CHILOCCO INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL: TOOL FOR ASSIMILATION, HOME FOR INDIAN YOUTH

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Chilocco Indian School, which opened in 1884, served the educational needs of American Indian students from all over the United States for nearly one hundred years. Its story is one of students and faculty working together to produce what was considered by many of its students one of the finest non-reservation federal Indian boarding schools in the nation. Its story is also a reflection of federal intervention, not always positive, in the education of Indian youth.

Three works about Chilocco have been written to date. Larry Bradfield wrote a masters thesis that was a mainly administrative account from 1884 to 1955. Kimberly Tsianina Lomawaima wrote her doctoral dissertation, later published as a book, on the period from 1920 to 1940, based on oral histories. Dr. Leon Wall, former superintendent of Chilocco, in 1979 published a defense of his tenure at Chilocco. This project is an attempt to utilize administrative, federal government, and especially student accounts of Chilocco's nearly one-hundred-year history to reach some sort of balanced history of the school.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the individuals who assisted me in this project. In particular, I wish to thank my major advisor, Dr. L. G. Moses, for his

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sunshine glittered off pale yellow limestone, and spilled over on the green lawn in front of Wheeler Hall. Graduating seniors, tennis shoes peeking out from under red gowns, lined up for pictures on the steps of the Chilocco Indian School building.[1] It was May 9, 1980, and by ten o'clock in the morning the auditorium in Wheeler Hall had filled with students, parents, alumni, and newspaper and television reporters, present for commencement. In previous years, commencement had been held in the football stadium, but now the stadium field was overgrown with weeds; and with only eleven students graduating, Wheeler Hall was large enough for the exercises that year.[2]

Eleven students. Chilocco had once housed several hundred. Thousands of students graduated from Chilocco during its nearly one-hundred-year history; but these eleven were different. They were the last.

Two weeks after this final graduation, Southwestern Bell Telephone crews closed down the campus telephone system; lower-floor windows were boarded; Oklahoma Gas and Electric teams prepared to cut off natural gas and

electricity services. Three weeks later, at 5:00 p.m. Friday, June 13, 1980, Chilocco Indian School closed.[3]

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) had opened Chilocco in 1884 for two main reasons. The first reason was to fulfill government promises to educate Indian children which, with varying degrees of success, was accomplished. However, the second and, to the government and reformers, most important reason was to use Chilocco as a tool to assimilate Indians into the dominant culture. In this, the program was less successful.

For the first fifty years, Indian children of all ages lived together at Chilocco and received a basic academic education, as well as vocational training. Since congressional appropriations were limited, a great deal of the vocational training consisted of growing food and cash crops, constructing new buildings, and performing maintenance.

During the next twenty-five years, BIA-directed reforms changed Chilocco's structure. An emphasis on reservation and day schools prompted non-reservation boarding schools, including Chilocco, to become junior high and high schools. Stress on either academics or vocations fluctuated, depending on the current Bureau policy. Many students were orphans, or came from areas where educational opportunities were limited. Navajos from Arizona and New Mexico made up a

large segment of Chilocco students after 1947. Students came from as far away as Alaska.

Then beginning in 1953, Congress decided Indians should become more self-sufficient. Further stress on reservation, day, and public schools resulted in Chilocco and other boarding schools turning into centers for students who, for various reasons, were social worker referrals. During the 1960s and 1970s, people considered Chilocco a reform school for Indian youth, a last resort for turning them into productive citizens--a much less popular program than in earlier years. In addition, government investigation teams believed some of the Chilocco staff were abusive toward the students. Also, the combination of student labor no longer being used to help with school finances, and reduced congressional appropriations, made keeping the school open financially unfeasible--so Congress closed it. With Chilocco's demise, the history of over a century of widespread federal involvement in Indian education also came to a close.

From their earliest settlement of America, Europeans adopted varying programs to resolve their conflicts with Indians. Spanish missionaries tried to convert the Indians to Christianity, mainly to support the political and military outposts of Spain. Early colonial settlers, especially through their churches, opened schools for Indians.[4] Indian youth in particular, however, did not

become the focus of attempted education until 1794, when the Senate ratified its first treaty specifically calling for efforts by the federal government to educate Indian children.[5]

However, true direct federal involvement in Indian education did not begin until the end of the Civil War. Education was considered to be an essential part of the "peace policy" introduced at the beginning of President Grant's administration. Without education and training in industrial pursuits, there could be no hope for any lasting results from the new policy. Consequently, the Board of Indian Commissioners, a group established to give the reformers of the nineteenth century a voice in Indian policy making, proposed a universal common school system supplied by the federal government to all its Indian wards just as the states provided public schools for their children. There was general agreement that the type of education needed was industrial or manual training, as well as schooling in reading, writing, and arithmetic.[6] The federal government began to build schools, staff them with teachers whose salaries they paid, and maintain them exclusively by means of government appropriations.[7]

The organization of humanitarian reform groups dedicated to the principle that Indians must eventually be assimilated into the dominant culture accelerated this trend toward federal schools. As the reformers began to champion the cause of a comprehensive program of federal education,

they directed most of their energies at the boarding school. They regarded this type of school superior because it promised to separate children from their cultures, enforce discipline, and provide a controlled teaching atmosphere.[8] Educators of the time also preferred the boarding school pattern " . . . to free the children from the language and habits of their untutored and often times savage parents."[9]

The federal government appeared to agree. United States Commissioner of Education John Eaton, Jr. advocated boarding schools equipped with workshops adjacent to farming land that would offer education to a large number of students. He proposed that boarding schools offer instruction in industries as well as academic subjects, so that the students could return to their tribes as workers and teachers worthy of imitation. It was this general idea that was put into effect when, on November 1, 1879, General (then Captain) Richard Henry Pratt opened the first non-reservation government boarding school at Carlisle, Pennsylvania.[10] Carlisle became the model for non-reservation industrial boarding schools, which emerged in the following decade as the most popular type of institution in the federal school system.[11] Pratt believed that Indian youth were capable of acquiring the same education and training as white youth, but only by removing them from family and tribal influence.[12]

Of course, these families and tribes had been educating their children for centuries. The foundation of this

education evolved from the nuclear family where parents taught their children the necessary skills to survive. Children also learned how to communicate with family members and to use social skills appropriately. In addition, with the formation of clans, bands, and tribes, education became more complex, focusing on the knowledge necessary to contribute to the overall welfare of a much larger group.[13]

However, to European-Americans, Indians had no culture and lived hardly better than animals. Education to the better ways of European civilization seemed to be the answer. To accomplish this goal, Pratt intended Carlisle to be an industrial school where young Indians could learn to "make a living among civilized people by practicing mechanical and agricultural pursuits and the usual industries of civilized life."[14]

By the mid-1880s, Carlisle was hailed as an outstanding success, and the school's reputation led the Indian Office to consider opening additional non-reservation institutions,[15] thereby introducing a new era in Indian education. Based on the idea that the best way to civilize Indians was to remove the youth entirely from the reservation,[16] off-reservation boarding schools became a prominent feature of the new policy of assimilation.[17]

Between 1880 and 1900, the Indian Bureau opened twenty-four additional off-reservation manual labor boarding schools, an expensive proposition.[18] Congress based appropriations for the schools on the number of students at

each facility. Thus, in 1885, John H. Oberly, Superintendent of Indian Schools, proposed compulsory attendance with the Indian agent being responsible for keeping the schools filled by persuasion if possible, or by withholding rations or annuities from parents if necessary.[19]

Thomas Jefferson Morgan, Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1889 to 1893, agreed with Oberly's policy. In his annual report for 1891, Morgan stated that "the prime duty of the agent, in connection with Indian education, shall be that of keeping the Government schools filled."[20] Morgan's motives, besides financial, also appeared humanitarian. He believed that without education, Indians were doomed to destruction.[21] "We must either fight Indians, feed them, or else educate them. To fight them is cruel, to feed them is wasteful, while to educate them is humane, economic, and Christian."[22]

To Morgan, compulsory education for Indian children was the most effective way to accomplish this goal. Morgan proposed using three levels of schooling, beginning with primary instruction at day schools and advancing to "grammar and high schools." He envisioned a typical high school as a boarding and industrial facility situated in a farming community, remote from the reservation, and preferably near a city so that students could mingle with "civilization."[23]

However, Morgan knew that the work in the non-reservation boarding schools was not much above that of an ordinary grammar school. Part of the problem arose from the fact that non-reservation schools took untutored children directly from the reservations. Consequently, the schools spent most of their energy providing rudimentary training.[24]

One way to solve this problem was to recruit students from mission schools and reservation schools. Some boarding school officials even talked students into transferring from other boarding schools. The recruiting controversy presented Morgan with a dilemma. In theory, he supported the transfer of advanced pupils from day schools to off-reservation schools and believed there should be a continuous upward flow of children from the lower schools. Yet in practice, taking the best students from local schools threatened to disrupt the educational program at those schools. Also, stealing students away from the mission schools angered religious leaders, many of whom strongly supported the Indian Office.[25]

The spectacle of schools fighting over students had become a national embarassment by 1893. In the midst of the controversy, Morgan resigned as Indian Commissioner. A staunch Republican, he refused to work for the Democratic administration of newly elected Grover Cleveland.[26]

But before he resigned, Morgan, as well as those before him, had entrenched the non-reservation boarding school into

the federal Indian education system. By 1895 the reform drive of the previous decade had produced an impressive educational program. The federal government was spending over $2 million annually to support two hundred institutions. Day schools, agency boarding schools, and large non-reservation establishments served more than eighteen thousand students. The scale of the government's program was matched by its idealism. The men and women who designed and supervised the system believed they had found a method of molding people anew.[27] But in the final analysis this assimilationist atttempt failed, although, through the off-reservation boarding school system, Native American children did receive educations.

Indian children by the thousands began attending boarding schools throughout the United States. Scattered housing patterns on large, isolated reservations, along with a philosophy that Indian youths must be separated from their culture in order to be assimilated, led children from widely scattered regions to distant boarding schools located off-reservation. Such a school was the Chilocco Indian School, located on the Oklahoma side of the Oklahoma-Kansas border, whose doors opened on January 18, 1884.[28]

Notes

1. (Arkansas City) Daily Traveler 9 May 1980.

2. Daily Oklahoman 18 May 1980.

3. Ibid., 23 May 1980.

4. Leonard Bearking, "Indian Education Under Federal Domination," in The American Indian Reader, Education, ed. Jeanette Henry (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, Inc., 1972), 88.

5. Report on BIA Education (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office [GPO], 1988), ix, 1.

6. Francis Paul Prucha, American Indian Policy in Crisis (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 269.

7. Margaret Connell Szasz and Carmelita Ryan, "American Indian Education," in Handbook of North American Indians, William C. Sturdevent, ed., vol. 5, History of Indian-White Relations, Wilcomb E. Washburn, ed. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1988), 290.

8. Robert A. Trennert, Jr. The Phoenix Indian School (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 4.

9. Hildegard Thompson, "Education Among American Indians: Institutional Aspects," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 311 (May 1957): 97.

10. Evelyn C. Adams, American Indian Education, intro. by John Collier (Morningside Heights, NY: King's Crown Press, 1946), 51-2.

11. Trennert, Phoenix, 5.

12. Richard Henry Pratt, Battlefield and Classroom (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 225.

13. Report on BIA Education, 1.

14. Pratt, Battlefields, 225.

15. Trennert, Phoenix, 8.

16. However, the occupations offered were very limited. They included such trades as blacksmithing, shoemaking, and harness making for boys and, for girls, domestic arts training suitable for work as maids or housekeepers.

17. Margaret Szasz, Education and the American Indian (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), 4.

18. Szasz and Ryan, "Education," 290.

19. Adams, American Indian Education, 53-6.

20. Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1891), 159. Hereafter called Annual Report.

21. Robert M. Kvasnicka and Herman J. Viola, eds., The Commissioners of Indian Affairs 1824-1977, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), 198.

22. Annual Report 1892, 47.

23. Trennert, Phoenix, 10.

24. Ibid., 11.

25. Ibid., 37.

26. Ibid., 40.

27. Frederick E. Hoxie, A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 190.

28. Robert D. Alley and Ronald G. Davison, "Educating the American Indian, a School Joins the Twentieth Century," The Clearing House 46 (February 1972): 347.

CHAPTER II

BUILDING AND GROWING

"Light on the Prairie"

Congress, acting on the recommendation of Secretary of the Interior H. M. Teller, and Commissioner of Indian Affairs Hiram Price, on May 17, 1882, provided for the establishment of Chilocco Indian School, or Haworth Institute, as it sometimes was called in honor of the first Superintendent of Indian Schools. This Indian Appropriation Act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to construct in the Indian Territory adjacent to the Kansas boundary and the Ponca and Pawnee reservations, a building to be used for the instruction of 150 Indian children.[1] The location on Chilocco Creek, in the Cherokee outlet, was chosen because of the great distances from tribal homes in the Indian Territory to the three existing training schools--Carlisle, Hampton, and Forest Grove, Oregon.[2] The Secretary and Commissioner of Indian Affairs chose James M. Haworth to establish Chilocco.[3]

Haworth made periodic inspections of the project during September and early December (1883) before riding south to recruit Indian children. He selected enrollees from those

tribes of Indian Territory least provided for in education under existing laws. Stopping first at Darlington, Oklahoma, headquarters of the Cheyenne-Arapahoe reservation, he arranged for thirty-two students. From Darlington, Haworth traveled to the Kiowa-Comanche-Wichita Agency where, despite the bad weather and scattered camps, he arranged for fifty-eight additional students. During early January, 1884, Haworth returned to Chilocco, and the second week of January he visited the Ponca, Pawnee, and Sac and Fox agencies seeking students for the new school. His tribal friends sent thirty-three pupils more than he requested. The first superintendent, William J. Hadley, arrived October 8, 1883, to supervise the final details and prepare for the opening of the school.[4]

Once it was only a prairie, cut almost in two by a small stream which wound its way through a slight growth of willows, red bud, elms, and cottonwoods.[5] But by January 15, 1884, a school building sat in the middle of that prairie. Workers used native limestone taken from a quarry one and one-half miles east of the building site to construct the walls.[6]

The first Indian children, 123 in number, traveled by wagon for nearly a month to reach the school, encountering a two-day blizzard on the way. These conditions must have deepened their anxieties about leaving their homes for a strange new place. The weary travelers were in awe of the three-story limestone building rising up out of the prairie.

The building drew other travelers. Passing cowboys and Indians, attracted by the building's lights, often rested beneath the lone tree that stood in front of the building. Chilocco gained the name of "light on the prairie" and the tree became known as "cowboys' tree."[7]

Getting Started

Dedication ceremonies at Chilocco held on the campus opened with songs by the Indian children. Haworth made a lengthy speech telling the children what the government had done for them and what opportunities they had. Reverend Fleming of the First Presbyterian Church in Arkansas City, Kansas, offered a prayer and reminded the teachers of their responsibilities and rewards. All of the speeches were translated into Kiowa and Comanche by Frank Maltby and into Caddo by a Mr. Edwards.[8] Haworth then told the children that the building was theirs, and the children wandered about, making themselves at home. The six chiefs present at the opening exercises in the small auditorium were: White Man, Apache; Big Tree, Tenati, and Dangerous Eagle, Kiowa; Lone Horse, Cheyenne; Niwatch, Arapaho; and Inkinish, Caddo. They all said they were pleased with the school and that Haworth had only to ask for more children, so great was their respect for him.[9]

Chilocco's first superintendent was William Jasper Hadley, who had come west from Iowa to teach at the Cheyenne Manual Labor and Boarding School at Darlington. He

supervised that school about four years before Major Haworth assigned him to Chilocco. He spent the first term supervising student labor. The children opened the farm, put up fences, and dug sewers. Then, on July 12, 1884, Chilocco received thirteen sections of land to add to the original 1200 acres, for a total of 8,640 acres.[10]

These activities were a precursor of things to come. During Chilocco's first thirty-five years, it was truly a "manual labor" school. Although some attention would be given to scholastic pursuits, the main emphasis was on building a large, self-sufficient campus, accomplished with student labor.

There were numerous problems at Chilocco during the first year. Two students died--a Cheyenne girl and a Caddo boy. Open-range stock damaged the garden.[11] There were no railroads with which to transport the children that Hadley might induce to attend Chilocco. Bands of drunken cowboys and Indians constantly harassed him. A political spoils system controlled the selection of Hadley's assistants.[12]

In addition, parents and chiefs often visited the school. Mostly, they were pleased with the school and pledged to work with it.[13] However, during the first year, Hadley had constant trouble with some of the parents. For example, in September 1884, Big Tree and a group of Cheyennes brought four runaway pupils back to school. When they left, the four wagons took four children as they went off into the night. Hadley followed them west to the

Chikaskia River but could not catch them. One month later, Wolf Feather, a Cheyenne policeman, arrived to visit a reportedly sick son. After complimenting Hadley on the school, and expressing regret about Cheyennes taking their children home, he sent three boys ahead on foot and drove off with his own son, in Hadley's presence.[14]

Keeping the children in school was a big problem during these early years. The children's inclination to rebel at work and discipline, become homesick, and head for home, plagued Chilocco for many years. A police escort had to return the first few boys who ran away in the spring of 1884, temporarily checking the urge.[15]

Other student escapades at Chilocco caused problems at times. Once, when Hadley refused to allow some students to go home with their parents, the students destroyed all the melons in the garden, and threw big chunks of the fruit at dormitory windows. The boys also occasionally corralled a stray sheep, pig, or calf, then stole out at night for some barbecue.[16] Perhaps the children were trying to force Hadley's hand so he would send them back to their families.

Hadley's health began to fail as early as March after school began. He was continually in poor health until he left Chilocco the following winter. Hadley's successor, Dr. Henry J. Minthorn of the Forest Grove, Oregon, Indian School, took over on November 15, 1884.[17]

Minthorn was Canadian and had had a varied career as army physician and school administrator before coming to

Chilocco. Chilocco did not impress him. First, he disliked the school's location, describing it as "unfortunate." Chilocco was one mile south of Kansas, in Indian Territory, which was without law. Second, he claimed that cattlemen herded their stock through the grounds, made a racecourse for horseracing, and sold whiskey. In an attempt to stop these activities, he contacted the War Department, which said it was illegal to detail an army officer to the area. He also was not able to get the Chilocco superintendent authorized as a United States marshall, or get any help from the Indian police, who had no money to send someone to Chilocco.[18]

In addition to these problems, enrollment at Chilocco had dropped, and Minthorn's primary task was to check this. First, he visited the agencies of Indian Territory to recruit students. Next, he imposed harsh military discipline at Chilocco to bring unruly children into line and discourage runaways.[19] Minthorn had very effective methods for dealing with runaways, even resorting to drastic measures on occasion. When he learned that two young Cheyennes, both graduates of an eastern school, were organizing a mass run-off of Cheyenne boys, Minthorn hauled them into his office on a Sunday morning. He ordered them to remove all government clothes. When they had done so, he gave each a blanket and said, "You want to be wild Indians, now go and be wild Indians." He then took both boys ten

miles out on the prairie, in different locations, and dumped them--left to get home by themselves.[20]

One remedy for after-school shenanigans was a night watchman. Once when one of the larger boys, Samuel Ahaton, held this duty, Minthorn went out to the water fountain at midnight to see if Sam was on the job. Immediately he was touched on the shoulder and a voice full of righteousness and authority demanded, "What for you want to run away?" After nervous apologies, Sam got a commendation and promotion.[21]

Political pressures plagued the Indian Affairs office for many years, resulting in frequent turnovers of Indian boarding school superintendents. Some stability in personnel at Chilocco finally came after 1891, when President Benjamin Harrison extended the Civil Service System to include school superintendents, assistant superintendents, teachers, and matrons serving in the Indian Service.[22] But in 1885, Chilocco's superintendent was a Republican, and soon found himself out of a job. After Grover Cleveland became president in 1885, members of his party exerted pressure on him to place Democrats in office.[23] Minthorn remained at Chilocco only until August 16, 1885 when, in this revolution following Cleveland's inauguration, Walter R. Branham, Jr. replaced him as superintendent.[24] While awaiting his successor, Minthorn took a large contingent of pupils to Wichita and Newton, Kansas, on an entertainment and publicity tour. This was

during the first week of August. While he and the pupils were on tour, the new superintendent arrived.[25]

Branham, Chilocco's third superintendent, took over on August 17, 1885. Branham began his term at Chilocco by asking the Indian Bureau for relief from the parents. This was soon forthcoming, when the Commissioner of Indian Affairs authorized agents in Indian Territory to withhold rations from families who took children from school. The parents so irritated Branham that after two years he urged the commissioner to bar all Potawatomi children from Chilocco because of the duplicity of their parents.[26]

Branham continued Minthorn's disciplinary program. The students experienced various forms of punishment, including confinement in a small "dark room" under the front hall of the main building. For major infractions by older boys, there was the whip. Another device that made Chilocco pupils behave was the military system. After Captain Pratt at Carlisle used it with success, all non-reservation boarding schools adopted the military system. Students, boys and girls alike, were divided into companies with student officers at the head of each unit. The cadet sergeants, appointed and paid by the school, assisted the disciplinarian and superintendent in maintaining order among the companies.[27] After the relatively carefree lifestyles most Indian children were used to, it must have been difficult for them to adjust to such a regimented life.

A special torment for Superintendent Branham was a young man named Charles Victor. Charles ran away several times, once with six other boys. They ran away at night in sub-zero weather. For this, the disciplinarian, Mr. Gray, severely whipped Charles. Charles and a friend later left the school to work on the railroad. Both wrote letters to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, complaining of everything at Chilocco.[28] But the majority of the students stayed in school. Far from home, and with no means of travel other than walking, they had little choice.

At the end of the first year, the Chilocco staff and nearby farmers rewarded the students with their first Christmas celebration. The farmers, some of whom spent the day and evening at the school, furnished Christmas dinner. In the decorated chapel stood an artificial Christmas tree, an ingenious contrivance made by Mr. Nelson, the school's carpenter. The tree had a revolving framework, pyramid-shaped, on which was hung a glittering array of Christmas presents. The children were remarkably quiet; this was undoubtedly because of the revolving tree, the motive power being unseen--the children believed that the tree had strong medicine. Each child received a present, and many people donated Christmas goods and money for the event.[29]

Branham reported to the commissioner that on August 17, 1886, Chilocco had only 80 students, but he enrolled 204 during the year; he used these students to farm the land and make other improvements, duties which at the time took

precedence over classroom work. The students plowed and cultivated 300 acres--125 in oats, 125 in corn, 50 in millet, and 15 in garden. Indian pupils did all the work. Branham reported he spent not one dollar for white labor outside of hay-making. The students took care of 150 cows, fifty-five yearlings, seventy calves, forty-eight hogs and pigs, twelve mules, and nine horses. They also made numerous physical improvements, including a 40- by 30-foot granary, and blacksmith and wheelright shops.[30]

At this time, Chilocco staff and students shared one building, which served as dormitory, storeroom, kitchen, dining room and home for the twenty employees. All lived, slept, ate, cooked, and washed in this one building. The girls slept on the right, upstairs; the boys on the left; the small boys just above the auditorium. Besides this main building, there were four wooden cottages--two on the right and two on the left, situated about two hundred feet from the main building. One of these was the office, another the laundry, and still another the shoe shop.[31]

There was no barn for the mules and no shelter for the cattle. Winter came, and hay was stacked all over the reservation from one to two miles away from the herd. With the winter came a blizzard on the seventh and eighth of January, 1886. The thermometer sank to twenty-two degrees below zero. They lost that year 120 head of cattle. Branham's ears froze "stiff as boards," from fifteen minutes exposure while he looked after the stock.[32]

T. C. Bradford, who took over from Branham September 1, 1887, continued working the students. His first annual report to the commissioner, like those of previous superintendents, outlined in detail the work students accomplished, with little mention of their scholastic achievements. He reported the students made shoes, boots, most boys' clothes, and all the girls' clothes. Some boys did carpentry and blacksmithing. Both boys and girls did laundry, housekeeping, cooking, and took care of the dairy. Finding the place "unhealthy," Bradford set the students to work papering and painting the building's interior, and relaying sewers. The students also planted 750 trees, one hundred each of grapes and gooseberries, and four thousand strawberry sets. Almost as an afterthought, he mentioned the students also learned spelling, reading, geography, history, penmanship, and drawing.[33]

On February 3, 1889, Bradford retired and George W. Scott became the new superintendent of Chilocco. A young Illinois Democrat, Scott took charge on February 5, 1889, under what he believed were trying conditions. He found Chilocco "the most demoralized of public institutions." In addition, Scott hardly started when the Republican administration of Benjamin Harrison swept into office. However, Scott soon won the enthusiastic praise of the new Superintendent of Indian Schools, Daniel Dorchester, when glowing reports spoke of his energy, wisdom, and progressive advances; Dorchester retained him despite his party

association. Scott's tenure at Chilocco was still brief. Political disputes among employees, withdrawal of twenty-seven Sac and Fox children, and pressure from local businessmen so discouraged Scott that he resigned in October. Scott moved the first week in December, 1889, to nearby Arkansas City, where he formed a law firm and collection agency.[34]

Benjamin S. Coppock succeeded Scott. After five superintendents in less than five years, the institution had at last found itself in the care of a capable executive officer who, for five years, carried out an effective program.[35] Coppock took over as the sixth superintendent of Chilocco on December 1, 1889. He revised and improved the curriculum, disciplined employees and pupils, and personally supervised the farm operations with success. Unlike Minthorn, Coppock approvingly described Chilocco. He thought the school's location was an advantage, with its nearness to a thriving city (Arkansas City). From the main building east was the Santa Fe Railroad. Northeast one-half mile lay Cale, the terminus of the Frisco Railroad, with its stock yards. The Arkansas City and Guthrie wagon road was near the Santa Fe, as were the Arkansas City and Kingfisher roads.[36]

Hard work continued, as Coppock reported to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1892. The blacksmith and three apprentices shod the teams, sharpened plows and harrows, repaired breakages, and kept the school vehicles, tools, and

implements in fit condition for use. The carpenter and five boys worked on the construction of an implement house, cattle shed, employees house, and on the ceiling, wainscoting, and finishing of the shops. In the sewing room the girls, with their instructors, made their own clothing, a portion of the boys' underwear, new sheets, pillow slips, and towels for the school, darned stockings, and mended all clothing. They also cut and sewed rags for one hundred yards of carpet. Under the supervision of the cook, the girls cooked for the school, cared for the dining room and milkroom, and made butter and cottage cheese. With the laundress and a small detail of boys, the girls also washed and ironed for the school.[37]

In addition, a new feature that year was a nursery. Students planted thirty thousand grafts of apples and plums; fifteen thousand grape cuttings; a total of fifteen thousand peach, cherry, pear, and catalpa seedlings; as well as three-fourths of an acre of strawberries. The fruit orchard contained five hundred apple trees, five hundred peach trees, 250 cherry trees, and 150 apricot trees.[38]

In 1893, the students performed the same tasks. In addition, they refloored the schoolrooms, halls, stairways, and dormitories of the main building. They also cleaned the whole building and freshened it with whitewash, paint, and paper.[39] During the year, Coppock had added two cottages for employees, a substantial stone farmer's home, a stone slaughterhouse, a stone workshop containing eight rooms

thirty by forty feet each, an entire new system of water supply, a granary, and a milk house. He also opened on the farm a stone quarry, which provided that year alone over one thousand cords of rubble, broken ashlar, and range stone. The nearness of the quarry, coupled with a handy water supply and two good railroad depots within two miles, enabled Coppock to erect facilities at low rates.[40]

Students experienced recreation as well as work. There were several activity organizations for students at Chilocco. In the summer of 1889, pupils and employees raised money for a full set of band instruments. In addition to the band, beginning in the early 1890s, private music lessons were available for pupils in voice, piano, and organ. Each Saturday evening, two literary societies met for discussions, debates, and declamation.[41]

One major event during Coppock's tenure at Chilocco was the opening of the Cherokee Outlet to settlement. Despite the fact that Chilocco's land title was secured by ratification of the Cherokee Outlet Purchase Agreement in March, 1893, Coppock had to contend daily with squatters, fence cutting, and cattle stealing. The whole affair reached a climax on September 16, 1893, when the great land rush began.[42]

On the morning of that day, thousands of homesteaders lined up on the road leading south from Arkansas City at the edge of the Chilocco reservation. Coppock had dismissed school for the day and the students enjoyed ball games and

picnics while the soldiers guarded the boundary line. At 11:30 that morning, a passenger-packed Santa Fe train proceeded down the tracks across the south line of Chilocco, stopped, and waited for the signal. At one minute before noon, a soldier near the railroad fired his carbine, and the rush was on. After the cloud of dust cleared, the south boundary of Chilocco was empty of Boomers; there were only dark spots on the horizon to the south to show where they had gone.[43] Once the 1893 land rush was over, Chilocco resumed normal operations with little local disturbance.[44]

After the run, Coppock took six employees and thirty-two pupils by train to Chicago, where they participated in the Government Indian School Exhibit at the World's Fair. The Indian Office saw the fair as an opportunity to demonstrate the promise of its new assimilation program. Its principal exhibit was a two-story frame school house. During the fair, delegations from government schools occupied the building. Each group spent a few days in the model classrooms, demonstrating "civilized" skills and enduring the stares of the curious.[45] From September 20 to October 20, Chilocco students demonstrated daily a working schoolroom, shoe shop, tailor shop, and sewing room to thousands of spectators. The students also demonstrated their skills at writing, painting, crocheting, and other crafts.[46]

A major event of Coppock's administration followed in 1894. At last, after ten years, on June 28, Chilocco

graduated its first class--nine girls and six boys.[47] With Chilocco operating as a "manual labor" school--emphasis on "manual labor"--it is no wonder it took so long for students to graduate. Between hard labor and having to learn English before learning anything else in the classroom, it is a small miracle they had time for enough education to graduate at all. Soon, however, students would come to Chilocco already speaking English, and with some previous classroom education.

In 1893 there occurred a major shift in federal policy. Commissioner Daniel M. Browning declared that non-reservation boarding schools should be regarded as advanced schools, and that their pupils should as a rule consist of those who previously attended the reservation schools and, having finished the reservation-school course, would profit by further training both in books and in industries. He advised that students and parents should consider transfer from a reservation to a non-reservation school a promotion and a privilege, and agents should make such selections for transfer carefully, basing their decision on merit and proficiency. Consequently, reservation schools had to expect to surrender their brightest and most promising pupils.[48]

In addition, Commissioner Browning made some confusing and contradictory statements about attendance in his annual report. He decided not to force the attendance of Indian children at non-reservation schools against the will of

their parents, and issued instructions to agents and school superintendents. Brown advised them that no more children would be taken away from reservations to non-reservation schools without the full consent of the parents and the approval of the agent, and the consent of the parents must be voluntary and not in any degree or manner the result of coercion. He also said that this order did not conflict with the law of March 3, 1893, which declared that the Secretary of the Interior could, at his discretion, withhold rations, clothing, and other annuities from Indian parents or guardians who refused or neglected to send and keep their children of proper school age in some school. "Even ignorant and superstitious parents have rights."[49] If parents could be punished by threat to their livelihoods, they most likely would give "voluntary consent" for their children to leave home to attend school.

Coppock lost his job in the fall of 1894. At the urging of former Superintendent Scott, the Indian Bureau began a detailed investigation at Chilocco in October, 1894. Superintendent William M. Moss, on October 13, urged the relief of Coppock on the grounds of negligence in purchasing flour and accounting for cattle.[50] He charged Coppock with open market purchase of flour at higher than market prices, and irregularities in accounting for cattle. Commissioner Browning dismissed him on November 5.[51]

On December 7, 1894, Benjamin F. Taylor became Chilocco's seventh superintendent. Taylor had been

Principal Teacher at Fort Hall, Idaho, and Fort Shaw, Montana, and Superintendent of Crow Creek Boarding School in South Dakota. Under Taylor's supervision, Chilocco's sixty-five-acre nursery continued a booming business, supplying a wide area with trees and shrubs of all varieties. Under the supervision of a skilled nurseryman, Chilocco shipped 5,876 nursery stock in the form of trees to various schools and agencies. In addition, the nursery staff delivered over six thousand trees and shrubs of various kinds to Indians whose children were in school at Chilocco and desired to improve their places.[52]

Under Taylor's guidance, enrollment at Chilocco grew. Three hundred forty-six pupils were enrolled at one time during the 1894-1895 school year, with an average attendance of three hundred twenty-five. A class of six graduated at the close of the school year.[53]

During Taylor's last year, employees donated one hundred dollars of their own money to start a library. They purchased 125 volumes. After fourteen years, Chilocco students had books with which to practice their new English-speaking capabilities--if they had any spare time. Later the same year, Taylor secured from the government an authority of four hundred dollars with which he obtained five hundred additional books.[54] Later, in 1901, the library increased to thirteen hundred volumes. Students also had access to two hundred newspapers and periodicals in the reading rooms, received principally as exchanges to the

Chilocco Beacon, a newspaper established at Chilocco in November, 1900.[55]

In addition, Taylor continued the building program at Chilocco. During the year, he had erected a hospital building, supplying a long-felt want at the school. By using students to haul all the sand and do the excavating as well as a large portion of the carpentry, he was able to complete the building and have a very small amount of appropriation left.[56]

The eighth superintendent of Chilocco was Charles W. Goodman. Prior to coming to Chilocco, Goodman had served as Supervisor of Indian Schools, superintendent at Keam's Canyon School in Arizona, and superintendent of Pawnee Boarding School in Oklahoma Territory. He took charge of Chilocco on September 1, 1898, after Taylor resigned.[57]

Goodman quickly got to work supervising further improvements to the school grounds. He had built a two-story stone dormitory with a basement for small boys. He built a corncrib and granary, 30 by 50 feet. The boys laid 1,304 feet of stone sidewalks.[58]

There was an unusual amount of sickness at the school during 1899. A severe epidemic of measles struck the school in the coldest weather of a very hard winter, followed by pneumonia and other complications. Consequently, six children died during the year.[59] The following year, although smallpox was epidemic in the country and the

neighboring towns, by thorough and continued vaccination and great care none of the students contracted the disease.[60]

Changing Curriculum and Attendance Policies

The Board of Indian Commissioners announced in 1898 that while a few Native Americans "might push their way into professional life . . . the great majority must win their living by manual labor." Educators insisted the solution was vocational training, believing learning manual skills would help Indian children overcome their "racial handicaps." Indians could never be Anglo-Saxon, but they would benefit from a term of labor under strict supervision.[61]

The process began when Estelle Reel, the first woman so named, became superintendent of Indian education in 1898. Her chief conviction was that native children were different from white children. Reel agreed with those who used the race's alleged backwardness to justify an emphasis on manual training. In an office circular issued in 1900, she reminded her field personnel that half of each day should be devoted to work and half to classroom learning. She left little doubt which of these areas should receive the most attention.[62]

Most significantly, Reel announced a new course of study in 1901 that the commissioner was confident would "bring the Indian into homogeneous relations with the American people." The Indian Office's new curriculum

covered twenty-eight subjects. In each area, the superintendent's orders were the same: teach only those subjects that apply directly to the students' experience; focus all learning on skills that would promote self-sufficiency.[63]

Under this program, all students in Bureau schools were taught the same basic academic courses as in white schools, as well as sufficient vocational training to prepare them for reservation life. Girls were taught domestic science by cooking, washing, sewing, and cleaning the schools. Boys were "given instruction in manual training" while they worked on the school farms raising food for the school, constructed buildings or made repairs on them, and provided janitorial services on the school buildings. Thereby, institutional labor was transformed into vocational training.[64]

Reel's curriculum had one vocal critic. Former commissioner Morgan attacked the plan. He approved of manual training, but he had never conceived of it as a central objective. Like other nineteenth-century reformers, he believed industrial training should teach the "habits" of civilization--punctuality, persistence, and attention to detail; in short, industry. Reel's curriculum seemed to do nothing but prepare students for jobs that frequently were useless on reservations. To accept her course of study was, in Morgan's eyes, to give up the assimilationist effort and

to sentence native children to life on the fringes of American society.[65]

In 1897, soon after President McKinley entered the White House, William A. Jones, a successful businessman and politician, became commissioner.[66] Jones informed agents that he expected them to look carefully into all the surroundings and the condition of the children proposed for transfer, and be fully satisfied that the students' best interests would be served by such transfers. Agents were to understand that it was the policy of the commissioner's office that when Indian children arrived at the age when they could properly appreciate the benefits and advantages of further education, every effort should be used to induce both children and parents to avail themselves of this opportunity.[67]

Jones believed it was the duty of the government to train these young people so that they would become stronger mentally, morally, and physically. It was for this purpose that young Indian children were taken from their homes to the boarding school during the formative period of their lives in order to mold character and make each boy and girl a home-builder and a home-maker "upon those principles underlying our own civilization, prosperity, and happiness." In order to fulfill these goals, Jones was adamant about making Indian children attend school, with or without their parents' approval. In his 1900 annual report, he made his position clear. "Many old Indians look upon governmental

school work as hostile to them and the taking away of their children as hostages; others view it as a special mark of favor that their little ones should be permitted to attend school, and they demand payment for the favor."[68] Despite these factors, he was determined Indian children would go to school.

Despite this stringent policy, homesick students still escaped from the boarding schools. One student's case proved the pervasive power of the government. During the year 1900 an Indian boy, John Denomie, a son of John B. Denomie, a member of the Bad River tribe of Chippewa Indians, under the jurisdiction of the La Pointe Agency in Wisconsin, ran away from the Indian School at Flandreau, South Dakota. The Indian agent at Ashland, Wisconsin, S. W. Campbell, directed Roger Patterson, the government farmer at the Bad River Reservation, to ascertain if the boy was on the reservation, and if so to return him to the school. The boy's mother requested permission to say good-bye to her son, and the request was granted. As soon, however, as the boy reached the door of the house, the mother pulled him inside and locked the door, thus denying entrance to the policemen or Patterson. Finally Patterson pushed the door open, breaking the lock, again took the boy into custody, and returned him to the Indian school at Flandreau. John B. Denomie instituted a suit against Roger Patterson. The court directed a verdict in favor of Patterson, the defendant, upon the ground that the evidence showed that

Patterson was engaged strictly in the discharge of his official duties pursuant to lawful directions received from the United States Indian agent.[69]

New Directions

In line with the new government policy, in 1901 the BIA decided Chilocco should place more emphasis on agricultural training. The policy of the school was to be the teaching of farm industries suitable to the climatic conditions of the areas in which Chilocco students lived. Commissioner Jones considered this an important feature, as a large Indian population surrounded the school. He felt these tribes should learn to be farmers on the lands the government had allotted them.[70]

Jones stated that this was an admirable idea because it proposed to fit pupils for active life and enable them at an early date to cease being pensioners upon the bounty of the government. It would make them self-respecting, self-reliant, and independent American citizens. He believed the average Indian could not successfully compete with the average white man in the commerce, trade, or mechanical arts, because Indians had not the heredity or adaptability of the American citizen for success in these particular lines. Therefore, it stood to reason that the overwhelming majority of Indians must be farmers, stock raisers, and laborers.[71]

Samuel M. McCowan, former Superintendent of Phoenix, Arizona, Indian School, took over Chilocco on January 1, 1902. Attendance increased in 1905 until the average was seven hundred forty-one, crowded into a space sufficient to accommodate fewer than five hundred. This prompted the erection of Home Four, a room addition to Home Three, an administration building, a power house, a domestic building known as Leupp Hall, a horse barn, a residence for the assistant superintendent, and The Indian Print Shop.[72] McCowan also added a large lake at the east edge of the rectangular campus and graded the grounds, adding many trees and shrubs.[73] Of course, all this was accomplished with student labor.

To help implement the new government policy toward Chilocco, McCowan gave special attention to the development and improvement of the school farm. He expected to make agriculture and stock raising, gardening, dairying, and horticulture the chief features of the school. He felt that, as the majority of the Indian youth possessed allotments and farms, and as they had for generations lived an outdoor life, nothing could seem more appropriate or right than to foster in them a love for farm life and work. If he could instill in them love for their farm homes and pride in caring for them, the Indian youth would make rapid advancement toward "uplifting the Indian race." To this end he dedicated the resources of the Chilocco school.[74]

During McCowan's first six months at Chilocco, students increased the cultivated area by breaking out fifteen hundred acres of sod; constructed about fifteen miles of wire fencing; enlarged and improved the dairy herd; and installed a complete creamery. They made a start in the chicken business, constructed suitable houses and yards for the poultry, and purchased a number of varieties of chickens, turkeys, and ducks. In addition, students set out a new 30-acre orchard, and McCowan purchased some new implements, including mowers, rakes, and balers, with which students could harvest the hay crop of several thousand acres.[75]

All these activities, in addition to making Chilocco a more profitable work farm, undoubtedly helped agricultural students learn more about running a productive farm. Not all students, however, were in the agricultural program. Some learned carpentry, wagon making, blacksmithing, tailoring, shoemaking, harness making, broom making, painting, printing, masonry, dressmaking, sewing, fancy work, cooking, baking, canning fruits, laundering, and housekeeping. Engineering students also received instruction in practical work in the care and management of steam heat, waterworks, electric light, and ice plants.[76]

McCowan did not hold Indians in high regard. In his 1903 Annual Report to the Commissioner, he stated, "The Indian is proverbially unambitious . . . proverbially thriftless . . . we are striving to change this nature. In

this we do not desire to change him into a white man. Our motto is to make better Indians."[77] But in truth, they were trying to make Indians into white men.

In striving to make Chilocco more self-sufficient, McCowan eliminated all "nonsense." From his annual budget estimate, he eliminated pork and lard, as well as all vegetables, including potatoes, tomatoes, and corn. From the dairy herd came all the milk, butter, and cheese the school used. They made their own molasses instead of buying it. In 1904, McCowan planned for the school to make its own flour and kill its own beef, at a saving of sixteen thousand dollars. Also, Chilocco no longer "wasted time on trades." McCowan believed Indians possessed no genius for mechanics; in all of his years of experience, he had "never met a first-class full-blooded Indian mechanic." However, students still were able to learn available carpentry, blacksmithing, and wagon making, along with painting, horseshoeing, and harness making.[78]

Instead of trades, McCowan established practical courses of study, based entirely upon agriculture and household economy. The work in these branches, he felt, caused a complete revolution in desire and ambition. While formerly students thought contemptuously of life on the farm and almost unanimously hoped some day to teach, preach, practice medicine, or "perform some other service requiring little physical effort," McCowan stated they now all hoped and expected to be farmers and stock growers, to have homes

of their own, and to enlist in America's "great army of common people."[79]

In order to make farming more interesting and attractive, McCowan adopted the plan in the spring of 1905 of allotting to each boy belonging to the senior class in agriculture, one acre of ground upon which to demonstrate his ideas and abilities. In addition, farm stock grew. The school maintained pure-bred registered stock of four breeds of hogs--Poland China, Berkshire, Chester White, and Duroc Jersey; several breeds of fowl, such as Barred Plymouth Rock, White Plymouth Rock, White and Brown Leghorn, Light Brahma, Indian Game, Silverlaced Wyandotte, and Black Spanish; as well as turkeys, geese, ducks, guineas, pheasants, and pigeons.[80]

McCowan allowed emphasis on one vocation that not only saved on school printing costs, but also brought outside money into the school. The print shop flourished during his tenure. Students in this department performed all the work in connection with the publication of the Indian School Journal. Besides the monthly Journal, they issued a small weekly news letter that went to the parents of children in the Chilocco school. They also performed an enormous amount of job work for other schools and agencies.[81] Throughout Chilocco's history, many former students would achieve success in the white man's world through their expertise in the printing business.

Despite this hard work, students found time for some fun. In 1907, they enjoyed a New Years Eve masque ball; bonfires; ice skating; a band concert; and mixed literary and social programs in the gymnasium every Saturday night. Occasionally, boys went hunting in the snow for rabbits.[82] Students also had access to a new sports stadium. In addition, boys and girls could swim, fish, and boat in the lagoon during summer.[83]

During McCowan's career at Chilocco, he was assigned to the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. Naturally, Chilocco played a large role in McCowan's exhibit; students would again perform for curious spectators, demonstrating how well they had been "civilized." Chilocco employees and pupils worked hard collecting displays from various points, preparing them, and shipping them to St. Louis. In the Indian school building, the Chilocco class in domestic science conducted the model dining room and kitchen, preparing and serving meals in regular demonstrations. The Chilocco laundry class occupied one room and displayed skills in washing and ironing. Print shop students brought equipment to the fair and demonstrated their skills by publishing a daily newspaper titled Indian School Journal for distribution to visitors. The Chilocco band formed the nucleus of a 40-piece Indian school band that played concerts and ceremonial music day and night throughout the fair.[84]

In 1908, McCowan resigned on grounds of "rapidly developing diabetes." Two months after McCowan's retirement, Special Agent W. W. McConihe of the Indian Bureau filed a 77-page report with his office accusing McCowan of false claims, false payments, appropriating money for personal use, and other offenses. On February 3, 1909, a federal grand jury sitting at Guthrie, Oklahoma, indicted Samual McCowan on nine counts of embezzlement. The charges specified that between October of 1907 and March 31, 1908, McCowan had appropriated $9,355 of government money in transactions involving wheat, hogs, pasture leasing, and fraudulent claims. For some reason, the charges against McCowan pended for over eleven years. The cases closed on March 31, 1921, and McCowan was fined a total of $312.50 for ten counts of embezzlement and $187.50 for six counts of false claims and rolls.[85] Apparently, former superintendents Coppock and McCowan both found it easy to take personal advantage of taxpayer dollars.

Following the St. Louis World's Fair, in 1905 Francis Leupp became Commissioner of Indian Affairs. His first annual report called for lowered expectations and attacked those who believed in racial equality. He insisted that Native Americans occupied a station inferior to that of white Americans. "The Indian is an adult child," he told the National Education Association. "He has the physical attributes of about our fourteen-year old boy."[86]

During Leupp's administration, a new superintendent who agreed with the commissioner's ideas took over Chilocco. Samuel McCowan's successor as Chilocco's superintendent was John R. Wise.[87] One of Wise's immediate problems at Chilocco was keeping the school full of students. Several parents requested, with no success, that Wise allow their children to come home. Letters from 1909 reveal Wise's unyielding policy to keep children in school. During the 1909 scarlet fever epidemic, Marry L. Tasso requested a visit to her daughter, Lena; Wise turned her down. On March 16, 1909, Margaret (Cadotte) Goslin wrote to Wise requesting that her sister Delia Caddote come home; her father was dying. A note at the top of her letter said, "cannot approve unless requested by agent-JRW." On March 30, 1909, Clara Sizneroz wrote requesting her son come home, because she had approved his attendance for only three years, but he had been at Chilocco five. Wise received several letters of this type. In addition, he received letters asking about rumors of illness, starvation, and nakedness.[88] Twenty-five years of "success" had not dimmed the fears of parents anxious about their absent children.

Parents were not the only ones distressed by Wise's attitude. After Wise had been at Chilocco for a year and a half, the Superintendent of Indian Schools, Elsie Newton, described him as a man "of rigid, conscientious, and unquestioned honesty," who kept tight control, compared to his predecessor. She added, however, that "he is not a very

efficient man," and "not a good administrative head, nor is he a man of originality or even force, except where moral principle is concerned."[89]

In keeping with the action of his predecessors, Wise continued the building program at Chilocco. The Chilocco Hospital Training School opened February 11, 1908 with two female nurses and one male nurse. Charlotte Williams, senior nurse, and Maud Amiotte, nurse, were first cousins, from the Pine Ridge Reservation. They were Oglala Sioux, and great granddaughters of the famous Sioux leader Red Cloud.[90] Wise also established a fire department in 1908, stocked the lagoon with sunfish and catfish, and added five new rooms to Agriculture Hall.[91]

The major problem and greatest single threat to Chilocco during this period was the attempt of the bureau to dispose of it. The crisis lasted about three years. Although Leupp advocated compulsory eduation for Indian children, he did not believe federal boarding schools were the place to enforce his ideas. Leupp decided the large non-reservation boarding schools were "educational almshouses" that increased rather than decreased the dependence of their Indian graduates upon the government. In the winter of 1907-1908, Commissioner Leupp recommended closing Chilocco, Carlisle, and Haskell Indian Schools.[92] In addition, on January 15, 1910, Senators Thomas Gore and Robert L. Owen of Oklahoma wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the Secretary of the Interior asking for

suggestions on Chilocco and describing strong support for turning it over to Oklahoma for use as an insane asylum.[93]

Two factors saved Chilocco from closing. The first was Representative Campbell of Kansas and the Arkansas City business interests. They had no desire to see Chilocco turned over to Oklahoma or to lose Chilocco's open market business. The second saving factor was government agents of the Five Civilized Tribes. In January 1910, with the disposal bills introduced in the U. S. Senate, Supervisor Oscar Lipps, Inspector E. B. Linne, and Superintendent Dana H. Kelsey of the Union Agency for the Five Civilized Tribes at Muskogee, Oklahoma, each wrote strong letters to the bureau and Secretary of the Interior on the need for pupils of the Five Civilized Tribes to attend a large school such as Chilocco. After the school gained its reprieve, pupils from those tribes were allowed to enroll and did so in large numbers. With the demand for Chilocco bolstered, talk of a sale soon died and Chilocco was able to continue its work.[94]

On April 1, 1911, Superintendent Edgar A. Allen took over Chilocco. Allen revised Chilocco's academic program to conform to that of the state of Oklahoma. In 1912 he added an intensive program in agriculture and domestic science beyond the eighth grade.[95]

While Allen was at Chilocco, the bureau adopted a "New Course of Study" in 1916. This curriculum provided a practical integration between the academic and vocational

courses offered at Chilocco. More academic courses related directly to vocational training. The new curriculum divided the course of study into three divisions--primary, prevocational, and vocational. The industrial details for the prevocational division required each boy or girl to spend a certain number of weeks during the three-year course in each of the various agriculture or trade departments for boys or domestic arts and sciences for girls. This gave each prevocational student considerable experience in every vocational course offered at Chilocco and prepared him or her to choose the most suitable course during the four-year vocational course.[96]

The man who introduced the new course of study was Commissioner Cato Sells. For Sells, assimilation was simply a label for the process by which Indians fit themselves into their proper places in the white man's United States. In the twentieth century, schools would not transform the Indians, they would train them to live on the periphery of American society.[97]

Therefore, work was still a part of everyday life at Chilocco. In 1915, students produced 4,324 combined bushels of sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, sweet corn, popcorn, peas, beets, mustard, onions, lettuce, tomatoes, turnips, spinach, green beans, and cucumbers, along with 11,416 heads of cabbage, 16,275 dozen green onions, 24,783 dozen radishes. From the orchard, they harvested a combined 2,283 bushels of apples, apricots, peaches and plums, and 3,000

quarts of cherries. All were used in the kitchen to feed students and staff.[98]

Such industry meant the students had to adhere to a very rigid daily schedule. Rising at six in the morning, they had breakfast from 6:30 to 7:30, at which time they were allowed one hour of "play time" before classes began for most students at 8:30. In class or at work details until noon, they got a one-hour break for lunch, then back to work until four in the afternoon. After 4:00, they again had "play time" until dinner at 5:30, followed by a study period until eight o'clock at night. After recovering from their hard day, they had to be in bed when the bugler played "taps" at 9:15.[99]

In addition to daily "play time," the Chilocco administrators "generously" allowed the students to have one-half day in town--once a month, girls separated from boys. The second Saturday of the month was for boys, the third Saturday for girls.[100] Students did, however, enjoy various recreational activities throughout the year, including picnics, Christmas celebration, movies, and literary societies.

The Chilocco staff tried very hard to make Christmas at Chilocco a special time for those students who remained at the school during the holidays. On Christmas Eve, 1913, the entire body of pupils and teachers assembled in the gymnasium to view the tree decorated by the matrons and disciplinarians. Not only were the tree and the hall

trimmed, but almost six hundred presents were ready for distribution, and each person received one to carry home with him. Everyone also received large bags containing nuts, candy, fruit, and popcorn. At 4:00 Christmas morning, members of the choir went from one building to another, singing Christmas carols. The girls spent the morning reading, visiting, or writing to their friends. Many of the boys hunted rabbits or took long walks to whet their appetites for the noon dinner held in the dining room of Leupp Hall, trimmed with many hundred feet of Christmas greenery and dozens of red bells. Students spent the afternoon quietly, and in the evening all gathered in the auditorium to listen to the program of vocal and instrumental music, recitations and exercises.[101]

To provide weekend entertainment, in 1918 the school obtained a Simplex Moving Picture Machine.[102] Also, students formed four literary societies--the Hiawatha and Minnehaha for girls, and the Soangetaha and Sequoyah for boys.[103]

On April 1, 1918, Allen transferred to the Kenesha, Wisconsin Agency to protect Indian interests in the timber industry. His temporary successor was Oscar H. Lipps, Chief Supervisor of Indian Schools, who served only to December 1919. Clyde M. Blair stepped in as Assistant Superintendent in Charge from Lipps' departure until Spring of 1921, when he became superintendent.[104]

By May 1921, there were forty-eight buildings on Chilocco's campus. The course of study, while modeled to some extent on the public school course of Oklahoma, was yet distinctly vocational, especially in the field of agriculture. With the girls, one half of the time in school was given to the study of Domestic Arts and Science, and the other half to the ordinary academic branches. The boys devoted half their time to agricultural or industrial shop activities, and the other half to the ordinary academic branches.[105]

Students in prevocational courses took classes in civics, current events, English, reading, spelling, history, arithmetic, geography, physiology, and penmanship, as well as vocal music, manners and right conduct, and conversational exercises. Freshman vocational students took civics, English, history, geography, arithmetic, and botany. In addition, boys learned about farm implements, and girls took domestic arts and sciences. Sophomore students had essentially the same core curriculum, with the addition of soils and horticulture for boys; girls continued courses in domestic arts and sciences. At the junior level, boys added stock judging; at the senior level, field crops, rural economics, plant diseases, insects and insecticides, and feeds. As seniors, girls finally got a break in their repetitive routine--they learned child care.[106] Obviously, boys were being taught to be farmers or farm laborers, and girls to be homemakers or domestic servants.

World War I at Chilocco

During World War I, students and employees responded to their country's needs. The Red Cross Auxiliary formed a Chilocco chapter in the fall of 1917, and this group met every Friday afternoon making stockings, scarves, pajamas, and other articles for servicemen. They also put together four-pound boxes of candy for each soldier from the school. In addition, Liberty Loan drives collected $6,950 from the students, and $20,800 from employees.[107] Besides seven wounded, four Chilocco men died during the war--David Johnson, Bennett Lavers, Edward Nelson, and Simeon Mosely.[108]

Post-War Reforms

In 1922 the Uniform Course of Study was revised to approximate more closely that given in the public schools. Day schools were expanded so that all of them included six grades, and reservation boarding schools were made uniform with eight grades. Non-reservation boarding schools began to offer high school work as a matter of course.[109]

Commissioner Cato Sells held some very strong views concerning Indian education, the new course of study, and non-reservation boarding schools. For example, he believed the first aim of Indian education was "to detach the child from its native vernacular. The only slow stage in Indian education is in teaching the use of English so that the

pupil will not only read it, but talk it and think in this language. With this work well done, the Indian boy and girl advances as rapidly as the average white people."[110] As far as the new curriculum was concerned, he felt the students would gain the "most useful education possible within the allotted time," and those who completed higher vocational training were at least equal to graduates from public high schools.[111] Essential to this process, the non-reservation boarding school, in Sells' eyes, operated as a melting pot, breaking down tribal barriers to make "greater progress [toward becoming like whites] than any other primitive race . . . casting away the things which typify his old, barberous way of life."[112]

Sells felt that the large amount of productive work in the schools not only afforded the practical training desired, but was necessary to the proper support of the schools, as they could not possibly be maintained with the legislative appropriations provided. Thus what may be termed school earnings, which the students themselves contributed toward their support and education, was very important. Sells was very proud of what he called the results of this training. Because of it, he felt many hundreds of young men among the Indians could shoe a horse and repair its harness, set a wagon tire, lay a concrete walk and even build a respectable sort of house; there were as many young Indian women who could do successfully any kind of house work, care for their children according to the

more sanitary and hygienic practice of modern living, and give to their homes a "touch of art and comfort."[113]

Charles Henry Burke replaced Cato Sells as commissioner on May 7, 1921. Government policy had changed little. Congress still said there would be compulsory education for Indian children if they were subject to federal jurisdiction. Children whose parents refused to send them to school continued to be forcibly enrolled in whatever government boarding schools the Commissioner of Indian Affairs should designate.[114] Although Indian schools may have upgraded their industrial training, they fared badly in comparison with the white public school system in regard to level of instruction.[115]

Blair transferred to the larger Haskell Institute July 1, 1926. The man who succeeded him and served as superintendent of Chilocco for thirty years was Lawrence E. Correll. He came to Chilocco in the fall of 1919 as a teacher of agriculture, and on July 1, 1926, the thirty-year-old Correll became the youngest Indian school superintendent in the country.[116]

Correll was very aware of the value of good public relations. Although expenses for the school paper were limited to $2,000 a year after 1924, Correll managed to publish a monthly magazine on school news and programs until World War II. He sponsored the crack Chilocco boxing team during an era when that sport was very popular.[117]

Chilocco boxers were among the best in the nation, defeating most of their opponents and winning many championships.

Correll also oversaw many physical improvements at Chilocco. He built two large dormitories. Home 5, built in 1931, was the home of the junior and senior girls. Most of the rooms were for two and three girls each, but about four rooms accommodated six girls. The building contained a reception room, a living room, and a kitchenette in addition to other rooms. A playround was at the back of the Home, with swings and two tennis courts. Home 6, the home of the junior and senior boys, was built in 1932, north of the boys gymnasium. This building was two stories high and built so that each room had outside windows.[118]

In addition to these two new buildings, Correll rebuilt Home 4 Dormitory after a fire, and remodeled Home 3, adding two new wings. Home Three housed the small girls, and much was done to beautify it. Vines covered it already, but students added flower beds and shrubs, as well as a large playground.[119] Correll also supervised construction of three Home Economics cottages, a power plant, laundry, print shop, stock barn, dairy barn, scale house, shop buildings, filling station, fire station, a complete poultry plant, sewage disposal plant, new wells and water reservoir, agriculture classrooms and offices, a band house, lighted athletic field, dining room addition and bakery, new refrigeration rooms and zero locker system, several large

apartment houses, and numerous implement and storage sheds and garages.[120]

All these improvements did not seem to make Noreen, a Potawatomi girl who attended Chilocco from 1923 to 1926, happy. She felt the food at Chilocco was terrible; often the students were served hard tack. She always was afraid of the matrons, and claimed school officials censored the mail. Once, she found a dead mouse in the milk pitcher, and worms in the hard tack.[121]

On the other hand, Pauline, a Cherokee girl who attended Chilocco three years after Noreen and stayed until 1931, had different memories of Chilocco. About her term at Chilocco, she said, "It was the happiest two years of my life. I learned to cook, sew, entertain, have manners, clean house, iron, and wash." Pauline was acting in ways that would win high marks of social approval, behaving like a good little white girl. She particularly liked living in the practice cottages, where seven or eight girls would live together for six to nine weeks at a time. The girls would play family roles, cooking meals and keeping house. One thing Pauline was not particularly fond of was having to march everywhere on campus, but this activity ceased in 1930, as a result of the Meriam Report.[122]

The Meriam Report

In 1928, almost ninety percent of all Indian children were enrolled in some school. About half of these attended

public schools, and about ten percent, private and mission schools. Of those attending schools operated by the BIA, twenty-seven percent were enrolled in reservation and off-reservation boarding schools and a much smaller percentage in day schools. Behind these statistics, education was limited. A large proportion of the children dropped out of school early. For those who remained, the education they received was poor. The educational level of day schools was low, but it was better at the boarding schools, which offered more advanced course work.[123]

During the Hoover administration, the Department of the Interior employed the Institute for Government Research to conduct a survey of Indian administration including education. The findings of the survey were published in a lengthy report in 1928. This report, called the Meriam Report, sparked a new point of view, which led to newer objectives, methods, and approaches.[124] One of the chief objects of criticism was the BIA boarding school, viewed as a "grossly inadequate" institution. The report claimed vocational training programs had evolved into mere student labor necessary for the schools to operate. Where schools did teach vocational training, the trades were either disappearing from the market or were taught at levels inadequate to secure a job. Thus the concept of training for reservation life had never fulfilled the goals anticipated in 1900. In addition, the problem of the

runaway became the symbol of the failure of the boarding school.[125]

The report recognized the importance of family security in the development of youth, and this turned attention to day schools versus boarding schools. The purpose of education was more directly pointed toward helping Indians gain the scientific, technological, and civic skills to function in the world about them. Results of this newer emphasis expressed itself in many important ways. Day schools were extended to provide education within the home environment. Those non-reservation boarding schools which were retained changed their objectives; they further readjusted their programs to give emphasis to vocational training keyed to available employment opportunities in the skilled and semi-skilled trades.[126]

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29. Indian School Journal February 1916, 306.

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35. Indian School Journal April 1916, 494.

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57. Bradfield, "Chilocco," 24.

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first names of interviewees in her book, hence the use of first name only for Noreen; also, Pauline, Curtis, and Robert, ff.

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CHAPTER III

REFORMS AND OTHER CHANGES

Collier

John Collier was the longest serving and most famous commissioner in the history of the BIA, occupying this position from 1933 to 1945. His policies represented a drastic departure from the reformers of the late nineteenth century. In the past, educators had sought to minimize the exposure of Indian children to Indian culture. It was a primary purpose of the boarding school to remove the child from the direct influence of parents and the Indian community. One of Coller's first acts as BIA commissioner was to reverse this policy, redirecting Indian education to the use of community day schools. In his first year, Collier either closed or converted to day use ten schools that had been boarding schools. Between 1933 and 1941, the total number of day schools rose from 132 to 226, enrollment in day schools more than tripled, and the number of students in day schools in 1941 exceeded the number in boarding schools.[1] Collier also started programs in bilingual education, adult basic education, training of Indian teachers, Indian culture, and in-service teacher training.[2]

The bureau offered to Indian youth the first effort to

provide schooling that acknowledged the diversity and significance of native cultures. It gradually added rug weaving, silver making, pottery making, and tribal history to the regular course of study. Collier's education director, Willard Beatty, developed bilingual texts for Sioux, Navajo, and Pueblo children, and began one of the earliest programs in the country for training teachers in the techniques of bilingual instruction. Unlike his predecessors, he understood the need to teach children in their own language.[3] However, much of the student labor continued, often out of necessity during the depression years.[4]

Accompanying the new emphasis on Indian culture and on day schools was a down-grading of the boarding schools, which earlier had held a favored position in the government's acculturation program. The emphasis on the community day schools caused the off-reservation boarding schools to lose most of their younger pupils. Subsequently, the boarding schools undertook the care of three types of Indian youth: students pursuing a high school vocational course, neglected and dependent children, and pupils with no access to local schools.[5]

In their 1939 study, the National Advisory Committee on Education reported "a notable decrease in the enrollment of Government boarding schools." But they also noted that the programs in boarding schools were improved to serve primarily the need for secondary education; and that

attention had been given to adapting vocational education to the special needs of the Indian children. Child labor in the boarding schools lessened, although the committee stated that there was still too much of it in the elementary boarding schools. The committee also noted improvement of educational personnel, attributed to the establishment of higher requirements and salary increases.[6]

Collier and Beatty further sought to reform the teaching practices of Indian education. They relaxed the rigid discipline and other practices of boarding schools borrowed from the military. They reoriented vocational education from the needs of urban job markets to provide skills that Indian students could employ on the reservation, recognizing that many Indians eventually returned to the reservation.[7]

Effects of the Meriam Report on Chilocco

Following the Meriam Report, the Indian Bureau reduced the enrollment of Chilocco and, although the school's advantage in vocational training prevented any talk of abolishing the school as in 1907-1910, the limited enrollment did change somewhat in nature. Beginning in 1933, the bureau established regional organizations with field agents and social workers to select Indian children most in need of Chilocco's program. These students were usually orphans, children with home problems, or those

without access to the public schools that the bureau emphasized at the time. Consequently, the school became an integral part of a larger scheme to solve the social and welfare problems of the Indian Bureau.[8]

As a result of the Meriam Report, Chilocco dropped the lower grades. Additionally, because of criticism of the drudgery of work details, Chilocco adopted the three-quarter day plan in 1929. In this plan, fifty percent of the students' time was spent taking regular academic courses, twenty-five percent in music, art, physical education,and other "extracurricular activities," and the remaining twenty-five percent in vocational training. Agriculture students still spent half of their time on the farm, however, and special post-graduates spent seventy-five percent of their time in their vocations.[9]

In 1935, there was another overhaul of the Chilocco curriculum. The academic department was renamed "the related subject matter department," and a method of alternate days of school and vocational training devised to further stress vocational work. Each student spent every other full day in vocations, every other half day in related matter, and the rest of that half day in "extra-curriculars"--music, art, and electives. The electives offered double periods in study of theory and problems related to vocational training. Thus, Chilocco's program was a combination of the new three-quarter day program and the older half-day program, on alternate days.[10]

In addition to updated courses in agriculture and home economics, students had available training in more modern trades. In 1936, Chilocco male vocational students could learn auto mechanics, barbering and dry cleaning, carpentry, electricity and radio, plastering and masonry, painting and decorating, plumbing and steam-fitting, power plant operation, printing, and leather crafts. However, new courses for girls were still limited to domestic arts--baking and simple cookery.[11]

One young man who took advantage of the school's updated vocational program was Donald Sharp, a Creek who attended Chilocco during his high school years, 1936-1939. He was no stranger to boarding schools, having begun school at the age of five, attending Euchee Mission [for male Creeks only] near Sapulpa, Oklahoma.[12]

Sharp believed that, although an Indian boarding school like Chilocco would not work today, it was the best thing that ever happened to him or other Indians of his time, for without the education provided by Euchee Mission and Chilocco, he felt he might not be alive today. According to Sharp, the schools took children, often poor, and fed them three good meals a day, gave them excellent medical care, and educated them so they could earn a living in their adult years.[13]

Sharp believed he got a very good education at Chilocco. He learned the trades of painting, auto mechanics, and plumbing, and provided for his wife and three

children practicing these trades. In addition, he felt he got a very good academic education, and is still especially fond of ancient history, particularly ancient warfare.[14]

Small in stature (Donald recalled he thought, as a teenager, that he would never get above 85 pounds), the best sport for him was boxing, and he was a member of the Chilocco boxing team during its heyday.[15] The sport dominated all others for successful records. The name Chilocco was synonomous for years with good amateur boxing throughout the midwestern United States. It began in the winter of 1932-1933 when a Wichita sports promoter, Jack Slattery, came to Chilocco and interested Correll in an amateur tournament sponsored by the American Legion. In the following years, boxing became very popular at Chilocco. Many state and regional champions brought trophies back to the school. This great success brought charges of over-emphasis from the Indian Bureau, but the program continued until 1949, when it stopped because of increasing criticism of the sport on grounds of health hazards.[16] Sharp remembered in 1938, when seven of nine Chilocco boxers won the Oklahoma Golden Gloves Tournament. He was one of those seven, and he went on to the Golden Gloves Tournament in Chicago, where he again won.[17]

Sharp was also a member of Company 'C' of the Oklahoma National Guard. He was discharged from active duty after achieving the rank of corporal. Part of the success of the national guard unit he attributed to patriotism, and part to

the money boys could earn as members, especially during summer camp.[18]

One summer camp was held at Fort Sill August 6-21, 1938. Troops from Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado, and New Mexico participated in war games which lasted for six days among the mesquite wilds as a part of their training encampment. The sixty-seven men and three commissioned officers of Company 'C' arrived about midday on August 7. The first week consisted of instructions and preparations for the "war." On Saturday morning, the Brown force, of which all Oklahoma guards were a part, was mobilized and moved from the regular camp. They moved under the cover of darkness toward the front line into a new bivouac area until the closing days, when they were on the front. The final outcome of the war favored the invading Brown forces. The "summer soldiers" experienced some of the hardships of real war. They endured a scarce water supply, a scorching sun, and loss of sleep. Only one man from Company 'C' dropped out during the whole encampment.[19]

Like so many students of Chilocco's earlier years, Sharp remembered the students were under a lot of discipline, but he considered the discipline a good thing; the administration had to do something to control hundreds of students on one campus. In his opinion, when Commissioner Collier relaxed discipline at Indian boarding schools, the gradual disintegration of the attitudes of the students began.[20] Sharp was possibly speaking from the

vantage of not only an older generation, but as a former military man. In fact, student attitudes did not "disintegrate" until the 1960s when, due to federal policy, troubled and often delinquent youth began to attend Chilocco.

Unlike Sharp, Curtis, a Creek who attended Chilocco from 1927 to 1935, was not completely happy at Chilocco. His memories included the rock pile the boys had to work in punishment for bad offenses, such as drinking or stealing. He disliked the strong discipline at the school, the homesickness, and not having a family life. What he did like was the openness of the campus, the woods and fields, where boys could go hunting, fishing, or just roam--probably like conditions at home. He also felt the academics were bad, he wanted to know more, so he finally left Chilocco and went to public schools.[21] Evidently, Chilocco's academic offerings were not up to Curtis' standards. Although by this time students spent half of each day in academic work, Curtis must have desired more academics, rather than a mixture of academics and vocational training.

Robert, also a Creek, went to Chilocco from 1933 to 1936, entering the school at age fifteen. Before going to Chilocco, he and several brothers had also attended Euchee Boarding School in Sapulpa.[22] When Robert first went to Chilocco, the school still separated the girls from the boys in the dining hall; boys ate at one end of the dining hall and the girls on the other end. Up to this time, students

at boarding schools were kept separated by gender, obviously a holdover from religious attitudes when Christian missions were in charge of Indian education. By the time Robert left Chilocco, boys and girls were mixed, half and half, at the dining tables. On Sunday afternoons, if the weather permitted, the school held "Lawn Socials," where all students, boys and girls, could visit together on the quadrangle in the center of the main campus. On Saturday nights, they went to a dance or a movie.[23]

If students got too many demerits, they could not go to dances, to movies, or to town. They received demerits for not cleaning their rooms properly, or if they were late to class or cut class, among other offenses. If they got in more serious trouble, there was always the infamous rock pile for the boys. They reported to Jeff Mouse, who worked them very hard for two or three hours, or whatever their punishment was.[24]

Robert remembered having to march everywhere in groups; but he felt it was for the good of all--with nearly a thousand children on campus, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, there had to be some controls. But he believed most of the students enjoyed the discipline; they knew what the limits were. To Robert, that was teaching the way life is; they learned they could not do whatever they wanted, whenever they wanted to do it.[25]

As Robert recalled, the girls were strictly chaperoned. They went straight from the dormitory to the dining hall,

marching in military formation. They marched to the school building. Also, there were always two or three of the dormitory matrons with them, wherever they went. When the girls went to town (Arkansas City), they all went in a group, on a bus, with chaperones. Boys, on the other hand, had a little more liberty. They could walk at night up to what they called State Line, a filling station and hamburger joint. They would stay an hour or two, then walk back to the dormitory and go to bed.[26]

Robert's vocation was agriculture, because boys in the agriculture program had an opportunity to make money. They sharecropped and raised wheat, corn, and oats, on school land with school equipment. In the summertime when they harvested, they got one-fourth of whatever their plot of ground produced. They could also raise farm stock and get a percentage of the profit.[27]

Chilocco students kept a complete dairy that produced all the dairy products for the school. The dairy contained a big ice cream maker, and Robert went there in the summertime to "talk 'em out of a little bit of that." Students were always looking for more food. Some boys would go to the poultry plant and steal eggs; then they would come out of the dining room with bread stuffed in their shirts. At night, they would go down to the creek and toast the bread and boil the eggs--a veritable feast! Robert did not know why they did this, there was always plenty of food in the dining room, and he got all he wanted to eat . . . "Just

to be doing something, I guess."[28] This fact is rather curious if, in fact, students were offered sufficient food during the day. But three good meals a day still does not allow for snacks, and teenagers, especially boys, are continually hungry. Perhaps appetites, combined with the lure of a small adventure, prompted the boys to steal eggs to boil down at the creek.

Robert enjoyed Chilocco. He thought he was getting good training, without costing his parents anything. "There'll never be another one like it. It was really a marvelous place, as far as I'm concerned." He felt as well off as someone at a preperatory school back East. Everybody was interested in him and he had everything he needed.[29] Like Sharp, Robert's memories may have mellowed with age. For whatever reason, he shared with Sharp, Noreen, and Virginia Blaine (account follows) fond recollections of his time at Chilocco.

New Projects

Soon after Robert left Chilocco, several new projects began. In 1937, twenty-four boys formed a farming cooperative, with four projects each--poultry, dairy, garden, and grain plots. The boys would take care of these projects, sell the proceeds, and split their one-fourth share among them.[30] The engineering boys also were busy. They would get up at four in the morning to fire the boiler, then shut it down at 9:30 at night. The chief engineer gave

them this assignment so he and his assistant could get more work done during the day.[31]

Boys were not the only ones with new projects during this period. Chilocco opened a nursery school consisting of children two to five years of age. The purpose of the school was to give instruction to the senior girls of how to care for children. The girls would rotate detail every few days. Details included caring for the children, observing the children, and making homemade toys.[32]

Although widespread allotment had long ceased, Chilocco began a new homestead program in 1938. This program differed from allotment, in that homesteaders received only five free acres each of Chilocco land; then they were allowed to lease up to one hundred fifty-five acres more. The school then furnished them each with four horses, five cows, two sows, seventy-five chickens, as well as farming implements. The government gave them twenty-seven years to pay for their homesteads, and allowed the new farmers to pay with stock or grain if they so chose.[33]

The Chilocco Print Shop was still one of the larger successes of the school in 1938. Students set composition, proofread, cut paper, stitched pages, and mailed out the materials printed. Most of the work was devoted to the Indian School Journal, but there were also several small jobs the boys who studied printing performed.[34]

Chilocco Historical Museum

Chilocco students took on a very large and long-lasting project in 1938. Under the leadership of a committee of five students (Mary Kingfisher, Harlan Bushyhead, Zelma Joice, Reno Jimboy, and Levi Hall), they began studies of Indian village sites in the vicinity of Chilocco in quest of both historical information and artifacts for a new museum. Hugh Hamill, instructor of Indian history at the school, supervised the project. Beginning entirely from scratch, the students assembled a nucleus of about thirty relics for the school collection. These included arrowheads, fragments of flat grinding stones known as metates and hide scrapers. The hide scrapers were circular, sharp-edged pieces of flint originally attached to elk horn handles; none were found with the handles attached.[35]

They found most of the relics during an inspection of the ruins of a 200-year old French trading post and village on the Arkansas River about seven miles east of Newkirk, Oklahoma. The ruins consisted of from twenty to thirty mounds, some almost obliterated by plowing, believed to be the remains of dome-shaped timbered houses covered with earth. The houses looked like they had collapsed, since some of the mounds showed circular depressions in the center. Hamill and the students believed Indians of the Wichita and Pawnee tribes had inhabited the village.[36]

A room in the chemistry laboratory building at the school housed the new "Chilocco Historical Museum." Designed to cover all the tribes represented at Chilocco, the new project dealt especially with the Five Civilized Tribes and the plains tribes. Besides artifacts found at the Arkansas River site, and other sites, students gave many objects to the museum.[37]

Although study of their ancestors' relics provided a valuable history lesson, the aspiring preservationists failed to recognize they had relegated objects from their ancient cultures to the status of museum objects, using these items as a measuring stick for modern progress:

> The things our forefathers did do not seem real until we go in the museum and look at articles that were used long ago. We can learn much more by seeing the real objects than by reading a book and trying to understand it through vision words or pictures.
>
> We have learned to appreciate the life of our ancestors, and when we compare our present day with the past we see how progress has been made. Many years ago there were always slow difficult tasks to preform [sic], which have been changed in our modern age. The present has been built upon the past and only by knowing the story of the past are we able to understand our present development.
>
> It seems that a museum is one of the most worthwhile projects a school of this kind can include in its program, for it adds progress and a reliable background for our work of today.[38]

World War II

Company 'C' of the 180th Infantry, formed in 1924, began active duty on September 16, 1940, when Oklahoma's 45th Division mobilized. The company saw action in North

Africa, Sicily, and Italy during the war. At Pearl Harbor, Henry Nolatubby, Class of 1939, was killed aboard the USS Arizona, and was officially declared the first American Indian to lose his life in the war.[39] Besides Nolatubby, thirty-five other Chilocco students died in World War II.[40] In addition, Lieutenant Ernest Childers, Class of 1940, and Lieutenant Jack Montgomery, a Chilocco student in 1934, both received the Medal of Honor.[41]

Chilocco civilians also contributed to the war effort. From November of 1941 to November of 1942, the school collected 180,000 pounds of scrap metal for the defense industry. In March 1942, forty-five boys and girls made model airplanes for army and navy training programs. Chilocco's sheet metal defense training course enabled many older students who were not in the service to work in defense plants. In order to save supplies, the reduced student body that remained at school worked long hours in gardens and fields to raise more food.[42]

World War II retarded formal education of Indians. Indian youth of military age left school to enter the service. Others, especially girls, left school before graduation for employment in war industries. Consequently, high school enrollment dropped. On the other hand, the war years brought a greater number of Native Americans than ever before in contact with non-Indians, forceably bringing home to Indians their many disadvantages from lack of education--disadvantages in employment, in opportunities for

advancement in the armed services, and in social adjustment. These experiences whetted Indian ambitions for more education for themselves, and especially for greater educational opportunities for their children.[43] Consequently, regular high school and vocational curriculum underwent changes after World War II. The alternate days of school and vocation of the 1930s gave way to a well-developed rural high school program. The academic curriculum in 1948 required a full day of classes. The vocational department completely divorced production from instruction. Each department offered four years of theoretical and practical instruction with projects and problems, but no work details.[44]

Students of 1949 had thirteen vocations from which to choose. Offered to boys were power plant operations and electricity, printing, auto mechanics, blacksmithing and welding, plumbing, carpentry, painting, shoe repair and leathercraft, and agriculture. Girls could choose from a slightly more diverse program than in the past, including dry cleaning and pressing (boys could also choose this), weaving, baking and food preparation, and home economics.[45]

The Navajo Program

World War II touched and changed the lives of all Indians. In addition to those twenty-four thousand who served in the U.S. armed forces, over forty thousand others left their homes to participate in war work. For many, this

meant a significant increase in income, but equally important, it introduced new concepts and a greater appreciation for the value of schooling. These changes led Beatty, who remained director of education until 1952, to remold BIA education. The most dramatic illustration of this pragmatic shift came in the Navajo Special Education Program, which provided basic schooling for forty-three hundred overage Navajo students.[46] The program began in the fall of 1946, when 290 children started course work at Sherman Institute in Riverside, California. The first year was considered such a success that the program soon expanded and spread to other schools, among them Chilocco.[47]

The Navajo program actually began at Chilocco in March, 1946, when Superintendent Correll asked the Commissioner of Indian Affairs if fifty or one hundred of the Navajos might come to Chilocco for high school. The Correls went to the Navajo reservations in January of that year to make preparations, and the next fall a total of 149 children, under the guidance of Florence McClure, began their education.[48]

The program required special teachers and interpreters. Including McClure, Chilocco hired seven other teachers for these special students. Alice Antonio, a Navajo, came as a teacher and interpreter, as did Wilsie Bitsie from Window Rock, Arizona. Robbie George was a former interpreter for the War Department, and experienced his first teaching assignment as interpreter and teacher for the new program.

Rex Malone, also a Navajo with his first teaching assignment, came from the Navajo Reservation in Arizona, where he had lived since getting out of the service. Mary Thorne, Violet Muret, and Marie Engleking rounded out the Navajo Special Program staff.[49]

During the first three years of the five-year program, Navajo students worked one and one-half hours a day in general vocational training; they spent the rest of the day in a classroom. During this period, the student was expected to develop facility with English, learn hygiene and elementary science, and basic skills to use in more specialized training later. In the last two years of the program, the students' work was under the direction of a vocational instructor. Students spent half their school time learning special skills for specific jobs. At first the vocational fields for which there was adequate training were few, but by the early 1950s Navajo pupils trained in every vocational department at Chilocco.[50]

During the 1950s, although Navajo students in the special program formed the largest single group, students from the Five Civilized Tribes and other groups in central and eastern Oklahoma predominated the regular enrollment. Occasionally students came from as far away as Alaska.[51] In Alaska, a shortage of Indian schools was a serious problem for students. In 1953, there were four hundred eighth-grade graduates for whom there was no space available in existing boarding schools. At the urging of Senator E. L. Bartlett

of Alaska, the Branch of Education decided to use the space available at Chilocco, and the bureau enrolled 204 Alaskan Natives in the Chilocco program. Response of the students was varied; a small percentage of them chose to return home even before Christmas, but most of them stayed through the first year--perhaps in part because bureau leaders made it difficult if not impossible for students to leave. "Each student," the Juneau area director advised, "must be encouraged, persuaded, and even discreetly forced to remain at Chilocco." The bureau attitude was based on the premise that if the student failed at Chilocco there was no other "educational avenue" open to him.[52]

Other tribes as well attended Chilocco during this period. Virginia Blaine was an Otoe-Kaw who attended Chilocco for her freshman and sophomore years, 1949 to 1951. An orphan, she had attended Pawnee Indian School before going to Chilocco. To her, Chilocco was "just like home." In fact, years later, she sent four of her six children to Chilocco.[53] (See page 114.)

Blaine felt well cared for at Chilocco. The staff taught her personal hygiene, from proper dental care to hairdressing to how to put together outfits. In addition, she felt the academics were excellent. Teachers would, through personal attention, discover what a student's special talent was, then nurture that talent.[54]

Blaine's special talent was sewing, and she was able to make money with this talent. Teachers and dormitory staff

would bring her clothes that she could remake, or hired her to do work for them, for which she was paid cash that she could use to buy more sewing materials. She would then make clothes that she knew the girls with money would like, and would sell the clothes to these girls. She also earned money by spending an entire summer on campus, making new draperies for various buildings.[55]

Teachers recognized "real smart kids" and sponsored them for further education. For example, Blaine recalled one girl who, through the efforts of several teachers, attended nursing school. This girl became a registered nurse, holding various positions of authority, including head nurse in a hospital.[56] As female students generally only learned domestic trades, this girl's professional accomplishment made a strong impression on Blaine.

Of course, the Navajo Program was ongoing when Blaine began her stay at Chilocco. She remembered the Navajo students as very quiet and very shy, "they pretty well kept to themselves", but were "nice." On the whole, the Navajo students were very smart; the ones who had been in school for a while always rose to the top of whatever class they were in.[57]

She especially remembered how the Navajos loved to launder and iron clothes; she could always get them to take care of her clothes laundering for her! Also, the Navajo girls loved to shower so much that they had to be separated at shower time from the other girls, or they would

completely take over the shower room.[58] Evidently, frequent showering and laundering was such a novelty for students from the Arizona desert that they reveled in the supply of fresh water.

"Termination"

After a period of enthusiasm and success in getting reform measures enacted, John Collier ran into increasing opposition. The goals of reasserting Indian cultural patterns, Indian self-determination, and Indian self-government remained the guiding principles of Collier's activity, which he promoted through administrative means when legislative ones failed. He thus left himself open to continuing charges that he sought a revival of tribalism, segregation of the Indians from white society, and a slowing down if not an absolute halt in the drive for assimilation. In 1945, overwhelmed by frustration, Collier resigned.[59]

After Collier left office, there began a massive drive to assimilate the Indians once and for all and thus end the responsibility of the federal government for Indian affairs. Dillon S. Myer became commissioner in 1950, and by the end of his tenure in 1953 the bureau had been fully committed to termination.[60] During Myer's term of office, he not only tightened up the administration of the bureau, but also did everything within his power to accelerate the process of assimilation. As he commented in 1952, the ultimate

objective of Indian education was "complete integration in the American way of life."[61]

House Concurrent Resolution 108, adopted in 1953, sent the word "termination" spreading through Indian country. The resolution included removal of federal supervision and the dissolution of BIA control over certain tribes located in California, Florida, New York, and Texas. Congress approved additional legislation to abolish federal recognition of more tribes, and called for transferring a portion of government responsibilities and services to the states. Overtly, freeing tribal groups of their federal trust restrictions was the official intent of the termination policy. More importantly, however, termination essentially implied the ultimate destruction of tribal cultures and native lifestyles, as withdrawl of federal services was intended to desegregate Indian communities and to integrate Indians with the rest of society.[62] Cloaked in the guise of self-determination, the resolution was another tool for assimilation.

In other words, cast in terms granting Indians their rights and prerogatives as American citizens, the resolution's stated purpose was to free Indians from federal control and supervision, end their wardship, make them subject to the same laws, and entitle them to the same privileges as other citizens.[63] But it would also end the responsibilities of the federal government.

Indians, however, were already citizens by federal law; they had all the rights possessed by their white neighbors. They paid state and federal taxes the same as non-Indians, unless specifically exempted by treaty agreement or statute. Most of the exemptions applied only to real estate or income from trust property. What Indians feared therefore was a transitional period in which the government would breach treaties and ignore agreements; they would lose their land, tribal and allotted; and the United States would withdraw necessary public services, without the states replacing the withdrawn federal services.[64]

As a result of the resolution, in 1952 the BIA closed down all federal schools in Idaho, Michigan, Washington and Wisconsin. The following year a number of boarding and day schools closed, as Indian students transferred to public schools. Those federal boarding schools in operation continued a forced assimilation approach, educating children far from their homes so that they would forget their family and the reservation way of life.[65] In a policy directive to bureau personnel dated December 8, 1953, Commissioner Glenn L. Emmons (1953-1961) made the ruling that wherever adequate school facilities were available, Indian children should enroll in local public schools; but where such facilities were not available, Indian children might be enrolled in federal Indian schools.[66]

Gradually the boarding school became the educational facility for students who had social or educational

problems. Eligibility for admission was based on need for special educational programs not available locally (including English language programs), or on those whose social needs could not be met in their community (unstable home life, behavioral problems.)[67]

One positive step for Navajo Indian education occurred during this period of "termination." In 1953, about nineteen thousand, or fifteen percent of the total number of Indian children, were not enrolled in school. One of the areas of greatest need continued to be the Navajo Reservation. The Navajo Special Education Program, which had been in effect for seven years, produced some good results, but it had not affected a vast number of children who had no school facilities. In 1953, out of the nineteen thousand Indian children not in school, fourteen thousand or about three-fourths were Navajo. For this reason Navajo education was given first priority. Between 1953 and 1955, the Branch of Education carried out the Emergency Navajo Program with the aid of congressional funding, expanding facilities to make room for an additional thirteen thousand children.[68] Soon, thousands more Navajo young people found themselves uprooted from their homes and planted at faraway boarding schools like Chilocco.

Innovations in the Navajo Program at Chilocco Indian School

Flodelle Dyer, a Choctaw and music teacher, successfully used a new method to teach the hundreds of Navajo Indian youngsters who entered Chilocco every year. Most of the Navajos were unable to speak English when they arrived from their New Mexico and Arizona reservation, and Dyer never mastered the Navajo language. But she found the Navajo children more than eager to learn music, particularly group singing,[69] because it was a part of Navajo culture.

"Before the Navajos came," Dyer recalled, "all of the 'regular' high school students were English-speaking. Many of them were bilingual, speaking both English and their native Indian language." But it was different with the Navajos. They spoke Navajo, but no English. Tribal interpreters lived at Chilocco to help them, but in the final analysis, the Chilocco faculty had to bridge the gap. Despite the language barrier, Dyer taught all songs in English to the Navajo youngsters, without the aid of interpreters.[70]

Classrom teachers observed the music lessons, and then used the words of the songs for vocabulary work in their regular reading programs. "All of the music in the Navajo department is taught by rote," Dyer said. "Special attention is given to diction, pronunciation, enunciation, phrasing, vocabulary building, and the mechanism of lips, teeth,

tongue, jaws, and throat in saying and singing words," she explained. Singing songs made an effective contribution to the learning of English, Chilocco teachers found, and Miss Dyer worked closely with classroom teachers, often teaching in the classrooms, and helping the other teachers with music and musical games.[71]

Miss Dyer recalled a day when she played a recording of the "Pawnee Flag Song," sung by a native tribesman for the Willard Rhodes collection of native Indian songs at Columbia University. "When the record was finished," Miss Dyer said, "a Pawnee boy in the class raised his hand." "That was my father singing that song," the boy said simply. Investigation showed that the boy's father, who had died several years before, had recorded the song for Rhodes.[72]

A White Girl at Chilocco

Jeri Horinek lived a unique life at Chilocco. Born in 1952 to white workers at the school, she lived the first eighteen years of her life there. A white, non-student, she attended school in nearby Newkirk, Oklahoma; but spent much of her time observing her surroundings. Hornicek's mother was a dormitory matron, her father the head of the kitchen. Hornicek was too young to remember Superintendent Correll, who retired in 1956. However, W. Keith Kelley, who succeeded Correll, was very much a part of her life. She loved the Kelleys, and believed they truly loved the students.[73]

Hornicek recalled the campus as beautiful, "like a rich uncle's fancy farm." The campus had an orchard, cattle, a bridge, a lake, a huge park, and a fish pond at mid-campus. A "fairy tale place." Chilocco was a safe place to ride her bike after dark; her parents never worried about her. The hill at Home 6 was great for biking in the summer and sledding during winter.[74]

Hornicek vividly remembered when new students came in the fall, especially Navajo children. They were usually thin, and her father fed them right away. Sometimes there were break-ins at the kitchen, children looking for food. New students, homesick, cried when they came. Usually economically impoverished, most came with only one suitcase of belongings. Then they cried when they left, because they were leaving their friends. But when they left, they were "fat," and had boxes of clothes and other items to take home.[75]

Desertions also occurred, especially at the beginning of each school year. Because of this, an electric fence was put out in a field surrounding the campus, to keep students from escaping the school grounds; an easy solution for administrators, but students must have felt they were being treated like cattle. Hornicek remembered hearing lost [runaway] students crying out in the fields.[76]

Hornicek believed students had plenty to do. Her mother booked movies for students during the cold winter months. There was also volleyball, basketball, badminton,

croquet, painting, archery (Hornicek was taught archery by an Indian student), and a golf course. There were monthly dances, where the students did the bunny hop, the stroll, the hokie-pokie, and square danced. In addition, the ponds were stocked for fishing. School officials also let the students catch rabbits and cook them over a fire on a stick.[77]

There were other activities throughout the year. Each early fall, there was a watermelon feed, and students would "flounder [sic] on watermelon." They always celebrated Christmas, with a Christmas tree in each building, and lights (especially blue ones) on the two islands in the lagoon. There was a carnival in February or March, in the boys' gym, with booths, bingo, a cake walk, etc.; a typical school carnival. There was a pageant in the spring, with different tribes, dances, and beautiful costumes. Hornicek learned to identify the Eagle, Rain, and Hoop Dances. At the pageant, there were contests with drum beaters, and people came from miles around to watch. At the end of the school year, there was "Play Day," an all-day picnic, out in the country by a creek with a swinging bridge.[78]

A New Type of Student at Chilocco

In the summer of 1962, Dr. Leon Wall succeeded Kelley as Superintendent of Chilocco. Wall had written several handbooks on the Navajo language, edited a Navajo language newspaper, and wrote his doctoral dissertation on a ten-year

study of problems of teaching English to Navajo children.[79] Thus, he appeared very qualified to oversee the operation of Chilocco, with its many Navajo students. In Hornicek's opinion, however, it was under Wall's supervision that the school went downhill. She felt he did not love the students--he was busy writing a book, and was "too wrapped up in academics." [80]

When Hornicek was in about the eighth grade, 1965-6, "things changed." Her parents no longer allowed her to wander alone through campus. There were a select few students still special to her parents, but most seemed angry. Hornicek's friends stopped coming to Chilocco to visit her, and she spent more of her spare time in Newkirk, visiting them instead.[81]

During the 1960s, things had changed. Hundreds of new students began to arrive at Chilocco, many of whom were referrals from social workers. To be eligible to attend Chilocco, ca. 1960, one had to be of at least one-fourth degree of Indian "blood." Students also had to be in a situation where local or public school facilities were unavailable locally.[82] New admissions criteria further specified that attention be directed to the educational and social needs of youth with histories of family neglect or whose patterns of behavior made educational experiences in their home communities difficult.[83]

In order to accommodate this sudden influx of students, the school needed more space. Accordingly, in 1964, in the

spirit of general reforms that would lead to Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Philleo Nash slated more than one million dollars in new construction for the school. Award of two construction contracts paved the way for a new 320-student dormitory and related facilities. A utilities improvement contract for $144,000 called for construction of complete water and sewer systems, a 200,000 gallon steel water tank, road grading, fencing, and similar work.[84]

Without question, the decision to use the space at Chilocco was attuned to bureau goals rather than to the needs of the students. Restricted by budgetary limitations and anxious to increase the percentage of pupils in school, the Branch of Education juggled students to fit spaces, regardless of the effect on the students themselves. In the view of Hildegard Thompson, Director of the Branch of Education since 1952, enrollment served as the key for the long-term effect of education. Like Willard Beatty, she believed that education made itself felt through an accelerating effect, with each generation advancing in its schooling a little farther than the previous one. Consequently, the initation of the cycle was crucial.[85]

Chilocco itself was about to enter a new cycle--one of charges of abuse, official denouncement, and eventual abandonment by the government.

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3. Szasz and Ryan, "Education," 295.

4. Prucha, Great Father, 980.

5. Theodore Fischbacker, "A Study of the Role of the Federal Government in the Education of the American Indian," (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 1967), 363-4.

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7. Szasz and Ryan, "Education," 295.

8. Bradfield, "Education," 111.

9. Ibid., 113.

10. Ibid., 114-5.

11. Ibid., 115.

12.Donald Sharp, interview by author, 17 April 1991, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Bradfield, "Education," 122-3.

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21. Lomawaima, "Prairie Light," 282-320.

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23. Ibid., 322.

24. Ibid., 342-3.

25. Ibid., 349.

26. Ibid., 336-7.

27. Ibid., 334.

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29. Ibid., 348.

30. Indian School Journal 1 October 1937, 4.

31. Ibid., 26 November 1937, 3.

32. Ibid., 15 October 1937, 6.

33. Ibid., 11 March 1938, 1.

34. Ibid., 2 December 1938, 7.

35. Indian School Journal 29 April 1938, 2.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., 10 March 1939, 1-2.

39. Ibid., 126.

40. The war dead were: Howard Battiest, William Biggs, Jack Blair, Jack Burns, Boyd Catt, Ben Clemons, Thomas Cornell, Jacob Cornsilk, Sequoyah Downing, Earl Gill, Jack Gill, James Haas, William Hanks, Cornelius Hardman, Edwin Isaac, John D. Isaac, Kenneth Harrison, Jack Hickman, Woodrow James, Haskell Knight, Ramsey Knight, William T. Lasley, J. P. McCurtain, Zack T. Morris, Melvin Myers, Wilson Odom, Andrew Porter, Snow Proctor, Bennie Quinton, Duff Reynolds, Grady Roberts, Boney Starks, Robert Stabler, James Tarpeleechee, and Hiawatha Tuggle. Indian School Journal 20 November 1948, 1-2.

41. Bradfield, "Chilocco," 126.

42. Ibid.

43. Thompson, "Education," 99.

44. Bradfield, "Chilocco," 120.

45. Indian School Journal 8 October 1949, 1.

46. Szasz and Ryan, "Education," 295.

47. Bradfield, "Chilocco," 116.

48. Ibid.

49. Indian School Journal 11 October 1947, 2.

50. Bradfield, "Chilocco," 118.

51. Ibid., 121.

52. Szasz, Education, 127-8.

53. Virginia Blaine, interview by author, 14 May 1991, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

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59. Prucha, Great Father, 993-4.

60. Ibid., 1013-17.

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63. U. S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, The Education of American Indians, The Organization Question, 91st Cong., 1st sess., November 1969, Vol. 4, 495-6.

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67. Sally J. McBeth, Ethnic Identity and the Boarding School Experience of West-Central Oklahoma American Indians (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, Inc., 1983), 78-9.

68. Szasz, Education, 125.

69. Daily Oklahoman 6 January 1957.

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71. Ibid.

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73. Jeri Hornicek, interview by William D. Welge, 17 November 1990, Videotape, Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

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CHAPTER IV

BATTLES AND DEFEAT

A New Mission

For many years, Chilocco offered American Indian youth a variety of secondary-level vocational and academic experiences not normally available at reservation schools. When other educational alternatives became more accessible to these students, the bureau saw off-reservation schools like Chilocco performing a new role. Besides continuing their primary mission of providing appropriate learning experiences for Indian youth for whom a public or federal day school was not available, they also focused on students who were scholastically three or more years deficient, or who had histories of family neglect.[1]

This redirection meant the arrival of a new kind of student, an adolescent with severe educational deficiency. Routine test batteries showed the overwhelming majority of these new enrollees to have average or above academic potential, but this plus factor had been negated by a background of poverty and social isolation.[2] The federal boarding schools were considered vital for beginning students several years late in enrolling; orphans; those from non-English speaking families; the academically

retarded; dropouts from public schools; those having special problems; or those needing vocational training that public schools were not equipped to handle.[3]

Nearly sixty percent of these youngsters attended BIA boarding schools, either because there was no public or federal day school near their home, or because they were "social referrals." Estranged from his family, confronted with an alien culture and unable to talk to his teachers, the Indian student's academic performance was predictably poor, often finishing high school with little better than a ninth-grade education. Despite this regression, a boarding school student was usually not held back for academic failure; at the end of each year, he was promoted to the next grade whatever his performance. As a result, the typical high school class contained highly intelligent students as well as many who should still have been in grade school.[4]

Despite these factors, in 1967, members of the Oklahoma Indian Affairs Commission took the stand that entrance requirements for Indian boarding schools should be relaxed further so more students could enroll. Members of the commission believed many Indian students would be better off getting part of an education in Indian schools than none at all in public schools. However, bureau policy was rigid--all students had to be of welfare status and certified by the social workers of their respective agencies in order to attend federal boarding schools.[5]

Chilocco in particular turned away extremely few students who asked for admission to the school. Many students had encountered problems at home and in the public schools. Chilocco gradually accumulated nearly twenty-five percent of its enrollment of students with some kind of problem. According to Leon Wall, these students, with few exceptions, usually overcame their problems after having been at Chilocco for awhile. All students were treated like "normal" students at Chilocco, and usually they responded in like manner.[6]

The Chilocco administration responded to the influx of new "problem students" by tightening discipline. They used such tactics as handcuffing drunk or otherwise unruly pupils. Apparently, other boarding schools also used such stringent measures, and when authorities outside the boarding schools learned of them, a Senate investigation of federal boarding schools began.

The Kennedy Report

Although the Indian Bureau shouldered the major burden of oversight of the American Indian education system, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, including the U. S. Public Health Service and the U. S. Office of Education, as well as the newly created Office of Economic Opportunity, carried a significant portion. In July 1967, Senator Fannin (R-AZ) wrote to Senator Wayne Morse (D-OR), chairman of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public

Welfare, to suggest that a special subcommittee on Indian education be established. The subcommittee was to examine, investigate, and make a complete study pertaining to the education of Indian children. Its leadership passed on the death of Robert Kennedy to Senator Morse, until his election loss in November. Then Senator Edward Kennedy took over. The Kennedy Report, as it came to be called, was as grave a censure of federal Indian policy as the nation had ever witnessed.[7]

The subcommittee conducted on-site investigations of federal boarding schools, field investigations in representative parts of the country, and field hearings.[8] These investigations showed that school environments were sterile, impersonal, and rigid, with a major emphasis on discipline and punishment, which the students deeply resented. The students found the schools highly unacceptable from the standpoint of emotional, personal, and leadership development. For example, social activities involving both sexes, such as plays, concerts, dances, and social clubs, were relatively infrequent. According to the students, even when these events were held they were usually over-chaperoned and ended very early. Many teenage students also expressed great frustration with the boredom of weekends in the boarding school dormitories. Teachers and all but a few counselors departed, and almost no social activities were planned. Investigators believed, therefore, that it was hardly surprising that students occasionally

resorted to drinking and glue-sniffing in order to relieve their boredom.[9]

The report outlined educational and social criteria for admission to the boarding schools. Education criteria included students for whom a public or federal day school was not available; those who needed special vocational or preparatory courses not available to them locally, to fit them for gainful employment; and those retarded scholastically three or more years or having pronounced bilingual difficulties. Social conditions that called for admission were students who were rejected or neglected; those who belonged to large families with no suitable home and whose separation from each other was desirable; those whose behavior problems were too difficult for solution by their families or through existing community facilities; and those whose health or proper care was jeopardized by illness of other members of the household. Thus, the student population of the off-reservation boarding schools consisted of young people with special social and emotional problems.[10] Most of the off-reservation boarding schools had become "dumping grounds" schools for Indian students with serious social and emotional problems. These problems were not understood by the school personnel, and instead of diagnosis and therapy, the schools acted as custodial institutions at best, and repressive, penal institutions at worst.[11]

Investigators believed that even as custodial institutions, the bureau's off-reservation boarding schools were not satisfactory. Several reports pointed to examples of overcrowding in dormitories or classrooms, lack of privacy for the students, inadequate areas for study and recreation, and unappealing meals. In addition, rules existed which irritated older students by their rigid enforcement and inappropriateness to the student's age, including punitive discipline. Also, the dormitories were like "barracks," living conditions were "sterile," "unimaginative," and "institutional."[12]

Although the student population of off-reservation boarding schools had changed dramatically, no corresponding changes had taken place in their staffing, goals, or curriculum. The subcommittee found a number of students had been ordered to attend one of these schools as a substitute for a reformatory. Most of the schools had phased out special programs and vocational education, masquerading as strictly academic institutions, preparing students for college. In fact, mental health problems had reached crisis proportions in many of the schools. The interaction between students and professional staff was described by consultants as malignant and destructive. In summary, the schools did not rehabilitate, were not designed as therapeutic agents, and in fact they often did more harm than good. As one consultant to the subcommittee stated, "They are a tragedy."[13]

Dr. Robert Leon, professor and Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Texas Medical School at Austin, conducted an on-site investigation of Chilocco. Testifying before the subcommittee, he made several observations. He found some of the effects of Indian boarding schools demonstrated by the very people who worked in the boarding schools. Some of these people had great difficulty in discussing their own experiences as Indian boarding school students. Many of them showed what Leon called "a blunting of their emotional responses." This he attributed to separation from parents and the oppressive atmosphere of the boarding schools. He believed if one could get the trust and confidence of these Indian employees and allow them to feel comfortable in discussing their past experiences, some of them would begin to admit the difficulties they had in going through the boarding schools and would for the first time, and to their own great surprise, express much hostility and resentment about the treatment they received.[14]

Leon believed educators at the Indian schools existed only to receive children who had such severe social and emotional problems that they could not remain in public schools. These were children whom the community could not care for because they had no families, or unstable families, and no one to care for them; or they were maladjusted for any number of reasons and had continual conflicts with authority causing them to be labeled delinquent; or they had

severe emotional problems with resulting crippling fears or bizarre behavior; or they had a combination of any or all of these. In spite of the fact that it was well known that such children predominated in many of the Indian boarding schools, these schools had no programs with which to alleviate the problems.[15]

According to the report, seventy-five percent of Chilocco students fit the above description. Curiously, however, many of the investigators spoke of the "few" who caused trouble there. For instance, they found that a "few" delinquents at Chilocco gave the whole school a "reform school atmosphere." A "small number" of the students were sent there because they could not get along anywhere else. These students forced the administration to be very strict with rules and regulations.[16]

Scattered among the boarding school students who were enrolled for social reasons were those whose presence was solely attributed to the inaccessibility of education close to home. The effects on Chilocco, as observed and reported by Richard Hovis, a student teacher, were distressing. "The few delinquents at Chilocco give the whole school a reform school atmosphere. . . . These students force the administration to be very strict with rules and regulations. As a result, many teachers categorize all the students as delinquent cases and treat them as such. It is no wonder that the students have little to say in class when they are

thought of as poor, ignorant, Indian juvenile delinquents."[17]

According to Hovis, with infrequent exceptions, students arrived at Chilocco and then were not allowed "out of sight of the campus" for nine months. Although the Chilocco administration made a conscious effort to bring to the students the educational advantages that it thought important, this resulted in special educational and cultural activities day and night until the students barely had enough time to sleep. But the administration failed do the "little things that seem so important for the proper growth of teenagers." They did not have the freedom to take a walk more than one hundred yards from campus; they could not go downtown shopping; they could not go into town to see a movie on a weekend; they did not even have the freedom to go into town and get a coke at a drug store like any other teenager.[18]

This lack of outlet for their emotions could result in violent and bizarre happenings. A few of the students sometimes sneaked out of their dormitory rooms and walked into town to buy liquor. Then they drank it as as fast as they could stand--sometimes with fatal results. Easter 1969, one of the Crow boys from Montana was found dead from too much alcohol.[19]

The subcommittee stated that the number of Indian youngsters indulging in intoxicating beverages and seeking other prohibitive types of entertainment would not be

necessarily curbed by punishment based on handcuffing methods and solitary confinement, as used by Chilocco officials. They suggested a more positive approach, such as an expanded and more attractive recreational program, might produce better results.[20] However, Superintendent Wall defended these practices. He stated that in a few instances, for lack of police protection, the staff felt compelled to use handcuffs in order to prevent a student from injuring himself, another student, an employee, or to prevent him from destroying government property.[21] Should a student come to Chilocco drunk and be unruly or dangerous, the employees had to take care of the student as best they could to protect him from hurting himself or others. All Chilocco had in the way of law and order for the hundreds of students and employees was a night watchman whose duty was to watch for fires and to protect government property. Government regulations decreed employees were to keep hands off the students. Their hands were tied. Wall claimed the BIA investigative team took advantage of the situation in order to make a negative report.[22]

Several of the students to whom the investigtors talked also complained about the food. Some said it was poorly prepared and all of it tasted the same. Others complained that they did not get enough to eat and complained that they could not go back for seconds. Some of the boys who were engaged in the athletic programs particularly complained about the inadequate quantity of food.[23]

A large proportion of the students who were admitted to Chilocco had a background of academic failures, or social and psychological problems. One of the administrators expressed the point that students with a background of failures, who expected an easier road in this school, found that the school would not tolerate academic inactivity. He felt this was one of the factors contributing to the school's dropout problem. There were, of course, other factors indicated as causes for dropouts. Among these were pregnancies, parental pressures for children to return home, homesickness, dismissal from school for serious school infractions, and so forth. Some students intentionally and frequently broke school rules to bring about a dismissal from school.[24]

Additionally, the subcommittee found that over twelve hundred Alaskan natives were being sent to federal boarding schools in Oregon and Oklahoma, thousands of miles from their homes. In addition, they found that over four hundred Indian students from the northwest United States were being sent to federal boarding schools in Oklahoma. They found these placement procedures questionable and strongly opposed by Indian and native leaders testifying before the subcommittee.[25]

The senators criticized Chilocco in particular for having students from Alaska and the Northwest. Actually, Chilocco had little to say concerning the students sent there. Past policy had been to take any students sent by

the Washington office, or any who asked for admittance. New policy makers had never changed this ruling. However, some schools did not comply with the ruling, and for this reason, Chilocco really got more than its share of the problem students.[26]

In sum, the senate subcommittee recommended Chilocco be closed. They believed Chilocco was a noble idea and years ago when most of the students were from Oklahoma it was a good idea; but it was just too much to expect a child from a remote Indian village to become acculturated to middle class standards so far from his family and the things he loved. The only result was that he regressed further into his shell and finally gave up hope that anyone really understood or wanted to help him.[27]

If the school was to be continued, the subcommittee recommended it should be for students from the immediate area. Since these students were apt to be educationally retarded, and in addition have social and emotional problems, the school should have remedial programs for academic and intellectual development and an adequate mental health program. Additionally, placement for those students who came from long distances should be found nearer to their homes.[28]

Contracting Controversy

Senator Lee Metcalf (D-MT) obtained the results of the individual investigation at Chilocco. Although the

subcommittee had yet to publish the report, Metcalf inserted it in the Congressional Record. Consequently, early in 1969 news headlines broke across the country describing a major scandal related to the school's disciplinary practices. Reports stated a BIA investigation team's report charged that "criminal malpractice" and "physical and mental perversion" were being visited upon the students by the school staff. "Youngsters reported they were handcuffed for as long as 18 hours in the dormitory, handcuffed from behind the back from above or around a basement pillar or from a suspended pipe," reports claimed. Permanent wrist scars and a deformed hand were listed as documented evidences of the harsh treatment. Further charges were made that these practices were condoned by the school's administration. As a consequence of the report both the superintendent and principal at Chilocco were suspended during the investigation, with operation of the school placed in the hands of BIA area officers.[29]

At about the same time as the report's release, the BIA announced it would seek a private contractor to operate the school. Memoranda were sent to the faculty announcing this decision, indicating a large-scale termination of positions at Chilocco, along with reassurances of assistance in securing other positions.[30] The memoranda caused an uproar among administrators, faculty, alumni, and students. The Chilocco Alumni Association and a number of faculty members responded by sending telegrams to President Nixon, the

secretary of the interior, the entire Oklahoma delegation to Congress, and U. S. Senators James Pearson and Robert Dole of Kansas.[31]

Several Chilocco students, acting on their own, organized a committee to fight back at critics of the school in general, and proponents of contracting the school in particular. Members of the committee, called SOS (Save Our School), were Gary Ten Bear, Randall Bennett, Carol Plumley, Lilly Wagner, and Ruby Yellow Robe. SOS students presented a petition with nearly seven hundred student signatures to Commissioner Bennett when he visited Chilocco. "If this happens to Chilocco, it can happen to the rest of the Indian schools. If that happens, then reservations. After that all benefits will be gone."[32] Students accused the BIA of slandering Chilocco to further efforts to eliminate it from BIA jurisdiction. Carol Plumley, 19, Otoe-Ponca and head of the newly-organized student committee, urged students to start a letter-writing campaign to parents, congressmen, tribal councils, and hometown newspapers to let people know what the school was really like. At an emergency assembly called by the SOS committee, Wagner said, "The slander against Chilocco was started by three people." Ten Bear told his fellow students, "The stories of punishment at Chilocco are not true and you know it." Plumley added, "We know that many of us would never get a high school education if it weren't for Chilocco." One student asked, "If these boys are being beaten, why do they stay here?" A number of

students interviewed after the meeting said they could not understand where the investigative team got their information. All those interviewed by reporters pinpointed the troublemakers to three boys who said they were taken off the student council because they got into trouble with authorities in Arkansas City. One boy who had been handcuffed said, "They could have sent me home for what I did [drunk and unruly] but they didn't. I stayed and I am going to get a diploma." Pat John of LaConner, Washington came to the school one and one-half years earlier after she could not get along at another Indian school. "It's like one great big family--everyone looks after everyone else," she said. Gary Ten Bears added, "Chilocco is the biggest and best Indian School. If they can do away with this one, it will be easy to get the others."[33] Miss Ruby Yellowrobe, 18, Gros Ventre, expressed an insightful opinion. "The Bureau of Indian Affairs is trying to get rid of Indian education and then put the blame for Indian education's failure on private contractors."[34]

At a meeting of the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes, Commissioner Bennett praised the actions of SOS, and clarified his position on the contracting proposal. "I think we can take heart from the example that was provided by the student leadership of Chilocco School when they faced an issue. They took this on their own initiative to bring to the attention not only of the BIA but of the tribal leadership, and you might say the nation,

their feeling in relation to their school." For "the purpose of setting the record straight," Bennett claimed the reason he visited Chilocco, where the students presented him with their petition, was to hear the students' points of view in relation to the investigative report, and to apologize to the student body, and the staff, about the adverse publicity the report generated. Concerning the rumors of contracting, Bennett claimed there was never an intent to close Chilocco. Rather, the consideration was whether under the administration of a contracted organization an improved educational program might be brought to the students there. However, because of the resultant publicity of the report, "a decision has been made that there will be no contract negotiations and that all discussions and matters relating to a proposal to contract the administration of the school will be postponed indefinitely. So Chilocco School will be continued in operation as it is."[35]

At the same meeting, Plumlee presented the students' views to the Inter-Tribal Council. She stated that the students believed Chilocco was filling a need; without Chilocco, many Indian students would not be able to go to school--they would be "lost." "When it comes to Chilocco, students try to do their best. It is just a few of these that have caused all this trouble for us. Not over ten percent. Already people are saying, 'Well, that bad school.' It is kind of a bad name anymore, and we want to

try to clear that up as students, because we know what goes on on that campus, and it is not like these newspapers say--that all this cruelty and such. It is not that way. They twisted it around and made it so that it looks like it happens everyday--in our everyday life."[36]

Although an FBI investigation failed to find any violation of civil rights at Chilocco, the damage was already done. Alaska tribal officials were no longer willing to send their children thousands of miles to a boarding school where brutality had been supposedly documented. Others, concerned with the possibility of Chilocco closing at a future date, sent their children to other schools, and enrollment dropped drastically.[37]

Improving Conditions

Following the 1968 and 1969 incidents, in an attempt to improve conditions for students at Chilocco, a number of innovations were implemented to improve the school program and meet the needs of the students. A Unit Program began, designed to provide individualized teaching for each pupil. For each course, students learned what the aims and objectives were for the course, and teachers explained how they graded the student for advancement. Students worked at their own rate of speed, and had a one-on-one conference with their teacher before final testing.[38] The vocational program was offered to post-graduate students, who could participate in various programs, including printing, body

and fender work, welding, dry cleaning and heavy equipment operation.[39] A Pupil Personnel Service Center (PPSC) became available to all students in need of counseling.[40] Additionally, students were permitted weekend passes on any weekend that parents and guardians permitted. For those remaining on campus during weekends, recreational activities included a swimming pool, golf, tennis, volleyball, touch football, basketball, bowling, and movies.[41]

The Chilocco administration also made clear the status of student rights and responsibilities. Every student was to enjoy those rights secured to him or her by the Constitution and laws of the United States. However, students were told their rights to education implied a responsibility to follow recognized rules, through recognized channels, in any case in which he or she felt those rights jeopardized.[42] Additional student responsibilities meant contributing to the existence of the school itself. All students still worked for their room and board, a policy set up by the BIA and accepted in most bureau schools. In addition to this maintenance, students were expected to do certain assigned chores in their dormitories, since Chilocco operated on a limited budget and various housekeeping assignments were essential to the operation of the school.[43]

The bureau, to help Chilocco implement these new programs, asked Congress for $50,000 in planning money and seven million dollars for physical improvements to the

campus.[44] The bureau regarded Chilocco as a test case for its new policy of eduational strategy of improving staff, programs, and facilities. It planned improvements in dormitory living conditions, increased recreational activities, better guidance and counseling programs, and updated academic and vocational programs.[45] Superintendent Self requested $80,000 for expansion and improvement of the recreational program, which was to include the student union renovation; fencing, archery, tennis, golf, horsemanship, boxing, rifle and pistol ranges; arts and crafts; judo and karate; photography; dances and rock concerts; and off-campus bowling and skating.[46]

However, Chilocco did not receive the money requested, and members of the school board went to Washington to find out why.[47] James Hawkins, the bureau's director of education, responded with promises of $300,000, which he expected from cuts in staff and operating funds from cutting enrollment in half to facilitate physical renovations; but, the Anadarko area office of the bureau made no attempt to trim staff, so in fact there was no savings, and therefore no $300,000.[48] Finally, Chilocco received an appropriation of $200,000 with which to make its planned improvements.[49]

Improvements in recreational and curriculum areas lasted through the next decade. Wichita Blaine, a Chilocco student from 1976 to 1979, recalled he and his fellow students frequently went into Arkansas City on weekends for movies. In addition, they spent most Saturdays bowling and

Sundays skating. He said there was more than enough to do for recreation at Chilocco, if a student was not too lazy to take advantage of the facilities. In addition to the weekend entertainment in Arkansas City, Blaine played golf at the nine-hole golf course on campus; played basketball and touch football; swam in the indoor swimming pool; and watched movies.[50]

Blaine said successful school work was stressed, and many vocational fields were still offered when he attended Chilocco, including dry cleaning, drafting, agricultural science, and printing. He learned the printing trade there, a vocation with which he still earns his living. He disagreed that students were advanced to upper grades without learning, because he had to go to summer school twice after failing English. Good performance in, as well as out, of the classroom was rewarded. A point system existed, where students accumulated points for meeting their responsibilities, as well as staying out of trouble. After accruing a certain number of points, the students received money. Blaine thought this a good example of positive reinforcement for doing your work and not causing trouble. However, if students got in trouble, they lost privileges.[51]

One of Blaine's favorite privileges was going, on a chartered bus, with the school's athletes to various events. There was a dark side to these outings, however, and that was the way students at other schools treated the visiting

Chiloccoans. By this time, Chilocco had gained a reputation as a bad school, with bad kids. Blaine said the students resented this, because they had done nothing to deserve it. The only time they got any respect was when the boxing team, reinstated in 1978, competed. Chilocco's boxing heritage carried over to this new program, and the boys were particularly successful in their matches.[52]

Athletic teams, whether they won or lost, stopped at McDonald's on the way back to the school. This was a special treat, as everyone got to order whatever he wanted. The boys had one thing in common with their precedessors at Chilocco, in that they were always hungry. But Blaine attributed this to normal teenage appetites, as there was plenty to eat at the school. He claimed the problem with the students and the food was none of the students were raised to eat anything but meat or perhaps potatoes, so they did not like the food. He had been raised to eat fruit and vegetables, and said the food was good.[53]

Blaine, who lived in Oklahoma City when his mother made him go to Chilocco, would have preferred attending public school in Oklahoma. He believed he would perhaps have had better opportunities in a public school, or at least been exposed to a greater variety of life choices. However, he said he made the most of the situation, got an education, and learned a trade that is still with him.[54]

AIM

During the late 1960s, young Native Americans began to form political activist groups. The most radical of these new organizations was the American Indian Movement (AIM). AIM's original purpose was to protect migrating Native Americans from ethnically selective law enforcement policies, but they also supported self-determination and spoke out against BIA policies. Their activities reached a peak in 1973 when they occupied the villege of Wounded Knee at the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota in an attempt to dramatize their hatred of the BIA, and demand self-determination and a return of tribal sovereignty. This became a major media event, resulting in a new awareness among the American public of problems encountered by Native Americans. It also showed young militant Native Americans a new method of protesting injustices visited upon Indian youth.[55]

Two months before the occupation of Wounded Knee, several members of AIM entered the Chilocco superintendent's office in December 1972 and staged a sit-in. Dissatisfied that allegations of mistreatment at Chilocco were dismissed, they stated that their purpose in occupying the superintendent's office was to bring attention to the school, and to demand that a national investigating committee be formed to conduct an objective investigation into education of Indian youth and into the BIA boarding

schools.[56] As a result of AIM activities, guards under contract with the Western Oklahoma Indian Police Association in Anadarko were posted at the school. Placed to prevent any takeovers by militant Indian groups, the guards' presence also resulted in a decrease in bootlegging intoxicating beverages to the students from surrounding cities.[57]

AIM again turned its attention to Chilocco in December 1973. A powwow scheduled for December 15 was in jeopardy of being cancelled, because AIM leaders planned to visit the campus as the powwow would only be held if no outside organizations were involved. Meanwhile, the BIA in Anadarko asked for additional law enforcement for Kay County that Friday and Saturday nights.[58] The Chilocco administration finally agreed to the powwow, and a small group of AIM members reportedly attended; however, there were no resultant disturbances. But instead of holding the powwow on campus as usual, it was held in the National Guard Armory at Arkansas City. The compromise was not reached until one hour before the powwow was scheduled to begin.[59]

Jack Talmadge, who in 1973 was a teacher and assistant principal at Chilocco, blamed militant groups for many ensuing problems at Chilocco. For instance, he believed the superintendent was no longer solely responsible for the school, because he was afraid of reactions from militant groups. Any discipline might result in a charge of violation of student rights.[60]

Talmadge also stated that in the name of "rights," the administration did not make the students take particular courses, because the students wanted complete freedom. It was his belief that the courses and passing requirements had been "watered down," and students were passing subjects without the ability to read. Fifteen percent could be on academic track for college, but fifteen to twenty percent were on a low vocational track, and just wanted to be able to earn a living. In his seven years at Chilocco there were only two or three students he considered mentally retarded, but nearly all were academically retarded by two to five years. This resulted in an extreme range of ability in classrooms, sometimes with grade levels from first to ninth in a single room. However, the new emphasis on individualized instruction seemed to be helping. But the main drawback seemed to be that most students did not push themselves in the area of self-responsibility, which was necessary for the new program to work. He did believe that those who did work hard could compete against students in any other school.[61]

A history teacher, Talmadge found that most students did not like history, but he tried to stress its importance. He believed it was a fallacy students wanted to learn about Indian history; his students felt the same way about Indian history as they did about history in general, except perhaps a slight interest in their own tribe. In addition, he found students were often surprised at their own misinformation.

For example, many wore AIM buttons, and knew that AIM occupied Wounded Knee, but did not really know anything about AIM or Wounded Knee--"They jump in without thinking."[62]

GAO Audit

Allegations of financial mismanagement hit Chilocco in 1978. During an audit of the school, the General Accounting Office (GAO) uncovered what was termed "questionable expenditures." For instance, GAO investigators claimed to have found that the bureau approved $27,000 for a backhoe and small front-end loader for a heavy equipment class consisting of only five students. For a six-student vocational agricultural class, the school operated a 6,000-acre farm, with four self-propelled grain combines and twelve farm tractors. The bureau also installed a new central air conditioning and heating unit in a vandalized dormitory vacant since 1972, because the building might be used in the future. Other expenditures included a fully equipped drafting room and woodworking shop that were unused; a large walk-in freezer partially used; a small oven replaced a large, workable oven because the larger one was too big to accommodate current usage; and cellos, violins, drums, woodwinds, and brass instruments placed in a warehouse awaiting disposal.[63] The GAO also noted that by the most conservative criteria, Chilocco had the capacity to

serve 500 students, but only housed 195.[64] It also criticized Chilocco's entire budget in general.

Jimmy R. Baker, Chilocco superintendent, immediately responded to the report. He stated that what the report failed to note was that Chilocco had proposed its own remodeling programs and cleanup programs which would save the government millions of dollars in fixing the school. The backhoe was the first new equipment the heavy equipment instructor had acquired in eighteen years. A hay barn was empty because cows were fed hay in winter, during which season the audit took place; it would be full again in the summer.[65]

Doc Pewewardy, Comanche tribal vice chairman, said the GAO investigators should have taken into account the school's long hours of operation, its special role in Indian culture, and its responsibility to help students socially and emotionally as well as academically. "The school offers three wholesome and nutritious meals each day, a liberal student check-out policy designed to negate an institutional-type environment, a planned and structured recreational program, twenty-four-hour dormitory supervision under Indian personnel encouraged to assume as much as possible the role of parents, and professional counseling services," he said. "[The] GAO only understands dollars. It takes money to educate a pupil."[66]

The GAO report recommended closing Chilocco, or at least consolidating it with other Indian schools. Senator

Henry Bellmon (R-OK), member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, agreed. In a Committee hearing, he threatened to get Congress to "take a meat ax" to the bureau budget if it did not trim its spending requests; and Chilocco and other boarding schools were a good place to begin. He believed Congress was spending too much money to keep open facilities that now housed relatively few students.[67]

The main reason boarding schools now housed few students could be traced back to the Indian Self-Determination and Education Act of 1975. The act instituted the policy of the government contracting to tribes those services which they could administer on their own. This essentially implemented a self-determination policy.[68] Such services included education. Tribal governments began new, or expanded existing, schools on reservations, and many parents chose to send their children to these schools rather than to off-reservation boarding schools, including Chilocco. Consequently, Chilocco's enrollment dropped even further than it had after the Kennedy Report and contracting controversy, and the bureau soon reported that it would attempt to cut the Chilocco budget by twenty percent during the 1979-1980 school year.

Earl Barlow, bureau director for Indian education programs, subsequently announced the bureau would preside over the gradual, orderly transfer of controls over Indian schools from the bureau to the Indians. He stated this process would take a long time, beginning in the fall of

1980, with a "consultancy process" with the tribes.[69] However, in the case of Chilocco, this process never took place.

A Lost Battle

In October 1979, citing high costs, the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, of which Bellmon was a member, recommended Congress close Chilocco.[70] Once again, Chilocco supporters had to pull together to try to save the school. The school board voted to furlough non-essential personnel for the summer of 1980, a move expected to save $180,000 or ten percent of the school's budget. The board also proposed reorganization of positions and staff, including elimination of ten supervisory positions.[71] An analysis firm hired by the board further recommended Chilocco close its nine-hole golf course and convert that land to agricultural use; sell all the horses, sheep and buffalo on campus; and allow students to earn money for clothing, transportation, and recreation for themselves, rather than receive those "amenities" from the school.[72] The federal government's obligation to educate American Indian children was finally relegated to a matter of dollars and cents. Chilocco was not included in the fiscal 1981 Department of Interior budget.

In February 1980, Chilocco Superintendent C. O. Tillman told the school's students that efforts would continue to keep the school open, but that the students should be

prepared for the worst. "We haven't given up hope of keeping Chilocco open, except we are getting the same old hogwash and stalling from people who could help us," Tillman told the student body. "But let's go out there smiling and proud if the school is closed, so we can look each other in the eye when we meet and know we did our best." The students greeted Tillman's talk emotionally, some dabbing at their eyes with tissues. At the close of the special assembly, a number of students approached Tillman, shook hands with him and patted him on the shoulder.[73] They suspected the fight was lost.

However, there was one last hope. In March, a sixteen-member delegation went to Washington, D.C., in a last-ditch effort to keep the school open through fiscal 1981. All eight members of the Chilocco Advisory School Board, representatives of five north-central Oklahoma Indian tribes, and two eighteen-year-old Chilocco students took to Washington a proposed contract for the Tonkawa Indian tribe to operate the school with support from the Ponca, Kaw, Otoe-Missouri, and Pawnee tribes.[74] Keeping the coalition in suspense for nearly two months, the Bureau of Indian Affairs rejected the proposal, and notified Chilocco officials the school would be closed June 15.[75] Although proponents of self-determination for American Indians for several years, the bureau did not allow these tribes to determine for themselves that they wanted to keep Chilocco open for their children.

Now the students knew Chilocco was doomed. Several months before, many expressed their feelings about the school. "The school is part of our heritage," said Dan Williams, an 18-year-old senior from Oklahoma City. "A lot of students come here because their parents or brothers and sisters did. There are several whose grandparents went to school here right after it opened." "It's like living in a small town of kids about the same age," claimed Lantz McLendon, a Seminole from Lakeland, Florida. "It's better here than a regular high school. There are no guns, weapons or drugs here like the public high schools. There are rules, and everybody understands what they are and what happens if you break them. If they close this school down, there is no place else to go. There are a lot of us who will either just go home and sit, or drop out and go on welfare."[76]

Opal Cloud, a second-generation Chilocco student working at the school, maintained the government was reneging on a treaty by closing the campus. "It's money they don't want to spend on Indian children, and there are lots of these kids who can't make it anywhere but in an Indian school like this. A lot of these kids come here from a reservation. There is a big adjustment, and some kids can't make it from the reservation into the public schools. Their choice is to come to a school like this, or stay at home and get no education at all."[77]

The sentiments of those most closely involved did not concern federal officials. In the spirit of fiscal responsibility, ignoring the pleas of those most affected, the Senate maintained its stance on closing Chilocco at the end of the 1979-1980 school year. In the words of Chilocco's acting superintendent Earl Yeahquo, "Those who attempt to equate dollars and cents to the education of an Indian child not only advocate this ridiculous notion but are unwise and foolish as well."[78]

Vacated, cut off from utility service, windows boarded, entrances chained, Chilocco closed under protest, a victim of federal bureaucracy. For decades, the same bureaucracy forced American Indian children to attend such boarding schools in the name of civilization, then assimilation. Then, once American Indians became accustomed to the educational system and, indeed, depended on it to help their more troubled youth, the bureaucracy took it away, ignoring obligations expounded since 1790. The closing of Chilocco was another in a long line of broken promises.

Notes

1. Alley, et al, "A Reading Improvement Strategy," 14.

2. Ibid., 14.

3. William A. Brophy and Sophie D. Aberle, The Indian, American's Unfinished Business (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), 149.

4. Daniel Henninger and Nancy Esposito, "Regimented Non-Education Indian Schools," The New Republic 160, 15 February 1969, 18-19.

5. Oklahoma Indian Affairs Commission Meeting Minutes, 29 November 1967, in Robert Miller Collection.

6. C. Leon and Beulah Whidney Wall, Tomahawks Over Chilocco, (Oklahoma City: Kin Lichee Press, 1979), 89.

7. Szasz, Education, 148-50.

8. Ibid.

9. National Tragedy, 64.

10. Ibid., 72.

11. Ibid., 103.

12. Ibid., 76.

13. Ibid., 104.

14. Ibid., 2152.

15. Ibid., 2155.

16. U. S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, The Education of American Indians, A Compendium of Boarding School Evaluations, 91st Cong., 1st sess., November 1969, Volume 3. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1969), 321.

17. National Tragedy, 73.

18. Compendium, 319.

19. Ibid., 320.

20. Ibid., 305.

21. Wall, Tomahawks, 22.

22. Ibid., 67.

23. Compendium, 301.

24. Ibid., 305.

25. National Tragedy, 123.

26. Wall, Tomahawks, 114.

27. Compendium, 323.

28. Ibid., 302.

29. Alley and Davison, "Educating the American Indian," 348.

30. Ibid.

31. Daily Oklahoman 5 and 6 April 1969.

32. Daily Oklahoman 10 April 1969.

33. Indian School Journal 11 April 1969, 1-2.

34. Daily Oklahoman 8 April 1969.

35. Minutes of Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes meeting 11 April 1969, Robert Miller Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma, Norman Oklahoma.

36. Ibid.

37. Alley and Davison, "Educating the American Indian," 348.

38. Indian School Journal 5 October 1973, 1.

39. Indian School Journal 5 February 1971, 1.

40. Indian School Journal 9 January 1970, 1.

41. Indian School Journal 19 October 1973, 1.

42. Indian School Journal 30 November 1973, 1.

43. Indian School Journal 19 October 1973, 2.

44. Daily Oklahoman 7 April 1972.

45. Daily Oklahoman 28 April 1972.

46. Daily Oklahoman 29 December 1972.

47. Daily Oklahoman 20 December 1972.

48. Daily Oklahoman 3 January 1973.

49. Daily Oklahoman 2 January 1974.

50. Wichita Blaine, Interview by author, 14 May 1991, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid. Blaine had not thought about Chilocco for some time before the interview. He was surprised at how much fondness he still felt for the school, how much fun he remembered having there. Perhaps he, as well as others interviewed, recalled in retrospect the good and not the bad. He wondered at this, but said that truly, on the whole, going to Chilocco was a good experience for him.

55. James S. Olson and Raymond Wilson, Native Americans in the Twentieth Century (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 167-174.

56. Wall, Tomahahawks, 206.

57. Daily Oklahoman 1 December 1972.

58. Daily Oklahoman 15 December 1973.

59. Daily Oklahoman 16 December 1973.

60. Audiotape of Jack Talmadge presentation to a class at Oklahoma State University, 3 March 1973.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Daily Oklahoman 2 March 1978.

64. Ibid.

65. Daily Oklahoman 3 March 1978.

66. Daily Oklahoman 28 March 1978.

67. Daily Oklahoman 29 March 1979.

68. Prucha, Great Father, 1157-8.

69. Daily Oklahoman 17 May 1979.

70. Daily Oklahoman 3 October 1979.

71. Daily Oklahoman 29 November 1979.

72. Indian School Journal 29 January 1980, 1.

73. Daily Oklahoman 14 February 1980.

74. Daily Oklahoman 22 March 1980.

75. Daily Oklahoman 7 May 1980.

76. Daily Oklahoman 14 November 1979.

77. Ibid.

78. Daily Oklahoman 14 June 1980.

CHAPTER V

EPILOGUE

At the end of the nineteenth century, assimilation of Native Americans into white society was a primary goal of the federal government and Indian reform groups. Their main tool for this process was education of Native American youth. To the federal government, education meant teaching Indians to be self-sufficient, rather than continuing to rely on the government for financial support--a condition imposed on Native Americans after the government eradicated their traditional means of support and declared them federal wards. To reformers, education meant exposing young Indians to the advantages of white culture in order to "lift up" the Indian race to the level of the Anglo-Saxon race. To these reformers, the best way to successfully achieve assimilation was to remove Indian youth from the influence of their "primitive" homes and provide for them a new home--in off-reservation boarding schools like Chilocco. Beginning in the 1880s, such schools spread across the country, and in 1884 Chilocco Indian School opened to bring assimilation to Indian Territory.

Indian students who attended Chilocco did find a home there, some because Chilocco was better than their own

abusive homes, and others because they had no choice but to adapt to life at a school far away from their families. Most received an education of some sort, whether academic or vocational. Many used this education to provide a life for themselves after they left Chilocco.

Most former Chilocco students interviewed stated that the school was a home away from home, and remembered the good things it offered them. Even those attending Chilocco during the tumultuous 1960s felt this way. Labeled delinquent, maladjusted, and educationally retarded, the majority of these students saw Chilocco as a place that offered them educational opportunities, and they fought to keep these opportunities.

So, although investigative documents, from the Meriam Report to the Kennedy Report, detailed abuses and failures of the boarding schools, Chilocco students did not really feel these allegations were a part of their personal experiences. Perhaps they had low expectations to begin with, since the boarding schools operated on a lower level than white schools. Perhaps the Save Our School committee was responding to perceived threats to their federal benefits in general, rather than solely defending Chilocco. Nonetheless, students generally held the school in high regard, and fought to keep it from being taken away from them. In their eyes, Chilocco offered them a chance to be with other Native American young people, and a chance to

achieve an education that would allow them to make a living during their adult lives.

However, did Chilocco and other off-reservation boarding schools succeed in assimilating their Native American students? Not completely. What they did achieve was offering Native Americans the means by which to live in a multi-cultural society, whether they chose to live their adult lives among whites or on reservations. In the end, Native Americans defeated forced assimilation. They took what this educational system had to offer and adapted it to their own benefit. The assimilationist movement begun by the federal government and nineteenth-century reformers failed, but the educational by-product of this movement prevailed.

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