic organization. At least 5,000 indigenous groups can be distinguished by linguistic and cultural differences and by geographical separation. Some are hunters and gatherers, while others live in cities and participate fully in the culture of their national society. But all indigenous peoples retain a strong sense of their distinct cultures, the most salient feature of which is a special relationship to the land.²

Most indigenous peoples suffered at the hands of their conquerors, particularly in the Americas. Besides Native Americans in the United States and the First Nations in Canada, many indigenous peoples throughout Central and South America experienced some form of deculturalization. To rectify the attempts at deculturalization of indigenous peoples, including the Native Americans described in this chapter, *Article 27 of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989* promises that education for indigenous peoples "shall be developed and implemented in cooperation with them to address their special needs, and

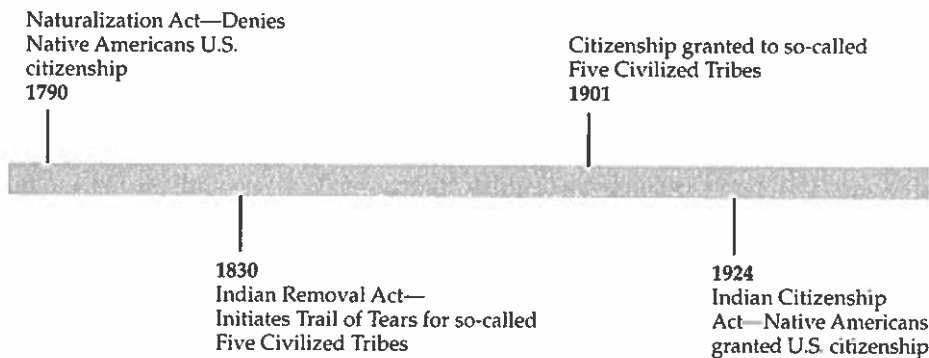
shall incorporate their histories, their knowledge and technologies, their value systems and their further social, economic and cultural aspirations."³ Article 27 is completely opposite to the actual educational policy of the U.S. government in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During that time, Native Americans' "histories, their knowledge and technologies, their value systems and their further social, economic and cultural aspirations" were never included in educational programs. In fact, education attempted to eradicate these cultural factors.

Likewise, most of the world's indigenous peoples have suffered some form of deculturalization. The brutality of these efforts was exemplified for me in 1999 when I was invited by the National Taiwan Normal University to visit local indigenous tribes who were attempting to salvage what was left of their cultural traditions. One photograph in a collection of the Taipei museum stands out in my mind as an example of cultural and linguistic genocide. It showed a Japanese soldier, during the period that Japan occupied Taiwan in the early twentieth century, beheading a member of a local tribe for refusing to abandon his indigenous language and learn Japanese. The photo showed the blood gushing from the neck as the head fell to the ground.

CITIZENSHIP IN THE NEW REPUBLIC

For Native Americans, the process of deculturalization was accompanied by a denial of U.S. citizenship. The Naturalization Act of 1790 excluded Native Americans from U.S. citizenship. This was in keeping with the belief that the survival of the republic depended on a homogenous citizenry of "whites." At the time, Native Americans were classified as "domestic foreigners." Consequently, because of the 1790 legislation, they could not seek naturalized citizenship because they were not "white."⁴ In 1867, Congress created the Indian Peace Commission, which effectively made the requirement for U.S. citizenship for Native Americans, in the words of historian Rogers Smith, the "repudiation of native religions and ways of life, and acceptance of middle-class American middle-class Christianity with its attended customs."⁵ By the end of the nineteenth century, attitudes began to change as some Native American nations were deculturalized and adopted European culture. As I will explain, the so-called Five Civilized Tribes were among the first Native Americans to be granted citizenship in 1901.⁶

The granting of citizenship to all Native Americans did not occur until 1924, when Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act. This legislation authorized "the Secretary of the Interior to issue certificates of citizenship to Indians."⁷ After winning the Indian wars and confiscating most Native American lands, the U.S. Congress magnanimously declared, "That all non-citizen Indians born within the territorial limits of the United States be, and they are hereby declared to be, citizens of the United States."⁸ Therefore, in 1924, Native Americans gained citizenship while immigrant Asians were still denied naturalized citizenship.



Native American Citizenship Time Line

THOMAS L. MCKENNEY: THE CULTURAL POWER OF SCHOOLING

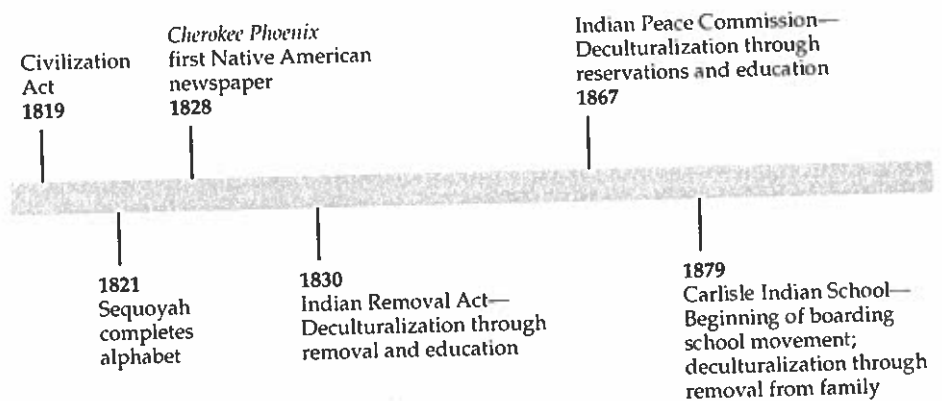
Thomas McKenney, the first head of the Office of Indian Affairs, targeted the Five Civilized Tribes for the process of deculturalization. He believed in the power of schooling to culturally transform Native Americans. His opinion reflected the growing conviction among many European Americans that education was the key to social control and improvement of society. Born into a Quaker family on 21 March 1785, Thomas L. McKenney's religious values were reflected in policies stressing peace and Christianity during the 14 years of his service as superintendent of Indian trade and, after that office was abolished in 1823, as head of the newly created Office of Indian Affairs from 1824 to 1830.⁹

A decade before the common-school movement, McKenney's ideas on the power of schooling were enacted by Congress in the Civilization Act of 1819. In the 1820s, McKenney advanced the argument that the creation of tribal school systems operated by white missionary teachers would culturally transform Native Americans in one generation. This extreme belief in the power of the school to change and control societies was later reflected in the thinking of common-school reformers in the 1830s and the rise of public schools.

Conceptualizing Indians as children, McKenney believed the key to civilizing them was schooling. Consequently, shortly after being appointed superintendent of Indian trade in 1816, McKenney's interests shifted from trade as a means of cultural transformation to the use of schools. By 1819, McKenney was able to convince Congress to pass the Civilization Fund Act to provide money for the support of schools among Indian tribes. Reflecting on his effort to gain approval of the legislation, McKenney wrote, "I did not doubt then, nor do I now, the capacity of the Indian for the highest attainments in civilization, in the arts and religion, but I was satisfied that no adequate plan had ever been adopted for this great reformation."¹⁰

Just prior to the adoption of the Civilization Fund Act, McKenney recounts, it appeared "to me to be propitious for the making of the experiment."¹¹ McKenney considered the introduction of schools into Indian tribes as an "experiment" in what I call ideological management. Could schools "civilize" Native Americans? Could schools bring about a cultural transformation? At the time, McKenney didn't consider the possibility that some tribal members might resent and resist this attempt at cultural transformation. He believed that the time was right for the experiment because of relative peace with the tribes and, besides, "there were now several missionary stations already in operation, though on a small scale, all of them furnishing proof that a plan commensurate to the object, would reform and save, and bless this long neglected, and downtrodden people."¹² The Civilization Fund Act of 1819 authorized the president to "employ capable persons of good moral character, to instruct them [Indians] in the mode of agriculture suited to their situation; and for teaching their children in reading, writing, and arithmetic." The legislation provided an annual sum of \$10,000 to be used by the president to fund the establishment of schools. The legislation specifically indicated that the funds were to be used with tribes "adjoining the frontier settlements of the United States." In practice, a large percentage of the money funded missionaries to set up schools among the Choctaws and Cherokees.¹³

By the late 1820s, McKenney was advocating a final solution to the problem of the southern tribes that involved their removal to lands west of the Mississippi for their protection and "civilization." After negotiating in 1827 with the Chickasaw Indians for their removal west of the Mississippi, McKenney wrote Secretary of War James Barbour that after removal the southern Indians should be guaranteed their lands in the west and "schools should be distributed over all their country. The children should be taken into these, and instructed . . . [in] reading, writing and arithmetic, in mechanics and the arts; and the girls in all the business of the domestic duties."¹⁴



Native American Education Time Line (Prior to Civil Rights Movement)

Thinking of Indians as children who only needed to be protected from evil and sent to school, he concluded that under the conditions of isolation and education Indians could be civilized in one generation. "Now can anyone doubt," McKenney wrote, "that this system [schools in Indian Territory] would not lift them in a single generation to a level with ourselves?"¹⁵

THE MISSIONARY EDUCATORS

There was no objection to the U.S. government subsidizing Protestant missionary educators under the provisions of the Civilization Act. From the perspective of the early twenty-first century, government support of missionaries might be considered a violation of the First Amendment prohibition against government support of religion. But, for most European Americans in the early nineteenth century, public education and Protestantism went hand-in-hand. Throughout the nineteenth century, most educators did not think it was strange to begin the public school day with a prayer and a reading from a Protestant Bible. In the minds of most white Protestants in the early nineteenth century, it probably appeared logical and correct to use missionary educators to "civilize" Native Americans, because "civilizing" included conversion to Christianity.

In the United States, Protestant churches organized to civilize Native Americans and to convert the entire non-Christian world. In the early nineteenth century, missionary educators took the message of Protestantism to Asia, Africa, and the South Pacific. In 1810, the Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches founded the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). The ABCFM had a global mission and began sending missionaries abroad and to Native American tribes in 1812. In the minds of missionaries, Native Americans were foreign "heathen."¹⁶

Presbyterian missionaries sponsored by the ABCFM, and later the Board of Foreign Missions, believed that missionary work involved the manifest destiny of Anglo-Saxon culture to be spread around the world. The concept of manifest destiny included a belief that it was God's will that the U.S. government extend its power across the continent and over all Native American tribes. The Board of Foreign Missions believed it was proper for the U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs to aid missionary efforts, because they believed the spread of republican government to Indian nations required the spread of Protestantism and Anglo-Saxon culture.¹⁷

Consider, for instance, the Reverend James Ramsey's description of his speech at a Choctaw school in 1846: "I showed them [on a map] that the people who speak the English language, and who occupied so small a part of the world, and possessed the greatest part of its wisdom and knowledge; that knowledge they could thus see for themselves was power; and that power was to be obtained by Christianity alone."¹⁸ Then he told them that the key to their success would be to continue the practice of establishing religious schools. In this way, they could share in the glory of Anglo-Saxon culture and Christianity.

The Presbyterian missionaries sent by the ABCFM had more influence on the leadership of Native American tribes than other missionary educators. Presbyterians believed that conversion of the tribal leadership would result in Christianity and civilization trickling down to other tribal members. In contrast, Baptists and Methodists believed that their work should begin with conversion of the common full-blood Indian.¹⁹

All three religious denominations emphasized the importance of changing traditional customs of Native Americans while teaching reading and writing. For instance, the Presbyterian missionary Cyrus Kingsbury, called the Apostle to the Choctaws, wrote:

It is our intention to embrace in their [Native American] education, that practical industry, and that literary, moral and religious instruction, which may qualify them for useful members of society; and for the exercise of those moral principles, and that genuine piety, which form the basis of true happiness.²⁰

In the words of historian Michael Coleman, "These Presbyterians could accept nothing less than the total rejection of the tribal past, and the total transformation of each individual Indian, a cultural destruction and regeneration to be brought about by the Gospel of Jesus Christ."²¹

Similar to the Presbyterians, the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Kentucky Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen, and other Protestant missionary organizations defined as their goal the replacement of Native American culture with the culture of white Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. While many Native Americans had only asked for literacy, they received an education designed to bring about their cultural and religious conversion.

LANGUAGE AND NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURES

The relationship between language and culture is evident in the differences between missionary efforts to develop written Native American languages and the creation of a written Cherokee language by Sequoyah. Missionaries wanted to develop written Native American languages not as a means of preserving Native American history and religions, but so they could translate religious tracts to teach Protestant Anglo-Saxon culture. Teaching of English was also considered a means of cultural transformation. Moravian educator John Gambold wrote, "It is indispensably necessary for their preservation that they should learn our Language and adopt our Laws and Holy Religion."²²

In contrast, Sequoyah's development of a written Cherokee language was for the purpose of preserving Cherokee culture. Missionaries reacted negatively to Sequoyah's invention because it threatened their efforts. Reverend Gambold wrote, "The study of their language would in a great measure prove but time and labor lost. . . . It seems desirable that their Language, Customs, Manner of Thinking should be forgotten."²³

In 1821, Sequoyah, a mixed-blood Cherokee whose English name was George Guess, returned to the Cherokee Nation from Arkansas with a Cherokee alphabet using 86 characters of his invention. Sequoyah was born in a small Cherokee village in Tennessee, served in the War of 1812, and joined a group of Cherokees in 1819 who immigrated to Arkansas. Sequoyah worked 12 years on the development of his alphabet. He was illiterate and did not speak English. Consequently, his approach to developing a written language was different from that of a literate missionary using English or another European language to render the Cherokee language into a written form. While he probably got the idea of having a written language from Europeans, Sequoyah's invention was based on his creation of characters to represent different sounds in the Cherokee language.²⁴

The genius of Sequoyah's alphabet was that because each of the 86 characters matched a particular sound in the Cherokee language, it was possible for a Cherokee to quickly become literate in Cherokee. With diligence, a person speaking Cherokee could learn the alphabet in 1 day and learn to read Cherokee in 1 week. A Moravian missionary described the following changes resulting from Sequoyah's invention:

The alphabet was soon recognized as an invaluable invention. . . . In little over a year, thousands of hitherto illiterate Cherokees were able to read and write their own language, teaching each other in cabins or by the roadside. The whole nation became an academy for the study of the system. Letters were written back and forth between the Cherokees in the east and those who had emigrated to the lands in Arkansas.²⁵

The future editor of the first Native American newspaper, Elias Boudinot, recognized the importance of Sequoyah's invention and decided to publish a newspaper in English and Cherokee. While requesting funds in 1826 for his newspaper, Boudinot told the congregation at the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia that one of the most important things to happen to the tribe was the "invention of letters." He pleaded for funds for a printing press "with the types . . . to be composed of English letters and Cherokee characters. Those characters," he informed the congregation, "have now become extensively used in the nation; their religious songs are written in them; there is an astonishing eagerness in people of all classes and ages to acquire a knowledge of them."²⁶

After his address in Philadelphia, Boudinot headed to Boston to collect the newly cast type in Sequoyah's symbols. He returned to the Cherokee Nation, and on 21 February 1828 he published the first Native American newspaper, the *Cherokee Phoenix*, with columns written in English and Cherokee. Of primary importance for full-bloods, the newspaper published Cherokee laws in both English and Cherokee.

Though missionaries had struggled for years to create a written Cherokee language, they were not receptive to Sequoyah's invention. One important reason for their reluctance to embrace the new alphabet was that it required a knowledge of spoken Cherokee. None of the missionary educators had been able to learn Cherokee, so Sequoyah's symbols were of little use to them.

In addition, many missionaries feared that if Cherokees learned to read and write in their own language, then they would never learn English. For most missionaries, learning English was essential for the purpose of destroying traditional Cherokee culture. Therefore, while Sequoyah's invention proved a uniting force among full-blood Cherokees, it did not become a language of the missionary schools established on Cherokee lands in the East.

INDIAN REMOVAL AND CIVILIZATION PROGRAMS

By the time of Andrew Jackson's election to the presidency and his First Annual Message to Congress in December 1829, he had concluded that civilization policies originating with presidents Washington and Jefferson, and extended by the Civilization Act of 1819, had failed to educate southern tribes to the point where they would want to sell their lands. He worried that education was resulting in Indians gaining the tools to resist the policies of the U.S. government. Gaining the ability to resist was precisely why the Cherokees had decided literacy was important.

In his First Annual Message to Congress, Jackson devoted considerable space to outlining his arguments for Indian removal to lands west of the Mississippi.²⁷ One of the crucial parts of Jackson's argument was the right of white settlers to Indian lands. Previously, President Washington argued that Indian lands should be acquired by treaties and purchases. Now, President Jackson proposed a combination of treaties and exchange of lands for land west of the Mississippi. In addition, Jackson maintained that white settlers had rights to Indian lands that were not cultivated. In other words, he only recognized as legitimate claims by Indians for land on which they had made improvements. Claims could not be made for land, in Jackson's words, "on which they have neither dwelt nor made improvements, merely because they have seen them from the mountain or passed them in the chase."²⁸

In proposing to set aside land west of the Mississippi for the relocation of Indians, Jackson promised to give each tribe control over the land and the right to establish any form of government. The only role of the U.S. government, Jackson argued, would be to preserve peace among the tribes and on the frontier. In this territory, Jackson declared, the "benevolent may endeavor to teach them the arts of civilization, and, by promoting union and harmony among them, to raise up an interesting commonwealth, destined to perpetuate the race and to attest the humanity and justice of this Government."²⁹ The key to fulfilling the humanitarian goals of removal would be education. In its final version, the Indian Removal Act of 28 May 1830 authorized the president to set aside lands west of the Mississippi for the exchange of Indian lands east of the Mississippi. Furthermore, the president was authorized to provide assistance to the tribes for their removal and resettlement on new lands.

In one of the most infamous acts in human history, entire nations of people were forced from their lands. Called the Trail of Tears, Indians died

of cholera, exposure, contaminated food, and the hazards of frontier travel. Witnessing the removal of the Choctaws from Mississippi, missionary William Goode wrote, "Melancholy and dejected with their compulsory removal, years elapsed without much effort for improvement." He told the story of the drunken Choctaw who threw himself into the last boat leaving for Indian Territory shouting, "Farewell white man! Steal my Land!"³⁰ Near his home in 1832, Horatio Cushman recalls the sounds from the encampment of Choctaws waiting for removal: ". . . there came, borne upon the morn and evening breeze from every point of the vast encampment, faintly, yet distinctly, the plaintive sound of weeping."³¹

After visiting the encampment, Cushman recorded this bleak portrait:

The venerable old men . . . expressed the majesty of silent grief; yet there came now and then a sound that here and there swelled from a feeble moan to a deep, sustained groan—rising and falling till it died away just as it began . . . while the women and children, seated upon the ground, heads covered with shawls and blankets and bodies swinging forward and backward . . . sad tones of woe echoing far back from the surrounding but otherwise silent forests; while the young and middle-aged warriors, now subdued and standing around in silence profound, gazed into space . . . here and there was heard an inarticulate moan seeking expression in some snatch of song, which announced its leaving a broken heart.³²

The Cherokees faced the horror of physical roundup by the U.S. Army. By 1838, only 2,000 of 17,000 Cherokees made the trip west. The remaining 15,000 did not seem to believe that they would be driven out of their country.³³

In 1838, General Winfield Scott, with a combined military force of 7,000, was placed in charge of the removal process. General Scott issued a proclamation that within a month every Cherokee man, woman, and child should be headed west. Scott's troops moved through the countryside surrounding houses, removing the occupants, looting and burning the houses, and forcing the families into stockades. Men and women were run down in the fields and forests as the troops viciously pursued their prey. Sometimes the troops found children at play by the side of the road and herded them into stockades without the knowledge of their parents. Besides stealing directly from the Cherokees, the troops and white outlaws drove off cattle and other livestock. The Cherokees placed in stockades were left destitute. A volunteer from Georgia, who later served as a colonel in the Confederate Army, said, "I fought through the Civil War and have seen men shot to pieces and slaughtered by thousands, but the Cherokee removal was the cruelest work I ever knew."³⁴

The removal of tribes to Indian Territory raised the issue of the legal status of tribal governments and, as part of the operation of government, tribal school systems. This issue was clarified in a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 1831 involving the extension of the laws of the state of Georgia over the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokees argued that this was illegal because they were a foreign nation. The question, as posed in the decision of the Court, was: "Is the Cherokee nation a foreign state in the sense in which that term is used in the Constitution?"³⁵ The Court argued that the section of the Constitution dealing with the

regulation of commerce made a distinction between foreign nations, states, and Indian tribes. Consequently, Indian tribes are not foreign countries, but they are political entities distinct from states. In the words of the Court, Indian tribes are "domestic dependent nations. . . they are in a state of pupilage. Their relation to the United States resembles that of a ward to his guardian."³⁶

Once settled in Indian Territory, the tribes quickly engaged in the business of organizing governments and establishing school systems. Because of their segregation in Indian Territory, the tribal school systems were only for tribal children. In addition, in one of the many cultural and racial twists in history, because the tribes owned enslaved Africans, the tribes established segregated schools for freed Africans after the Civil War. One example of a successful Native American school system was the one created by the Choctaws who sent their best graduates to the East to attend college. In 1842, the ruling council of the Choctaw Nation provided for the establishment of a comprehensive system of schools. A compulsory attendance law was enacted by the Choctaw Nation in 1889.

The Choctaw schools were developed in cooperation with the missionaries. In this regard, Superintendent of Indian Affairs Thomas McKenney's dream of establishing schools in Indian Territory became a reality. The Spencer Academy was opened in 1844 (my uncle, Pat Spring, died in the fire that burned down the academy in 1896) and the Armstrong Academy in 1846. By 1848, the Choctaws had nine boarding schools paid for by tribal funds. Moreover, a system of day, or neighborhood, schools was organized, and by 1860 these schools enrolled 500 students. After the Civil War, the Choctaws established a system of segregated schools for the children of freed slaves.³⁷

An adult literacy program was also developed by missionaries through a system of Saturday and Sunday schools. Families would camp near a school or church to receive instruction in arithmetic, reading, and writing. Instruction was bilingual in Choctaw and English. While there were not many texts in Choctaw, missionaries did translate many portions of the Bible, hymn books, moral lectures, and other religious tracts into Choctaw.³⁸

Many teachers were Choctaws educated in tribal schools. The teachers were examined in the common-school subjects and the Choctaw constitution. Teachers followed a course of study modeled on that of neighboring states and taught in English, using the *Choctaw Definer* to help children translate from Choctaw into English.

The Spencer Academy for boys and the New Hope Academy for girls were the leading schools. The children who attended these schools were selected by district trustees until 1890 and after that by county judges. Selection was based on "promptness in attendance and their capacity to learn fast."³⁹ Only one student could be selected from a family.

In 1885, the tribal council removed the two academies from missionary management and placed them under the control of a board of trustees. In 1890, a school law was enacted that required male teachers at the Spencer Academy to be college graduates and to have the ability to teach Greek, Latin, French, and German; female teachers at the New Hope Academy were

to have graduated from a college or normal school and be able to teach two modern languages besides English. The faculty of both schools included white and Choctaw instructors.

The success of the Choctaw educational system was paralleled by that of the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokees were given land just north of the Choctaw Nation. In 1841, after removal, the Cherokee National Council organized a national system of schools with 11 schools in eight districts, and in 1851 it opened academies for males and females. By the 1850s, the majority of teachers in these schools were Cherokee. Jon Reyhner and Jeanne Eder write, "By 1852 the Cherokee Nation had a better common school system than the neighboring states of Arkansas and Missouri."⁴⁰

The success of the Choctaw and Cherokee school systems was highlighted in a congressional report released in 1969. The report noted: "In the 1800s, for example, the Choctaw Indians of Mississippi and Oklahoma [Indian Territory] operated about 200 schools and academies and sent numerous graduates to eastern colleges."⁴¹ The report went on to praise the Cherokee schools. In the words of the report, "Using bilingual teachers and Cherokee texts, the Cherokees, during the same period, controlled a school system which produced a tribe almost 100% *literate* [emphasis added]."⁴² The report concluded, "Anthropologists have determined that as a result of this school system, the literacy level in English of western Oklahoma Cherokees was higher than the white populations of either Texas or Arkansas."⁴³

NATIVE AMERICANS: RESERVATIONS AND BOARDING SCHOOLS*

As white settlers moved into western lands in the latter part of the nineteenth century, leaders in the U.S. government were forced to reconsider their relationships to tribes and their attempts to "civilize" Indians. First, there was the problem of designating land on which to settle displaced tribes. Unlike in the 1820s and 1830s, there was a realization that white settlement would eventually cover most of the continent. In 1858, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles E. Mix, in his annual report, declared that the U.S. government had made several serious errors in dealing with the southeastern tribes, including "the assignment to them of too great an extent of country, to be held in common."⁴⁴ Holding large tracts of land in common, according to Commissioner Mix, limited the attempts to civilize the Indian because it prevented Indians from learning the value of separate and independent property.

Reservations and allotment programs were the responses to the land issue. The reservation system combined with education was considered by

*I would like to thank the librarians and staff at the Huntington Free Library of the National Museum of the American Indian for their help in finding material on the education of Native Americans.

the U.S. government as the best method of dealing with what Commissioner of Indian Affairs Luke Lea called the "wilder tribes."⁴⁵ In the *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* in 1850, Commissioner Lea argued that certain Indian tribes, specifically the Sioux and Chippewas, had an "insatiable passion for war" and that it was "necessary that they be placed in positions where they can be controlled."⁴⁶ Once concentrated in reservations where they could be controlled, the tribes would be compelled to remain until they proved to be civilized. Under this system, the federal government was to supply agricultural implements to aid in this process of civilization.

Provisions for manual labor schools on reservations were specified in Commissioner Mix's report of 1858. Mix argued that reservation sites should be selected that would minimize contact with whites and provide opportunities for Indians to learn agricultural skills. To prepare Indians for agriculture, manual labor schools were to be established that would teach basic skills in reading, writing, arithmetic, and agricultural skills. Of particular importance, according to Commissioner Mix, was the role of manual labor schools in molding the character of future generations of Indians in what he called "habits of industry." To carry out this enterprise, Commissioner Mix recommended that a military force should remain in the vicinity of the reservations "to aid in controlling the Indians."⁴⁷

Adding to the problem for government officials, western Indians displayed a great deal more resistance to white incursions onto their lands. This resulted in Indian wars across the plains of the West during the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1867, Congress created an Indian Peace Commission to deal with the warring tribes. The Indian Peace Commission advocated different methods for the education and civilization of Indians. Nathaniel Taylor, chairman of the Peace Commission, told Crow Indians at Fort Laramie: "Upon the reservations you select, we . . . will send you teachers for your children."⁴⁸ According to Jon Reyhner and Jeanne Eder, this promise was embodied in the Treaty of Fort Laramie with the Sioux and their allies.⁴⁹

The members of the Peace Commission were not entirely satisfied with the traditional attempts to educate Indians, particularly with regard to language. The Indian Peace Commission report of 1868 states that differences in language were a major source of the continuing friction between whites and Indians. Therefore, according to the report, an emphasis on the teaching of English would be a major step in reducing hostilities and civilizing Native Americans. In the words of the report: "Through sameness of language is produced sameness of sentiment and thought; customs and habits are moulded [sic] and assimilated in the same way, and thus in process of time the differences producing trouble would have been gradually obliterated."⁵⁰

Replacing the use of native languages with English, destroying Indian customs, and teaching allegiance to the U.S. government became the major educational policies of the U.S. government toward Indians during the latter part of the nineteenth century. An important part of these educational policies was the boarding school, designed to remove children from their families at an early age and thereby isolate them from the language and customs of their

parents and tribes. These boarding schools were different from those operated by the Choctaws in Indian Territory, which were somewhat elite institutions within their educational system and were not designed to destroy Indian customs and languages.

In *A History of Indian Education*, Jon Reyhner and Jeanne Eder demonstrate the connections between the establishment of boarding schools for Indians and the history of black education in the South. The first off-reservation boarding school was the Carlisle Indian School, established in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in 1879. The founder of the school, Richard Pratt, had commanded an African American cavalry in Indian Territory between 1867 and 1875. According to Reyhner and Eder, Pratt's interest in founding a boarding school was sparked when he took 17 adult Indian prisoners of war to Hampton Institute.⁵¹ Hampton Institute played a major role in the development of African American education in the South. Booker T. Washington was educated at Hampton and used it as a model when he established Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in 1881. The primary purpose of Hampton was to prepare freed slaves to be teachers who could instill work values in other freed slaves. In the words of historian James Anderson, "The primary aim [of Hampton] was to work the prospective teachers long and hard so that they would embody, accept, and preach an ethic of hard toil or the 'dignity of labor.'"⁵²

Pratt not only wanted to instill the work ethic in Indian children but also, as he told a Baptist group, immerse "Indians in our civilization and when we get them under [hold] them there until they are thoroughly soaked."⁵³ The slogan for the Carlisle Indian School reflected the emphasis on changing the cultural patterns of Indians: "To civilize the Indian, get him into civilization. To keep him civilized, let him stay."⁵⁴

Pratt's educational philosophy embodied the principles behind the allotment movement of the latter part of the nineteenth century. The allotment program, applied to the Five Civilized Tribes with the breakup of Indian Territory, was designed to distribute commonly held tribal property to individual Indians. It was assumed that individual ownership would instill the capitalistic values of white civilization in Indians. Tribal ownership was viewed as a form of socialism that was antithetical to the values of white American society. Also, the allotment program was another method of dealing with the Indian land problem. In the *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* in 1881, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Hiram Price criticized previous attempts to civilize Indians because they did not teach the necessity of labor. This could be accomplished, Price argued, only when individual Indians were made responsible for their own economic welfare. He contended that this could be done by allotting Indians "a certain number of acres of land which they may call their own."⁵⁵

Pratt attacked the tribal way of life as socialistic and contrary to the values of "civilization." Reflecting the values of economic individualism, Pratt complained about missionary groups who did not "advocate the disintegration of the tribes and the giving to individual Indians rights and opportunities among

civilized people."⁵⁶ He wrote to the commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1890, "Pandering to the tribe and its socialism as most of our Government and mission plans do is the principal reason why the Indians have not advanced more and are not advancing as rapidly as they ought."⁵⁷

Between the founding of the Carlisle Indian School in 1879 and 1905, 25 nonreservation boarding schools were opened throughout the country.⁵⁸ It is important to emphasize the nonreservation location of the boarding schools because of the educational philosophy that Indian children should be removed from family and tribal influences. It is also important to note that both nonreservation boarding schools and schools on reservations were required to teach English. In the *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* in 1887, Commissioner J.D.C. Atkins ordered the exclusive use of English at all Indian schools. Atkins pointed out that this policy was consistent with the requirement that only English be taught in public schools in territories acquired by the United States from Mexico, Spain, and Russia. Comparing the conquest of Indians to the German occupation of the French provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, where it was required that German rather than French be used in the schools, Atkins declared, "No unity or community of feeling can be established among different peoples unless they are brought to speak the same languages, and thus become imbued with like ideas of duty."⁵⁹

It was also hoped that Indian children would transfer their allegiance from their tribal governments to the federal government, thereby building a sense of community with the white population. Consequently, in 1889, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan issued "Instructions to Indian Agents in Regard to Inculcation of Patriotism in Indian Schools," which required that an American flag be flown in front of every Indian school. The instructions stated, "The 'Stars and Stripes' should be a familiar object, and students should be taught to reverence the flag as a symbol of their nation's power and protection."⁶⁰ In addition, the instructions required the teaching of American history and the principles of the U.S. government. There was no suggestion in the instructions that the history of Native Americans and their governments be taught in the schools. Also, the instructions called for the teaching of patriotic songs and the public recitation of "patriotic selections."⁶¹

In one of the more interesting uses of celebrating national holidays as a method of building support for government policies, Commissioner Morgan's instructions required that schools inculcate in students allegiance to government policies designed to break up tribal lands. After a sentence requiring the celebration of Washington's birthday, Decoration Day, the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, the instructions stated: "It will also be well to observe the anniversary of the day upon which the 'Dawes bill' for giving to Indians allotments of land in severalty become a law, viz, February 8, 1887, and to use that occasion to impress upon Indian youth the enlarged scope and opportunity given them by this law and the new obligations which it imposes."⁶²

In 1889, Commissioner Morgan wrote a bulletin on "Indian Education" that outlined the goals and policies of Indian schools. The bulletin was distributed by the U.S. Bureau of Education with an introduction written by the commissioner of education, William T. Harris. In the introduction, Harris praised what he called "the new education for our American Indians," particularly the effort "to obtain control of the Indian at an early age, and to seclude him as much as possible from the tribal influences."⁶³ Harris singled out the boarding school as an important step in changing the character of American Indians. Harris argued that it was necessary to save the American Indian, but, he wrote, "We cannot save him and his patriarchal or tribal institution both together. To save him we must take him up into our civilization."⁶⁴

Commissioner Morgan opened the bulletin with a statement of general principles of education for what he identified as a Native American population of 250,000 with a school population of 50,000. These general principles called for systematizing Indian education, increasing its availability to Indian children, and making it compulsory for all Native American children to attend school. In addition, Indian education was to place special stress on vocational training for jobs and on teaching English. With regard to instruction in English, the bulletin states, "Only English should be allowed to be spoken, and only English-speaking teachers should be employed in schools supported wholly or in part by the Government."⁶⁵ Moreover, the general principles stressed the importance of teaching allegiance to the U.S. government. Also, Morgan urged the bringing together of the members of many different tribes in boarding schools as a means of reducing antagonisms among them.

After outlining the general principles of Indian education, Morgan turned to the issue of the high school. Morgan noted that the government at that time was not supporting high schools for American Indians but only nonreservation boarding schools, reservation boarding schools, and day schools. Morgan favored the introduction of high schools for Indians as a means of breaking "the shackles of . . . tribal provincialism."⁶⁶ In advocating high schools, Morgan stressed the character-training qualities of a secondary education. He stated, "The whole course of training [high school] should be fairly saturated with moral ideas, fear of God, and respect for the rights of others; love of truth and fidelity to duty; personal purity, philanthropy, and patriotism."⁶⁷

Similar to the goals he gave for a high school education, he argued that grammar schools should stress systematic habits, "fervent patriotism," and the duties of citizens. Morgan stressed the character-training aspects of grammar schools, which he felt should develop an independent economic person as compared to an Indian dependent on communal tribal living. Reflecting the reality of how Indian schools were conducted, Morgan stated that in grammar school: "No pains should be spared to teach them that their future must depend chiefly upon their own exertions, character, and endeavors. . . . In the sweat of their faces must they eat bread."⁶⁸

Morgan also advocated early childhood education as a method of counteracting the influence of the Indian home. Similar to the boarding school, early childhood education would help to strip away the influences of Indian culture and language. Morgan states, "Children should be taken at as early an age as possible, before camp life has made an indelible stamp upon them."⁶⁹

With hindsight, one might consider this plan of Indian education as one of the great endeavors to destroy cultures and languages and replace them with another culture and language. The key was the removal of children from the influences of family and tribe and their placement in educational institutions where they would not be allowed to speak their native languages or practice native customs. As part of this educational effort, there was a concerted determination through a forced program of patriotism to have Indians switch their loyalties from their tribal governments to the federal government.*

The conditions in boarding schools lived up to Morgan's previously quoted edict: "In the sweat of their faces must they eat bread." During the 1920s, a variety of investigators of Indian schools were horrified by the conditions they found. At the Rice Boarding School in Arizona, Red Cross investigators found that children were fed "bread, black coffee, and syrup for breakfast; bread and boiled potatoes for dinner; more bread and boiled potatoes for supper."⁷⁰ In addition to a poor diet, overcrowded conditions contributed to the spread of tuberculosis and trachoma.

Using a paramilitary form of organization, boarding schools were supported by the labor of the students. As early as the fifth grade, boys and girls attended classes for half the day and worked for the other half. As part of the plan to teach agricultural methods, children raised crops and tended farm animals. The children were constantly drilled and given little time for recreation. They were awakened at 5 a.m. and marched to the dining room, then marched back to the dormitories and classrooms. At the Albuquerque Indian School, students marched in uniforms with dummy rifles. For punishment, children were flogged with ropes, and some boarding schools contained their own jails. In the 1920s, anthropologist Oliver La Farge called the Indian schools "penal institutions—where little children were sentenced to hard labor for a term of years to expiate the crime of being born of their mothers."⁷¹

THE MERIAM REPORT

The publication of the *Meriam Report* in 1928 began the process that ended this massive educational effort to change the language and culture of an entire people. The report was based on investigations conducted in 1926 by the Institute

*The emphasis on patriotism is also reflected in the first rule of Indian school service: "1. There shall be a flagstaff at each school, and in suitable weather the flag of the United States shall be hoisted each morning and taken down at sunset." From Department of the Interior, United States Indian Service, *Rules for the Indian School Service 1913* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1913), p. 3.

for Government Research at Johns Hopkins University at the request of the Secretary of Interior, Hubert Work. The report was known by the name of the principal investigator, Louis Meriam, and it was published as *The Problem of Indian Administration*.⁷²

The report stated that the most fundamental need in Indian education was a change in government attitude. The report accurately stated that education in "the past has proceeded largely on the theory that it is necessary to remove the Indian child as far as possible from his home environment."⁷³ Completely reversing this educational philosophy, the report stated that "the modern point of view in education and social work lays stress on upbringing in the natural setting of home and family life."⁷⁴

The report went on to argue that the routine and discipline of Indian schools destroyed initiative and independence. In addition, the report criticized the provision of only half a day of schooling and of working students at heavy labor at a young age. In particular, the report was critical of boarding schools and the isolation of children from their families and communities.⁷⁵

Ironically—from the standpoint of the previous history of Indian education—federal policy after the issuance of the *Meriam Report* stressed community day schools and the support of native cultures. The report argued that community day schools would serve the purpose of integrating education with reservation life. During the 1930s, Indian education placed stress on community schools and the rebuilding of the cultural life of American Indians. As I will discuss in a later chapter, these policies changed dramatically in the 1950s and 1960s with attempts to terminate tribes and with Indian participation in the civil rights movement.⁷⁶ In the end, the legacy of the allotment program and the educational efforts of the latter part of the nineteenth century was increasing illiteracy among the Five Civilized Tribes of Indian Territory and the destruction of family life and Indian customs on the reservations. For the rest of the century, American Indians would attempt to rebuild what the federal government had destroyed.

CONCLUSION

During periods of conquest, education provided Europeans with a means to cultural and linguistic genocide of Native Americans. By defining Native Americans as the culturally and racially inferior other, Europeans could justify the Indian wars and the resulting expropriation of lands. The defeat of Native Americans opened vast territories for European Americans' exploitation.

The problem for the U.S. government was ensuring that Native American armies would never again challenge the incursion of white settlers. To avoid any future challenges from the vanquished, the U.S. government instituted educational policies of deculturalization. To a certain extent, these educational policies were effective. However, continued resistance by Native Americans eventually led to demands on the U.S. government in the latter part of the twentieth century for restoration of tribal cultures and languages. The federal government responded positively to these demands only when it appeared that Native Americans were no longer a military threat.

NOTES

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23. *Ibid.*
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