

THE PAWNEE AGENCY AND BOARDING SCHOOL  
HISTORIC DISTRICT: TOWARD A NATIONAL  
REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
NOMINATION

By

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## PREFACE

The buildings of the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School reflect the history and significance of an American Indian tribe's interaction with the federal government. Not only do they stand as the physical remnants of the Pawnee presence in Oklahoma over the past 125 years and of the government's administration of federal Indian policy, but these resources also have meaning to the present generation of the Pawnee Nation. Now owned by the Pawnees, some of the buildings currently serve the needs of the tribal community, and tentative plans to reuse more of them testify to its desire to look to the future and to the importance of the buildings to tribal identity. In recognition of the historical significance of the agency and boarding school, and in the interest of preserving the integrity of the resources, many tribal members hope to list the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district.

This report, as the culmination of graduate work toward a Master of Arts degree emphasizing Applied History, draws together research on the history of the agency and school, and an evaluation of the property's eligibility for the National Register. The report includes a discussion of the philosophy and purpose of the National Register of Historic Places, and of the requirements for eligibility that a property must meet to qualify for listing. The history of the agency and boarding school provide the historic context necessary to justify the property's significance, and a chapter on the contributing

resources of the district gives more detailed construction and alteration histories of individual buildings and structures. The final two chapters summarize the significance of the district, delineate its boundaries, evaluate its integrity, and conclude the report. The information compiled for the report will be used to nominate the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School to the National Register of Historic Places.

In preparing this report, as well as throughout my graduate studies, I have been fortunate to work with a dedicated and supportive advisor, and wish to thank Dr. Bill Bryans for his guidance and encouragement. Dr. L. G. Moses's vast knowledge of American Indian history, and Dr. Lowell Caneday's experience in interpretation of historic, cultural, and natural resources have further broadened my education and prepared me for a career in applied history that is still grounded in the discipline of history. I also want to thank John B. Phillips, head of the Government Documents Department of the Edmon Low Library, for his assistance and willingness to share sources on Indian education and the Pawnees uncovered during the course of his own work. The Pawnee Nation, and especially Ramona Osborne of Little Eagle and Associates, have provided me with a tangible project and goal toward which to strive, and have expressed generous appreciation for my work; I sincerely hope that this report helps the Pawnees in successfully listing the property on the National Register. I was also aided in my research by the 1998-1999 LeRoy H. Fischer Graduate Research Paper Award for work that has been incorporated into the report. And finally, I also wish to thank family and friends who have lent their moral support to my foray into graduate school.



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## I. INTRODUCTION

The history of the Pawnee Nation in Oklahoma began in the mid-1870s with the removal of the tribe from its traditional homelands in Nebraska and its resettlement in what was then Indian Territory. The relationship of the tribe to the federal government of the United States, complex and enduring, has centered physically on the buildings that make up the Pawnee Agency, located next to Black Bear Creek, a tributary of the Arkansas River in north-central Oklahoma. The sandstone masonry buildings, associated historically with the administration of the agency and with the education of the children of the tribe through a government boarding school, survive today and reflect the history of the interaction of the Pawnees with the federal government. These buildings, as part of the history of the region, derive significance from their association with the historic trends of federal Indian policy and Indian education, and for the craftsmanship and visual unity of the buildings. Because of their historical significance, the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School buildings are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Register, the nation's official list of properties deemed significant in American history, architecture, culture, archaeology, and engineering, provides a means to recognize the importance of these properties to our heritage. According to guidelines for nominating significant properties to the register, these places "contribute to an understanding of the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation." A property can be classified as a district, site, building, structure, or object depending on its type or historic use. Because the National Register recognizes the importance of history at all levels, from the rise of individual communities to events of national scope, properties may be listed as significant at the local, state, or national level.<sup>1</sup>

Congress authorized the creation of the National Register of Historic Places with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966. Although the federal government had been increasing its role in preservation since the end of the nineteenth century, this act marked a significant commitment to the movement. Prior to its passage, federal involvement in preservation concerns attempted to protect primarily resources of national importance or those located on federal property. The Historic Sites Act of 1935, called by William J. Murtagh a seminal bill for preservation, had declared “a national policy to preserve for public use historic sites, buildings and objects of national significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States.” The National Historic Preservation Act expanded the scope of the federal government’s influence in preservation by recognizing the importance of significant state and local resources as well as those of national value.<sup>2</sup>

The National Historic Preservation Act provided for the National Register of Historic Places in Title I, which directed the Secretary of the Interior to “expand and maintain” this list of significant properties worthy of preservation. Shortly after implementation of the act, the secretary delegated much of his responsibility to the states, where appointed officers took charge of carrying out the directives of the act at the state and local levels. The responsibilities of these officers included surveying properties within their states for possible inclusion on the register, developing a statewide preservation plan, and activating restoration and rehabilitation of the identified properties. Now known as State Historic Preservation Officers, these appointees and their staffs continue to coordinate preservation planning and the nomination and listing of properties within their states on the National Register.<sup>3</sup>

Nominations to the register, if approved by the State Historic Preservation Officer and his or her professional staff – which must include a historian, an architect, an archaeologist, and an architectural historian – advance to a state review board, made up of citizens from these same disciplines, for further review. Nominations approved by the board are submitted to the Keeper of the Register within the National Park Service. If the nominated property passes this final review, the Keeper of the Register officially lists it on the National Register of Historic Places. Once listed, the property becomes a recognized part of the “collective patrimony” of the United States.<sup>4</sup>

Because of this decentralization of the Secretary of the Interior’s responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act, Murtagh notes, “The National Register is thus essentially a state and local program in which the federal government reacts to those identifiable man-made resources which the states and localities recommend as worth preserving.”<sup>5</sup> The National Register, therefore, provides the opportunity to recognize formally the meaning of local resources to their own communities, as well as the importance of properties of state or national significance. It is a powerful recognition that the collective experience of all citizens together contributes to our national heritage, and gives meaning to the physical remnants of the past.

The buildings that make up the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School still stand as remnants of this past, and are significant for their association with historic events and trends, specifically the relationship of the federal government to the Pawnees in the administration of the agency and in the education of their children. For this association, the buildings are eligible for the National Register under Criterion A, association “with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.”<sup>6</sup>

Although the agency and school fit into the broader context of federal Indian policy in the United States, they are primarily significant on the local level, important in the history of the Pawnee Nation and north-central Oklahoma.

Ranging in age from the first building constructed in 1876 to the final one completed in 1932, the buildings of the agency and school comprise a historic district, defined for the purposes of the National Register as an entity possessing “a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.” Built of local sandstone, the buildings display a visual unity that sets them apart as an identifiable and associated complex of buildings. For this reason, they also meet Criterion C for the craftsmanship of their stonework, and because, taken as a whole, they “represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.”<sup>7</sup>

In summary, it is the purpose of this report to demonstrate and justify the eligibility of the buildings of the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the nation’s official inventory of properties significant to American history, architecture, culture, archaeology, and engineering. The research done for the report, the information compiled within it, and the evidence marshaled to argue eligibility will be used to nominate the property to the National Register. The Pawnee Agency and Boarding School will be nominated as a historic district, significant on the local level for its association with historic events and trends, and for the craftsmanship and overall visual unity of the buildings that make up the complex. This historic district is worthy of recognition and preservation as a significant component of American history.



## NOTES

1. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Guidelines for Completing National Register of Historic Places Forms, Part A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1997), i.
2. Murtagh particularly cites as landmark preservation legislation the Antiquities Act of 1906, the creation of the National Park Service in 1916, and the Historic Sites Act of 1935. William J. Murtagh, *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1997), 51, 58, 60, 66; Historic Sites and Buildings Act quoted from Murtagh, Appendix A, 174-75.
3. Murtagh, *Keeping Time*, 66, 70-73; National Historic Preservation Act quoted from Murtagh, Appendix A, 176-79.
4. Murtagh, *Keeping Time*, 73.
5. Ibid.
6. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1998), 2.
7. *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, 15; *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 2.

## II. THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The National Register of Historic Places is one of the cornerstones of preservation in the United States. Although listing on the National Register is not appropriate or desirable for all historic properties, the procedures used by the register provide a model for preservation planning and the identification of significant historic and cultural resources. By delineating standard guidelines and tangible criteria through which to evaluate the properties that connect us with the past, the National Register offers the opportunity to consider the importance and meaning of these places to our heritage. Recognizing and understanding this meaning – this significance – can empower us to protect the resources invested with it, and sustain them into the future.<sup>1</sup>

### **Purpose of National Register Documentation**

Beyond the overall philosophy of the National Register of Historic Places, this inventory of the nation's significant historical, architectural, archaeological, engineering, and cultural properties has several practical purposes. On the most fundamental level, the register lists these resources to recognize them as meaningful to our past, but the documentation produced by the nomination process becomes an important record of the history of each property and the reasons why it is significant. Collectively, the documentation of all National Register listings records and preserves an archive of data on properties significant to the history of the United States and worthy of preservation.

The National Register registration form, completed to nominate a property for inclusion, contains the relevant information necessary to determine whether or not the

property is eligible for listing. The form identifies the resource and its location, explains how it meets at least one of the criteria of the National Register, and defends the property's historic significance and integrity. The documentation produced for successful nominations "assists in preserving historic properties by documenting their significance and by identifying the historic characteristics that give a property historic significance and integrity."<sup>2</sup>

Beyond the primary purpose of providing formal recognition of a property's significance, placement on the register offers some secondary benefits. Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Register listing provides some limited protection to significant resources threatened by actions funded or licensed by the federal government, which must take into account the affect of such actions on the resources before proceeding. Owners of commercial properties listed on the register may qualify for investment tax credits when rehabilitating the property within prescribed guidelines. If funding is available, the owner of a listed property may qualify for matching grants for restoration or rehabilitation. Despite the recognition of significance that listing provides, the National Register does not restrict the use or sale of private property or guarantee restoration money; and it places no restrictions on the alteration or rehabilitation of listed properties unless a project involves federal funding.<sup>3</sup>

### **Requirements and Format of a National Register Nomination**

The National Register of Historic Places has a standardized procedure for nominating properties and a specific format in which to submit nominations. The preparer of a nomination must understand the requirements and the meaning of several

concepts and terms *as defined by* National Register guidelines. The National Park Service, as the division of the Department of the Interior that administers the National Register, provides several publications to aid nomination preparers in adhering to the guidelines. The basic guide, *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, takes preparers step by step through the registration process, explaining necessary concepts and terms, how to apply them to the property being nominated, and how to enter all information on the form. To facilitate understanding of the requirements, an explanation of the concepts and terms, with definitions specific to the register, follows.

#### The Key Concepts of Significance, Integrity, and Context

The National Register uses what it calls the “three key concepts” of historic significance, historic integrity, and historic context to determine whether or not a property is eligible and qualified for listing. While these concepts are complex and can seem intangible and subjective, the National Register guidelines show that understanding what they mean and “how they relate to a historic property” can assist preparers in evaluating properties and justifying their eligibility. The guidelines define the terms and break them down into component parts. According to the National Register, those properties that possess historic significance within a defined historic context, and that retain historic integrity, are deemed eligible for the register.<sup>4</sup>

The guidelines state, “Historic significance is the importance of a property to the history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture of a community, State, or the nation.” In other words, properties considered significant must have meaning in one or more of the listed areas (history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture) at the local, state, or national level. To meet the requirement for significance, a nomination

preparer must demonstrate why the property is important in the history of a community, state, or the nation as a whole. The register defines four aspects of history in which a property can achieve significance; these criteria are discussed below. Significance also includes defining a specific area of history “in which the property made important contributions,” and a specific time period during which it made the contributions.<sup>5</sup>

In measuring significance, a preparer must place a property and its contribution to history within a broader context. Historic context “is information about historic trends and properties grouped by an important theme in the prehistory or history of a community, State, or the nation during a particular period of time.” This means that in order to evaluate the meaning or importance of a specific property, the nomination preparer must have perspective, and understand how the property fits within the broader themes of history. Knowledge of the historic context helps a preparer “understand a historic property as a product of its time and as an illustration of aspects of heritage that may be unique, representative, or pivotal.” To simplify the concept of contexts, the register breaks them down and organizes them by theme, place, and time. While place and time are self-explanatory – where the property is located and when it made its contribution – theme is more complex. To be considered significant, a theme must be important in American history and demonstrated as such through research. The property must be placed within an important theme in the history of the area in which it achieves significance, such as the development of a community, the body of work of a significant architect, or the occupation of a culture at a prehistoric site. The property must remain significant when viewed within the context of the theme.<sup>6</sup>

Historic integrity relates to the physical characteristics of a property that convey

its historic identity. A property eligible for listing on the National Register must retain enough of the characteristics that were present during the period in which it achieved significance to convey accurately this significance. The guidelines note, “Not only must a property resemble its historic appearance, but it must also retain physical materials, design features, and aspects of construction dating from the period when it attained significance.” The register defines seven aspects of integrity and, while admitting that evaluating integrity “is sometimes a subjective judgment,” contends that understanding the physical features of a property and how they relate to the property’s significance will aid the preparer in determining whether or not it retains integrity. The seven aspects of integrity, further defined in Figure 1, are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Although a property should possess “several, and usually most” of the qualities of integrity, it need not possess all seven.<sup>7</sup>

### Criteria for Evaluation

An understanding of the general concepts of significance, context, and integrity lay the foundation for completing a nomination to the National Register. In determining the eligibility of a property, historic significance and historic context are closely related, for listed properties “must possess significance when evaluated in the perspective of their historic context.” If deemed significant within their defined context, properties are then evaluated for historic integrity; for a successful nomination, the preparer must convincingly argue that the property possesses both historic significance and integrity.<sup>8</sup>

The National Register provides four Criteria for Evaluation for use in determining the historic significance of a property. The guidelines call the criteria the “standards by which every property that is nominated to the National Register is judged.” According to

## **Aspects of Historic Integrity National Register of Historic Places**

Historic integrity is the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's prehistoric or historic period. Historic integrity is the composite of seven qualities:

- **Location** is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred
- **Design** is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property
- **Setting** is the physical environment of a historic property
- **Materials** are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property
- **Workmanship** is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory
- **Feeling** is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time
- **Association** is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property

Figure 1. The Seven Aspects of Integrity defined by the National Register of Historic Places. Text is quoted from *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 44-45.

the criteria used by the register, a property can be significant for association with historic events or trends; for association with important people; for distinctive physical characteristics including design, craftsmanship, or the work of a master; or for its potential to yield further, important information. In order to qualify for listing on the register, the property must meet at least one of these criteria, but can be eligible under more than one criterion. Ultimately, the property must be shown significant under the selected criteria when evaluated within its historic context, demonstrating again the interplay of historic significance and historic context.<sup>9</sup>

The National Register's Criteria for Evaluation are deliberately broad to encompass a wide variety of properties and the many reasons for which they may be significant at the local, state, or national level. By using the criteria and the historic context, a nomination preparer can determine a property's eligibility "by identifying the links to important events or persons, design or construction features, or information potential that make the property important." The National Register guidelines present a systematic breakdown of the four Criteria for Evaluation, designating each by letter.<sup>10</sup>

Criterion A: Properties significant under Criterion A "are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history." Although a property may be associated with a single, historic event, it can also achieve significance through association with repeated events or activities, or with broader historical trends or patterns. For example, a resource significant in either the founding of a community or throughout the community's rise as an important commercial center could be eligible under Criterion A. Evaluating a resource by researching its history within its context can reveal an association with historic events or trends, but simple association does not make



it significant; the property must have an *important* association with those events or trends to qualify it for listing on the register under Criterion A. It must be a good representative of the properties associated with the defined events or trends.<sup>11</sup>

Criterion B: Historic resources may be eligible for listing on the National Register if they “are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.” Such properties usually derive significance from their association with an individual who has made a recognized contribution to history, and should illustrate his or her achievements. In other words, a property eligible under Criterion B should ideally be associated with the individual’s “productive life,” the time period in which he or she made the contribution to history. An example would be the home or office of a doctor who is significant for making advances in the science of medicine. When more than one property associated with the individual exists, all should be compared to designate those properties “that best represent the person’s historic contribution.”<sup>12</sup>

Criterion C: Properties listed under Criterion C are significant for reasons relating to their physical design or construction, generally in the areas of architecture, artwork, engineering, or landscape architecture. The resource must meet one or more of four main components that make up Criterion C. Most properties listed under C are significant because they “embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.” These properties are representative of a known type, period, or construction method by exhibiting the features or range of features that commonly occur in them. They can also illustrate the evolution of a style or the transition between styles. Properties under Criterion C can also represent a significant work of a master architect or craftsman. This can include a well-known master or an unknown craftsman “whose

work is distinguishable from others by its characteristic style and quality.” A property possessing “high artistic style” by expressing aesthetic ideals or design concepts is also eligible under Criterion C. Finally, resources “that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction” qualify under Criterion C. This part of the criterion is often applied to historic districts that encompass several buildings that are visually related to one another but that may not reflect a particular, distinctive style. Viewed together, the resources of a district may clearly form an entity distinguishable from the surrounding buildings or landscape.<sup>13</sup>

Criterion D: Archaeological or historic resources may be eligible under Criterion D “if they have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.” It is necessary that these resources not only *contain* information about human prehistory or history, but also that this information is *important* enough to contribute to a valid research design. National Register listings under Criterion D most commonly are archaeological sites that are known, through testing or partial excavation, to contain relatively intact cultural resources. Less commonly, a building, structure, or object could also have information potential that would make it eligible under Criterion D. For example, study of a building that exhibits a variation of a known style may reveal important information about the development of a significant local design.<sup>14</sup>

The National Register distills these guidelines for determining the significance of a property, derived through application of the Criteria for Evaluation, into a specific, concise definition. Although this definition masks the flexibility inherent in the criteria and their application to diverse resources, it summarizes the test of eligibility:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.<sup>15</sup>

The National Register does exclude certain properties from listing unless they are a part of historic or archaeological districts, or meet exceptional criteria considerations that make them eligible. To respect the separation of church and state, religious properties are not eligible unless they are significant based on architectural, artistic, or historical – not doctrinal – importance. A moved property, divorced from its setting and association, is not eligible unless for architectural significance or as the surviving structure best associated with an individual or event. A birthplace or grave, because not associated with a person’s productive life, is only eligible if it is that of “a historical figure of outstanding importance” and no other appropriate property survives. A cemetery is ineligible unless primarily significant for age, distinctive design features, association with an event, or if it contains the graves of individuals “of transcendent importance.” Reconstructions must be accurate, dignified, and part of a master plan to be eligible. A commemorative property is not eligible unless it has attained historical significance on its own and not for the event or person it commemorates. Finally, properties less than fifty years old do not allow the perspective necessary to evaluate

significance and are ineligible unless of “exceptional importance.”<sup>16</sup>

### Property Classifications

Although identifying and justifying historic significance through application of the Criteria for Evaluation is the true test of a property’s eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places, the nomination preparer must also categorize the resource. The National Register recognizes only “physically concrete properties that are relatively fixed in location”; these are associated with our history and so provide a tangible link to the past. The National Register recognizes five types of properties for listing – buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts.<sup>17</sup> While all are common terms, for the purposes of the register, they have very specific definitions that are explained below. For the exact language used by the National Register for each category, and examples of properties that usually fall under each, see Figure 2 on page 18.

Building: According to the National Register, a building was originally created to shelter human activity in any form. The category of “building” encompasses residential dwellings, public buildings such as libraries, commercial business places, civic buildings such as courthouses or town halls, and places of entertainment like theaters. The term also includes buildings “historically and functionally related” to places of human activity, such as a barn, or the jail next to a courthouse. Those properties classified as buildings must be relatively complete, retaining their “basic structural elements.” A nomination preparer must look at the building as a whole and identify its significant features, and cannot nominate only a portion of it, such as the facade of an otherwise ineligible building. A building missing basic structural components could be called a ruin, and may be eligible under the property category of site.

Site: For a property categorized as a site, the place itself is significant for its historic, archaeological, or cultural value, and need not contain any standing structures. While this definition can make a site's association seem somewhat intangible, it must be the location of a significant event or pattern of events. The association must be documented through the evidence of physical remains or cultural resources, or through research that confirms the location. If the site once contained a building that is now a ruin, the site is still eligible if the location, and not the building, is significant; for example, if a battle took place near a house that is now a ruin, the site would be eligible for the battlefield regardless of the condition of the house, because the site of the battle, and not the presence of the house, was the event that makes the location significant. A site may also be a natural landmark that is strongly associated with an event or pattern of events that left no material evidence, such as the location of a treaty signing. In such cases, research must clearly establish the association of the site to the event.

Structure: In contrast to a building, a structure generally was created not to shelter human activity, but for some functional purpose. Many properties that fall into this category are engineered structures, such as bridges, ships, aircraft, dams, or highways. They may also be of simpler construction, such as windmills or bandstands. Nomination preparers should not overlook prehistoric properties that also qualify as structures, including mounds, and ancient roadways or irrigation systems. As with a building, a structure missing basic structural components is usually considered a ruin.

Object: The National Register categorizes as objects those properties that are "primarily artistic in nature or are relatively small in scale and simply constructed." The category of "object" typically includes public sculpture, statuary, monuments, and

**Property Classification and Resource Types  
National Register of Historic Places**

<i>Type</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Examples</i>
BUILDING	A building, such as a house, barn, church, hotel, or similar construction, is created principally to shelter any form of human activity. "Building" may also be used to refer to a historically and functionally related unit, such as a courthouse and jail or a house and barn.	Houses, barns, sheds, garages, courthouses, city halls, commercial buildings, libraries, factories, mills, train depots, hotels, theaters, schools, stores.
SITE	A site is the location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure.	Habitation and village sites, rock shelters, petroglyphs, sites of treaty signings, gardens, battlefields, shipwrecks, campsites, natural features having cultural significance.
STRUCTURE	The term "structure" is used to distinguish from buildings those functional constructions made usually for purposes other than creating human shelter.	Bridges, tunnels, canals, dredges, firetowers, mounds, railroad grades, roadways, ships, aircraft, telescopes.
OBJECT	The term "object" is used to distinguish from buildings and structures those constructions that are primarily artistic in nature or are relatively small in scale and simply constructed. Although it may be, by nature or design, movable, an object is associated with a specific setting or environment.	Sculpture, monuments, boundary markers, statuary, fountains.
DISTRICT	A district possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.	Campuses, business districts, residential or commercial areas, industrial complexes, irrigation systems.

Figure 2. Property Classifications for resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Taken from *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, 15.

fountains, but can also include boundary markers or mile posts. Eligible objects are associated with “a specific setting or environment,” and “should be in a setting appropriate to their significant historic use, roles, or character.” Portable objects such as small sculptures, furniture, or decorative arts are usually excluded from listing, as are objects removed from their intended settings and housed in museums.

District: When a property contains several resources of relatively equal importance, or a large area with a variety of types of resources, the National Register categorizes it as a district. According to the guidelines, a district has “a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity” of resources that are “united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.” In other words, a district encompasses a group of components that are related to each other in some way, whether through a shared history (such as a residential neighborhood) or through their function (such as several buildings making up a factory complex). While districts often “convey a visual sense of the overall historic environment,” this is not necessary. An archaeological district, for example, could contain several habitation sites of a particular culture. A district must have a defined geographic boundary based on the relationship of its resources and that distinguishes it from other properties. Generally, a district encompasses a single geographic area, but may comprise separated areas if appropriate. It is then designated a discontinuous district; for example, the individual locks of a canal separated by stretches of natural waterway. The several resources within a district need not be individually distinctive, but are classified as either contributing to the significance of the district or as non-contributing. The integrity of the district is judged by its overall sense of historic character when an observer steps back and considers it as one entity.<sup>18</sup>

## **Categorization of the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School Resources**

As noted in the Introduction, the resources that make up the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School will be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. The buildings together comprise a “distinguishable entity” that are related not only by their appearance and construction material, but also by their historic purpose and their physical development. Although the components of this district “lack individual distinction” in terms of recognized style, they do exhibit considerable craftsmanship for their stonework, and present a visual unity that sets them apart from the surrounding environment and the nearby town of Pawnee.

With the property categorized as a historic district, it must be placed within its historic context to define its significance. The next two chapters present the history, documented through historical research, of the Pawnee Agency and the Pawnee Boarding School. This history, documenting the district’s connection with the history of federal Indian policy and Indian education, illustrates its eligibility under Criterion A of the National Register’s Criteria for Evaluation.



## NOTES

1. "National Register of Historic Places," State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society website, <<http://www.ok-history.mus.ok.us/SHPO/natreghp.html>>.
2. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Guidelines for Completing National Register of Historic Places Forms, Part A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1997), 1.
3. State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society, *Oklahoma National Register Nomination and Request for Determination of Eligibility Manual* (Oklahoma City: State Historic Preservation Office, revised 1992), 1; National Historic Preservation Act quoted from William J. Murtagh, *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1997), Appendix A, 178.
4. *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, 1, 3.
5. *Ibid.*, 3, 1.
6. *Ibid.*, 4, 49; U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1998), 8.
7. *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, 4; *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 44.
8. *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 9.
9. *Ibid.*, i, 11; *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, 3.
10. *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 2-3, 11; *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, 37.
11. *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 7, 12.
12. *Ibid.*, 14-15.
13. *Ibid.*, 17-20.
14. *Ibid.*, 21-23.
15. *Ibid.*, 2.
16. *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, 37.
17. *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 4.
18. *Ibid.*, 4-6; *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, 15.

### III. HISTORIC CONTEXT: THE PAWNEE AGENCY

The history of the Pawnee Indians in Oklahoma begins with the tribe's removal from their traditional homelands in Nebraska to Indian Territory in the mid-1870s. While the Pawnees had occupied the central plains for centuries, settling in villages but ranging far from their homes for extended buffalo hunts, they had ceded land to the federal government and acknowledged its supremacy by the middle of the nineteenth century. With their Nebraska land base reduced to a 285,000 acre reservation by an 1857 treaty, the Pawnees entered into a changed relationship with the United States by accepting the presence of an Indian agency on the reservation and the administration of their affairs by an agent.<sup>1</sup> When the Pawnees moved south to Indian Territory less than twenty years later, the Pawnee Agency was reestablished on the new reservation to continue the government's presence.

As a component of the Office of Indian Affairs, the Pawnee Agency sought to implement the policies devised by the United States government to guide its relationship with native peoples. While the specific programs designed by the government and the methods used to carry them out changed through the years, for much of the history of the interaction of American Indians with the United States, the goal of federal policy was the assimilation of the tribal members into white society. While the Indian Office, as a hierarchical arm of the government, directed federal Indian policy from Washington, D.C., the administrators and employees of the various agencies throughout the country worked directly with the tribes to carry out the programs mandated by the office. The Pawnee Agency was, therefore, the focal point of the tribe's interactions with the federal government. The agency implemented federal policy, worked with the members of the

tribe as they adjusted to the changes, and reacted to the consequences of the government's programs among the Pawnees.

Throughout the period of significance for the historic district, 1876 through 1950, the Pawnee Agency, along with the boarding school, was a central presence in the lives of the Pawnees. As the arm of the Office of Indian Affairs that implemented the programs of the federal government at the local level, the agency was a part of the broad trends of federal Indian policy through these years, and its actions reflect those trends. The agency played a role in the events that led to removal of the tribe to Indian Territory. In the difficult years following removal and before agricultural fields on the new reservation had been fully developed, the agency distributed rations to the tribe. The responsibilities of the agency also entailed fulfilling the obligations of the United States toward the Pawnees as a result of past treaties, including distribution of an annuity and providing for the education of the children. Later, the agency worked to implement allotment and deal with its repercussions, including land ownership, leasing, and sale, and the responsibilities of citizenship. With the Indian New Deal of the 1930s, the agency assisted the Pawnees with the reorganization of tribal government. And throughout the 1940s, the Pawnee Agency sought to guide the tribe through the shifting goals of federal policy and administrative reorganization of Indian affairs.

### **The Jurisdiction of the Pawnee Agency**

The bureaucracy inherent in the Indian Office meant that the administrative structure of the agency and the mechanisms used in supervising work with the Pawnees would vary through the years. When the tribe first arrived in Indian Territory, it fell

under the jurisdiction of the Pawnee Agency as a distinct entity of the Indian Office. By 1883, the office had consolidated the agency with the Ponca and Otoe agencies; headquarters for the combined agency was at Whiteagle on the Ponca Reservation. By 1886, the Oakland Agency of the Tonkawa tribe had been added.<sup>2</sup> Although one agent oversaw the consolidated agency, a clerk stationed at the Pawnee reservation handled day-to-day administration there.<sup>3</sup>

In 1891, immediate charge of the boarding school for the Pawnee children was placed in the hands of a school superintendent, while the agent at Whiteagle continued to administer the agencies of the four tribes under his jurisdiction. Finally, in 1901, as part of a nationwide trend to eliminate the politically appointed agents, the Indian Office transferred all aspects of administration among the Pawnees to the school superintendent, who thereafter had responsibility for the Pawnee Boarding School as well as the agency. By the following year, the Ponca, Otoe, and Oakland agencies had been separated from the Pawnee Agency and the school superintendent at Pawnee had direct charge of administration for the Pawnees for the next eighteen years.<sup>4</sup>

In 1920, the confusing shifts in jurisdiction began again, when the Indian Office placed administration of the Ponca, Otoe, and Tonkawa reservations under the Pawnee Agency; just one year later, affairs of the three other tribes were again put under the Ponca Agency. An agent at the Pawnee Agency then administered the Pawnees and the Kaw tribe, which had been added to the Ponca Agency in 1913. In 1927, all five of these tribes – Pawnee, Ponca, Otoe-Missouria, Tonkawa, and Kaw – were again consolidated under the Pawnee Agency. In 1947, the agency was placed under the control of the Western Oklahoma Consolidated Agency at Anadarko and became a subagency, but

retained a district agent stationed at Pawnee. In 1950, the subagency officially became an area field office under the Anadarko Area Office, with an area field representative in charge at Pawnee.<sup>5</sup> Despite these many variations in administration, the government's programs among the Pawnees and the business transacted with tribal members through the agent, clerk, superintendent, or area field representative centered on the buildings near Black Bear Creak on the tribal reserve in what became Oklahoma.

### **The Pawnees in Nebraska and Removal**

Pawnee history reaches back several centuries before the tribe's arrival in Indian Territory. Cultural predecessors of the Pawnees likely inhabited the central plains for seven to eight hundred years prior to the United States' acquisition of the region as part of the Louisiana Purchase. By the seventeenth century, the direct ancestors of the Pawnees lived in villages along the Platte and Republican rivers in central Nebraska, but also ranged onto territory far to the west and south to hunt buffalo. By the time Lewis and Clark observed the Pawnees in 1805, the tribe consisted of four confederated bands, the Chaui, the Kitkihahki, the Petahaurata, and the Skidi, living near each other along the Loup River and its juncture with the Platte.<sup>6</sup>

Traditional Pawnee culture fostered community. Each band was further subdivided into villages of extended families with elaborate kinship networks. Within the villages, ten to twelve mudlodges each housed between thirty to fifty people, all of whom fulfilled their social role within the household. According to geographer David J. Wishart, the villages were "governed by consensus rather than power." While the four bands were largely autonomous, they formed a loose confederation overseen by a council

made up of village and band chiefs. Throughout the nineteenth century, population loss due to epidemic disease and warfare with other tribes had led to the consolidation of the villages of each band and a stronger identity of the four bands as one tribe.<sup>7</sup>

Although semi-nomadic and absent from the villages for extended buffalo hunts each year, the Pawnees considered the villages home. Each village offered its inhabitants a center for traditional rituals and ceremonies that governed their cultural world view, and a place where individuals drew support from a community of interdependent members. The villages also provided the Pawnees some mutual protection from the Sioux, who clashed with the Pawnees from the 1830s up until the tribe's departure from Nebraska. Sioux raids discouraged Pawnees from venturing too far from their villages alone, further strengthening the importance of community for their own safety. The villages also served as a focal point for horticultural practices that, along with the buffalo hunts that secured meat, provided the tribe with its subsistence.<sup>8</sup>

The Pawnees maintained farming patches that surrounded the villages. The women gathered nearby wild foods but also planted corn, beans, squash, pumpkins, melons, and sunflowers, walking out from their villages during the day to tend their fields. After the second hoeing of the corn, most of the tribe set off on the summer buffalo hunt, moving steadily westward in pursuit of the herds. The men of the tribe hunted, killed, and butchered the buffalo while the women dried the meat and processed the hides. Returning home in the fall, the tribe harvested the crops, celebrated the earth's bounty, and then again left the villages for the winter hunt. The cycle began anew in the spring, when the Pawnees arrived home to plant. The rhythm of the annual subsistence cycle included a rich ceremonial component that regulated planting, harvesting, and the

hunt, and was intricately woven into the fabric of Pawnee culture.<sup>9</sup>

The formal relationship of the Pawnees with the federal government began over a half century before the tribe's move to Indian Territory. In 1818, the government concluded separate treaties with each of the four bands, declaring "perpetual peace and friendship" between them and the United States. The bands "acknowledge[d] themselves to be under the protection of the United States of America, and of no other nation." In an 1825 treaty largely concerning regulation of trade, the government dealt with the four bands as one tribe, and reiterated the obligations of friendship. The treaty also stated that the Pawnees admitted "that they reside within the territorial limits of the United States, acknowledge their supremacy, and claim their protection." The Pawnees promised to refrain from trading or selling firearms to hostile tribes, and were to be provided a licensed trader. In 1833, the government negotiated the first treaty that included the loss of territory, undermining the tribe's land base, and promoting the assimilation of the Pawnees into white society. The Pawnees ceded their land south of the Platte River in exchange for a forty-six hundred dollar annuity for twelve years. The treaty included funds for agricultural equipment, the establishment of schools, mills, and blacksmith shops, and the offer of a farmer for each band to teach Euro-American methods of agriculture. Another land cession along the Platte came with an 1848 treaty.<sup>10</sup>

An 1857 treaty further defined the relationship between the Pawnee tribe and the government, and included the cession of all remaining Pawnee land north of the Platte except a reservation fifteen miles wide by thirty miles long. The Pawnees were to settle on this strip of land near the Loup River, where the government intended to further extend its civilization program among them. An agent would reside "on or near" the

reservation, and the government would provide blacksmith shops, a grain and lumber mill, dwellings for agency employees, and two manual labor schools “to improve the condition of the Pawnees, and teach them the arts of civilized life.” The treaty also encouraged agriculture by providing equipment, livestock, draft animals, and the assistance of a farmer to teach the Pawnees the farming techniques of whites. Finally, the 1857 treaty guaranteed the tribe an annuity of forty thousand dollars per year for five years, and thereafter thirty thousand dollars annually in perpetuity. At least half of the annuity was to be paid in goods and “such articles as may be deemed necessary.”<sup>11</sup>

Despite the intentions of the government and its agent stationed at the Pawnee Agency to assimilate the tribe and advance them toward “civilization” according to Euro-American standards, the Pawnees did not prosper on their Nebraska reservation. By the mid-1870s, the traditional pattern of Pawnee life had suffered serious disruption. Attempts of the government to settle them on individual farms and to discourage the buffalo hunt had placed stress on the tribe. Crop failures due to drought and insects, and Sioux attacks on the Pawnees during buffalo hunts had threatened the food supply. The devastating Sioux raids, both on the hunting grounds and near the villages, had killed many Pawnees and bred fear among the people. Neighboring white settlers encroaching on the reservation continually stole timber in open defiance of law. Disease spread through contact with whites and warfare with the Sioux had drastically reduced the tribe’s population from an estimated eight to ten thousand in the late 1830s, to four thousand in 1860. By the mid-1870s, the Pawnees numbered only 2,200. In an effort to escape the effects of all these pressures, the Pawnees would decide, many reluctantly, to abandon their Nebraska home and move south to Indian Territory. To the Pawnees, the



move was a desperate attempt to save their tribe from destruction and keep their remaining cultural traditions intact. To the Indian agent in charge of the Pawnee Agency, it was an opportunity to continue the work of “civilizing” the tribe without the distractions of marauding Sioux and greedy white settlers.<sup>12</sup>

The move to Indian Territory was accomplished between 1873 and 1875. Although there was initial disagreement within the tribe over whether or not to abandon their homelands, a group of tribal members traveled south during the winter of 1873-1874 to live with the Wichitas, with whom they shared friendship and common linguistic roots. As more Pawnees became convinced of the necessity of leaving Nebraska, their agent, William Burgess, and Barclay White of the Northern Superintendency held councils with the tribe to discuss the issue. In October 1874, the Pawnees resolved, in council, to move south to Indian Territory, to settle on a reservation to be chosen by members of the tribe and approved by the government. The resolution included the agreement that the tribe would accept the government’s civilization program; the Pawnees were to “abandon the [buffalo] chase and endeavor to get a living from the products of the soil and herding” after removal. Shortly after approval of the resolution by the tribe, the majority of the Pawnees traveled to the Wichita Agency, while the remaining four hundred, mostly the elderly, the children, and the infirm, stayed in Nebraska until the new reservation could be selected and prepared for them.<sup>13</sup>

In late 1875, Agent Burgess traveled to Indian Territory to select the land for the reservation. After rejecting a parcel near the Quapaw Agency in northeastern Indian Territory, Burgess met with the Cherokees to negotiate purchasing land from them for the Pawnees. After inspecting land between the Arkansas and Cimarron rivers and

finding it suitable, Burgess retrieved forty Pawnee men from the Wichita Agency, chosen to make the final decision on behalf of the tribe, and showed them the land. On 4 March 1875, they formally resolved “to adopt this tract and region for our new home.” The new reservation encompassed 283,026 acres.<sup>14</sup>

While the remaining Pawnees in Nebraska and those at the Wichita Agency awaited their departure for Indian Territory, agency employees worked to prepare the new reservation for their arrival. Employee John Williamson and a crew of hired men began erecting buildings and securing provisions. By October, Williamson’s crew and Indian laborers had constructed several log buildings, a saw mill, roads and bridges, and a ferry boat to cross the Arkansas River. Workers had broken three hundred acres of ground in preparation for the following year’s agriculture, had put up two hundred tons of hay, and had harvested several melons and pumpkins. The tribal members residing at the Wichita Agency had moved to the new reservation during the summer, and the last four hundred remaining in Nebraska began their journey south in the fall, reaching their new home in December 1875. With the tribe reunited, Agent Burgess looked forward to developing the Pawnee Agency in Indian Territory. He and the Pawnees hoped for an improved life without the perils they had faced during their final years in Nebraska.<sup>15</sup>

### **Establishment of the Pawnee Agency in Indian Territory**

After removal, the Pawnee Agency refocused its energies on its responsibility as a component of the Office of Indian Affairs to implement federal Indian policy, but Burgess and his staff first had to complete adequate structures in which to carry out their work. They had constructed the first buildings at the new agency quickly, in preparation

for the arrival of the tribe and the need for a center of administration. Although these buildings were log, plans were already in place to begin construction of an agent's residence and a boarding school building out of locally available materials including sandstone, limestone, clay, and sand. By 1876, Burgess reported the erection of a "neat and substantial stone office with dwelling attached." The school building was completed in 1878. In accordance with federal policy, Burgess saw the physical improvements of the agency as opportunities to train the Pawnees in a Euro-American work ethic. He noted that in construction projects, breaking farmland, and operating mills and shops, "Indian labor has at all times formed a most important element, and has developed a skill and aptness on their part worthy of notice, and led many not before accustomed to work into steady and industrious habits at useful pursuits."<sup>16</sup>

The agent or clerk in charge of the local administration of the agency, and finally the school superintendent placed over the agency in 1901, lived in the stone dwelling, and at least initially also conducted agency business there. In 1906, construction of a stone office building allowed for a separate location for the work of administering the agency. The structure contained office space for the superintendent, clerks, and stenographers, a waiting room for those visiting to conduct business, and a vault for the storage of records and files. The building was periodically renovated, and in 1928 the agency constructed an addition to create more space. Although a large, stone hospital was completed near the office building and opened in 1931, other stone structures erected on the tribal reserve through the years were associated specifically with the boarding school.<sup>17</sup> The agency office, first in the agent's residence and later in the separate stone building, served as the focus of administration.

## **The Distribution of Rations and the Pawnee Annuity**

The 1857 treaty between the United States and the tribe had guaranteed the Pawnees a perpetual annuity to be distributed on a per capita basis. Distribution of the annuity was one of the responsibilities of the Pawnee Agency. The obligation of the government to provide the annuity began in 1858, with the tribe receiving, for the first five years, a total of forty thousand dollars each year, and thirty thousand dollars per year thereafter, to be divided equally among the tribal members. Written into the treaty was the provision that at least half the value of the annuity would be distributed in goods.<sup>18</sup>

Although the Pawnees were to receive the annuity on a per capita basis, with the thirty thousand dollars divided evenly among the members of the tribe, at times the Pawnee Agency diverted portions of the annuity for specific purposes. The agent accomplished this through negotiation with the tribe in council, where the headmen and chiefs formally agreed to the diversion of funds. In 1873, Agent Burgess used three thousand dollars of the annuity to purchase food following average crop yields and a devastating Sioux attack on the hunt that killed sixty-nine Pawnees and forced the rest to abandon on the plains the meat they had obtained. While this use of annuity money, then, was sometimes done to purchase desperately needed food and supplies during the difficult years immediately preceding removal and during establishment of the new reservation in Indian Territory, it also served to augment federal funds appropriated for the civilization program.<sup>19</sup>

During the move to Indian Territory, those Pawnees who traveled first to the Wichita Agency received rations there, while the agent in Nebraska used a nine thousand dollar indemnity provided for the losses sustained in the 1873 Sioux attack to feed those

remaining at the agency. On the southward journey to Indian Territory, the Pawnees again suffered from inadequate supplies and stopped at times along the way to work for food. Once settled on their new reservation, the agency, handicapped by a congressional delay in funding, failed to provide enough rations, prompting many to leave the reservation in search of something to eat. Although the agency managed to gather the tribe back on the reservation after appropriation of the annuity money and the purchase of food, tribal members still suffered from hunger and a high death rate.<sup>20</sup>

Shortly after establishment of the reservation, the agency built a commissary from which the agent distributed weekly rations. Although the government allowed the Pawnees to attempt a hunt in 1877 to secure desperately needed meat, they could not locate any buffalo. Two years later, the tribe had a successful hunt, but the agency soon prohibited the traditional hunts, partially because of the decreasing number of buffalo on the plains, but more important, according to the civilization program, the hunts only interfered with the transition to settled agriculture. During the first few years in Indian Territory, before fields were fully developed and producing adequate yields, the agency continued the weekly rations. By the mid-1880s, Agent Lewellyn E. Woodin reported the end of the ration system at the Pawnee Agency.<sup>21</sup>

Although it had at times provided necessary food and clothing, the stipulation that half the annuity be distributed in goods rather than in cash eventually proved unsatisfactory both to the agent and to the Pawnees. By 1881, Agent E. H. Bowman declared that the issue of clothing and other supplies was “an expensive and, compared with results, a profitless waste of means.” Bowman complained that the Pawnees often simply turned around and sold the goods for far below their market value and did not

appreciate them. He considered the distribution of annuities a poor use of government funds and concluded, “That which comes easy goes easy. That which is not the product of the labor of the individual, civilized or savage, is not appreciated or valued.”<sup>22</sup>

By the early 1890s, the Pawnees had also expressed dissatisfaction with the use of goods for half the annuity, although for different reasons. While the agent had determined that the tribe did not appreciate the goods because they had not worked for them, the Pawnees revealed more practical reasons for their attitude. The goods distributed to them were often “unsuitable or unusable,” including clothes that did not fit properly. In late 1892, during negotiations for the allotment of the Pawnee Reservation, tribal leaders brought up the issue of the annuity in goods, with Knife Chief pointing out that the agent ordered clothes that were too large or small and therefore unwearable. According to Martha Royce Blaine, another tribal member added that “the commissary was full of their [annuity] goods, but they had to go to the agent like beggars to get food that was lawfully theirs.” Although the government commissioners first argued that the annuity had nothing to do with the current discussion of allotment, they eventually consented to include a provision in the allotment agreement to change the annuity to a full distribution in coin. The agreement thus amended the 1857 treaty to that effect.<sup>23</sup>

The Pawnee Agency distributed the annuity to the tribal members semi-annually, with one payment in the spring and another in the fall. The thirty-thousand-dollar total, divided equally among the entire population of the tribe, did not amount to a large sum of money for each individual. In 1884, when half the annuity was still paid in goods, the cash portion amounted to approximately thirteen dollars per person, which Agent John W. Scott noted did not go far toward the support of tribal members. The change making

the entire annuity payable in cash – coupled, ironically, with the high death rate that contributed to a decline in population – increased the amount of the payment for each individual. By 1917, annuity payments brought the Pawnees between forty and fifty dollars per year. Mary Wabaunsee remembers that in the twenties, her family used their annuity moneys to purchase clothes, and the amount of her annuity was sufficient to supply her with a wardrobe each spring and fall.<sup>24</sup>

Despite the relatively small amount of money that the annuity gave each individual, agents began complaining that the Pawnees did little work when they could depend on cash payments to support them. While more money eventually came from the leasing of allotments, the disdain that Pawnee Agency administrators held for the annuity payments prompted periodic discussion of a commutation of the annuity. A commutation would have resulted in a pro rata disbursement to tribal members and the discontinuance of the annual thirty-thousand-dollar distribution. The 1857 treaty and its later amendment had reserved for the president the option of commuting the annuity. In 1902, Superintendent George I. Harvey suggested that the tribe was in favor of a commutation, and he felt that a single payment would benefit the able-bodied; the government could hold the sum due to minors until they reached their majority and pay out periodic installments to those judged noncompetent. The following year, Harvey revealed his own reason for favoring commutation of the annuity. He reported, “I am sure it is not to be expected that any systematic self-effort in the line of industry will be made by these Indians until this division of funds is made.”<sup>25</sup>

According to later reports, the Pawnees and the government reached an agreement in 1909 allowing for the commutation of the annuity at six hundred thousand

dollars, but in 1915, Superintendent Ralph P. Stanion indicated that nothing further had been done regarding the annuity. Stanion, anticipating the expiration of the trust period on individual allotments in 1918, when the Pawnees would assume full responsibility for their own lands, hoped that commutation of the annuity could coincide with the end of the trust period, thus freeing the Pawnees from governmental regulation. Stanion judged it unfortunate that the tribe “should be under the influence borne of their expentecy [expectancy] as each successive payment is made of this perpetual annuity.” In 1917, Stanion urged passage of a congressional provision to fund the commutation and distribute to each Pawnee his or her share, and thereby “relieve our competent Indians of this one last tie that binds them to the Government as wards and relieve them of all Governmental restrictions.” Despite Stanion’s wishes, the annuity remained intact; the government also extended the trust period for allotted Pawnee Indians before its scheduled expiration.<sup>26</sup>

The commutation issue resurfaced in the 1930s when the Indian Office circulated a proposal that the tribe consider commuting the annuity to establish a revolving loan fund. Although several Pawnees, according to Superintendent Lem A. Towers, expressed interest in the plan, others disapproved. While many younger tribal members saw advantages in a lump sum payment or a loan fund to aid them in purchasing equipment or embarking on rehabilitation projects, some of the older Pawnees, unable to undertake projects involving physical labor, preferred to continue the annual payments. In 1938, following a favorable vote in which less than half of the adult members of the tribe participated, the newly organized tribal and business councils petitioned the president to appoint a representative to negotiate a commutation with the tribe.<sup>27</sup>



The following year, however, Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier argued against the request for a commutation of the annuity, suggesting that the Pawnees further consider the ramifications of such action. In Collier's view, commutation and discontinuance of a tribal annuity made sense only for those intent on "closing out the affairs" of a tribe. Because the Pawnees had recently adopted a tribal constitution and bylaws, which "contemplates continuation or existence of the Tribe as a body," he contended that the annuity should be continued as well. Referring to the 1857 treaty that guaranteed the annuity, Collier stated that, "as the Pawnee Tribe under its corporation charter is bound to protect and safeguard the tribal assets, it is believed that it would be to the advantage of the tribe to keep this treaty unbroken for the present."<sup>28</sup>

Again, the perpetual annuity remained intact following Collier's response to the idea of commutation. The annual distributions to the members of the tribe on a per capita basis has continued to the present. As the Pawnee population has stabilized and recovered throughout the twentieth century, now standing at approximately 2,500 members,<sup>29</sup> the decreasing per capita amount of the annuity has become less significant on the practical, financial level, but is still an obligation of the federal government to the tribe for the 1857 cession of much of its Nebraska homelands.

### **Allotment of Lands in Severalty**

One of the major responsibilities of the Pawnee Agency in its administration of the government's relationship with the tribe concerned the allotment of the reservation. Allotment of lands in severalty, the break up of tribally held reservation lands into individual parcels for each tribal member, had a serious impact on tribal culture and

entailed a significant administrative undertaking for the agency. Following allotment, the further ramifications of leasing of allotments, administration of the lands of deceased allottees and the resulting heirship cases, and eventually the sale of allotments added to the work done by the agency on behalf of individuals of the tribe. As a major component of the government's civilization program, the Indian Office saw allotment of lands in severalty for use as individual farms as the means to assimilate American Indians into the dominant society.

The government had begun planning for the individualization of the Pawnees with the treaties of 1833 and 1857, which both promised agricultural equipment and the services of farmers to teach the methods of intensive agriculture. These early attempts had met with little success in Nebraska, both because individualized farming conflicted with the tribe's traditional lifeways and because the Sioux attacks discouraged the Pawnees from scattering to farms isolated from the protection of their villages. With an 1876 act of Congress that authorized the sale of the Nebraska reservation and formalized the land purchase in Indian Territory, the government further encouraged agriculture and individual property ownership. Each head of family or single Pawnee over the age of twenty-one, who so elected, would receive an allotment of 160 acres.<sup>30</sup>

Although their agent had hoped to disperse quickly the Pawnees on individual farms following removal to Indian Territory, the immediate concerns of food and shelter, and the high death rate prevented early implementation of the plan. Upon arrival at the new reservation, many Pawnees erected cloth tipis or built mudlodges near the agency. To supplement the meager government rations, the agent allowed the women to plant vegetables on land set aside for the government farm. Discounting this traditional



Figure 3. A Pawnee mudlodge on the reservation, circa 1886. The photograph was taken by William S. Prettyman of Arkansas City, Kansas. Photograph courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society, Athey Collection, negative number 5024.

Pawnee subsistence practice and denigrating the garden tracts as “squaw patches,” the agent allowed the planting only as an expedient to stave off starvation. Despite these allowances, Burgess affirmed his commitment to the “civilizing” affects of individual land ownership, assuring the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that the Pawnees would soon settle on separate farms, “thus break[ing] up their village life and many of the hereditary customs and improper habits associated therewith.”<sup>31</sup>

Charles H. Searing, Burgess’s successor, echoed the previous agent’s negative opinion of the communal living practices of the Pawnees and also hoped to move

forward with allotting individual plots of the reservation to families. Yet, the agency continued to struggle with meeting basic needs throughout the first several years in Indian Territory and, therefore, made little progress in allotment. The tribe suffered from hunger and disease, with the population continuing to decline; by 1877, the 2,200 tribal members counted in 1875 had dwindled to a startling 1,521. In an effort to quickly provide food, the agency set to work breaking sod and planting crops, allowing the tribe to temporarily settle together in their bands despite the desire to disperse them on individual allotments. Two of the bands soon moved out from the immediate vicinity of the agency to areas of newly broken sod, while the other two bands remained congregated near the agency buildings. All maintained “band farms” and worked them communally, dividing the produce among the band members.<sup>32</sup>

By 1880, several individual families had located on their own farms, but the new agent, E. H. Bowman, remarked that, “on examination, while I find provision made of an excellent and ample record book for allotments of land, there is not a single entry of allotment.” He noted that those settling on plots of land had done so “without any definite idea or knowledge whatever of their [boundary] lines,” or any records “to show ownership or valid claims to their homes.” The agent set out to rectify the situation, with little success. The following year he reported no official allotments and railed against the use of the band farms that he found so difficult to eradicate. Ignoring the desperate need for food that had led to the band farms, he proclaimed their establishment a “most unfortunate (almost criminal) mistake” that had “met a temporary emergency at the expense of future hinderance [*sic*] in the work of civilization.”<sup>33</sup>

Determined to break up the band farms, Bowman pledged to “use all the means

and influence in my power to counteract this arrangement, so antagonistic to all progressive influences.” He promised wagons and harness to entice the Pawnees to take up individual farms and sent agency employees out to assist in breaking new farmland. By 1882, the next agent, Lewellyn E. Woodin, could report fifty-five allotments in severalty on the Pawnee reservation and the erection of several homes by the men under the direction of the agency carpenter.<sup>34</sup>

While the agency’s rather informal process of allotting the reservation lands continued, the prosperity anticipated by agents did not materialize. Those selecting allotments could not successfully farm them until they had fields ready to plant, implements with which to work them, and homes to occupy. Drought and other unfavorable weather conditions took their toll on crop yields, contributing to continuing subsistence problems. In 1886, after a hailstorm almost destroyed the entire corn crop, Agent E. C. Osborne forewarned the Indian Office that should the upcoming winter prove severe, he would have to ask for assistance to support the tribe through “another battle for bread.” The alarming death rate continued and drew pessimistic pronouncements from successive agents, who attributed it to “[h]ereditary and constitutional diseases.” Osborne’s predecessor predicted that it was only a matter of time before the Pawnees became extinct. In 1887, Osborne added up the “gradual yearly decimation” since the tribe had arrived in Indian Territory – a loss of 1,108 in eleven years. The population then stood at 918; that year deaths exceeded births 125 to 45. Despite the grim statistics, Osborne could finally report of the Pawnees, “They were a tribe of villagers a few years ago, but that condition has very nearly been broken up, and they now are in families located upon farms extending over almost the entire reservation.”<sup>35</sup>

Although the agency had apparently succeeded in scattering the Pawnees on individual farms, passage of the Dawes General Allotment Act in 1887 offered a more comprehensive program. Promoted for decades as the means of instilling in Indians the principles of citizenship and individual property ownership so dear to white Americans, allotment of lands in severalty became the driving goal of humanitarian reformers in the latter part of the nineteenth century. According to Francis Paul Prucha, “No panacea for the Indian problem was more persistently promoted. . . . It was an article of faith with the reformers that civilization was impossible without the incentive to work that came only from individual ownership of a piece of property.” By placing the ownership of land in the hands of individual members rather than in the tribe, the Dawes Act presumably was to ensure Indians a place in a society that highly valued private property. Granting legal title to a small parcel of land was to secure a home for each individual before all land was lost to whites continually pressuring reservation boundaries. Opening surplus acreage left over after allotment was to quell the land hunger of these white settlers, and intersperse them among the Indians, thereby teaching, by example, farming skills and responsible citizenship. Indians laboring on the land as yeoman farmers were to absorb the ideals of America’s dominant culture, and feel the stir of pride and incentive to work that was to come from individual landownership. In addition to the sincere humanitarian wishes of the reformers, western land interests recognized the potential surplus acreage that the Dawes Act would open up to them, and joined the reformers in support of the program.<sup>36</sup>

The major provisions of the Dawes Act authorized the president to survey reservations with agricultural and grazing land and allot tracts to individual Indians. As

passed in 1887, the act stipulated 160 acres for each head of family, eighty acres to single adults and orphaned children, and forty acres to other single persons under eighteen born before the date the president authorized allotment for their reservation. An 1891 amendment equalized this provision by authorizing eighty acres for each individual regardless of age, including married women, whom the original act had excluded. Each allottee was to receive a patent for the land, to be held in trust by the federal government for twenty-five years, for the “sole use and benefit” of the allottee. After the trust period expired, the Indian would receive a fee simple patent for the land, removing restrictions against its alienation or encumbrance. The president could extend the trust period at his discretion. Indians who accepted allotments became citizens of the United States. If anyone failed to select an allotment within four years of the order for allotment on his reservation, the Secretary of the Interior could direct the agent to select one for him.<sup>37</sup>

After passage of the Dawes Act, Osborne eagerly awaited application of the policy to his agency, by then overseeing the Pawnee, Ponca, Otoe-Missouria, and Tonkawa tribes. Echoing both the ethnocentrism and rhetoric of the act’s proponents and their faith in allotment as a solution to the government’s involvement with Indians, Osborne proclaimed, “[U]ntil they can be compelled to accept their land in severalty, thus throwing upon each Indian his success or failure, his life or death, there will always be an Indian Service and an Indian problem, while he, poor fellow, will stand idly about ever ready to draw his treaty money and annuities, which have made persistent beggars of them all.” Osborne’s successor, D. J. M. Wood, described the Pawnees as eager to accept allotment and suggested that they would accept their land in severalty if the Indian Office made “proper overtures.” Two years later, Wood admitted that while some were

anxious for allotment, many actually opposed it. The split generally occurred between the older members of the tribe, including the chiefs and religious leaders attempting to preserve some of the communal nature of traditional culture, and younger “progressives” more accustomed to white culture through their education in government schools. This second group more easily accepted change, including the idea of allotment.<sup>38</sup>

The “proper overtures” to the Pawnee tribe came in the form of the Cherokee Commission. Appointed by the president in July 1889, the commission’s purpose was to acquire “surplus” tribal lands in Indian Territory for white homesteaders. Negotiating first with the Cherokees for the Cherokee Outlet, the commission next worked to obtain lands from other tribes. When the commission, then chaired by David H. Jerome and often referred to as the Jerome Commission, arrived at the Pawnee reservation in October 1892, Special Allotting Agent Helen Clark, with the help of an interpreter and surveyor, had already started entering allotments. By this time, the chiefs and others who had previously opposed allotment had accepted the inevitable division of the reservation into individual tracts. It remained for the commissioners to execute an agreement with the tribe to formally accept allotment and to cede the remaining land.<sup>39</sup>

The commission began negotiations with the Pawnees in council on October 31. Although the tribe now accepted allotment without argument, the issue of the cession and price of surplus lands caused considerable debate. The Pawnees initially refused to sell the surplus, pointing out that the agreement proposed by the government made no provision for the future children of the tribe, who would have no land if they sold all the acreage remaining after allotment. Ignoring this legitimate concern, the commissioners reiterated that the government needed the surplus land for the thousands of whites



clamoring for homesteads. The commission moved on to the issue of price, already fixed by Congress at \$1.25 per acre. The Pawnees, however, citing the tribe's past loyalty to the United States and their previous service in the army as scouts, asked \$2.50 per acre. Certainly, they said, the government could afford this price for a tribe that had always been on friendly terms with the United States.<sup>40</sup>

In successive meetings throughout much of November, the Pawnee leaders and the Jerome Commission argued over the price of the land. When the commissioners held firm to \$1.25, the Pawnees lowered their asking price to \$1.50 per acre, but the commissioners still refused to yield. They declared that the government could not pay more than \$1.25 and insisted that the land was not worth even that. Threatening at times to drop the price further and to exclude from allotment those children born since passage of the Dawes Act, the commission finally wore the Pawnees down. Unwilling to decide the fate of the tribe unilaterally, Sun Chief, the head chief, asked that the council adjourn until the next morning, when the people would vote. His actions signaled his own reluctant agreement, and the tribe followed his lead. The next day, November 23, as all Pawnees in attendance at the council stood to signal their consent to sell the surplus land for \$1.25 an acre, Sun Chief said, "alone I could not have the heart to decide it, so I asked my tribe, and you see what they say – the land belongs to them."<sup>41</sup> Or so it did until Congress ratified the agreement on 3 March 1893. In a land run on September 16 of the same year, the federal government opened the ceded surplus lands of the Cherokee Outlet, and of the Pawnee and Tonkawa tribes, to white settlement – for \$2.50 an acre, twice the amount the Pawnees had received for the sale of their land.<sup>42</sup>

The final agreement between the Jerome Commission and the Pawnee tribe

formalized the allotments then being made and confirmed those that had been made prior to passage of the Dawes Act. The Pawnees had four months from the date of the agreement to finish making their selections, and Allotting Agent Clark completed and mailed the allotment schedules by the last week of June. Despite threats to the contrary during the negotiations, all children born since 8 February 1887 and up to the completion of the allotment process received allotments. From the proceeds of the sale of the surplus lands, the tribe would receive eighty thousand dollars, to be divided and paid per capita in coin. The government would hold the balance from the sale in trust at 5 percent interest, with the interest to be distributed to the tribe annually on a per capita basis.<sup>43</sup> At the completion of the allotment process, the 821 living members of the tribe received allotments for a total land area of 112,701 acres. The agency reserved 840 acres for school and administrative purposes. And the Pawnees ceded 169,320 acres, more than half of the original 283,026 acre reservation.<sup>44</sup> The agreement thereby fulfilled the two main goals of the Dawes Act, allotting individual plots to the Pawnees and opening the rest for land-hungry whites.

The administrators in charge of the agency had looked forward to the allotment of the reservation since the tribe's arrival in Indian Territory, and now expected to guide the Pawnees through this step of the civilization program. Agent Wood, ignoring the arduous negotiations with the Jerome Commission, declared, "The tribe is well satisfied, and are prosperous and united." Like his predecessors, Wood believed that once the Pawnees shared in the benefits of individual land ownership and citizenship, the tide of civilization would envelope them, and they would join in the prosperity of American society. The agency personnel set out to aid the Pawnees in settling on their allotments

by building homes and developing their farms. Yet, unanticipated effects quickly complicated the process.

Just one year after allotment, Agent J. P. Woolsey, Wood's successor, stated that conditions for the Pawnees had materially changed. Although the Pawnees had become citizens, Woolsey's assessment of its effect on them was decidedly negative. Several refused to stay on their land and attend to their farming, proclaiming a new independence as citizens of the United States. While Woolsey's reaction reflected resentment of his own diminishing power as the tribe's agent, he also expressed concern for the welfare of the Pawnees, who were now less inclined to take his advice. As citizens, the Pawnees were now subject to the laws of Oklahoma Territory; short of withholding annuity payments, the agent could no longer simply demand obedience. Woolsey also cited the detrimental effect of cash payments to the Pawnees, including the annuity and the eighty thousand dollar payment from the proceeds of the sale of their ceded land that made the 1894 payment unusually large. Woolsey claimed that the lack of farm work done by the Pawnees was a direct result of the influx of cash.<sup>45</sup>

Allotment and the opening of the surplus lands also brought white settlers onto the former reservation, with many homesteaders interspersed among the Pawnee allotments and others concentrated in the town of Pawnee that sprang up near the agency. Although intermingling with whites was one of the goals of the Dawes Act and was to teach Indians by example, the agent quickly lowered his opinion of the benefits of interaction with whites. In addition to a cycle of debt in which many Pawnees soon found themselves in town, they also had to contend with the occasional theft of belongings and disrespect from homesteaders. With the passage of time, respect and

genuine friendships developed between some Pawnees and their new neighbors, but mutual hostility continued to characterize some interactions. The Pawnees retained a distrust of the motives of whites.<sup>46</sup>

Agent Woolsey and the clerk in immediate charge of the Pawnee Agency, W. B. Webb, deplored these negative effects of the allotment program and the problems they presented as the agency tried to settle the Pawnees down to productive agriculture after the fashion of other Americans. Woolsey contended that the tribal members were not prepared for the responsibilities of citizenship or for interaction with crafty whites intent on cheating them. He and Webb also grew increasingly frustrated by the lack of work many Pawnees did on their farms.<sup>47</sup> Yet, in assessing the actions of the Pawnees following allotment and the arrival of white settlers, Woolsey, Webb, and their successors consistently demonstrated a lack of understanding of the complex and profound changes Pawnee culture had endured. Ignoring the long-term assault on tribal traditions by the government, beginning decades before allotment, agency administrators frequently contended that the Pawnees did not take life very seriously, preferring dances and visiting to working their farms. Agents failed to consider the psychological effects of a continued high mortality rate and the disruption of communal ties that the government's demands for individualization caused. What agents perceived as unconcern for the future and frivolous social activities were instead manifestations of this cultural disruption and attempts to cope with the changes allotment and its consequences had caused.

If they discussed them at all, agency personnel exhibited only a superficial understanding of the reasons behind the Pawnee response to allotment and the

civilization program. In 1898, Webb reported, “The greatest difficulty in the way of getting these Indians to remain permanently upon their allotments is their dislike of the isolation, their fondness for visiting.” Rather than consider the cultural implications of this behavior, Webb tried to force them back to their allotments, “to impress upon them the necessity of looking forward and staying at their homes.” Despite the serious repercussions and cultural disruption of allotment, agents continued to focus on the ultimate goal of transforming the Pawnees into individual citizen farmers, regardless of the painful transition.<sup>48</sup>

Disappointment with allotment and its results went well beyond the Pawnee Agency. Those who had promoted allotment as a panacea to cure the “Indian problem” soon discovered that it fell considerably short of its goals. Although some voices had cautioned that allotment itself was only the beginning and the transformation of Indians into self-supporting citizens would take time, most had been optimistic at passage of the Dawes Act. When positive results failed to manifest themselves, disillusionment quickly set in, and reformers searched for answers by revising the provisions and implementation of the act. Many Indians could not farm their land because they did not have the necessary agricultural equipment. While the Indian Office attempted to provide equipment and training, both were often inadequate for the number of Indians needing assistance. More troubling to the critics, the Dawes Act had placed numerous restrictions on the Indians’ free use of their allotments. Originally designed to protect the new landowners from losing their property, such restrictions soon became the target of reformers hoping to thrust Indians immediately into American society. As had been the case with the original Dawes legislation, aggressive land interests joined the

reformers in calling for a lessening of restrictions on Indians' use of their land.<sup>49</sup>

### **Leasing and Sale of Allotments**

Policymakers had designed allotment to give Indians a place to labor for their own support, and to instill in them a pride of private property ownership. To that end, Indians were to work their land themselves. Therefore, the Dawes Act prohibited the leasing of land to others. It soon became apparent, however, that many Indians were not able to farm their land themselves. The allotments of women and children, the aged, young adults away at school, and the disabled often lay fallow, of no benefit to their owners. If the government removed restrictions on leasing for these situations, the allottees could collect rent, providing for their economic needs. It soon followed that allowing able-bodied allottees to lease a portion of their lands would provide them with the means to purchase badly needed equipment and improvements for that portion of their land that they did farm. An 1891 amendment to the Dawes Act granted leasing privileges to those who could not farm for themselves "by reason of age or other disability." In 1894, a further revision added the ambiguous term "inability" to this list, and leasing of allotments became increasingly common.<sup>50</sup>

The Pawnees had some experience with leasing as early as 1884, when by a majority vote the tribe had consented to a grazing lease of one-hundred-fifty thousand acres of the reservation. Ironically, the lease was Agent John W. Scott's way of dealing with whites illegally running cattle on the land; unable to dislodge the invaders, Scott worked out a three cent per acre rental fee instead. Notices for the leasing of individual allotments went out to area post offices in 1893, almost immediately after completion of

the allotment process. Initially, Agent Woolsey was optimistic about leasing, and noted in 1895 that several thousand acres of leased land had brought a “fair compensation.” Echoing the argument of those who had advocated leasing, Woolsey hoped that interspersing white farmers among the Pawnees would demonstrate proper farming methods to them. He assured the Indian Office that he would “endeavor to get a class of men amongst the Indians who will always want to do the right thing with them.” While he admitted this would be difficult, he saw leasing as a good source of revenue for the tribe. Yet by 1897, many lessees were already delinquent on their payments; in response to inquiries by Pawnee lessors in need of the income, Agency Clerk Webb had begun sending out letters asking for the money owed them.<sup>51</sup>

As with allotment, Pawnee Agency personnel quickly began to lower their opinion of the value of leasing. Webb soon decided that it had demoralized the tribe. By adding over twenty-four thousand dollars of cash revenue to the annuity that the tribe already received, Webb contended, it “only encourages idleness and extravagance [*sic*].” In 1899, new agent J. Jensen came down decidedly against leasing, calling it “a mistake in the first instance.” In the same ethnocentric tone of his predecessors, Jensen declared that “the Indian is not much inclined to labor at any time, and when he can get enough to live on by renting his land he will do absolutely no work at all.” Although Jensen admitted that whites would probably do the same under similar circumstances, he complained that the Pawnees worked less and less each year and that the tribe was steadily deteriorating. By 1900, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs had come to the same conclusion about leasing, and stated, “By taking away the incentive to labor it defeats the very object for which the allotment system was devised.”<sup>52</sup>

Jensen initially suggested changes in the leasing policy to improve the situation, such as leasing for a share of the crop rather than for cash rent. He thought such an arrangement would give the lessor a stake in the work being done and incentive to see the crops properly cared for. Leasing for cash, he said, only made the Indians more dependent. By the time Jensen left the agency in 1901, he had given up hope, noting, “They perform hardly any labor, and are afflicted with chronic diseases, the ravages of which it seems impossible to control.” Jensen concluded, “No material improvement in their habits and condition can be expected.” No longer hoping for self-sufficiency, he decided the lease money along with the annuity would support them. At the time, the tribe’s population had reached its nadir. The Pawnees numbered only 629.<sup>53</sup>

By 1904, when George W. Nellis took over as superintendent, statistics offered a grim picture of the condition of the tribe. Although the population had finally begun to stabilize after the low of 629, Nellis reported that only forty Pawnee families lived on and cultivated their allotments, down from 125 ten years before. Only 15 percent of subsistence for the tribe as a whole came from what the Indian Office considered “civilized pursuits” – farming or laboring for wages; 43 percent came from the cash annuity, and the remaining 42 percent from lease money. The number of farming and grazing leases for the year stood at 340.<sup>54</sup> Faced with these statistics, Nellis mused, “such a condition of circumstances, permitting them, as it does, to pass their time in idleness and still have means to indulge in all vices would seem to make retrogression certain and advancement impossible.” Nellis ventured to suggest that instead, some progress had been made. Over the next few years, he reported more Pawnees farming more acreage, which he attributed partly to the better availability of farming equipment.<sup>55</sup>



Leasing continued under Nellis's administration, but, in keeping with national policy, he required all able-bodied Pawnees to hold back a minimum of forty acres of arable land from leasing. They were to use this small tract, farming it themselves. By this method, Nellis hoped to foster responsibility and prevent the total reliance on cash payment that leasing entire allotments had created. Nellis reported some positive results, noting that several Pawnees had improved their farming capabilities and their care of livestock. On the surface, this program seemed to present a rational balance between insistence on total self-support through labor and total dependence on lease and annuity money. Nellis felt that the income from leasing could assist Pawnees in improving their homes and the forty acres they farmed for themselves. When extended from leasing to the sale of lands, however, the idea had ominous implications.<sup>56</sup>

The Dawes Act had been intended to prevent the sale of allotments during the twenty-five year trust period. Not until the trust period expired and the Indian Office issued a fee simple patent could the allottee sell or encumber the land. The exception for leasing, which distanced many allottees from the use of their land, was the first breach in this safeguard. From leasing, it was a small step to sale, which separated Indians from their land entirely. In 1902, Congress authorized the sale of the land of deceased allottees to avoid complicated partitioning of land among heirs. In 1906, passage of the Burke Act again broke down protection from the sale of allotted lands, further diminishing the land base of American Indians as individuals lost all or large portions of their allotments. The act authorized the issuance of fee simple patents before the end of the trust period to Indians declared competent to manage their land. Intended to remove restrictions for those ready to assume full responsibility for conducting their own affairs,

according to Prucha, the new policy instead “opened the door to early alienation of allotments.” Determination of competency was not always considered carefully and the sale of an allottee’s land often occurred quickly after he received his fee patent. In 1907, Congress went so far as to allow the sale of the land of noncompetents in certain circumstances, with the income from the sale to be used for the seller’s benefit.<sup>57</sup>

By 1910, under the more liberal policies made possible by the Burke Act, Superintendent Nellis had begun encouraging Pawnees, in some cases, to sell parts of their allotments. An extension of the earlier plan to lease portions of land to generate income for improving the rest, Nellis now allowed sale under the same principle. Many of the younger men, willing and able to farm, had no farming equipment and no funds to buy it. Selling some of the land gave them the money to get started in farming, but at the expense of further erosion of the Pawnee land base. With the help of the Burke Act, patents in fee for twenty-seven allotments had been issued to the Pawnees by 1910; twenty of these had already been sold.<sup>58</sup>

The Pawnee Agency continued the policy under successive superintendents, who also encouraged leasing or selling large portions of allotments to finance improvements on the portion retained for the owner to farm for himself. Although W. W. McConihe, in 1914, suspected that many leased all their acreage without reserving the required forty acres, his successor, Ralph P. Stanion, defended the policy, adamantly proclaiming it a success. Stanion declared, “there is no question but that such practice adds to the advancement of our Indians.” He also insisted that issuing patents in fee to competent Indians accelerated their advancement and made them “more keenly alive to their responsibilities.” Yet, Stanion also noted that at least 75 percent of patented land had

been sold. By 1917, seventy-four patents in fee on original allotments and thirty-four on inherited allotments had been issued since passage of the Burke Act. The agency continued to report land sales. For example, in 1917, eleven tracts of noncompetent land and thirteen of inherited land were sold.<sup>59</sup>

Amid the general support of these sales, some voices of alarm went up over the liberal policy of issuing fee patents. While McConihe stayed at the agency only a short time and so did not feel competent to judge the situation himself, he recommended an investigation of the number of fee patents being issued and the sale of land, urging quick action “before the disease takes the form of an epidemic.” Even Stanion admitted that most who received a patent in fee for their land sold it shortly after delivery of the patent. Despite the insistence that allottees used sale and lease proceeds to improve homesteads, much of the money also went to paying off debts many had incurred in the town of Pawnee. Superintendent Ferris, in efforts to get the debt situation under control, hoped to eventually eliminate the sale of land to cover expenses. By 1919, when he reported some success in paying off the debts, he noted, “this tribe has no land to spare, very likely half of them now being landless.”<sup>60</sup>

By 1921, only 52,000 acres of the original 112,701 acres allotted remained in Pawnee hands. Superintendents had begun equating land that had been patented with land that had been sold. Although some Pawnees who received fee patents retained and worked the land successfully, most sold it shortly after gaining full title.<sup>61</sup> The trend was the same on many allotted reservations and the Indian Office began moving more cautiously on issuing fee patents and authorizing sales. The Pawnee Agency also shifted course, and tried to curtail land sales that earlier would have been authorized to equip the

owner for farming. Superintendent J. C. Hart in 1922 indicated that he discouraged land sales, partly because land prices were low, but more importantly because he believed it was “decidedly unwise to allow lands to be sold for support only unless the case is very urgent.” Superintendents reiterated the same reasoning through the 1920s, and tried to hold down the number of land sales on noncompetent and inherited land as well as on patented land. Agency personnel continued to cite the cash income from the annuity, interest on trust funds, and leasing, which now included oil and gas leases on some allotments, as a disincentive to labor.<sup>62</sup>

### **Agency Supervision and Indian Accounts**

Throughout this period following the allotment of the reservation, the responsibilities of the Pawnee Agency expanded. While the agency had previously dealt more with the tribe as a whole, it soon took a more active role in the lives of individual members of the tribe. Although the government had intended allotment to further individualize Indians as separate citizens, it soon found that doing so significantly increased the workload of agency personnel as they oversaw the income of individuals through accounts kept by the agency office. The added work reflected a national trend; the Indian Office had hoped to hasten its own demise as it made independent citizens of its Indian wards and withdrew government support. According to Prucha, “Although these were sincere and noble aims, what actually occurred was a tremendous growth in administrative work as a result of the individualizing of the Indians.”<sup>63</sup>

Allotment was the catalyst for this expansion of responsibilities because it separated the reservation into over eight hundred individual parcels held in trust by the

government. The agency therefore had a duty to supervise the use of these parcels in the best interest of the allottees until the trust period expired and the Indians assumed full responsibility for their land and any transactions involving it. As time went on, administration of the land and subsequent policies regarding its use and inheritance became increasingly complicated. The Pawnee Agency, in conjunction with the Office of Indian Affairs and the Secretary of the Interior, exercised responsibility for approving the lease of land not used by allottees, for collecting and disbursing the income from leases, for determining the competency of allottees to manage their land themselves, for supervising the sale of land, and for determining the heirs of deceased allottees and the disposition of their property.<sup>64</sup> The first real increase in agency staff workload following allotment came with the leasing of allotments.

Until 1898, the agent and the clerk in charge at Pawnee took their duties to oversee leases and distribute the income as a matter of course. In 1899, Agent Jensen reported that he had simply collected the money from lessees and immediately paid the lessor, without having to account for it formally in his quarterly reports. By a change in policy the year before, overseeing leases became a much more labor intensive job. Jensen noted that previously, “[i]t was very little trouble to handle the lease money. . .but now the money is taken up and accounted for under the agent’s bond just as carefully as money advanced to him from the Treasury Department.” New to the “Indian agency business,” Jensen stated bluntly that the strict accounting of lease money “involves an immense amount of work and entitles this agency to another clerk.” He reiterated his plea the following year, complaining, “It is well nigh impossible to perform [the work] properly with the clerical labor allowed this office, and I think some relief should be

afforded me.” The agency staff had to examine lands proposed for lease, prepare the paperwork, and collect and disburse the money.<sup>65</sup>

The number of leases and the work involved increased significantly when oil and gas leases joined agricultural and grazing leases as a source of revenue for some allottees. Throughout the 1910s, the agency superintendent continued to ask for additional staff to assist the overworked lease clerk. In 1914, the superintendent called the lease clerk “the hardest worked man in the office” and reported that he had been working evenings to try to keep up. The “cash work” was still behind five years later, when Thomas Ferris renewed the request for more staff. He lamented the time spent on administrative work that should have been spent on work with the Pawnees. He wanted an experienced cash man added to the staff “if the whole work here is to be kept from being a horrible joke.” By the early- to mid-1920s, oil and gas production had fallen off and many of the related leases had been canceled, relieving the office of some of the work but also lessening the income of several tribal members.<sup>66</sup>

Beyond leasing, the Pawnee Agency also supervised the sale of allotted land when sales were authorized. Because allotted land was to be held in trust for twenty-five years following allotment, sales did not begin immediately as leasing had. In fact, the first land sales that the agency dealt with were sales of the land of deceased allottees. While such land was to pass to the heirs of the original landowner, locating the heirs and dividing the land equally among them soon became a problem for the Indian Office. As time went on, the division of allotments into smaller and smaller parcels resulted in unworkably small tracts of land. In 1902, the Indian Office authorized the sale of much inherited land, with the proceeds, instead of the land, divided among the heirs. The

Pawnee Agency had sold land under this authority the next year and continued to do so through the years unless the land could be held in trust and used by heirs as a source of leasing income. Before such sales could take place, the office or a visiting examiner of inheritance held heirship hearings and probated the estates.<sup>67</sup>

As with leasing, dealing with inherited land, its sale, and the income from sales demanded much of the agency's attention. Superintendent Nellis described the complicated supervision involved in handling inherited land money in 1906. Income from inherited land sales amounted to about one hundred thousand dollars, most of which Nellis had deposited in banks in the town of Pawnee on time certificates at 6 percent interest. He kept only enough to meet "ordinary needs" on open account, accessible on short notice. Nellis had allowed the disbursement of over thirty-eight thousand dollars during the year, but only for what he considered necessary and prudent expenses, including the purchase of livestock and farm machinery, for allotment improvements such as the erection or repair of dwellings and fences and well digging, for buying furniture, for medical treatment, and for paying off debt. He had also paid out eight thousand dollars of the money in monthly checks of ten dollars each. Nellis assured the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that "every dollar of these funds was expended under my personal supervision."<sup>68</sup>

Other land sales supervised by the agency took place after determinations of competency and issue of a fee simple patent. Although the president extended the trust period for Pawnee allotments for ten years before its expiration in 1918, again in 1928, and then for twenty-five years in 1938, the Indian Office released individuals from supervision before the end of the trust period through various means. Authorized by the

Burke Act of 1906, competency commissions first traveled to reservations, and in conjunction with the superintendent, identified those Indians it considered competent to manage their own land. The commission then issued patents to the allottee for his land. According to Prucha, “opponents of the process pointed out that the patentees sold their lands, wasted the sale money, and ended up worse off than before, but supporters of the program, although they admitted some evils in it, were convinced that fee patents and citizenship were the only road along which Indians could advance.” In an opinion that Pawnee superintendents occasionally shared, supporters felt that “[e]ven Indians who lost their land gained valuable experience and learned a lesson in responsibility.”<sup>69</sup>

In 1917, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells liberalized the issuance of fee patents further by applying the concept of blood quantum to competency.<sup>70</sup> Sells’s Declaration of Policy proclaimed all Indians of less than one-half “Indian blood” capable of handling their own affairs. In 1919, Sells lowered the blood quantum requirement to include those of one-half Indian blood as well as those of less than one-half, and these received fee simple patents. Again, many quickly sold their land. The appointment of a new Secretary of the Interior in 1920 prompted a reevaluation of the liberal policy, and the Indian Office went back to examining competency individually before issuing a patent. The secretary also abolished the competency commissions and required agency superintendents to judge for themselves the competency of those under their charge.<sup>71</sup>

Pawnee Agency superintendents worried at times that some of the Indians who pursued application for a patent to their land did so under pressure, either from white settlers intent on buying the land or from creditors pushing the Indian to sell land to pay off debts. Under such circumstances, according to the superintendent, the applicant



resented any inquiries into his intentions for the land following delivery of a patent. Superintendents also insisted that land sales properly supervised brought a fairer price than those handled directly by the allottees. Along with leasing and heirship cases, advertising land sales and selling land through the agency office added to the time staff spent administering the land and proceeds of individuals.<sup>72</sup>

The income received by the Pawnee tribal members from their annuity, lease rentals, and land sales often worried agency personnel, many of whom believed that the cash brought in through these methods had a detrimental effect. Complaints began shortly after allotment, and successive agents and superintendents cited the annuity and lease money as a disincentive to labor for self-support, and decried the cash payments as excuses for idleness. Rather than farm their own allotments, many Pawnees, according to superintendents, chose to lease their land and live on the semi-annual payments due them from the rental and annuity.<sup>73</sup> In 1903, Superintendent Harvey summed up the sentiment of administrators by declaring, "When a person can live as well as he cares to live without work, it is a difficult task to teach him to labor."<sup>74</sup>

In addition to the lack of incentive caused by cash income, administrators also complained about the vulnerability of individuals to the crafty business community in the town of Pawnee west of the agency. Well aware of the semi-annual payments of cash to the tribal members, many storekeepers and bankers took advantage of the situation, extending credit between payments and calling in debts on distribution days. Blaine relates the tactics of Thomas Berry and H. M Thompson, owners of a meat market where many Pawnees purchased meat on credit. According to Blaine, "On annuity payment day, [Thompson] and Berry placed a table by the door where the agency personnel

handed out the annuity.” After a tribal member received his annuity, he immediately met Thompson, who collected the money owed the store while Berry noted the transaction in a ledger. Similar practices by other merchants and bankers kept many Pawnees constantly in debt, borrowing against future annuity and lease payments.<sup>75</sup>

The mounting debts incurred by the Pawnees eventually led to alarm and action by the agency superintendent, who began to vigilantly supervise individual accounts. By 1914, McConihe feared that every Pawnee had “a millstone of debt hanging around his neck” and that “there seem[ed] to be a well systematized plan in the town of Pawnee to keep him in debt by loaning him money and charging him interest.” When Thomas Ferris took over as superintendent in 1918, he took it upon himself to get the serious indebtedness under control. Ferris thwarted the local merchants by requiring the Pawnees to secure his written approval before making purchases or buying on credit. Although such strict control appeared to contradict the goal of making the Indians self-sufficient, Ferris judged it necessary to help the Pawnees climb out of debt. Merchants and bankers were less inclined to lend credit knowing that the superintendent would scrutinize the transaction. In 1919, Ferris reported that loans that had previously run to one hundred thousand dollars had been reduced to a few thousand. He continued his crusade to pay off the debts by close supervision. At the same time, Ferris pushed for increased farm production as the means to advance the tribe closer to self-support.<sup>76</sup>

In the meantime, the Pawnee Agency pressed on with the work of managing the land and the individual accounts of the Pawnees from the agency office. By 1918, the income of each individual from various leases, formerly spread out among different accounts, had been consolidated into one account, somewhat simplifying administration.

The agency distributed the annuity money twice each year, in the spring and the fall, and supervised the drawing up of leases and collection of the rental fees. The office continued to examine individuals to determine competency when they applied for patents in fee, and preferred that anyone wishing to sell land do so through the office to guarantee a fair price. According to former students of the Pawnee Boarding School, their parents took care of business with the agency, and a student wishing to withdraw money from his or her account there had to have a parent's permission. With the individualization of the Indians, the agency remained intimately involved in even the routine transactions of the Pawnees.<sup>77</sup>

### **Shift of Philosophy and the Indian New Deal**

By the end of the 1920s, Superintendent A. R. Snyder wondered, as did others in Indian Affairs, if the swift issue of patents would not force "advancement" through sale and dissipation of proceeds; the theory being that once all the cash was gone Indians who previously had been unwilling to work would be forced to labor for their subsistence. Snyder vacillated on this question, stating at other times that the loss of property that often followed the issue of patents was a tragedy that should be avoided if possible. He instead continued to encourage Pawnees to live on and cultivate at least portions of their allotments, quoting an adage, "Back to the Land," as "the key to successful handling of the Indian population." Yet Snyder, influenced by the difficult economic times during which he served as superintendent for the Pawnees, soon began placing less emphasis on land and farming as the only avenue of success for Indians.<sup>78</sup>

Since the turn of the twentieth century, some Pawnee Agency personnel had

recognized that not all Indians took naturally to farming or stock raising, but such recognition had generally been overwhelmed by the Indian Office's driving aim to transform the Indians into self-sufficient agriculturalists. Frequent crop failures throughout the years of Pawnee occupation in Oklahoma had not dislodged this goal, but the growing hardships faced by all farmers in the 1920s was difficult to ignore. Land, equipment, and hard work did not necessarily guarantee success in farming, and many Pawnees increasingly turned to other types of work for income. In 1923, Hart reported that 44 percent of the Pawnee population did not live on farms in the area. Several lived in nearby towns or distant localities. Many younger tribal members had been educated in the Pawnee Boarding School and off-reservation schools, and worked at trades learned in those institutions.<sup>79</sup>

By the late 1920s and early 1930s, as agricultural fortunes continued to decline, Snyder encouraged those who could secure day labor to lease their lands. He preferred that they work for wages to support their families rather than risk crop failure and destitution in the drought-stricken region. Some Pawnees worked in the oil fields, for road and bridge contractors, as agricultural field hands, as Indian Service employees, and in a variety of other trades. While not the yeoman farmers that supporters of allotment had envisioned, these men and women supported their families by other means. When the depressed local economy took its toll on such work, the agency hired all the men it could to assist on building projects at the agency, including a school building and the hospital, both built in the early 1930s.<sup>80</sup>

The doubts that surfaced at the Pawnee Agency about the practicality of compelling Indians to take up agriculture as their sole avenue to self-sufficiency

coincided with broader stirrings against accepted federal Indian policy. Although the Indian Office had held steadfastly to the basic philosophy behind allotment and the full assimilation of American Indians into white society as farmers, the office soon faced mounting criticism of the policy and the related leasing, sale, and patenting of Indian land. Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, a reform movement, pushed by numerous organizations but increasingly led by outspoken reformer John Collier, had gathered momentum, and called for sweeping changes in federal Indian policy.<sup>81</sup>

With Collier's appointment as Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1933, the possibility of reform and a shift of policy away from assimilation moved a step closer to reality. According to Prucha, Collier's ultimate hope for the reform of federal policy was "a restoration of Indian culture, a return to Indian political autonomy, and communal ownership of land and resources instead of the individualism of allotment." Efforts to implement his ideals culminated in passage of the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) in June 1934. Although intense opposition from both Congress and many Indians led to a watered down version of Collier's original proposal, the basic provisions of the IRA, or Wheeler-Howard bill, prohibited further allotment and allowed for voluntary transfer of allotments to tribal ownership, gave tribes the right to organize under a constitution and bylaws, and encouraged them to incorporate to manage their own property.<sup>82</sup>

As finally passed, however, the Wheeler-Howard bill excluded the Indians of Oklahoma from its provisions. Because of opposition by some Indians, many of whom believed they would lose their allotments, and his own objection to parts of the legislation, Oklahoma Senator Elmer Thomas had seen to the exemption of Oklahoma Indians. To justify his position, Thomas cited the fact that many Indians in Oklahoma

had moved beyond the reservation system and so should not be made to return to a former, more communal state. But Collier lamented that the tribes of the state would also be excluded from several other benefits of the act, and, working with Thomas and Oklahoma Representative Will Rogers, drew up another piece of legislation tailored more specifically to the needs of the Oklahoma Indians. Thomas solicited the opinion and suggestions of the Oklahoma tribes and their superintendents on legislation suitable for Oklahoma, and the Thomas-Rogers bill, known officially as the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act, became law on 26 June 1936. Although the act was even farther from Collier's original vision than the IRA, it allowed participation in similar provisions of self-government, corporate organization, land purchase, and credit.<sup>83</sup>

The Pawnees had a mixed reaction to Collier's reform goals. Although they eventually chose to participate in self-government, many voiced opposition to any movement that would return allotted land to tribal ownership. On the surface, the tribe would seem to illustrate the negative effects of allotment Collier so wanted to reverse. By 1934, the original Pawnee land base in Oklahoma had been drastically reduced. The tribe had settled in Indian Territory on a reservation of 283,026 acres. Allotment had broken down the boundaries of the reservation, had given the 821 members of the tribe individual parcels adding up to a total of 112,701 acres, and had forced them to cede 169,320 acres considered surplus by the government. Through 1934, 75,669 acres of the land, 434 of the original allotments, had been alienated. A total of 37,032 acres remained in trust status, protected from sale. Of this remaining land, the agency classified 23,656 acres as grazing land, leaving only 13,374 acres of land considered suitable for agriculture in Pawnee hands.<sup>84</sup>

But although many Pawnees had indeed lost their land through leasing and sale, some individual families had fared well under the allotment system and successfully managed their land holdings. Mary Wabaunsee's grandmother, who remembered the hardships of the early years in Indian Territory, recalled that life got better for her family after allotment. Despite the emphasis on quick land sales after patenting and the squandering of proceeds by some Pawnees, superintendents also reported that some managed their money and their land quite prudently. When Collier began asking for the reactions of Indians to his reform plans in preparation for introduction of the Wheeler-Howard bill, those who had managed to keep their allotments intact made it clear that they did not want to return their land to tribal ownership as Collier had hoped.<sup>85</sup> For the Pawnees, the effects of allotment had progressed too far to reverse the policy, and the tribe chose not to take advantage of any opportunity to adjust land ownership.

Yet, Collier's "Indian New Deal" did offer the Pawnees other means by which to build their future and revive their tribal identity. In addition to his goal of stopping and reversing allotment and its accompanying philosophy of assimilation, Collier hoped to revive and reorganize tribal governments as a step toward self-government and self-sufficiency. Although the tribal constitutions adopted under the IRA and the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act showed heavy influence from Collier in their structure, they did involve Indians more intimately in their tribal affairs.<sup>86</sup> The Pawnees, who had already taken steps toward more active involvement in the decisions made at their agency, soon began the process of reorganizing their tribal government.

## **Tribal Government**

In traditional Pawnee society, the villages of the four bands that made up the tribe were governed by consensus, not by power. The people respected the village chiefs, who sought their opinions before making decisions. According to David Wishart, the loose confederation formed by the bands was “bound together by proximity and a common world view and overseen by a general council composed of chiefs from all the villages.” Anthropologist Gene Weltfish adds that while “there were definite implicit mechanisms for village coordination and interband cooperation, . . . public opinion and consensus were always well estimated. No official conceived that an arbitrary decision was feasible or desirable.” As the bands lost population due to disease and warfare during the nineteenth century, they began to coalesce, forming a stronger identity as one tribe.<sup>87</sup>

The federal government also began dealing with the four bands as one tribal entity with the 1825 treaty regulating trade and reaffirming the friendship of the Pawnees toward the United States. As was the custom of the government in its interaction with American Indians, in negotiating treaties and agreements with the Pawnees, federal officials preferred to deal with those they recognized as the chiefs and headmen of the tribe. In the councils that led to the treaties of the nineteenth century and the decision to remove to Indian Territory, representatives of the government met with the chiefs and headmen of the four bands together in one council, securing their signatures on behalf of the tribe. Although this method attempted to superimpose a hierarchical structure on the tribal decision-making process, the band chiefs continued to seek consensus with their people, as evidenced by the negotiations over the allotment of the reservation. The final allotment agreement included the signatures of 158 of the adult men of the tribe.<sup>88</sup>



The agent in charge at Pawnee – and eventually the consolidated administration of the Pawnee, Ponca, Otoe-Missouria, Tonkawa, and Kaw tribes – continued the practice of presenting matters of importance to the Indians in council. The councils were a means for the agent to share information, to discuss the policies and programs of the Indian Office, and to negotiate agreements that required tribal approval. Although the traditional chiefs continued to play an important role in the councils, they soon recognized the value of including younger tribal members who had been educated in government schools. With their better grasp of English, these men could fully understand the words of government officials and translate their meaning to the chiefs.<sup>89</sup>

After the turn of the twentieth century, the Pawnees began taking a more active role in selecting tribal members to confer with the administration on matters that affected the tribe. In 1915, Superintendent Stanion reported that, although there was no “regularly established business council” of the Pawnees, “when any question of tribal importance comes up the Indians are very prone to appoint a committee for the purpose of looking after the tribal interests.” He noted that such committees generally included “the representative and more reliable and responsible members of the tribe.” Stanion considered the committees to be of assistance to the agency office in expediting administration. By the early 1920s, the tribe continued the practice of appointing informal committees, usually made up of two or more representatives of each band “to advise the Superintendent and to sign any papers affecting the Tribe.”<sup>90</sup>

In 1923, the Pawnees appealed to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles H. Burke to form an officially recognized business committee to work with the superintendent for the interests of the tribe. Burke responded favorably while asserting

that such a committee would have to be called and supervised by the agency superintendent to ensure that it represented the whole tribe and not simply a faction. The twelve member committee must be elected and its records must be stored at the agency as official agency records. Burke indicated that the Indian Office and the agency would welcome any suggestions offered by the committee, but cautioned, “you will understand, of course, that such committee will have no authority or power to direct the actions of the Superintendent. All such instructions must come from this Office.” In February 1923, the tribe elected twelve men to the newly approved business committee – two each from the Chaui, Kitkihahki, and Petahaurata bands, and six from the Skidi band, which had the largest population.<sup>91</sup>

Agency superintendents continued to praise the business committee after it achieved official recognition by the Indian Office, as when H. M. Tidwell reported in 1926, “It is an advantage to have this committee to promote harmony and reach understandings with the Tribe.” Three years later, Superintendent Snyder reiterated that the Pawnee business committee, made up of intelligent men, was often of help to him in his work in administering the agency. Snyder saw the Pawnee committee, as well as similar committees of three of the other four tribes under his jurisdiction, as a means of facilitating acceptance of federal policy and programs. He assured the Indian Office that “[t]hrough an official council of this kind, you can disseminate the principals [*sic*] and standards which you are trying to have the Indians adopt.” Soon the five tribes all had committees, and at times met together in a joint committee to discuss their mutual concerns as the tribes under the jurisdiction of the Pawnee Agency.<sup>92</sup>

By the early 1930s, another organization had arisen in the Pawnee tribe that,

according to the superintendent, made recommendations to the business committee, although the two groups would at times clash over what they considered best for the tribe. The Pawnee Indian Welfare Association, organized by some of the younger members of the tribe who had received educations in government schools, listed their purpose in a 1934 resolution. Noting that their membership included the adult voting members of the tribe, the association indicated that its purpose was “to promote unity of interest in all of our business affairs; to promote cooperation with all of our conceived organized forces for all of our mutual benefits, such as, [the] Indian Department at Washington, D.C., local agency officials, and the Pawnee Tribal Business Council; [and] to help to assist the aged, unfortunate, orphans, and widows.”<sup>93</sup>

With passage of the IRA and the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act in the mid-1930s, the Pawnee tribe would soon take the next step in the development of its tribal government. In 1937, Willard W. Beatty, Director of Education within the Office of Indian Affairs, articulated the changed relationship of tribes to the federal government that the reorganization of tribal governments under the Indian New Deal would entail. Writing about the “more challenging stage of development for Indians and the Indian Service” that Indian affairs had entered, Beatty spoke of the need for “the development of that partnership between the organized tribe and the agency personnel which the reorganization program envisages, the further education of the Indian community in the possibilities for group action in its own behalf, and the education of the councils in simple techniques of operation.” Beatty’s education division offered practical assistance in helping educate tribes for the reorganization, and he hoped to aid in “bringing reality to the promises inherent in the reorganization program.”<sup>94</sup>

The Pawnees, though, did not immediately avail themselves of the opportunity to organize under the Thomas-Rogers bill, although they had supported its passage in its final version. Superintendent Towers declined Beatty's offer, noting that he did not believe any of the tribes under the Pawnee Agency's jurisdiction were ready for assistance to organize a tribal government. Yet, by the middle of summer 1937, when Indian Service Organization Field Agent H. N. Clark visited the Pawnee jurisdiction, the existing Pawnee Tribal Council "indicated a keen interest in the organization plans" and asked numerous questions of the field agent. The council planned a general meeting of the whole Pawnee tribe so that Superintendent Towers and another field agent could explain the relevant provisions of the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act. Clark expressed optimism about organizing the tribe for self-government.<sup>95</sup>

Once the tribe expressed interest in organizing, the government lost little time in proceeding. Organization Field Agent Ben Dwight worked with the existing business council to prepare a constitution and charter, and submitted drafts of both to Washington on 30 July 1937. Although Collier provided an outline constitution and bylaws for tribes to follow as they drafted these documents, Regional Coordinator A. C. Monahan mentioned that the Pawnees had adjusted some of the provisions to suit their tribal needs. Monahan noted that although there had been some apprehension in the tribe earlier, opinion had recently "crystallized in favor of proceeding" with organization. The shift had come from the election of new business council members and presenting a full explanation of the provisions of the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act. The new business council, according to Monahan, had carefully considered the drafting of the documents and were "possessed of full information regarding the status of their tribal affairs and the

wishes of the tribal membership.”<sup>96</sup> Monahan continued,

The proposed constitution contains several provisions which are designed to meet the situation, peculiarly Pawnee. In dictating the substance of this constitution, the Council has attempted to give due recognition to both the older and the younger groups. Accordingly, it has provided that the Pawnee Business Council shall have general supervision and management of the affairs of the Tribe with a reviewing power, vested in the Nasharo (meaning Chief) group, upon those matters about which this latter group is particularly concerned.

With this balance between an elected business council and the Nasharo Council, the proposed Pawnee constitution sought to ensure representation of all tribal interests and to maintain traditional respect for the band chiefs. Monahan recommended approval of the proposed governing documents by the Secretary of the Interior.<sup>97</sup>

The office of the Secretary of the Interior approved the draft constitution and bylaws on 26 November 1937, but adoption of governing documents under the IRA and Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act came only with approval by members of the tribe through referendum. The Pawnees voted on the constitution and bylaws on 6 January 1938. Of the 463 eligible voters, 259, or 56 percent, cast ballots, well within the requirement that at least 30 percent of voters participate for a valid referendum. Superintendent Towers reported 197 votes in favor, sixty against, and two spoiled ballots. The Pawnees, therefore, ratified their constitution by a more than three to one majority. Although voter turnout was lower for approval of the corporate charter, it too passed in a referendum held on 28 April 1938.<sup>98</sup>

The constitution created the “Pawnee Indian Tribe of Oklahoma” and defined its purposes. The organization was “[t]o define, establish and safeguard the rights, powers and privileges” of the Pawnee tribe and its members; to secure for them the “rights, powers, privileges and benefits available” under the Thomas-Rogers bill; and [t]o

promote in other ways the common welfare of the Tribe and its membership.” Article III defined membership in the tribe and gave the Pawnee Business Council power to set rules for future membership, subject to the approval of both the Secretary of the Interior and the Nasharo Council. Article IV designated the Pawnee Business Council, with eight members elected every two years, as the “supreme governing body of the Tribe” and discussed requirements for election, selection of officers, and frequency of meetings. Article V dealt with the Nasharo Council, which was to consist of a total of eight members, with two “selected from the chieftainships” of each of the four bands; the members would serve four year terms. The Nasharo Council had the power to review actions of the Business Council, but any actions disapproved by the Nasharo Council would be submitted to the tribe and could be approved by a majority of at least 50 percent of eligible voters. The constitution included a bill of rights and allowed for amendment. The bylaws denoted the duties of the offices of president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer of the Business Council.<sup>99</sup>

As was true of all tribal organization under the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act, the corporate charter, and not the constitution, set forth the actual governmental powers of the Pawnee tribe. The corporate powers delineated by the charter included the power to enter into contracts for corporate purposes, to borrow from the Indian Credit Fund set up through the IRA, to deposit corporate funds in a national or postal savings bank or with a disbursing officer, to employ counsel, to protect tribal rights guaranteed by past treaty, and to advise the government on appropriation estimates or federal projects for the Pawnee’s benefit. The charter also gave the tribe the power “[t]o negotiate with the Federal, State, or local governments and to advise or consult with the representatives of

the Interior Department on all activities of the Department that may affect the Pawnee Indian Tribe.” Several other provisions dealt with the protection of tribal land from sale or mortgage and assigning tribal land to members of the tribe; because the Pawnees did not retain any land in tribal ownership following allotment, except that reserved for administrative and school purposes, these provisions likely reflected Collier’s original hope of returning much Indian land to tribal ownership.<sup>100</sup>

Collier had intended tribal organization under constitutions and corporate charters to launch a new stage in the relationship between tribes and the federal government, and the new Pawnee Business and Nasharo councils worked in conjunction with the Pawnee Agency to advance the interests of the tribe. Yet, in looking after the welfare of tribal members, the new councils were also continuing and augmenting the role of the council in existence since the 1920s. In Collier’s enthusiasm for his programs, he saw the changed relationship of the Indian Office and tribes as one of “active, responsible and authoritative partnership.” Although there was not total acceptance of Collier’s vision and he let himself be blinded by problems in the organization process, Prucha notes that “a new period in Indian relations with the government had begun, and the tribal councils [created under the IRA] became the basis for later developments in tribal autonomy.”<sup>101</sup> In the meantime, though, Collier’s dreams were nearly derailed by a hostile Congress, and Indian affairs entered a period of uncertainty and bureaucratic reorganization.

### **The 1940s and Beyond**

Although the Pawnee tribe approved their constitution and corporate charter in the late 1930s, reaction against Collier’s Indian New Deal had been gathering strength

since passage of the Indian Reorganization Act in 1934. Indeed, Collier had offered amendments that weakened his original version of the IRA to get it passed at all, and in the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act he made further concessions to secure congressional approval. Collier had proceeded with his enthusiastic goals in spite of the cautious reception by Congress and many Indians, but, according to Prucha, “After 1937 he managed only a holding operation against antagonistic groups, to whom Congress gave a receptive ear.”<sup>102</sup>

Collier faced opposition on two fronts, from those who saw his program as an extremist movement bent on returning the Indians to tribalism and setting them apart from the rest of American society, and from others who criticized his heavy-handed administration of the Indian Office. The long-standing drive for the assimilation of American Indians and for the lessening of federal responsibility and investment in Indian affairs both worked against Collier, and he soon faced attempts by members of Congress to repeal legislation supporting his programs. Although the Indian Reorganization Act was not repealed, the Indian Office endured congressional investigations of its work and attempts to repeal the act or exclude certain tribes from its provisions. Failing to end the Indian New Deal by these methods, Congress effectively undermined it by withholding the appropriations necessary to fund it. Collier resigned in frustration in January 1945.<sup>103</sup>

World War II had also worked against Collier’s program. The war diverted the nation’s attention from domestic concerns and compounded the difficulty of securing appropriations that the Indian Office already faced. But World War II also contributed significantly to a changed view of their place in society by Indians who participated in the war effort, either in active military service or in war-related jobs on the home front.



Thrust into the larger society, many Indians embraced the experience, “the freedom of association and action,” and the added income that their war work brought. For the nation’s leaders promoting a shared participation in patriotic service for all Americans and for the Indians themselves, the war “greatly accelerated the movement toward assimilation.” The 1940s, then, propelled Indian policy toward the drive for termination of federal responsibility to tribes that would mark the next decade. Collier’s successors as Commissioner of Indian Affairs moved increasingly in the direction of termination.<sup>104</sup>

For the Pawnees and the agency, the 1940s brought several adjustments. Following the adoption of the constitution and bylaws, and a corporate charter, the tribe continued to grow in tribal self-government, but remained tied to the regulations of the Indian Office and agency. Accompanying the shifting philosophy and policies at the federal level, administrative reorganization added to the uncertainty of this era in Indian affairs. In 1947, the Indian Office, which officially adopted the name Bureau of Indian Affairs in that year, reorganized its hierarchy to increase administrative effectiveness. At that time, the Pawnee Agency became a subagency of the Western Oklahoma Consolidated Agency at Anadarko, Oklahoma. Initially, all records and individual Indian accounts were transferred to Anadarko, and a district agent remained at Pawnee.<sup>105</sup>

A reduction in staff left the agency unable to maintain its previous level of supervision over individual transactions, and led to some confusion over procedure. Although staff still supervised decisions on sale of restricted lands, individual Indians were to prepare their own leases, which were then subject to the approval of the agency. Indians of the tribes used to dealing directly with the agency continued to inquire about their account balances at Pawnee, finally prompting District Agent John L. Johnson to

draw up a form letter reminding them that all records were now housed in Anadarko. By early 1948, less than one year after the transfer, the administration began transferring the land records back to Pawnee; individual accounts were to be returned as well, pending new appropriations to hire sufficient staff. In 1949, writing to a fellow Indian Service employee in Wisconsin, Johnson reported that no appropriations had come through, and Anadarko had been forced to terminate the clerk at Pawnee. Johnson expressed little hope of getting the position back, and closed with, “This Indian Service is certainly uncertain, isn’t it?”<sup>106</sup>

In 1949, yet another reorganization occurred, making Anadarko one of eleven area offices across the country. The Pawnee Agency became an area field office under the jurisdiction of the Anadarko Area Office, with Johnson still in charge as area field representative. In 1950, at the close of the period of significance for the historic district, the Pawnee Agency, as a field office, maintained its jurisdiction over the Pawnee, Ponca, Otoe-Missouria, Tonkawa, and Kaw tribes, overseeing their relationship with the federal government. Although there have been variations in federal programs, funding levels, and philosophies since then, particularly through the era of termination and the subsequent rise of Indian self-determination, the Pawnee Agency today continues its role as the local manifestation of a federal administrative presence among these tribes.<sup>107</sup>

As evidenced by the history of the Pawnee Agency, government policy toward American Indians, for much of its history, has focused on the assimilation of tribal members into mainstream society. Yet, in more recent times, tribes have asserted their rights of sovereignty and have defended the value of remembering and celebrating their cultural heritage. Tribes take a more active role in their own administration, if not

independent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, at least in conjunction with it. The Pawnee Agency, as a component of the bureau, still maintains jurisdiction over land transactions, acting as a trustee for Indian property. The Pawnee Business Council, though, now administers many of the services formerly overseen by the agency through grants and contracts available under Public Law 93-638. Although the funds for these programs, including law enforcement, higher education, and various social services, are still distributed through the agency, the business council administers or contracts out the programs, acting as a board that then oversees them. Two of the tribes under the Pawnee Agency, the Poncas and Kaws, are now compact tribes, and have a direct government-to-government relationship with the United States; these tribes provide directly to their members the services that the Pawnee Agency still provides the other three tribes.<sup>108</sup>

Robert L. Chapman, president of the Pawnee Business Council, sees continued paternalism on the part of the government agencies that deal with tribes. First elected to the council in 1985, Chapman has been a member for all but two years since then, and has served as president at various times. While the eight elected councilmen previously chose officers from among their own group, a recent amendment to the constitution allows for direct election of officers, and Chapman is in his first year of a four-year term as the first directly-elected president of the council. He takes the confidence placed in his leadership by the members of the tribe very seriously, and has guided the Pawnees through recent improvements in infrastructure on the tribal reserve and in an expansion of services provided through the tribal government. Chapman says that the tribe has considered moving on to compact tribe status like the Poncas and Kaws; while the Pawnee tribe contracts for some programs, it does not yet do so for all of them.<sup>109</sup>

As tribes have begun to exercise more of their tribal sovereignty in recent years, Chapman says, they have continued to meet with much resistance and opposition from the federal government as well as from state representatives. Many whites simply do not understand the long relationship between American Indians and the United States. With little sense of this history, they misunderstand the obligations of past treaties and the status of tribes as sovereign entities. Despite the resistance they receive as tribal councils and governments assert their rights, Chapman points out that they are simply trying to take care of their people, as they have always tried to do.<sup>110</sup>

Still, Chapman believes that attitudes are beginning to change, and that, despite the injustices that may mar the past, tribes must overcome them and continue their active roles in shaping the present and leading their people into the future.<sup>111</sup> The Pawnee Agency still works with the tribes under its jurisdiction and remains as the presence of the federal government through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, but the Pawnee, Ponca, Otoe-Missouria, Tonkawa, and Kaw tribes actively participate in shaping the programs and providing the services that affect their own members. In contrast to the prevailing drive for the assimilation of American Indians and the long-standing paternalism of the federal government that have existed throughout much of history, the Pawnees have worked, and continue to work, to achieve a balance between the government's goals and the desires and wishes of the tribe.

## NOTES

1. "Treaty with the Pawnee, 1857," in Charles J. Kappler, comp. and ed., *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties*, vol. 2, *Treaties* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), 764-67; Martha Royce Blaine, *Pawnee Passage, 1870-1875* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 203.
2. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883), 75, 1886, 137.
3. For example, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1884, 87, 1898, 245.
4. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1891, 359, 1901, 330, 1902, 297; according to Francis Paul Prucha, prior to the 1890s, agents and other personnel were appointed under a system of political patronage that often allowed the appointment of inexperienced or incompetent individuals in the Indian Service. After the president extended civil service rules to several positions below the level of agent in 1891, including school superintendent, the office began transferring duties from agents to superintendents. The administration of the Pawnee Agency was separated from the Ponca, Pawnee, Otoe, and Oakland Agency through this mechanism; Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984; Bison Books, 1995), 723, 731, 734.
5. *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1920, 4, in *Superintendents' Annual Narrative and Statistical Reports from Field Jurisdictions, 1907-1938*, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives (microfilm); J. C. Hart to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 21 August 1921, Pawnee Agency and Subagencies Collection, Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (hereafter cited as Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society), citations referring to parts of the collection that have been microfilmed include the roll number, if no roll number is noted, reference is to original documents; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1927, 32, 1928, 41; Lem A. Towers to Victoria Primeaux, 4 August 1947, "April-September 1947" file, Box 1, Subgroup 210, Records of the Pawnee Agency and Subagencies, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives-Southwest Region, Fort Worth, Texas (hereafter cited as Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth); *Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the Pawnee Agency and Subagencies*, 18, 28 (page numbers correspond to author's copy of inventory, distributed on disk), Fort Worth, Texas.
6. Although many sources list the four bands, spellings are taken from the "History" page of the Pawnee Nation website, <<http://www.pawneenation.org/history.html>>; David J. Wishart, "The Dispossession of the Pawnee," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69 (September 1979): 382-83; John W. Williamson, "Go South and Be Free: John W. Williamson's Account of the Pawnee Removal," ed. Thomas R. Buecker and R. Eli Paul, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 65 (Summer 1987): 133.
7. Wishart, "Dispossession of the Pawnee," 382-83; Gene Weltfish, *The Lost Universe*

with a Closing Chapter on the 'Universe Regained' (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1965), 2-5.

8. George Hyde, *The Pawnee Indians* (n.p.: George E. Hyde, 1951; reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 137-44; Alexander Lesser, *The Pawnee Ghost Dance Hand Game: Ghost Dance Revival and Ethnic Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933; reprint, with an introduction by Alice Beck Kehoe, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 37-38; Wishart, "Dispossession of the Pawnee," 383, 387; Blaine, *Pawnee Passage*, 98.

9. Hyde, *Pawnee Indians*, 137-44; Wishart, "Dispossession of the Pawnee," 383-86; Weltfish, *Lost Universe*, 8.

10. "Treaty with the Pawnee Marhar, 1818," "Treaty with the Pawnee Tribe, 1825," "Treaty with the Pawnee, 1833," in Kappler, vol. 2, 159, 258-59, 416-17, 571; Lesser, *The Pawnee Ghost Dance Hand Game*, 1; Blaine, *Pawnee Passage*, 40, 42.

11. "Treaty with the Pawnee, 1857," in Kappler, *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties*, vol. 2, 764-67; Blaine, *Pawnee Passage*, 40, 42; Wishart, "Dispossession of the Pawnee," 392-93; Hyde, *Pawnee Indians*, 244-45.

12. Wishart, "Dispossession of the Pawnee," 387-96; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1875, 112; the reasons for removal and motivations of the Pawnees and their agent are summarized from a seminar paper completed for History 5023, Historical Methods: Nancy McClure, "The Disruption of Subsistence Patterns and the Pawnee Removal," research paper, Oklahoma State University, 1998, manuscript in possession of author; for a detailed account of the events leading up to removal, see also, Blaine, *Pawnee Passage*.

13. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1874, 35-36, 1875, 288, 321; Council Minutes, 18 October 1873, 15 November 1873, 8 October 1874, Council Proceedings Volume, Roll PA3, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

14. William Burgess to Barclay White, 12 February 1875, Resolution, 4 March 1875, Letters Received, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives (microfilm); *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1875, 30, 77-78, 321, 1876, 226.

15. John W. Williamson, "Go South and Be Free Part II: John W. Williamson's Account of the Pawnee Removal," ed. Thomas R. Buecker and R. Eli Paul, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 65 (Fall 1987): 308; *Correspondence of the Honorable Secretary of the Interior and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Relative to the Removal and Necessities of the Pawnee Indians* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1875), 14, U.S. Executive Branch Documents, 1789-1909, Interior Department (microfilm); Burgess to Jonathan Richards, 1 December 1875, Kiowa Agency Correspondence, Foreign Relations, Roll KA39, Kiowa Agency Collection, Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (microfilm).

16. *Correspondence of the Honorable Secretary of the Interior and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Relative to the Removal and Necessities of the Pawnee Indians*, 14; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1875, 322, 1876, 56, 1878, 63.
17. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1906, 320; A. R. Snyder to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 12 July 1928, Sketch of Office, "Improvements 1928 and 1929" file, Box 5, Subgroup 86, "1940-45 Construction Program, Administrative Needs" report, "Construction 403 F.Y. 1938" file, Box 38, Subgroup 85, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth; *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1931, Section III, 2.
18. "Treaty with the Pawnee, 1857," in Kappler, *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties*, vol. 2, 764.
19. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1871, 453, 1873, 186, 193-94, 1874, 207; Joseph Stanley Clark, "The Ponca Indian Agency (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1940), 84; Wishart, "Dispossession of the Pawnee," 400.
20. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1874, 35, 207, 1875, 288; Mary Louise Wabaunsee, interview by Joseph M. Reed, 12 October 1998, tape recording; Martha Royce Blaine, *Some Things Are Not Forgotten: A Pawnee Family Remembers* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 17-18, 23-26.
21. Blaine, *Some Things Are Not Forgotten*, 21-23; Effie May Judy, interview by Grace Kelley, 11 May 1937, *Indian-Pioneer Papers*, vol. 49, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma (microfiche), 469; Clark, "Ponca Indian Agency," 20-21, 96-98; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1883, 76, 1884, 88.
22. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1881, 89.
23. Blaine, *Some Things Are Not Forgotten*, 40, 43, 46; Clark, "Ponca Indian Agency," 407; "Pawnee Indian Lands," in Charles J. Kappler, comp. and ed., *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties*, vol. 1, *Laws* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), 498.
24. *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1916, 13-14, 1917, 6; Blaine, *Some Things Are Not Forgotten*, 27, 87; Wabaunsee interview.
25. "Treaty with the Pawnee, 1857," in Kappler, vol. 2, 764, "Pawnee Indian Lands," in Kappler, vol. 1, 498; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1902, 298, 1903, 274.
26. *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1915, 10, 1917, 6; "Executive Order, Woodrow Wilson, 2 March 1918," in Charles J. Kappler, comp. and ed., *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties*, vol. 4, *Laws* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1929), 1040.
27. Lem A. Towers to Fred M. Daiker, 23 September 1937, Petition of Nasharo Council and Business Council to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 10 December 1938, "Pawnee Tribe 064,

- 1936 inc. 1938” file, Box 19, Subgroup 85, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.
28. John Collier to Towers, 13 November 1939, “Pawnee Tribe 064, 1939 only” file, Box 19, Subgroup 85, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.
29. “History,” Pawnee Nation website, <<http://www.pawneenation.org/history.html>>.
30. “Treaty with the Pawnee, 1833,” “Treaty with the Pawnee, 1857,” in Kappler, vol. 2, 416-17, 765; *An Act to Authorize the Sale of the Pawnee Reservation, Statutes at Large* 51, sec. 5, 30 (1876).
31. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1876, 56, 1877, 95, 1879, 71, 1880, 79.
32. *Ibid.*, 1875, 112, 1877, 95, 293, 1880, XXXII, 79; Lesser, *Pawnee Ghost Dance Hand Game*, 31-35, 40.
33. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1880, 79, 1881, 88, 296.
34. *Ibid.*, 1881, 88, 1882, 78, 352.
35. *Ibid.*, 1883, 77, 1884, 87, 1885, 94-95, 1886, 137, 1887, 88, 354-55.
36. Prucha, *Great Father*, 659, 664-71; U.S. Congress, House, *Report of the Secretary of the Interior; Being Part of the Message and Documents Communicated to the Two Houses of Congress*, Vol. 1, H. Exec. Doc. 1, part 5, 46<sup>th</sup> Congress, 3<sup>rd</sup> Session, 1880, Serial Set 1959, 11-13. This coalition of disparate interests – humanitarian reformers and aggressive whites seeking land – often backed the legislative programs of federal Indian policy; L. G. Moses, personal communication with author, 6 April 2000.
37. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1887, 274-77; Prucha, *Great Father*, 667-68; D. S. Otis, *The Dawes Act and the Allotment of Indian Lands* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 6-7, 185-86, originally published as “History of the Allotment Policy” in *Readjustment of Indian Affairs*, (hearings on H. R. 7902 before the House of Representatives’ Committee on Indian Affairs), pt. 9, 428-89, 1934.
38. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1890, 193, 199, 1892, 397; Lesser, *Pawnee Ghost Dance Hand Game*, 37, 39-40.
39. Prucha, *Great Father*, 746-47; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1893, 262; Lesser, *Pawnee Ghost Dance Hand Game*, 39; Blaine, *Some Things Are Not Forgotten*, 35-36; Clark, “Ponca Indian Agency,” 395.
40. Blaine, *Some Things Are Not Forgotten*, 37, 43-44.
41. “Report of Councils held by Cherokee (Jerome) Commission,” transcript, quoted in Blaine, *Some Things Are Not Forgotten*, 36-48; Blaine includes a detailed discussion of the councils in these pages.



42. Prucha, *Great Father*, 747; Blaine, *Some Things Are Not Forgotten*, 48-49; Pawnee Council Minutes, 22 September 1913, Roll PA45, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; the homesteaders were to pay \$2.50 per acre before receiving the patents for their homesteads, "Indian Legislation" in *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1893, 511-12.

43. "Articles of Agreement made and entered into by and between David H. Jerome, Alfred M. Wilson and Warren G. Sayre, commissioners on the part of the United States, and the Pawnee Tribe of Indians in the Indian Territory," 23 November 1892, "Allotment of Lands" file, Box 38, Subgroup 85, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth; Clark, "Ponca Indian Agency," 409. While the Pawnees received the eighty-thousand dollar payment, the government neglected to distribute the yearly interest payments. In December 1920, the Court of Claims awarded the tribe a judgment of \$312,811.27, the balance from the sale of the land plus interest accumulated since 1893; J. C. Hart to Eva Mae Williams-Carpenter, n.d., Roll PA43, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Kappler, *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties*, vol. 4, 289.

44. Subtracting the acreage allotted, reserved, and ceded from the original 283,026 acre reservation yields a discrepancy of 165 acres for which the author cannot account. There are also discrepancies between various sources regarding the number of allotments made. Although the agent's report for 1893 listed 797, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs reported 820; these differences likely stem from the fact that these reports were written at different times during the process of allotment. Various secondary sources use either of these figures, but later government sources list 821 and the Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth, contain 821 official allotment cards. Also, the number of allotments, made only to living members of the tribe, exceeds the number of Pawnees officially recorded in the census for both 1892 (798) and for 1893 (759); *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1892, 794, 1893, 702; L. W. Page, "Pawnee Agency" history, 20 May 1937, submitted to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, "053" file, Box 18, Subgroup 85, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth; Blaine, *Some Things Are Not Forgotten*, 49.

45. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1894, 248-49; Lesser, *Pawnee Ghost Dance Hand Game*, 119-20.

46. Blaine, *Some Things Are Not Forgotten*, 80-92.

47. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1894, 248-49, 1896, 265; *Annual Report for 1898*, Roll PA49, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

48. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1894, 249, 1898, 247; *Annual Report for 1898*.

49. Otis, *Dawes Act*, 99, 101-02; Prucha, *Great Father*, 671-72; Moses, personal communication with author, 6 April 2000.

50. Prucha, *Great Father* 671-72; Otis, *Dawes Act*, 116-18; *Annual Report of the*

*Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1892, 71.

51. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1884, 88, 1895, 260, 1897, 242; Lease Notice, Letterpress Volume 10, Roll PA7, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; on delinquent leases, see for example, W. B. Webb to Frederick J. Horning, 18 May 1897, Letterpress Volume 12, Roll PA7, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

52. *Annual Report for 1900*, Roll PA49, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1899, 229, 1900, 13, 342, 1901, 331.

53. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1900, 343, 1901, 331, 698.

54. *Ibid.*, 1894, 592, 1904, 606, 624.

55. *Ibid.*, 1904, 74, 302-03, 1905, 315, 1906, 319.

56. *Ibid.*, 1905, 315.

57. Prucha, *Great Father*, 872-77.

58. *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1910, Industries Section, 1-3, Sales Section, 1.

59. *Ibid.*, 1914, 14, 1916, 13; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1917, 175, 177.

60. *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1913, 9, 1914, 25, 1915, 9, 1916, 13, 1919, 5.

61. For example, in 1922, J. C. Hart noted that sixty-seven thousand of the original one-hundred-twelve thousand acres had been patented or sold through the agency since allotment, and wrote, "Some of the patented lands are still in the hands of the original owners, but in most cases more or less encumbered"; *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1922, 6; J. C. Hart to Malcolm McDowell, 21 April 1921, Roll PA45, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

62. *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1922, 8, 1920, 3, 1921, 8, 1923, 9, 1924, 9.

63. Prucha, *Great Father*, 779-80.

64. *Ibid.*, 877.

65. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1899, 200-01, 1900, 343.

66. *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1913, 1, 1914, 1,

1915, 1, 1917, 1, 1919, 1, 1923, 6, 1924, 26.

67. Prucha, *Great Father*, 873; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1903, 274, 1905, 314-15; *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1920, 8, 1921, 14, 1922, 8, 1924, 9, 1928, 10, 1929, Sales Section, 2.

68. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1906, 319.

69. "Executive Order, Woodrow Wilson, 2 March 1918," in Kappler, vol. 4, 1040; Executive Order, Calvin Coolidge, 29 May 1928, "Pawnee Tribe 064 1920-35" file, Executive Order, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 29 September 1937, "Pawnee Tribe 064 1936 inc. 1938" file, Box 19, Subgroup 85, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth; Prucha, *Great Father*, 881-82.

70. Although the concepts of "blood" and "race" are commonly used to categorize individuals into groups having supposedly different biological characteristics, there is no one accepted scientific taxonomy of race. The terms instead are part of the folk imagery that assumes physical, moral, intellectual, and psychological differences can be passed from parent to child via the medium of "blood." In the case of Cato Sells's policy, "blood" was used to designate supposed degree of "Indianness," but can also be used to justify discrimination based on the perceived inferiority of particular "races"; Karen I. Blu, *The Lumbee Problem: The Making of an American Indian People* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 6-7, 24-25, 204 ; (L. G. Moses and Raymond Wilson, eds., *Indian Lives: Essays on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Native American Leaders* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985; new ed. 1993), 6.

71. Prucha, *Great Father*, 883-85.

72. *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1914, 27, 1915, 9; Snyder to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 22 December 1927, "Buntin" file, Box 1, Subgroup 86, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.

73. For example, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1899, 300, 1900, 342, 1901, 331.

74. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1903, 274.

75. Blaine, *Some Things Are Not Forgotten*, 87-88, 93-95.

76. *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1914, 25, 1918, 1, 5, 1919, 5.

77. *Ibid.*, 1918, 1; Elsie Shilling, interview by Joseph M. Reed, 6 October 1998, tape recording; Thelma Cahwee, interview by Joseph M. Reed, 13 October 1998, tape recording; Wabaunsee interview.

78. *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1928, 7, 10, 1929,

Sales Section, 1.

79. Ibid., 1923, 6, 1924, 7.

80. Ibid., 1928, 8, 1929, 4, 6-7, 1931, 6.

81. Prucha, *Great Father*, 886, 896-97, 941, 954-55.

82. Ibid., 941, 944, 957-63.

83. Ibid., 961, 963, 969-73; Elmer Thomas to Percy W. Danielson, 29 December 1934, Pawnee Tribal Council to Thomas, 22 January 1935, "Senator Thomas Wheeler Howard Act" file, Superintendents of Cheyenne and Arapaho, Five Tribes, Kiowa, Quapaw, Shawnee, and Pawnee agencies to Thomas, 5 February 1935, "Reservation Information General" file, Box 9, Subgroup 86, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.

84. Prucha, *Great Father*, 956; Superintendents of Cheyenne. . .and Pawnee Agencies to Thomas, 5 February 1935, Notes on population and land distribution, "Reservation Information General" file, Box 9, Subgroup 86, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth; *Annual Statistical Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1934, 16.

85. Wabaunsee interview, *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1916, 12, 1923, 6; Prucha, *Great Father*, 956.

86. Prucha, *Great Father*, 967-68, 1010.

87. Wishart, "Dispossession of the Pawnee," 282-83; Weltfish, *Lost Universe*, 6-7.

88. Wishart, "Dispossession of the Pawnee," 383; "Articles of Agreement. . .by and between David H. Jerome. . .and the Pawnee Tribe of Indians," 23 November 1892.

89. Blaine, *Some Things Are Not Forgotten*, 41; Clark, "Ponca Indian Agency," 406.

90. *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1915, 8, 1916, 12, 1921, 12.

91. Stacy Matlock and Rush Roberts to Charles H. Burke, 9 February 1923, Hart to Burke, 26 February 1923, Roll PA45, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

92. *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1926, 13, 1929, 8; "Questionnaire on Tribal Organization," n.d., "064" file, Box 19, Subgroup 85, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.

93. "Questionnaire on Tribal Organization"; Resolution of the Pawnee Indian Welfare Association, 4 June 1934, "064" file, Box 19, Subgroup 85, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.

94. Willard W. Beatty to Reservation Superintendents, 22 April 1937, "Pawnee Tribe 064, 1936 inc. 1938" file, Box 19, Subgroup 85, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.
95. Pawnee Tribal Council to Collier, 30 December 1935, "Pawnee Tribe 064, 1920-35" file; Towers to Beatty, 3 May 1937, H. N. Clark to A. C. Monahan, 12 July 1937, "Pawnee Tribe 064, 1936 inc. 1938" file, Box 19, Subgroup 85, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.
96. Prucha, *Great Father*, 967; Ben Dwight to George Roberts, 30 July 1937, Monahan to Collier, 30 July 1937, "Pawnee Tribe 064, 1938 inc. 1938" file, Box 19, Subgroup 85, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.
97. Monahan to Collier, 30 July 1937.
98. Towers to Collier, 7 January 1938, Election Board Certificate, 7 January 1938, "Pawnee Tribe 064, 1936 inc. 1938" file, Box 19, Subgroup 85, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth; U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Constitution and By-laws of the Pawnee Indians of Oklahoma*, ratified 6 January 1938 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1938), 5; U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Corporate Charter of the Pawnee Indian Tribe of Oklahoma*, ratified 28 April 1938 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1938), 6.
99. *Constitution and By-laws of the Pawnee Indians of Oklahoma*, 1-5.
100. *Corporate Charter of the Pawnee Indian Tribe of Oklahoma*, 1-5.
101. Prucha, *Great Father*, 944, 958-63.
102. *Ibid.*, 993.
103. *Ibid.*, 994, 997-1005.
104. *Ibid.*, 1005-09.
105. *Ibid.*, 1036-37, 1229; Towers to Primeaux, 4 August 1947, John L. Johnson to Laura Belle Butler, 15 August 1947, "April-September 1947" file, Box 1, Subgroup 210, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.
106. Johnson to Amos Blackhawk, 29 September 1947, "October-December 1947" file, Johnson to Bert Brown Stanley, 24 February 1948, Johnson to Hugh D. Eagle, 30 March 1948, "January-March 1948" file, Johnson to Butler, 13 April 1948, "April-June 1948" file, Box 1, Johnson to Dorothy Y. Stewart, 19 September 1949, "July-September 1949" file, Box 3, Subgroup 210, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.
107. *Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the Pawnee Agency and Subagencies*, 63.
108. Phyllis Gonzales, Superintendent's Secretary, Pawnee Agency, interview by author,

16 March 2000; Julia Langan, Superintendent, Pawnee Agency, interview by author, 16 March 2000; Bureau of Indian Affairs website, <<http://www.doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.html>>.

109. Robert L. Chapman, President, Pawnee Business Council, interview by author, 16 March 2000.

110. Ibid.

111. Ibid.

#### IV. HISTORIC CONTEXT: THE PAWNEE BOARDING SCHOOL

I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed. . . .out of the hard and unusual struggle through which he is compelled to pass, he gets a strength, a confidence, that one misses whose pathway is comparatively smooth by reason of birth and race.

Booker T. Washington, as quoted in the  
*Pawnee Indian School Leader*, April 1956

Students at the Pawnee Boarding School in north-central Oklahoma chose a passage from Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery* to open the April 1956 issue of their student newspaper, the *Pawnee Indian School Leader*. Entitled "Words of Wisdom" by the newspaper staff, the excerpt continued, "every persecuted individual and race should get much consolation out of the great human law, which is universal and eternal, that merit, no matter under what skin found, is in the long run, recognized and rewarded." The Washington passage concluded, "this I have said here, not to call attention to myself as an individual, but to the race to which I am proud to belong."<sup>1</sup>

The students of the Pawnee Boarding School, founded in 1878, attended an educational facility born out of the federal government's drive to force the assimilation of American Indians into mainstream society and to obliterate native cultures. Boarding schools operated by the Office of Indian Affairs sought this objective through curriculum, work details, regimentation, discipline, and activities designed to mimic white cultural values. Although the Indian Office shifted the aims of federal Indian education policy at times throughout the Pawnee Boarding School's eighty-year history, the overall program at the school continued to reflect the goal of assimilation. The

voices of children who attended the school during its earliest history have largely been silenced through the intervening years; but students from the twentieth century add a complex and humanizing dimension to its story. Despite a program that continued to emphasize white culture over Indian, the students endured, finding within their experiences the benefits of education, the playfulness of childhood, and the survival of ties to their native communities.

### **A New School in Indian Territory**

The federal government had operated an industrial school for the children of the Pawnee tribe on the Nebraska reservation, but in September 1875, Agent William Burgess suspended classes as the last remaining group of Pawnees prepared to travel south to Indian Territory. Although two teachers would accompany the tribe to their new reservation, they would not conduct classes during the transition. Before their departure from Nebraska, the Pawnee chiefs and headmen resolved to apply the year's unexpended school funds "towards the erection and furnishing of a new Industrial school at our new agency in the Indian Territory in such manner. . .so as best to promote the Educational welfare of the youth of our tribe."<sup>2</sup>

Contractors completed the new industrial boarding school in Indian Territory in May 1878 and classes began the following November.<sup>3</sup> The school's purpose was to educate the children of the Pawnee tribe in accordance with the broader educational goals set forth by the Office of Indian Affairs. At the time of the boarding school's founding, United States government Indian policy centered on the assimilation of American Indians into the dominant culture. From colonial days onward, conflict over



land and between cultures had marred the years of contact between whites and Indians. The government's search for a way out of the "Indian problem" had early focused on what whites perceived as inherent differences between the races. Out of these ideas, an attitude evolved, and with it a solution. David Wallace Adams writes:

In a word, Indians were savages because they lacked the very thing whites possessed – civilization. And since, by the law of historical progress and the doctrine of social evolution civilized ways were destined to triumph over savagism, Indians would ultimately confront a fateful choice: civilization or extinction. That the race would choose civilized ways or savage ways, there was little doubt. Wasn't civilization preferable to savagism? Wasn't life preferable to death?<sup>4</sup>

Having concluded that civilization was the only alternative to outright extinction for American Indians, government policymakers and reformers embraced the goal of assimilation into mainstream American culture.<sup>5</sup>

The government considered land use and education key components in the civilization process, and expected to accomplish the transformation of a people from a "savage" into a "civilized" state in just one generation. In addition to allotment, which was to transform Indians into citizen farmers, education was to push the next generation of Indians further into the dominant white culture. Through the controlled environment of the boarding school, all vestiges of tribal culture would be obliterated. It was hoped that the children, considered more malleable than adults and therefore more easily separated from their native roots, would emerge from their educational experience transformed into model citizens of mainstream, white society. The children would, by example, draw their parents closer to civilization, and after reaching adulthood, would raise their own children as fully assimilated Americans. Future generations of Indians would have no further need of reservations and separate schools, for they would be an

indistinguishable part of the dominant culture. Education, along with self-sufficient farming, would end the dependence of native tribes on the federal government.<sup>6</sup>

Governmental policy on the Pawnee reservation in Indian Territory embraced the goals of the civilization program, promoting both allotment and education as essential. Despite the disruption of classes during removal, instruction could not wait until the completion of the boarding school building. Two day schools were already in operation by February 1876. Both conducted classes within a single frame building, one of the early structures built at the new agency. Although Agent Burgess praised the “good work” done in these schools, he considered them “mainly elementary in their character and preparatory in their influence.” He anxiously awaited the opening of the industrial school, which he proclaimed a “prominent aid to civilizing progress.”<sup>7</sup>

In this attitude toward the roles of day and boarding schools, Burgess and subsequent agents echoed the philosophy of the Indian Office. In 1879, Agent John C. Smith noted that only those children who “had made proper advancement” in day schools should move on to the industrial boarding school. Thomas Jefferson Morgan, during his term as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, formalized this attitude into a concrete plan of hierarchical schools. Day schools, the first contact with formal education for most children, would introduce them to English and the basics of primary education. Reservation boarding schools would continue the primary education, add more advanced grades, and focus half of each school day on industrial education. Off-reservation boarding schools would continue the process with more advanced education and industrial training. Theoretically, Indian children would move up the hierarchy only after attaining a sufficient level of achievement in each successive school.<sup>8</sup>

Before any Pawnee students in Indian Territory could advance beyond the day schools, however, the agency had to accomplish the practical matter of building the boarding school. With the 1875 resolution to divert unexpended funds from the Nebraska school, Burgess had begun planning for the construction of the new boarding school even before the entire tribe left Nebraska. By February 1876, he had reported that plans and specifications were in progress and stone was being quarried for use in construction.<sup>9</sup>

Despite such foresight, governmental bureaucracy derailed commencement of the project. In a January 1877 letter to Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Q. Smith, Central Superintendent William Nicholson discussed the source of delay. The 1857 treaty with the Pawnee tribe had appropriated ten thousand dollars yearly for two manual labor schools. When Burgess and Nicholson sought to use this money for construction costs, the Indian Office ruled that it had allocated the sum only to *support* schools, not to *build* them. In response, Nicholson patiently pointed out that “as there are no buildings adequate for the accommodation of these schools. . . it follows that the intention of said treaty is almost completely defeated.” He asked that Smith try to secure provision for the use of the next such appropriation for building the school. In May, Nicholson sent Smith plans and specifications for the building prepared by architects Haskell and Wood. The Indian Office awarded the contract for construction in the summer of 1877, and workers completed the building in May of the following year.<sup>10</sup>

In the meantime, the task of educating the children continued in the day schools. In addition to their “elementary character” noted by Burgess, the absence of boarding facilities also limited their effectiveness in reaching many students. Children living far

from the day schools could not attend, and even those living nearby could be prevented from doing so by vagaries of the weather. In May 1878, as construction of the boarding school neared completion, high water in Black Bear Creek kept many students who could not cross the swollen stream out of school.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, as they awaited the opening of the boarding school, teachers in the day schools worked to implement the goals of the Indian Office. Even Commissioner of Indian Affairs E. A. Hayt received evidence of the strides the Pawnees and their instructors had made. In the spring of 1878, two Indian schoolboys, prompted by their teacher, wrote letters to the commissioner describing their activities in school. Chalkley Gittingham, a student in “A” class, offered a rare glimpse of school life and curriculum for a Pawnee child of the time:

I like to go to school and learn to write and read and learn everything and I like to go to Sunday school and learn something about God in Sunday [school]. I always interpret for Charles Searing [the Agent who replaced Burgess] when he takes a class. . . . I am in “A” class in this school and we read in the third reader yesterday and today we just write letters. I study in Grammar [*sic*], Geography and Arithmetic and some times we read in Natural History. . . . Please write to your friend,

Chalkley Gittingham,  
Indian school boy, “A” class

Like the agent, Chalkley waited anxiously for the opening of the boarding school, telling the commissioner, “I would like to go to school in the big stone school house.”<sup>12</sup>

The wait would continue past the end of the spring term and well into the fall. Although the building itself was substantially complete in May, problems with the water supply began even before the cement had cured. A rain shower on 22 May put eight feet of water in the cistern, but the next day Agent Searing reported with dismay that “today there is not one foot in it” and therefore concluded that the cistern did not hold water.

Ashton and Smith, the contractors who had done the work, wrote to Commissioner Hayt in June and agreed to travel from their base of operations in Lawrence, Kansas, to repair the leaking cistern, despite their contention that, against their instructions, water was let into it while the cement was still green. Smith wrote again to Hayt in September, after making the repairs, to report on the work and express his opinion of the agency: “It will be extremely hard to make anything hold water at the Agency in the condition of affairs as they have been ever since I have had any personal knowledge of them and I am glad that I have no more contracts there.”<sup>13</sup>

In spite of the delays, Samuel S. Ely, Searing’s successor as agent, pushed on with plans to equip the school for the coming year. In May 1878, he requested permission to go on a buying trip for the school, which he hoped would open in September. The enclosed list included everything he wished to purchase, from bedsteads and cookware to ink and chalk; fabric for clothes and combs and brushes for the children. Books included arithmetic and geography texts, readers, and dictionaries. The exhaustive inventory totaled \$6,106.10. In August, Searing scavenged the agency for furniture, taking items previously “in use by employees or stored in their houses.” The hoped-for September opening date passed by. On 20 September, Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz approved a request for goods and supplies not to exceed three thousand dollars. Five days later Acting Agent Andrew C. Williams made yet another request for supplies, saying that it would be impossible to start the school without them. Schurz authorized a trip to Kansas City and Leavenworth to purchase supplies as late as October.<sup>14</sup>

After so many difficulties – funding for construction, the leaking cistern, equipping the building – the new boarding school finally opened on 11 November 1878.

Three days later, Williams reported, “Today the schoolhouse is filled to its utmost capacity, with up to date twenty more applicants [than can be accommodated].” With the school finally in operation, the Pawnees seemed poised for further advancement according to governmental criteria. In his 1879 annual report, Williams’s successor John C. Smith proclaimed optimistically that, along with agriculture and modern homes, good schools would elevate the Pawnees “socially, intellectually, and morally.” With the school open, filled to capacity, and staffed with teachers Smith called “efficient and . . . earnest and energetic in the discharge of their duties,” it appeared that the education of the Pawnees would progress smoothly.<sup>15</sup>

### **A Difficult Road**

Smith’s polished report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs masked the difficulties of an agency rife with conflict among employees. Despite his praise of the teachers, problems with the administration of the agency spilled over into the affairs of the schools. In the four years since the tribe’s arrival in Indian Territory, five men in rapid succession had held the position of agent; Smith himself would leave the post within the year. The actions of agents and the turnover of staff affected the work of “civilizing” the Pawnees through efficient education and administration. In 1878, Agency Clerk J. Hertford stated that there had long existed “an element of discord which has sapped the foundation of social order, and discipline, rendering the policy of the Indian Department nugatory in its efforts to civilize and ameliorate the condition of the Pawnees.” Commenting on the recent departure of Searing, Hertford proclaimed, “Thanks to the giver of All good he has left.” Unfortunately, problems continued under

subsequent agents.<sup>16</sup>

Many of the difficulties at the agency related directly to the administration of the day and boarding schools. An employee accused Williams of nepotism for his appointment of incompetent relatives to positions at the agency. In January 1879, Carpenter William Alexander wrote to Hayt to complain of Williams's attempts to discharge Alexander. He maintained that Williams had appointed "a grasping horde of relatives and pets." He charged that, due to the inefficiency of the teachers, both nieces of Williams, the daily attendance of the day school was much lower than it could have been.<sup>17</sup> Other employees leveled more serious accusations at Williams and O. S. Hiatt, the superintendent of the boarding school and another purported relative of the agent.

A month after classes began at the boarding school, Williams reported a daily attendance of 145 scholars. In subsequent months, Williams and Hiatt both continued to report attendance rates of 140 or more. Although overcrowding in boarding schools was not uncommon, the school completed for the Pawnees in 1878 had a listed capacity of one hundred, well below the number of students claimed. In May 1879, Agency Physician N. McKay informed Commissioner Hayt that Hiatt "reports monthly a larger number of children in school than are in attendance, and makes requisition for and receives rations for the whole number reported." Although Hiatt's reports stated that school officers boarded at their personal expense, McKay had learned from the principal and the industrial teacher that Hiatt used the extra rations received for the nonexistent children to board these employees, with "no payment required." McKay asserted that Williams, well-informed of the fraud, was "in sentiment and business transactions. . . in with his kindred" and had pecuniary interest in the arrangement.<sup>18</sup>

By June, John C. Smith had succeeded Williams as agent. Clerk J. W. Phillips corroborated McKay's accusation and requested that Hayt send instructions to Smith to withhold from Hiatt's pay the amount due for "supplies furnished by the government that have been used by him and the employees at the boarding school." With the replacement of Williams, Hiatt lost his support, and the new agent "omitted" Hiatt's name from the list of employees appointed for the fall school term of 1879. The exact relationship between Williams and Hiatt is uncertain; Williams's cryptic explanation of the matter in a letter to Acting Commissioner E. J. Brooks vaguely stated that his relationship to employees other than the day school teacher (his niece) was "so far removed as to be impossible to determine. . . . I presume that. . .Mr. Hiatt and myself are descendants of the same family tree at a very remote period of time."<sup>19</sup>

Further problems at the school involved discipline of the students. Although little information about discipline exists regarding the school's early years, in 1903, a particularly harsh incident attracted the attention of the Indian Rights Association. Among other charges leveled at Superintendent George I. Harvey, the association reported on his excessive punishment of a female student. After seventeen-year-old Virginia Weeks refused to do the work assigned her in the laundry and struck the assistant laundress when she attempted to pull her to her station, the two got into a scuffle. To punish Weeks, Harvey beat her with a yard stick in his private office. When she refused to apologize to the employee, he took her to the barn where he lashed her with a strap. After another refusal to apologize, he "continued the whipping until he beat her into submission" and extracted a reluctant apology. Harvey then took her to the hospital for treatment of an injured hand and essentially placed her in solitary



confinement for four days. Complaints from relatives about the girl's bruises prompted Harvey to send her to Phoenix Indian School, whose physician refused her admittance because of tuberculosis. By the time Harvey retrieved her and re-enrolled her at Pawnee, the bruises had healed.<sup>20</sup>

The following year, the Indian Rights Association initiated a senatorial inquiry into Harvey's treatment of schoolchildren and management of agency affairs, including leasing allotments without the owner's knowledge or consent, withholding money due heirs after selling inherited land, and owning stock in banks that lent to the Pawnees. Harvey also faced an internal investigation by the Indian Office, which sent a special Indian agent to the agency to look into the charges. Although Charles S. McNichols considered sixteen of the eighteen charges leveled at Harvey to be groundless, he questioned the bank stock ownership and particularly singled out the treatment of Weeks as a serious offense. McNichols believed, from witnesses and from Harvey's own testimony, that the whipping of the girl went "beyond reasonable bounds." He called it "an unmerciful flogging" and recommended that the Indian Office make it clear to Harvey that it would not "countenance such conduct." Rather than face further investigation, Harvey resigned in early 1904.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to the serious incidents of brutal discipline and skimming rations, the school also contended with lesser difficulties involving employees. High staff turnover continued. The appointment of a new agent could prompt the dismissal and replacement of several school employees at once. Those pursuing outside interests to the detriment of their efficiency in the school risked their jobs as well. In 1884, Superintendent L. D. Davis complained of a teacher and the baker keeping personal stock in the school corrals.

Agent John W. Scott intervened, advising Commissioner Hiram Price that he did not want the two dismissed as long as they kept their animals elsewhere. But less than a month later, Scott observed that the men had gone into the stock business too extensively for “the satisfactory discharge of their duties” and that he would relieve them of their positions as soon as he could find replacements.<sup>22</sup>

The number of employees at the school fluctuated with changes in funding and in the number of students enrolled. Although the day schools operated during the first few years of the agency’s existence in Indian Territory, they appear to have been discontinued after the establishment of the boarding school. The needed positions anticipated before the school’s opening included a superintendent, matron, teacher, assistant teacher, assistant matron, seamstress, and laundress, with the positions of assistant seamstress and assistant laundress to be filled by Indians. In January 1879, Acting Secretary of the Interior A. Bell approved a request for the addition of four employees, including a male and a female industrial teacher, a baker, and an assistant seamstress.<sup>23</sup> Future employee lists do not mention the female industrial teacher.

The school had scaled back the employee force by 1888, when reports show an average attendance of less than sixty-four students. Enrollment during the early 1890s hovered around one hundred students. An 1895 quarterly report lists 114 students, and by 1898, the school boarded fifty-seven boys and seventy-seven girls, a total of 134 children. The large staff that year reflected the increased number of students. The school employed twenty-one people in the positions of superintendent, three teachers, industrial teacher, farmer, matron with three assistants, seamstress with two assistants, cook, assistant cook and baker, laundress with two assistants, shoemaker, nurse, and

kindergarten teacher. In 1901, enrollment reached 147, with an average attendance of 135. A 1903 school report lists 150 enrolled children.<sup>24</sup>

The curriculum of the Pawnee Boarding School reflected the overall goals of the Indian Office. Throughout the early years of the school, policymakers considered “training in agriculture or the common trades for the boys and in the domestic tasks of white households for the girls. . . indispensable.”<sup>25</sup> Acting Commissioner E. M. Marble stated in 1880,

In the education of the Indian youth it is the policy of the office to have farm and domestic work occupy as prominent a place as study in the schoolroom, and the development of character and training of the pupils in the manners and habits of civilized life is held to be quite as important as acquiring a knowledge of books. . . the opportunity for teaching Indian children how to live, as well as how to read and think, is found only in the boarding school.<sup>26</sup>

Correspondence and reports from the agency indicate that the school strongly promoted the industrial and domestic instruction advocated by Marble. Before the boarding school opened, the day school teachers instructed the girls in sewing each day after academic classes. In the spring of 1879, the schoolboys worked “willingly and cheerfully” planting eight acres of garden vegetables and potatoes. Hiatt asked for two teams and sufficient seed to plant fifty acres of corn. When Agent Williams requested more employees to perform the domestic work of the school shortly after its opening, he was quick to add that “as fast as children can be educated to take the places of the employees they should do so,” but first the school needed “a sufficient number of competent employees to instruct and direct [the students] or their advancement will be slow and almost profitless.”<sup>27</sup>

Yet, even though the school hoped to meet the goals of the government, practical

obstacles and mundane reality prevented their full realization. Despite the earlier report of planting done by the schoolboys, E. H. Bowman, agent by 1881, noted with some exasperation that the school was deficient in a most important aspect, one “unquestionably of vital concern to the future efficiency and prosperity” of the school. It had been established as an industrial school where the children would “be instructed in the pursuits most necessary for the progress and advancement of the tribe in civilization.” Training in agriculture was most important, yet, “by a strange oversight no land was selected or set apart as a school farm.” To rectify the situation, Bowman asked Commissioner Price to appoint a survey board to appraise improvements on land near the school made by its occupant, who, according to Bowman, had settled there without a legal allotment. He hoped to purchase this land for use as a school farm. Documents from 1891 indicate the school farm was over one mile in length and a half mile in width. Whether or not it occupied the same land as that discussed in 1881 is uncertain.<sup>28</sup>

Because the Indian Office considered adoption of agriculture one of the marks of civilization for Indians during this period, the industrial education of boys emphasized training in crop growing and animal husbandry. Under the direction of the industrial teacher and the farmer, boys learned to plow, harrow, cultivate, reap and bind crops, and to care for a garden. Corn, oats, wheat, and potatoes were common crops. By the mid-1890s, the schoolboys also cared for fruit trees the farm had received from Chilocco Indian School. The school maintained cattle and hogs that the boys tended; slaughtering from the herds provided meat for the kitchen.<sup>29</sup>

In 1900, School Superintendent William Light formed an agricultural club for the schoolboys. He devised an elaborate experiment not only to train the older boys in

agriculture, but also to give them a taste of the market economy. Light divided an acre of land equally among ten boys and gave them seed to plant. Each boy owed Light one-fourth of his crop for rent after the harvest. The young farmers then hauled their products to market with team and wagon. Due to competition from surrounding farmers, the boys sold only a small portion of the crop in the town of Pawnee, but their enthusiasm satisfied Light. Only one “failed to produce a good crop.” Light allowed the boys to give what they could not sell to their parents, who “expressed pride and satisfaction in their children’s undertaking.” With confidence, Light summed up the



Figure 4. School boys with the tools of agricultural and industrial training, 1891. Their teacher is identified only as “Mr. Bundy.” Oklahoma Historical Society photograph, negative number 4162.

benefits derived from the experiment:

Their interest was intense and their work excellent. They would often leave the playground after supper to hoe and cultivate their crops. . . . I am well pleased with the results of the experiment and believe that much permanent good was accomplished. Each boy saw the results of faithful labor. The one partial failure supplied an example for contrast between the results of indolence and energy. I shall repeat the experiment next season and instruct the boys in marketing from house to house, thus giving them business experience that will benefit them throughout life.<sup>30</sup>

Although farming occupied the greater part of the industrial curriculum for boys, the students received instruction in other trades as well. As in most boarding schools, the needs of the institution offered boundless opportunities to train children in practical work skills. Effie May Judy, whose brother taught at the school in 1879 and 1880, observed that the children “were detailed to do the work, and in that way they learned to work as well as to talk English and to get a book education.”<sup>31</sup> Pawnee boys thus assisted in the carpenter and shoe shops, and cut and stacked cord wood for the use of the agency. Any new construction at the school presented a variety of tasks that student labor could accomplish, no matter how tenuous the relationship between the job and education. The boys spent much of 1892 assisting in the construction of a new dormitory. Under the supervision of the industrial teacher and the farmer, they quarried and hauled over two hundred cords of stone, excavated the basement, trenched for proper drainage, and waited on the masons and carpenters erecting the building. According to School Superintendent T. W. Conway, “The assistance they have rendered, as well as the knowledge they have acquired, has been considerable.” The next year, students painted a new barn, corncrib, and cowsheds.<sup>32</sup>

Industrial training for girls consisted of domestic chores. Girls assisted in the kitchen, laundry, bakery, dining room, dormitory, and sewing room. According to the

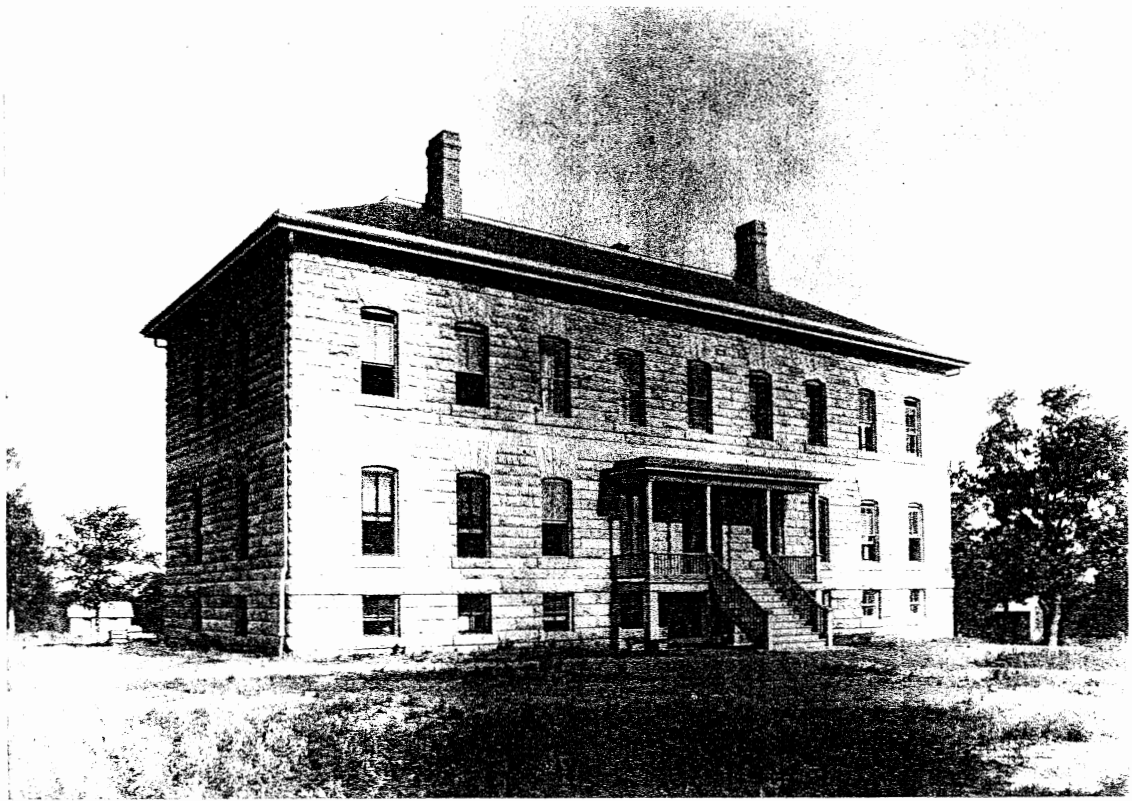


Figure 5. 1892 Boys' Dormitory at the Pawnee Boarding School, constructed with assistance from boys attending the school. Oklahoma Historical Society photograph, negative number 4164.

agent, such instruction would make them “realize the necessity of neatness and thoroughness in all kinds of household work” and give them a “true foundation of domestic or home life.” Girls attended classes in cooking, baking, dairying, and dressmaking. In the kitchen and dining room, they had to “prepare, cook, and serve meals at table until they [did] it well.” As with the boys’ chores, the girls’ training often coincided with the needs of the institution. In 1896, the girls in the sewing room did the mending for the entire school and produced over 1,800 articles for the school’s use. Girls also mastered crocheting, knitting, embroidery, and needlework.<sup>33</sup>

As in most boarding schools, regimentation was part of the experience of the



Figure 6. Pawnee Boarding School dining room in 1891, where girls learned food service skills that doubled as assistance to the staff in the operation of the school. Oklahoma Historical Society photograph, negative number 4168.

students of the Pawnee Boarding School. Although off-reservation schools stressed military routine most strongly, other boarding schools also incorporated it into their programs. Used partly as an aid in organizing the large numbers of students, administrators also saw military drill as a way to promote patriotism, neatness, good health, and obedience. Policymakers also thought that “being able to follow orders in a hierarchical organization” would help the children advance further toward civilization. In accordance with these goals, Pawnee school students received “regular instruction” in marching and military drill. Superintendent C. W. Goodman reported in 1897 that both boys and girls had military drill exercises on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The students



engaged in other physical activities such as calisthenics and outdoor sports as well.<sup>34</sup>

In spite of the emphasis on industrial training and military regimen, the curriculum for the Pawnee Boarding School students was not all work and drudgery. The children enjoyed instrumental music and singing exercises, so much so that when a new teacher hired in 1900 lacked the ability “to perform on organ or piano” or “to instruct in vocal music,” the superintendent asked if a change could be made to secure a teacher with these talents. Students also practiced drawing and its “kindred branches,” where they showed skill in “form and color work.” The children accompanied teachers on outdoor walks to study natural history and for the benefit of their health. Storytelling, dictations, and reading and retelling Bible stories were also part of the school curriculum. On Friday evenings, teachers supervised a social in the chapel, where students could play games and interact, although this was the “only occasion in which the boys and girls [were] allowed to play together.”<sup>35</sup>

American holidays were also significant events in boarding schools, where Indian children learned to celebrate those days important to the dominant culture. Students at the Pawnee Boarding School participated in holiday celebrations and performed public entertainments for their parents and relatives. In 1890, Superintendent Conway asked permission to allow the children to go home for a short vacation the day after Christmas, “with the distinct understanding that they return on January 3.” Conway also asked for a small appropriation in 1890 and 1891 to prepare a special Christmas dinner and to purchase “a present for each Pawnee child in attendance at school.” The staff would distribute the gifts on Christmas Eve. Christmas celebrations continued under Superintendent Goodman, who reported in 1894 that the school had a “handsome

Christmas tree” for the first time in years, “heavily laden with toys and other presents.” The children also presented a program for the eighty or ninety relatives in attendance.<sup>36</sup>

Other holidays also offered opportunities for the school to give public performances. The Arbor Day program in 1894 included an explanation of the “object and purposes” of the day. After the planting of trees, the schoolchildren “christened” them, naming each after an employee of the school. Programs on Franchise Day, Washington’s Birthday, and Decoration Day often included religious and patriotic hymns and recitations. Students recited a salute to the flag that summed up the Indian Office’s hope for assimilation: “We give our heads and our hearts to our country. One nation, one language, one flag.” In the 1896 closing exercises on 30 May, the children exhibited their schoolwork for an audience of over two hundred.<sup>37</sup>

The teaching of English received particular emphasis at the school, as it did at all Indian schools engaged in the work of assimilating students into white culture.<sup>38</sup> Conflicting reports indicate mixed success in this area. In 1885, Agent Scott noted “a steady and gratifying advance” in the students’ use and understanding of English. Conway, in 1891, was less enthusiastic about the students’ mastery of English, stating, “From morning until night the great battle of teaching the Indian youth to use and comprehend the English language goes merrily on.” He observed that children who entered school “at an early age” readily learned English, but “once outside the school influence they ha[d] a strong aversion to it.” School administrators attempted to force students to use English by withholding privileges as punishment for speaking Pawnee. The 1893 regulations for use of the school’s reading rooms stated, “All conversation must be in the English language, and pupils heard using the Pawnee language in [the]

Reading Room will sacrifice their right” to the room for at least thirty days. A second offense meant forfeiting use of the room for the “balance of [the] school year.” In 1897, Goodman praised the girls for their efforts to speak English at school, but said the boys “have not yet acquired that desire to please their instructors in all things and banish the use of Pawnee in daily conversation.”<sup>39</sup>

Little information exists to indicate the educational levels attained by the Pawnee Boarding School students during this period. Although it appears that the command of English in speech was not universal among them, quarterly reports from the 1890s listing each student consistently denote that all could read and write, while only roughly half

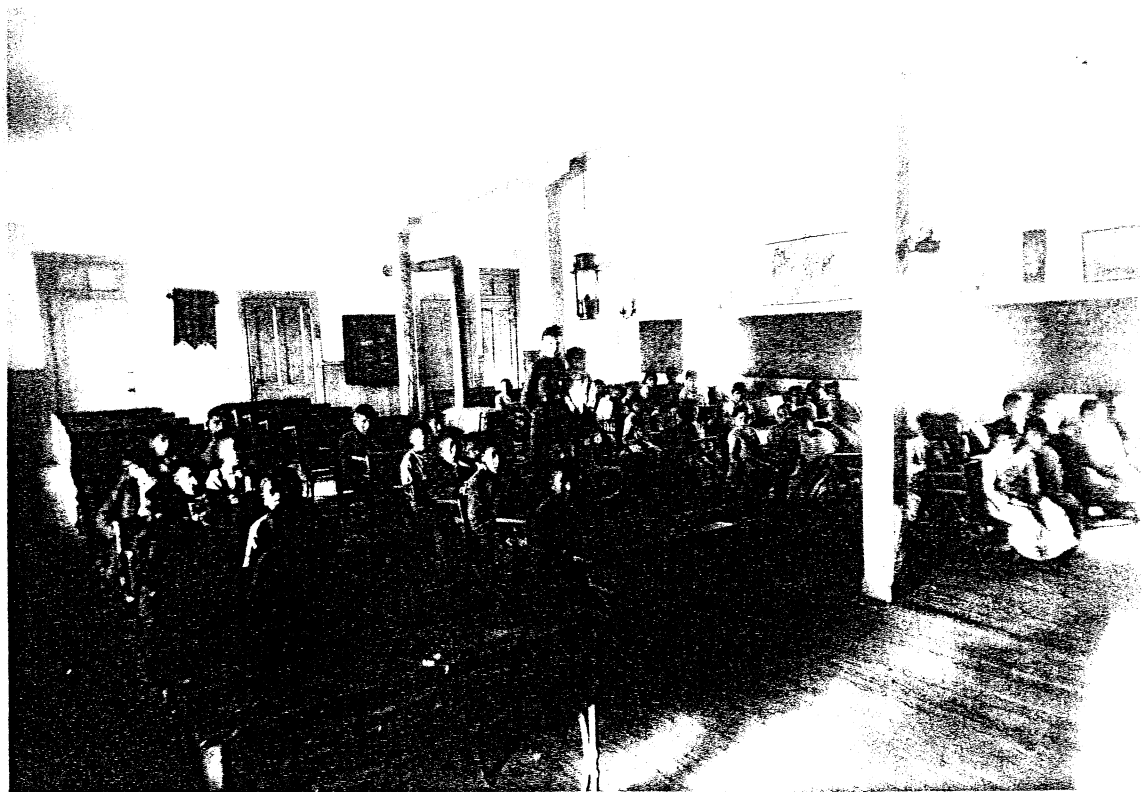


Figure 7. First and second grade students, Pawnee Boarding School, 1891. Oklahoma Historical Society photograph, negative number 4159.



Figure 8. The fourth grade class, Pawnee Boarding School, 5 May 1891. Oklahoma Historical Society photograph, negative number 4148.

could “work. . . in arithmetic.” An 1891 report noted that several of the students were “promoted from lower to higher grades at close of session, though the idea of promotion is not a stimulus for advancement as is the case in white schools.”<sup>40</sup>

Boarding schools ranked between day schools and off-reservation schools in the hierarchy of the Indian education system. In accordance with accepted policy, Pawnee Boarding School administrators advanced promising students to the next level. In 1884, the Pawnee Agency sent nineteen children to Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania and “other schools east.” Chilocco Indian School, founded in Oklahoma the same year, enrolled thirteen Pawnee children shortly after its opening and many more in the years to

come. In 1891, eleven current students and thirty-nine other Pawnee children, some of them former Pawnee Boarding School students, transferred to Chilocco. A few students also made their way to Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas. In 1896, another fifty of the most advanced students transferred to Chilocco. Through the succeeding years, superintendents continued to report many students advancing to off-reservation schools, primarily Chilocco and Haskell, and also reported the transfer of some students to public schools. In 1906, eleven Pawnee children enrolled in public schools and thirty-four attended off-reservation schools. Superintendent George W. Nellis also reported that forty-nine Pawnee over the age of eighteen were enrolled in off-reservation schools.<sup>41</sup>

The advancement of gifted pupils was not always the motivation for exporting children to other schools; at times school administrators contemplated transferring difficult students to get rid of them. In 1895, Sam White, recently returned from “his last runaway trip,” was present when the cowshed burned down. Although uncertain whether Sam’s smoking or an overturned lantern had caused the fire, Superintendent Goodman complained of the youth’s bad influence on other students because of his penchant for gambling and dice playing. Goodman called him “lazy and degraded and vicious,” and recommended to Agent J. P. Woolsey that Sam be placed in a reform school “for the sake of the boy and for the sake of the example” to other students. Chilocco had offered to take him if Goodman could not manage him. Goodman was quick to point out that if he relinquished the boy to Chilocco it was solely because of a desire “to get rid of him on account of his evil influence” and not because of an inability to handle him.<sup>42</sup>

Enrollment figures were prominent features in the records of schools and the Indian Office. Government officials often cited statistics to indicate the progress, or lack

thereof, of schools in their educational efforts. High enrollment rates could bring more resources into a school, not only in rations as the Hiatt scandal indicated, but also in expansion of facilities. Agents' and superintendents' reports regarding the Pawnee Boarding School often discussed the number of children in the school relative to the total number of school age children of the tribe. These reports frequently indicated that parents were eager to place their children in school, and that all those eligible would be in school if facilities were not already filled to capacity. Requests for new construction to expand the school in response to this demand appear throughout the years.<sup>43</sup>

Despite the agents' reports of the parents' strong interest in sending their children to school, there are indications that the boarding school had difficulties similar to other Indian schools in securing and maintaining attendance. In 1882, the attendance of boys was higher than that of girls because "parents want to keep girls at home under their own care," but by 1884, more girls attended. For the next several years, official reports implied a willingness of parents to send their children to school. Then, in 1893, Agent Woolsey was more candid about securing attendance. He said that while most parents readily sent their children to school, "the remainder are very much averse to having their little ones in school, and the strictest vigilance has to be exercised by the school employees to prevent them stealing them away after they are in."<sup>44</sup>

Other sources also allude to problems keeping the students in school. Effie May Judy recalled an "Indian truant officer who went and got any child who ran away and brought it back." Goldie Turner, who gathered information on Pawnee history in the 1930s, said that if parents did not send their children to school "the agent would send word. . .that all annuity payments would be stopped" until the children appeared for

classes. Turner noted that “this usually was sufficient and most of the children were brought in.” Correspondence between agency staff members, less public than the published agent’s reports, mentioned the use of agency police to bring runaway children back to school.<sup>45</sup> In 1898, Clerk W. B. Webb also contradicted the positive reports of the earlier agents:

I have experienced some difficulty in keeping the children in school. The opposition to an education prevails to an alarming extent in this tribe. The child pleads not to be sent to school and the parent seems to not have any appreciation of the benefits which the child will receive in after years from an education. . . . Invariably the result is that the child is retained at home and allowed to grow up in idleness and ignorance.<sup>46</sup>

Correspondence between Webb and School Superintendent G. H. Phillips in the early 1890s indicates concern about students staying in school. The two men were vigilant in seeing that they only excused the children for valid reasons and that parents would return them promptly. When Webb directed Phillips to allow a Pawnee to take a child to see his “dangerously ill” father, Webb assured Phillips, “War Chief promises to bring the boy back to school.” A year later, the issue of a parent wishing to take a child out of school over a weekend also required written correspondence. Phillips scribbled to Webb, “Crow Chief is here and says that you told him that he could take Thos. home this afternoon. Did you tell him so?” Webb replied on the same sheet of paper, “I told him he might take him after school was out this afternoon provided he would bring him back on Sunday eve and if he can[’]t do that he can[’]t take him.”<sup>47</sup>

If the school had difficulty retaining some students, others were eager to stay in school. In June 1891, Superintendent Conway requested an increase in summer rations because several students had asked to remain at the school during vacation. The motivations of the students for doing so did not necessarily relate to education. Conway

said of the boys, “if they go home, they will have nothing to do, and but little to eat or wear.” He also reported, “The girls say that they are afraid that their parents will compel them to marry [if they go home].” In addition to the reasons of the children, Conway justified allowing them to board at the school during the summer by the labor they would provide. He said the boys were “capable of doing good work in the farm” and the girls could “be used to advantage in the sewing room and kitchen.” The commissioner’s office approved Conway’s request.<sup>48</sup>



Figure 9. Students in Euro-American dress. Their teacher is identified as Mrs. Conway, wife of Superintendent T. W. Conway. The school at times faced a shortage of shoes, evidenced here by the moccasins worn by some of the girls. Oklahoma Historical Society photograph, negative number 4155.



The arrangement later led to difficulties that prompted scrutiny from the Indian Office. In July, when Conway traveled east on business, several of the students who had remained at the boarding school asked to go with him. According to Conway, their intent was to enroll at Carlisle. Carrie Norman's guardian refused her permission to join the group and took her back to the Indian camps. Upon Conway's return to the agency, he found Carrie, "supposed to be over fourteen years of age," married to Frank West, the school farmer. After Conway's initial alarm, he discovered that Carrie's guardian had "compelled [her] to don the regular 'squaw' attire" and had arranged for her to "co-habit" with a "blanket Indian." West, also Indian, had offered to marry her to save her from life in the camps with an uneducated husband. Under the circumstances, Conway allowed West to bring his new wife to the school building, but inquiry from the commissioner prompted West to offer his resignation, which Conway accepted.<sup>49</sup>

Through the years, while lessons went on inside the boarding school, problems with the physical structures continued. In 1879, less than a year after classes began, Agent Smith reported agency buildings falling apart, "the industrial-school building and appurtenances not in repair, and the furniture at [the] school, which is understood to have cost a year ago \$3,000, not worth \$250, carpets worn out, chairs and bedsteads broken, and kitchen furniture either broken up or stolen."<sup>50</sup> Successive agents decried the inadequacy of the buildings, both in capacity and in quality. Early agents frequently asked for funding to build a second school, citing the 1857 treaty that guaranteed two industrial boarding schools for the tribe; later requests focused on improving the one school they already had.<sup>51</sup>

Overcrowding and unsanitary conditions led to much of the clamor for additional

facilities. In 1889, Daniel Dorchester, Superintendent of Indian Schools, and Merial A. Dorchester, Special Agent, visited Pawnee Boarding School. They found thirty-nine girls sharing thirteen beds. Mrs. Dorchester observed that in addition to the crowding, “clogged drain pipes are broken off in the large sleeping-room, thus making an avenue for the entrance of the foulest odors.” She commented, “the wonder is that the matron, even with disinfectants and cotton plugging, can keep the girls healthy.”<sup>52</sup>

The water and sewer systems were frequently sources of complaint. In 1884, Agent Scott stated that water, the supply of which had always been inadequate, had to be hauled from a half mile away and was of inferior quality. He observed that it might be a cause of much of the periodic sickness that afflicted the children. Scott proposed sinking a public well to supply the school and the agency with pure water. As late as 1900, a decent sewer system was “an absolute necessity.” The cesspools under the outhouses were full, “an unbearable nuisance and a serious menace to the health of the pupils and employees.” The sewer lines drained into the hog pasture and feedlot. Superintendent Light asked for materials to run lines to Black Bear Creek, where he hoped to drain all sewage from the kitchen, laundry, bathrooms, and outhouses.<sup>53</sup>

Although the sewer system was still a problem in 1900, much building and improvement took place at the boarding school in the 1890s. The agency added a frame building housing a commissary and carpenter’s shop in 1891. The second floor of this structure housed a sewing shop, shoe shop, and storage areas. Contractors and staff, with help from the schoolboys, erected the boys’ dormitory in 1892. Built of stone, the dormitory was an impressive structure, “a beautiful stone edifice.” Even after its structure began exhibiting large cracks that prompted Light to request it be examined for safety, he

still called it a “magnificent building” and said that he did not want it to “be neglected while in [his] charge.”<sup>54</sup>

By the late 1890s, the boarding school consisted of several buildings serving a variety of functions. The boys’ dormitory housed three sleeping rooms with twenty-five beds for fifty children (but housed sixty), a hospital room for boys and one for girls, a guest room, a reception room, an office, four employee rooms, clothes rooms, play rooms, and the kindergarten room. The original school building, now known as the girls’ building, contained three sleeping rooms with thirty-five beds for seventy girls (occupied by seventy-seven), a bakeshop, a kitchen, a dining room, three clothes rooms and closets,

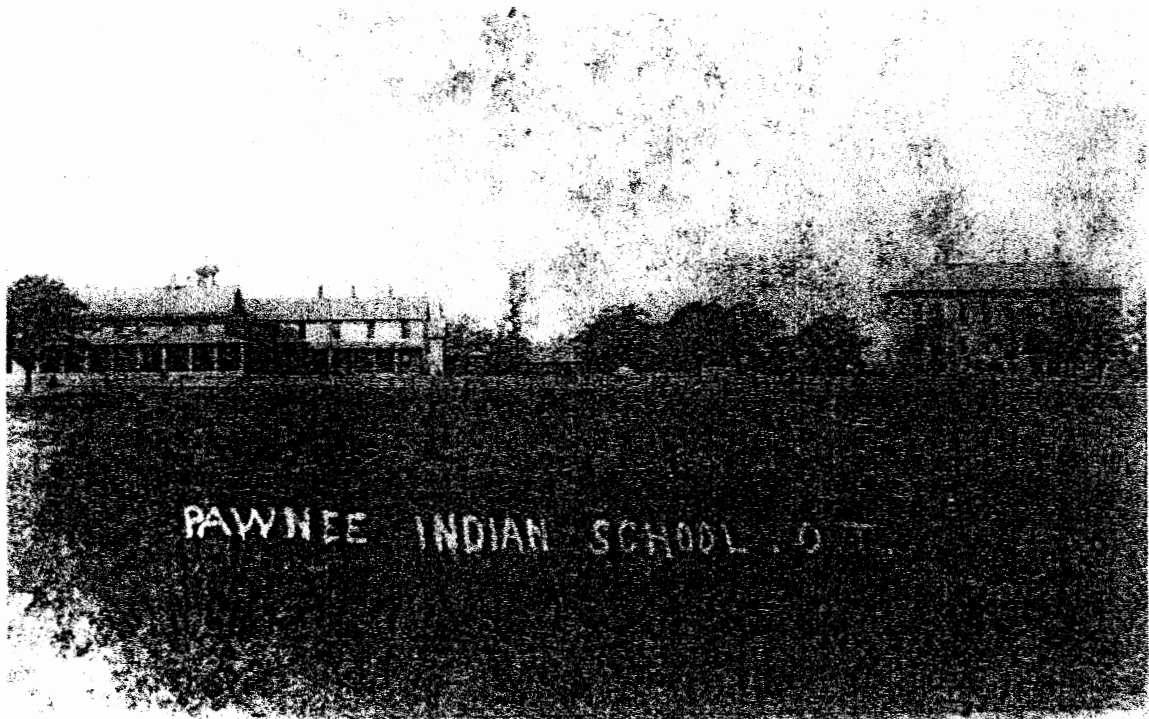


Figure 10. The Pawnee Boarding School campus, circa 1900. Although the photograph is not dated, the boys’ dormitory at right was present from 1892 to 1904. Oklahoma Historical Society photograph, negative number 10273.

four employee rooms, bathrooms, a play room, a reading room, the chapel, and two classrooms. The campus also had a stone laundry and meathouse, the frame commissary, a separate frame carpenter's shop, barns, and two frame and two brick outhouses.<sup>55</sup>

By 1902, the Pawnee Agency had managed to improve the support facilities. The sewer system was apparently in good condition. The water system, powered by two windmills pumping water from two wells into a tank, supplied hot and cold water to the boys' and girls' buildings, the horse barn, the girls' wash and bathroom, the laundry, the mess kitchen, and the school kitchen. In January 1902, work was in progress to repair and enlarge a well. The superintendent also reported improvements in fire protection, a source of concern in earlier correspondence. Two hydrants had been located so hoses could reach "every part of the buildings," and eight fire extinguishers had been placed in strategic locations in the structures.<sup>56</sup>

Pawnee Agency personnel had reason to be concerned about fire protection at the school. A cowshed burned in 1895. In 1900, fire destroyed several farm structures, including barns, a wagon shed, and a grain storage crib. The fire nearly spread to the commissary building, which would have endangered other nearby school buildings. Staff members managed to save the horses and mules and some of the school property stored in the structures. Superintendent Light suffered minor burns fighting the fire.<sup>57</sup>

In spite of the improved fire fighting equipment noted in 1902, the school suffered further damage from fire early in 1904. On 15 January, the boys' dormitory, considered by more than one agent to be the best of the school buildings, burned down. The *Purcell Register* reported a total loss of the structure and its contents and estimated the damage at twenty-five to thirty thousand dollars. The newspaper said that "the Indian

boys and other inmates had a very narrow escape” but that all had gotten out safely. The incident prompted anxiety about the danger of fire to other buildings as well. The next school report noted that the girls’ dormitory was “very badly planned, having very low ceilings, and being so cut up with small halls running in all directions as to make it very improbable that the children could be gotten out of it without loss of life if a fire should occur in the nighttime.”<sup>58</sup>

The *Purcell Register* expressed doubt about what plan the school would follow in providing for its full number of students after the fire. Nellis later reported that he sent several of the smaller boys home and retained “only those who could be accommodated in the hospital and kindergarten buildings.” In April, Nellis recommended reducing the employee force “on account of the decrease in attendance caused by the burning of the boy’s dormitory.” Average attendance in 1903, before the fire, had been 145; in 1904, it was 128. The 1904 report lowered the official listed capacity of the school by only ten students, from 130 before the fire to 120 after it, so space in other buildings must have been arranged for most of the boys.<sup>59</sup>

### **A Shift in Policy and Threat of Closure**

Throughout these early years of the Pawnee Boarding School’s existence, staff members had tried as best they could to provide for the students within the school’s limited facilities. They had attempted to live up to the goals of the Indian Office, and the many successive agents had often echoed the philosophy espoused by federal policymakers. On the local level, however, agents and school administrators faced the practical difficulties of circumstance and day-to-day life. A leaky cistern, squabbling

employees, and the loss of an already inadequate building to fire must necessarily take precedence over the lofty goals of “civilizing” a “savage” race. In 1899, a weary Agent J. Jensen had lamented the disparity between rhetoric and reality:

Mental and industrial education is essential to bring the coming generation out of the present savage state and eventually make such as survive the transition citizens of the Republic. The most discouraging feature of the business of an Indian agent is that such slight results in the way of improving the condition of the Indians are noticeable, even when the agent does his utmost in their behalf.<sup>60</sup>

Agent Jensen was not the only one discouraged by the failure of Indian education to live up to its goals. Commissioner of Indian Affairs William A. Jones entitled the section on education in his 1901 annual report “Well-Meant Mistakes.” He declared that he was not against education in the abstract, but said that “the present Indian educational system, taken as a whole, is not calculated to produce the results so earnestly claimed for it and so hopefully anticipated when it was begun.” Education had not produced assimilated Indians. According to David Wallace Adams, in Jones’s view, Indians “were still largely living on reservations, still prisoners of their tribal outlook, still wards of . . . Washington.” Indians were little closer to independence than they had been thirty years before and would not advance much further if the government continued current policy.<sup>61</sup>

In a retrenchment of policy in the early twentieth century, the Indian Office shifted the goal of education from rapid assimilation into white culture to a more gradual and less ambitious approach. According to Frederick E. Hoxie, policymakers “began doubting the speed with which the Native American might rise to a civilized state.” While still equating education with civilization, Jones and his superintendent of Indian education, Estelle Reel, no longer hoped for the immediate transformation of the tribes. Rather than aspire to the lofty rhetoric of earlier reformers, Jones and Reel sought only to

“provide a training which will prepare the Indian boy or girl for the everyday life of the average American citizen.” Jones’s uninspiring goal was to educate all Indians “to become self-supporting producers instead of idle consumers and mischiefmakers.”<sup>62</sup>

The less optimistic approach toward assimilation reflected shifting ideas on race in society and among social scientists. Whereas earlier reformers and scientists had believed in the progress and evolution of “primitive” peoples toward “civilization,” thinkers after the turn of the twentieth century began focusing on differences between groups. Hoxie writes that, influenced by such theory, policymakers “came to believe. . . that each racial and ethnic group. . . possessed specific skills and characteristics; a group’s ‘nature’ could not be erased by exhortation or government action.” This new view held that Indians were not capable of attaining the level of civilization ascribed to white society and that expecting too much of American Indians was foolish. Such racist attitudes of whites influencing and formulating Indian policy led to a shift from the goal of rapid assimilation to one that promoted improvement rather than transformation. By the early twentieth century, “the key to assimilation was no longer the act of becoming part of an undifferentiated, ‘civilized’ society; instead, assimilation had come to mean knowing one’s place and fulfilling one’s role.”<sup>63</sup>

Policy for the Indian school system began to espouse this view. No longer would schools seek to transform Indians into model citizens, they would simply “train them to live on the periphery of American society” and “labor patiently on the fringes of ‘civilization.’” The means to achieve such modest goals was to teach the Indian children practical work skills. In 1900, Reel declared, “Labor is the basis of all lasting civilization.” The school system should prepare Indian children for absorption into

society and Reel insisted on practical industrial education to train students for menial jobs. Although industrial education had always been an important part of Indian education, Reel focused her 1901 course of study more sharply on practical work skills, infusing even the academic lessons with “job-related applications.” Reel stated, “it is not wise to spend years over subjects for which [the Indian] will have no use in later life. . . when the time could be more wisely employed in acquiring skills in the industrial arts.” Hoxie notes that Reel’s program “was a curriculum of low expectations and practical lessons.” The Indian Office thus continued its pursuit of assimilation, hoping to train children in practical work skills to prepare them for the menial jobs to which this racist view relegated them.<sup>64</sup>

Jones and his successor, Francis E. Leupp, also hoped to shift the burden of Indian education away from off-reservation boarding schools to reservation boarding and day schools, and ultimately public schools. Jones lamented the contrast between conditions in the off-reservation schools and those in the Indian communities to which former students returned. According to Francis Paul Prucha, Jones believed that after receiving an education and living in “luxury” in one of these schools, an Indian child “returned to the squalid conditions of his home and was left to make his way against the ignorance and bigotry of his tribe.” Schools closer to home “could be better adapted to the actual life the students would live when they left school, and the educational center could widen its immediate influence to include parents and the whole Indian community.” Jones hoped first to concentrate education in reservation-based boarding schools, then, as graduates of these schools “learned to live by the sweat of their brow, the boarding schools, too, could be phased out and replaced by day schools.” Leupp



continued the campaign for more emphasis on day schools, declaring that they “radiate knowledge of better habits of life and higher morality through the tepees, cabins, and camps to which the children return every night.” The final step would be to “disband” all Indian schools and enroll the children in public schools.<sup>65</sup>

Administrators at the Pawnee Boarding School initially accepted the shift in policy goals enthusiastically. In August 1900, Superintendent Light wrote to Estelle Reel to express his approval of her added emphasis on industrial training. Light considered industrial training “the key that will unlock the future to the Indian.” Agreeing that manual labor jobs were appropriate for future Indian workers, he declared, “I believe the Divine injunction ‘In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread’ applies to this Red Man as well as to the other races of Mankind.” Light eagerly sought to implement Reel’s ideas in the Pawnee Boarding School. In November, he asked that she send him anything that might be of service in devising a curriculum to replace the one then in use. As soon as Reel released her new course of study, Light desired to have it adopted at the school.<sup>66</sup>

When the Indian Office moved forward on plans to shift the focus of education to day schools, Pawnee school administrators and tribal members responded less positively. In early 1905, a delegation of Pawnees led by James Murie traveled to Washington to voice concerns directly to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Murie, who had been educated in government boarding schools, reported that Leupp had “a different view in regard to schools. He was about to start day schools for the Pawnees.” The delegation objected, and “showed him where it was best to keep [the] boarding school.” According to Murie, the commissioner and Reel both promised to aid the Pawnees in retaining the school. Murie’s letter to Superintendent Nellis reporting on events in Washington

revealed the importance the tribe placed on saving the school. He closed by saying, “Tell the Indians that we are all well and that we are doing our best for them.” In his next annual report, Nellis, citing the distance many children would have to travel to reach the facilities, reiterated the conviction that day schools would not meet the needs of the Pawnees and that the boarding school should be maintained.<sup>67</sup>

Having escaped this threat of closure, the Pawnee Boarding School resumed the recovery begun after the dormitory fire and returned to the task of updating the lagging physical plant. Although Nellis speculated that the school facility in his charge was “probably one of the most poorly equipped” in the whole system of Indian education, subsequent years brought needed renovation and construction. In 1909, the agency erected a new stone dormitory to replace the burned building and remodeled the girls’ dormitory, the original school structure dating to 1878. Smaller support facilities also built in 1909 included a commissary, a combination laundry and shop building, a bakery with milk room, and a frame domestic science building. The school expanded in 1913 with the addition of a stone schoolhouse containing classrooms and an assembly hall. This structure would serve as the main classroom space until the construction of a large new school building, complete with an auditorium, in 1932. The campus that existed after completion of this building served the boarding school until its closure in 1958.<sup>68</sup>

In keeping with the increased emphasis on practical skills, the Pawnee Boarding School attempted to maintain industrial training and domestic science as important parts of the curriculum. Such training was to mesh with work the students were likely to find in the local area after completing their educations. In 1910, Nellis reported that training for the girls included housework, cooking, sewing, laundering, and poultry raising.

Noting that agriculture was the principle industry of the Pawnees, Nellis reported that industrial training for the boys emphasized farming, stock raising, and gardening. These domestic and farming skills dominated the industrial training provided at the school, although reports at times also mention dairying, carpentry, elementary mechanics, engineering, and painting for boys, and baking and nursing for girls.<sup>69</sup>

Despite the service-wide focus on industrial education, superintendents at the Pawnee Boarding School often remarked that their own curriculum fell short. Some cited lack of staff to properly carry out the training. In 1910, due to inadequate funding, Nellis had to let the school carpenter and school farmer go. He added, “this greatly cripples the efficiency of the school and practically nullifies in [*sic* any] effort at successful industrial training for the boys.” Later superintendents mentioned the youthfulness of the students. Ralph P. Stanion explained in 1915 that the industrial training was “rather elementary” because the school only taught children up to age fourteen. Students then generally advanced to off-reservation schools, where they encountered more extensive industrial and vocational education. H. M. Tidwell also stated in 1925 that the children were “nearly all too young for much industrial training.”<sup>70</sup>

Although successive school superintendents claimed to be unable to offer the industrial courses promoted by the Indian Office, they managed, as suggested by the Office, to give the students “a practical drill” in industrial skills. W. W. McConihe, superintendent in 1913, boasted that the training “has not been so much in the line of instruction only, as in the actually [*sic*] doing of these different duties.” Even though McConihe said that the children were small, this did not prevent him from subjecting them to work details. As was the case in many government boarding schools, student

labor, justified as a means to further their industrial training, also doubled as free labor for operation of the institution. The following year, in a rare admission of the overwork of children by a government employee, McConihe stated that they “have had to do work often times beyond their strength.” In the annual report, he wrote, “Our Indians often speak of the hard work given their children, the hours of confinement and how little time they are given to play.” Although McConihe offered a glimpse of compassion over the issue, the tone of the report suggested some annoyance at these parental objections; McConihe added that the workload “creates dissatisfaction with our school, no matter how well we are doing otherwise by their children.”<sup>71</sup>

Work detail by students included many tasks designed to increase the school’s self-sufficiency. Domestic training for girls coincided with the needs of dining room and kitchen; girls also tended to dairy products and sewed articles for use at the school. Boys helped with farm work, cared for livestock, and were drafted at times for “laundry work and house keeping.” Both boys and girls tended gardens, and thereby provided much of the food served in the dining room. Several reports discussed the need for more staff to carry out the work necessary to sustain the school and train the children. Yet, despite their youth and small size, students were clearly enlisted to pick up the slack as they ostensibly honed their industrial work skills.<sup>72</sup>

### **The Meriam Report and Its Effects on the Pawnee Boarding School**

By the 1920s, a movement began to reform the Indian Office, known chiefly for its bureaucratic inefficiency and ineffectiveness. The Office came under withering criticism in a 1928 report entitled *The Problem of Indian Administration*, or the Meriam

Report. The section on Indian education, authored by W. Carson Ryan, focused its criticism on the boarding schools, where investigators found inadequate food and medical care, overcrowding, student labor, poor quality teachers, military routine, and harsh discipline. Ryan also attacked the inflexible curriculum that ignored local conditions and excluded Indian culture, language, and religion. While many reformers again hoped to end the boarding school system, Ryan considered its immediate elimination unrealistic and instead sought a shift of the youngest students to community-based day schools, a revamping of the boarding schools, and a gradual movement of students into public schools. Ryan's recommendations for improvement included allowing adaptation of the curriculum to the local area and incorporating the cultural values of Indian students. He also stressed changes in vocational training to facilitate the adjustment of students to either an urban setting away from the reservation or a return to their people. The hope was that the educational experience would allow the students to adapt to the white world while retaining ties to their home community.<sup>73</sup>

According to Margaret Szasz, "in the years of reform that followed its publication, the Meriam Report became the symbol of definitive response to the failure of fifty years of assimilation policy." During the 1930s, particularly under the leadership of John Collier as Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the successive Educational Directorships of Ryan and Willard Walcott Beatty, the Indian Office implemented some of the recommended reforms. Although Collier's Indian New Deal "maintained a paternalistic control over the lives of the Indian people," some conditions did improve. With increased funding for the Indian Office in 1930, boarding schools finally met the basic necessities of adequate food and clothing for the children. The Education Division

made inroads toward cross-cultural education as it sought to train teachers to be “sensitive to Indian cultures and to consider teaching methods adapted to the unique characteristics and needs of Indian children.” Yet, as Szasz concludes, although some aspects of Indian culture entered the curriculum, it was fragmentary at best and lacked cohesiveness. By World War II, the gains made the previous decade suffered from shifting national priorities, budget cuts, and a return to the policy of assimilation.<sup>74</sup>

Despite some of the changes made in Indian education policy during the 1930s, few of these improvements, with the exception of better food, seem to have made their way into the Pawnee Boarding School to a substantial degree. Much of the difficulty of implementing changes mandated by the Indian Office stemmed from the lag that occurred in attitudes filtering down through the hierarchy. According to L. G. Moses, local school superintendents, having risen through the ranks of employees through the years, often reflected the philosophy of the commissioner and the education director in office at the time they were hired. Prucha also notes that while “the work of the schools depended upon administrative direction from the Office of Indian Affairs,” it was also “greatly affected by the quality of the persons in the field who implemented official policy.” These people were often slow to accept or implement new, more progressive ideas, and school programs continued without abrupt changes in design.<sup>75</sup>

The recounted experiences of former students who attended the Pawnee Boarding School in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s confirm this, and suggest a continuity throughout much of the school’s history. Basic curriculum, regimentation, discipline, and work details, all firmly established during the early years of the school, remained a part of the students’ lives after the Meriam Report, the subsequent Indian New Deal, and through

and beyond World War II. Whatever occurred at the federal level, staff and students at the school continued to focus on their immediate environment. While school administrators had to answer to the hierarchy of the Indian Office, the operation of the school did not necessarily mirror policy mandated from above. The Pawnee Boarding School responded to local conditions, including the ages and numbers of children in attendance, and the experience, interests, and workload of the teaching staff.

### **The School Program and the Student Experience**

The curriculum offered at the boarding school depended somewhat on the grades taught and the number of students and teachers at the school. In the early 1920s, the school offered classes only through the fifth grade. By the end of the decade, sixth and seventh grades had been added but were discontinued in 1930. In the mid-thirties, the school expanded through the eighth grade; grade levels stabilized with the addition of the ninth grade by the 1940s.<sup>76</sup> The number of students at the boarding school also fluctuated, affecting the workload of the staff and their ability to offer the training they wished to provide. Following the closure in 1919 of the Ponca, Otoe, and Shawnee schools, the Pawnee Boarding School enrolled students from several other tribes in addition to Pawnee children. Although enrollment stood at just seventy-six in 1922, it increased to between 150 and 200 during the 1930s and 1940s. The school also boarded older students who attended Pawnee High School. By the late 1950s, enrollment had dropped below one hundred, and by 1958 the school enrolled only fifty-three pupils.<sup>77</sup>

According to students who attended the school in the late 1920s through the 1940s, the academic curriculum at the boarding school consisted mainly of the traditional

subjects of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Mary Wabaunsee, a student at the school in the late 1920s and early 1930s, remembers that the boarding school taught classes comparable to those in public schools, which she also attended at times. By the mid-1950s, school schedules also listed classes in language arts, penmanship, social studies, geography, health, civics, and art and music appreciation. Although policy advocated vocational education at boarding schools, little was offered at Pawnee beyond the standard home economics for girls and agriculture for boys. Students often got their first exposure to a greater variety of classes after advancing to off-reservation schools for further education. Elsie Shilling, who attended the school in the 1930s, learned typing and shorthand at Haskell; Wabaunsee later earned a nursing degree on the Navajo Reservation and returned for a career at the hospital near the Pawnee Agency Office.<sup>78</sup>

Despite Indian Office attempts to bring Indian culture into the classroom in the 1930s, Pawnee Boarding School students clearly state that although the school did not try to prevent them from learning about Pawnee history and culture, instructors made no attempt to incorporate the students' own heritage into their classroom experiences. Mildred Hudson, who attended the school in the late 1920s and early 1930s, says teachers simply went by their textbooks and "the history of the Indian in the books was terrible." As presented in the books, "he was a savage then and he would always be made a savage." Students instead relied on their family and tribal connections to preserve their cultural heritage. According to Theodore Morgan, a student in the late 1940s, because traditional culture was not taught in school, he learned it at home. In the summers, when away from the confines of the boarding school, he and other children participated in tribal celebrations and ceremonies such as war dances and hand games.<sup>79</sup>



Although students had some free time for play, much of their time outside the classroom continued to revolve around the work details that served the institution. While domestic science and agriculture were ostensibly part of the practical application of course work in industrial training, the products of student labor in these areas continued to do more to sustain the school than to educate the children.<sup>80</sup> As early as 1926, even before the Meriam Report's publication, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles H. Burke recommended that schools "increase the proportion of the school day . . . devoted to instruction proper and . . . decrease the time given by pupils to institutional details which are for the performance only of noneducational labor." During the 1920s, the Pawnee Boarding School often used the "half-day plan" for its older pupils, with children spending half of each day in class and half in work details. By the 1930s, students spent more time in the classroom, but did not escape their institutional chores, which they did before and after classes.<sup>81</sup>

The youngest children were given the job of picking up papers and trash on the school grounds, the boys and girls each around their respective dormitories. Older girls had detail in the kitchen and dining room, serving food, clearing tables, operating the dishwasher, and sweeping, mopping, and waxing the floors. Elsie Shilling remembers learning to darn socks and sew, and girls made dresses, sewed numbers on football jerseys, and made their own basketball uniforms. Boys worked in the dairy, assisted in butchering, and tended the school garden that provided food for the kitchen. Both boys and girls took care of housekeeping in the dormitories, including the onerous task of cleaning the bathrooms. Children also worked in the laundry and bakery. Ronnie Goodeagle recalls that by the late 1940s, when he attended the school, boys also had to

help in the kitchen, peeling potatoes and washing dishes. At times, older students served as officers, supervising the younger children.<sup>82</sup>

School employees imbued these mundane chores with educational significance as they taught what they considered proper manners and work ethics. As Elsie Shilling says, both at Pawnee and at Haskell, “they tried to teach you the social graces.” Shilling recalls that they really told her the same thing her mother had; with characteristic humor, she adds that they “just said it with more finesse, but when you get right down to it it was the same thing.” Leila Black, an inspector from the Anadarko Area Office, attended a meeting in 1956 in which school staff discussed proper dining room and kitchen work with the student detail. The girls received instruction in personal cleanliness, proper clothing for food handling, correct table setting, cleaning tables and washing dishes, the use of hairnets, and the importance of at least tasting all foods and avoiding waste. Black and the staff summed up the lesson with instructions on “doing work in a business like way” and “responsibility for being on time for detail.”<sup>83</sup>

The importance that the Indian school service placed on time led to a strictly regulated schedule in the boarding schools. Courses of study periodically included in annual reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs allocate each hour of the day, including time spent on course work, industrial training, military drill, religious instruction, competitive games, free time, meals, and sleep.<sup>84</sup> The resulting routine and regimentation remain a prominent part of the recollections of former students, many of whom likened it to being in the military.

Pawnee Boarding School students awoke to the 6:00 a.m. rising bell; girls unlucky enough to be assigned to kitchen detail arose at 5:00. Students first made their

beds, a drill so repetitious that Mary Wabaunsee remembers each detail over sixty years after attending the school: “you straightened your bottom sheet, pulled it tight,” laid the top sheet and blanket over it, “and then you put your gown on top of your blanket and then pulled the sides up even. . .and then the top and bottom, same way, then start from the top and just made a roll to the end of the bed.” Students then stood by their beds for inspection. Ronnie Goodeagle remembers the inspector tearing up poorly made beds just “like in the military.” Students then went to the basement washrooms to clean up before morning detail, breakfast, and cleaning up the dormitory. School began at 8:30 a.m. and ended at 4:00 p.m., when students alternately cleaned the school buildings and participated in activities and clubs until the 5:30 p.m. meal. More activities and some free time followed supper. The youngest children went to bed at 8:00 p.m., the oldest an hour later.<sup>85</sup>

The logistics of operating the boarding school led to the assignment of a number to each child and his or her belongings. Students each had a numbered locker in the dormitory where their clothing was stored. Numbers sewn in each article of clothing facilitated sorting when clothes came back from the laundry. Mary Wabaunsee recounts the morning grooming routine, with a “clean up set” of numbered toothbrush, numbered comb, and the numbered nail on the wall from which they hung – “everything had your number on it.” Ronnie Goodeagle still remembers his, thirty-seven, and recalls requesting clothing from his locker by that number.<sup>86</sup>

Former students have vivid memories of marching everywhere in lines strictly segregated by gender. Movements across campus became a familiar routine, with the boys lining up in front of the boys’ dormitory on one side of the campus, the girls in front

of theirs on the other. Students marched at the sound of the bell to the dining hall, back to the dorms to prepare for school, to the classroom, to and from the noon meal, and out of school at the end of the day. Late afternoon play also ended with a bell; the children then washed up and marched in line for the evening meal. As if students did not have enough practice in marching, they were drilled on weekends in military style companies. Mary Wabaunsee recalls that if bad weather prevented outside drilling, the routine took place in the long living room in the girls' dormitory. She says, "They were always drilling us, for what I don't know."<sup>87</sup>

Students learned to follow the routine and do their jobs well or face the consequences. Besides redoing a carelessly made bed, Mildred Hudson learned that "if they assigned you a job, you do it well the first time because if you don't you go back and you do it again," a lesson that has stayed with her throughout life. School administrators expected students to follow the rules and forced conformity. In 1925, Superintendent Tidwell requested that the Indian Office add the position of disciplinarian to the employee force and noted that two or three "incorrigibles" had been sent to state institutions. Without elaborating on the reasons for such measures, a 1928 report remarked that "occasionally, a minor has to be sent to the State Reformatory." School staff also issued demerits, withheld privileges such as going uptown or to the movies, gave extra detail, and inflicted physical punishment to maintain discipline.<sup>88</sup>

As in the early years of the Pawnee Boarding School's history, even after the Meriam Report, staff continued to demand that the children speak English and forbade them to converse in their native languages. William Collins, a Ponca student who could speak no English when he started school in 1930, was once forced to chew lye soap when

caught speaking Ponca. He stated, “All we could do was sit there and chew like frothy-mouthed mad dogs, wide-eyed, tears streaming down our faces.” The prospect of punishment bred fear in students. Levi Horse Chief, who attended the school in the mid- and late-1920s, made sure he did not speak Pawnee at school and was quick to stop his younger brother, who risked breaking the rules by singing in Pawnee. Horse Chief does not remember the specific punishment meted out, but says “they watched that stuff pretty close.”<sup>89</sup>

The rules against speaking native languages relaxed in later years. Mary Wabaunsee remembers when children spoke Ponca among themselves, school employees did not “bother them about it because they could speak English.” Ironically, easing up on punishment for speaking native languages seems to reflect not a more enlightened attitude, but “success” in stamping out this aspect of native culture. Theodore Morgan remembers overhearing his grandmother, who spoke Pawnee, lamenting the loss of the language in younger generations. She was glad the children were learning “the white man’s ways, their language, their customs” because they needed this to get along in the world, but she feared they were losing their own language. She said, “They’re going to be like white people; what will our tribe be like a hundred years from now?” By the latter years of the school’s existence, most students spoke English proficiently, and only a few still knew their native tongue.<sup>90</sup>

For many children, attending the boarding school meant separation from their parents for the first time. Children struggled with loneliness and many former students discuss the difficulty of being away from home at such a young age. Although by the 1920s school administration allowed parents to visit their children whenever they wanted

to and students could go home for weekends and vacations, transportation considerations often placed limits on such visits. Levi Horse Chief's family lived a day's wagon ride from the school so he rarely saw his family during the school year. William Collins, whose home was near Ponca City, forty-five miles away, did not see his family for the duration of the school year, September to May. Mary Wabaunsee says, "some of those little kids I remember would just cry when they come, they'd be [so] homesick." She adds that "the matrons weren't that sympathetic" and either did nothing to comfort the children or simply told them to stop crying. Elsie Shilling speaks of loneliness at Pawnee and at Haskell, where she attended high school. Although she adjusted after two or three weeks, Shilling even recalls experiencing the feeling for a few years after she completed school. She says "come school time, you know, I'd have that lonesome feeling. . .and then I remembered I didn't have to go no place."<sup>91</sup>

Some students resorted to running away in response to homesickness and dissatisfaction with the school. Mildred Hudson ran away once in her teenage years with two or three friends, although she says "we didn't get very far" before they were found and returned to school. Mary Wabaunsee and Elsie Shilling recall that children from other tribes, farther from home and therefore less likely to see their families regularly, ran off more often than Pawnee children whose families lived closer. She remembers several Ponca girls desperate enough to run away during the winter with no shoes. Returned to the school and locked in an upstairs room, the girls tied sheets together and again escaped, only to be found and returned once more. Theodore Morgan jokes about students running away, retelling how a boy's parents might enroll him at school in the morning, spend some time shopping in town, and "why, when they got home. . .he'd be

at home waitin' for 'em!" An Otoe man told Morgan that when he was a child and the school bus arrived to pick up the children in the fall, the bus driver and his father would come in the front door while he ran out the back. Punishment for running away, though, was not a humorous matter and ranged from confinement to campus or extra detail for girls to cutting or shaving hair and physical beatings for boys. Ronnie Goodeagle received a beating after running away in the first grade and never tried it again.<sup>92</sup>

Corporal punishment for boys could be particularly severe. Ronnie Goodeagle describes vividly the method of beating used by the boys' advisor. The man wielded a thick leather strap "built kind of like a paddle." The boy being punished had to take his pants down and grab his ankles while the advisor delivered five lashes. Goodeagle remembers that "if you straightened up they'd give you another lick." The school also enlisted other children to inflict punishment. For running away, stealing, or getting in fights, boys often "got the belt line." The boys' advisor set up the belt line on the football field with two rows of boys lined up armed with their own belts. The offender, given a ten-yard head start, was sent running between the rows while the children tried to strike him on the bottom. Goodeagle says it was like a "hundred yard dash; that's where you learned how to run fast!" Surprisingly, with the passage of time, some former students are able to look back on the belt line with a certain amount of humor. Theodore Morgan jokes about a friend sent through a belt line set up between the dormitories because of bad weather. When the boys caught up with him, he leaped up the steps of the girls' dormitory, ran in the front door, through the building, and out the other side. The girls' building was forbidden territory for the boys, and former classmates still tease him about it at reunions. By the late 1940s, staff had eased up on use of the belt line.<sup>93</sup>

Although girls escaped the belt line, Morgan remembers them at times “watching the spectacle.” In contrast to the earlier beating of Virginia Weeks, by the 1920s, punishment for girls generally entailed extra work in the dormitory, restrictions on going uptown, and having hands swatted with rulers. The severity of the discipline also varied depending on the temperament of the employee meting out the punishment. Although Mary Wabaunsee notes it was infrequent, treatment of children could be brutal, and two incidents remain clear in her memory decades later. Wabaunsee says that while most of the matrons treated the girls well, the dining room matron “had a mean nature about her.” In directing the children in serving food, the matron slapped a child so hard she fell to the floor. The girl coming behind was too close to stop and also fell. Both were carrying hot beans and burned their arms, yet “it didn’t bother that woman.” Despite directives against harsh corporal punishment issued by the Indian Office shortly after the Meriam Report, a more serious incident indicates the lack of repercussions for some employees who harmed children. Wabaunsee witnessed a matron strike a girl hard enough to knock her off a porch onto the sidewalk below. The girl, who Wabaunsee “never knew to be a troublesome child,” sustained a skull fracture and was taken to Tulsa for surgery. Despite the subsequent death of the girl, Wabaunsee says “they didn’t do nothing to that woman” and she continued working at the school. Mildred Hudson sums up the disciplinary measures by saying, “they were real strict down there. . . .I guess that just about covers it.”<sup>94</sup>

There is evidence that Pawnee Boarding School administrators, at times, tried to curtail employees they thought had crossed the boundaries of acceptable discipline, but often defended their work with the children overall. In 1928, Boys’ Matron Belle Furry



struck a thirteen-year-old boy with the edge of a hairbrush, leaving the imprint of the brush on his bruised cheek. Superintendent A. R. Snyder had her reread a circular forbidding corporal punishment. She apologized, but defended herself by claiming she had used the flat part of the brush. Snyder suspended her, but Principal T. E. Reed soon asked that she be reinstated early because her suspension had left the school short-staffed. Four years later, Boys' Advisor Hugh Chouteau slapped a fifteen-year-old boy and burst his ear drum. Noting that the man had "considerable temper," Snyder asked that Commissioner C. J. Rhoads write to Chouteau directly with a stern warning; Rhoads did so and advised Snyder to "make it unmistakably clear" to all staff members that corporal punishment would not be tolerated. In spite of the incident, Snyder considered Chouteau a "fine young man" and insisted, "he is an excellent boys' adviser and has been able to handle the boys exceptionally well." Snyder apparently overlooked the possible connection between Chouteau's treatment of the boys and his ability to handle them.<sup>95</sup>

For the most part, the harsh disciplinary measures were carried out by the boys' advisor and the matrons. Many former students fondly remember their teachers, who treated them well. Snyder's comment in 1929 that the schoolchildren often spoke about "their fondness and admiration for many of our employees," no doubt referred to the teachers and not to the disciplinarians. Elsie Shilling appreciated the sewing skills she learned from her home economics instructor and spoke fondly of Mr. Dunlap, the eighth and ninth grade teacher. She remembers Dunlap, part Choctaw, preparing the students for when they ventured out into the world. He said, "You're Indian, and when you get out there you can't just be good, you gotta be better, or try to be better." Dunlap recognized the obstacles the children faced from racism in the dominant society, but

urged them to strive to succeed in spite of the difficulties. Just as later students took inspiration from Booker T. Washington's words on the same theme, Shilling says of Dunlap, "he inspired a lot of us." While most teachers at the school were white, long-time fourth and fifth grade teacher Dorothy Howacum was Laguna Pueblo. Boys' advisor Chouteau was part Kaw. At times, relatives of the local children worked at the school as matrons, cooks, and in other capacities.<sup>96</sup>

The Pawnee Boarding School provided its students with a variety of extra-curricular activities, clubs, athletic events, and holiday celebrations. As was the case with the curriculum, rarely did these programs incorporate elements of native culture, but former students all enjoyed participating in these activities. Children had playground equipment, including swings, slides, teeters, trapeze, a "giant stride," and an "ocean wave." The young children spent much free time playing marbles. Numerous clubs kept the children busy as they joined Girl or Boy Scouts, Arts and Crafts, Library Club, Farm Co-op, Good Manners Club, Future Homemakers, Music Club, or the Boys' Glee Club. The school band performed at football games and marched in parades, although Ronnie Goodeagle recalls the band's activity faded in the later-1940s.<sup>97</sup>

In 1956 and 1957 the school printed a student newspaper, the *Pawnee Indian School Leader*, that reported on classroom and special activities in which the students participated. For the April 1956 issue, reporters from each grade submitted their class's news, interesting subjects they had studied, and poems and impressions. The honor roll for the previous six weeks listed all who had maintained a B average or above in "social and academic work." In March, Pawnee Boarding School skits had placed second and third in the 4-H "Share the Fun" contest at Pawnee High School, while several girls won

first prizes in the dress review. The school had an active student council and the newspaper reported on their recent party and dance. Council members Rebecca Pratt and Sherman Lefthand, who boarded at the school but attended Pawnee High School, were to travel to a student council conference at Chilocco later in April.<sup>98</sup>

Although most of these activities reflect white cultural values, the school also had an Indian Club, where students performed traditional tribal dances and songs. The group was invited to perform at local and regional events. Thelma Cahwee, a student during the late 1920s and early 1930s, remembers traveling to Tulsa to perform at Girl Scout functions. In 1954, the principal of Chilocco wrote to Pawnee School Superintendent George Walker to invite them to Chilocco's seventieth anniversary celebration, "knowing that the Pawnee Indian School sponsors a splendid Indian Dramatics Club doing Indian dances, songs and drum numbers." Unfortunately, the event fell on the last day of school; Walker declined the invitation because the students would be going home for summer vacation.<sup>99</sup>

Former students particularly enjoyed participating in athletic activities. At times, the school sponsored teams in football, basketball, baseball, volleyball, and track. Theodore Morgan loved his time on the football team and went on to play football in the military. The "Braves," in their blue and white uniforms, did not have the best equipment but would sometimes "pull off an upset" in matches against high school teams. Morgan also played basketball and baseball. Ronnie Goodeagle recalls boxing until the school discontinued the sport; in the school followed the lead of Chilocco, which suspended boxing in 1949 after criticism over its health hazards. Elsie Shilling and Thelma Cahwee have happy memories of playing on the girls' basketball team.



Figure 11. The Pawnee Braves baseball team, 1933. Individuals are unidentified. Photograph courtesy of *The Oklahoma Indian School Magazine*, volume 2, April 1933.

Mildred Hudson played well enough to be recruited by a nearby school, and transferred to Burbank to play on their team.<sup>100</sup>

Students also found time to have fun and enjoy being children. Elsie Shilling remembers agency roll, when the employees invited the older children to the agency to entertain them and play cards. On weekends, students were trusted to walk uptown to the movies if they returned to the school at a designated time. A nearby farmer sold inexpensive watermelons that many of the children recall purchasing, although Ronnie Goodeagle mischievously admits, “we used to *steal* watermelons.” Theodore Morgan

says the students gave each other nicknames; when asked if the teachers had nicknames too, he laughs, “yeah, but they didn’t know about it though!” Students also dubbed the school “Gravy University” for the chipped beef gravy that graced most of the meals. Although the name was bestowed during leaner times, the students who attended in the late 1920s and after remember good food, and several say they loved the gravy and never tired of it. The school never shook the nickname; the sports page in the April 1956 school newspaper featured a baseball player with “Gravy” emblazoned on his uniform.<sup>101</sup>

The school year culminated with graduation and an all-day picnic on the school grounds. Also known as play day, the last day of school turned into a celebration that

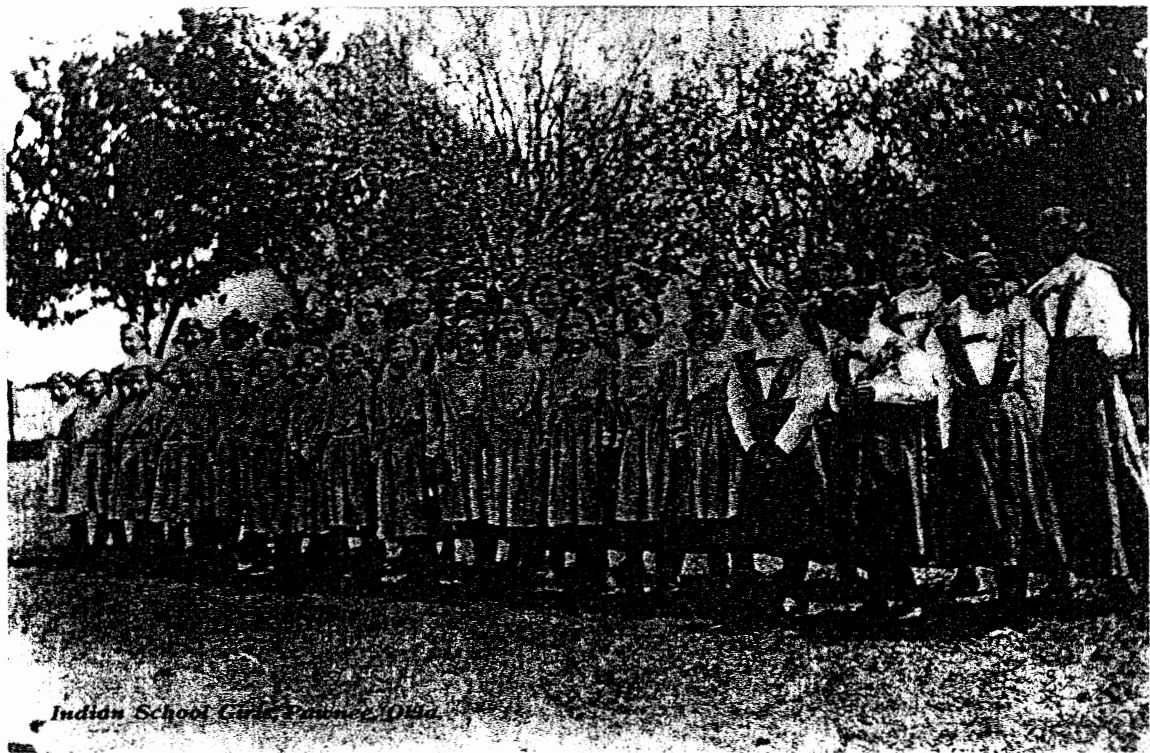


Figure 12. School girls in uniform, circa 1919. Some of the older girls, designated “officers,” assisted the matrons with the younger girls. The different uniforms at right may indicate this status. Oklahoma Historical Society photograph, negative number 743.



Figure 13. The 1948-49 fourth and fifth grade students. The photograph was likely taken on the last day of school, when children were free to wear clothes of their choice instead of their uniforms. Oklahoma Historical Society photograph, negative number 7477.

included students, staff, parents, and townspeople from Pawnee. Students wore their best clothes, not restricted to the government clothing they wore as uniforms during the year. Theodore Morgan remembers the night before play day as the one day a year students could stay up as late as they wanted. Staff prepared the food, barbecuing a beef all night. Potato salad, fruits, and vegetables completed the feast. Students competed in track events including relays, sack races, ball throws, and dashes, and the school awarded prizes and ribbons to the winners. At the end of the day, children headed home for summer vacation with their parents, having completed another school year.<sup>102</sup>

## **Declining Enrollment and Closure**

By the late 1950s, enrollment at the school had dropped and it no longer offered the ninth grade. Many Indian students attended public school by that time, the ultimate goal of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Several times during its history administrators in the Bureau had considered closing the facility. In 1917, Superintendent Stanion recommended that “within the ensuing three or four years every Indian child upon the reservation should be compelled to attend the public schools.” Succeeding superintendents disagreed with Stanion; while most asserted that the boarding school and the public schools maintained good relations, they saw a need for the boarding school. The question of whether to continue the school came up again in 1921. Although Superintendent J. C. Hart predicted that “when its usefulness is past, the way will be found for its proper closing,” Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells visited and decided that, for the present, the school would remain open. Throughout the 1930s, superintendents cited the distance many students lived from public schools, the short terms of country schools, and overcrowding in the public schools as reasons to continue the boarding school.<sup>103</sup>

Threats of closing the Pawnee Boarding School became more serious in the late 1940s and this time coincided with the rise of a wider movement calling for the termination of federal responsibility to American Indians. This post-World War II policy shift reversed some of the gains of the 1930s that had begun to recognize the value of native cultural traditions. According to Prucha, shortly after the resignation of John Collier as Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1945, “the executive branch of the government joined the Congress in a massive drive to assimilate the Indians once and for

all and thus to end the responsibility of the federal government for Indian Affairs.” Although the factors that led to this drive are complex, the post-war political and economic climate contributed to the renewed push for assimilation. As part of the measures that collectively became known as termination, Congress sought to end “services provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for Indians by transferring responsibility for those services” to other federal agencies, to state or local governments, to private agencies, or to the tribes themselves.<sup>104</sup>

In keeping with the prevailing mood for reduction of federal involvement in Indian Affairs, the House Appropriations Committee in 1947 recommended cuts that would have forced the closure of eight Oklahoma Indian schools, including the Pawnee Boarding School. Members of the Student Council appealed to the congressional delegation during the crisis. Representative George B. Schwabe wrote back to the students to assure them that he was in favor of continuing the school and promised to work toward that end. Senator Elmer Thomas also worked to restore the funds and the school escaped immediate closure. In 1949, in an attempt to emphasize the importance of the school, Principal L. E. Larson reminded his superiors how many tribes it served, stating that the closure of other area Indian schools thirty years earlier had rendered “Pawnee Indian School” a misnomer. Larson concluded, “We doubt if many outside of the Indian Service understand what a large area we serve as a boarding school.” In 1952, Principal William T. Johnson reiterated this fact, stating that the closure of the other schools had left “only the Pawnee Indian School (an elementary and junior high school) to serve this area.”<sup>105</sup>

Although shifting Indian students from federal to public schools had been a goal



of the Bureau since the early twentieth century, the termination era accelerated it. Commissioner Dillon S. Myer, appointed in 1950, “pushed vigorously for termination.” In 1952, Myer issued a memorandum entitled “Basic policies concerning transfer of Bureau of Indian Affairs Education responsibilities.” Forwarded by the Anadarko Area Director to area school principals, including Johnson, the memo emphasized “the need to expedite the transfer of the responsibilities which the Bureau now has, either to the Indians themselves or to other public agencies.” Although Myer felt that progress in getting more pupils in the public schools had been made in recent years, he stated, “I believe that the time has come to speed up the process of transferring the responsibility for school operations from the Bureau to local school districts. . . .” Myer echoed the philosophy of assimilation inherent in termination by declaring, “the process of integration would be expedited by having Indian children attend schools which are attended by other children in the community.”<sup>106</sup>

Principal Johnson attempted to fend off this latest threat by citing the special needs of many of the Pawnee Boarding School students. Many of the children did not receive adequate “food, clothing, recreation, medical and dental care” at home; these were provided by the boarding school but would not be offered by the public schools. Some students came from broken homes and needed special attention to quell “delinquent tendencies.” Johnson also noted that some families lived in remote areas without local schools or school bus service.<sup>107</sup> Myer’s successor, Glenn L. Emmons, allowed for the continued enrollment of such children in Bureau schools if public schools were unavailable, but, overall, supported termination measures as had his predecessor.<sup>108</sup>

By the mid-1950s, enrollment at the school had started to decline, and in 1956,

renewed rumors of possible closure prompted Emmons to assure Oklahoma Congressman Page Belcher that the Bureau had no immediate plans to close the school. His letter, however, foreshadows its eventual discontinuance. Emmons predicted that enrollment would continue to decline and warned, "if it reaches the point where the cost of operation becomes prohibitive it will be necessary to look for a more economical way to take care of the children." A year later, more hints of closure due to rising per capita costs stimulated a local drive to increase enrollment, but by the 1957-1958 school year, less than sixty children attended the school.<sup>109</sup>

By January 1958, the Bureau had determined to close the Pawnee Boarding School at the end of the term. Anadarko Area Director Will J. Pitner explained the reason: with the rising per capita costs it had "become increasingly difficult to offer a well-rounded program at the school because of the small number of pupils and resulting small educational staff." A month later, Commissioner Emmons wrote to personally explain the Bureau's position. Although his final word was that the school would close, he said "the wish of the Indian parents and the residents of Pawnee that the boarding school remain in operation is quite understandable." It had been established in the 1870s, Emmons wrote, and "no doubt has pleasant recollections for many of them." Yet he reiterated that "our main concern is to assure that the remaining pupils continue their education in schools offering fuller programs which will more adequately serve their needs." In May 1958, eighty years after the completion of its first building, the boarding school closed its doors.<sup>110</sup>

## **“It Was Whatever You Make of It”**

Looking back on the history of the Pawnee Boarding School from a modern day perspective, an outside observer can easily find reason to focus on the negative. The discipline, the regimentation, the work details, even the curriculum can lead one to conclude that a sojourn at the school could only have been unpleasant. Yet human experience is seldom so simple. Those who attended the school have memories that present a far more complex picture. Former students remember positive aspects of their years at the school and these serve to mitigate somewhat the negative experiences. Within the controlled environment of the boarding school, students found opportunity to learn and grow, and simply to be children. With the time for reflection that the intervening years have brought, former students look back to the benefits of their time at the school. Many agree that it was part of what defines them as individuals; Thelma Cahwee says, “it’s where I got my start, my education.”<sup>111</sup>

Several of the former students appreciated the boarding school as a way to get an education in an area where families often lived far from the nearest public school. Although many mentioned the lonesomeness of being away from their families at such a young age, they agreed with Elsie Shilling, who says, “it was a way of getting an education because most of us lived out in the country or away and they didn’t bus them like they do now.” For this reason, Shilling says of the school, “I was thankful it was there.” She feels the school had a well-rounded program. Theodore Morgan agrees that students received the basics that gave them a foundation for further education.<sup>112</sup>

The students also express warm memories of the friends they made and the teachers who took a special interest in their educations. Mildred Hudson’s overall

memories are less positive than are some of the other students, but she makes particular mention of the good friends she made at the school. Mary Wabaunsee enjoyed especially her friendships with children of other tribes, made possible by the boarding school environment. She says “the children were pretty good to interact and play together.” Wabaunsee, who witnessed some cruelty by matrons, notes the contrast with the caring teachers at the school. Thelma Cahwee and Elsie Shilling also enjoyed their teachers, and Shilling mentions that the school staff always tried to do something special for the children on holidays.<sup>113</sup>

Students appreciated the amenities and the activities that the school provided. The children were well-clothed and fed. Shilling mentions “three square meals a day” and a warm bed, the books she enjoyed from the school’s library, and the running water and electricity that many families did not yet have at home. Many students explain that in later years, the school relaxed the policy that had kept boys and girls strictly separated, and they enjoyed school dances, going to the movies, and swimming in the creek. Ronnie Goodeagle even recalls the “love tree” where sweethearts met. Nearly all of the former students interviewed actively participated in sports, a highlight of their memories of the school.<sup>114</sup>

In less obvious ways, several former students are able to find positive aspects in the discipline they received at the school. Although punishment and regimentation could certainly be harsh, Hudson, Morgan, Goodeagle, and Shilling all feel the discipline they learned was a good lesson over the long term, often contrasting it with the laxity they see in the disciplining of children today. While one would hope for less extreme measures than the physical punishment meted out at the boarding school, Goodeagle says, “maybe

we need that now days. . . , maybe that's why a lot of our children are having more difficulty in their everyday lives.” Goodeagle and Morgan both value the respect for their elders that they learned and Cahwee states that attending the boarding school “prepared me for being away from home. . . . I learned a lot to be on my own, do for myself. . .thinking for myself, deciding things for myself.”<sup>115</sup>

Of her time at the Pawnee Boarding School, Elsie Shilling says, “Those were good days.” Yet she also notes, “maybe I just want to remember the good things.” Those who attended the boarding school certainly recognize the complexity of their experiences, the mixture of good and bad. Shilling, as well as other former students, are aware of the negative aspects but choose to focus instead on the benefits of education and the special joys they found in their school days. Following the philosophy of Booker T. Washington, that one has an active role to play in his or her path in life, despite the obstacles one may encounter, Shilling concludes of the boarding school experience, “it was whatever you make of it.” The students of the Pawnee Boarding School made the most of their experience, enduring some hardships, but finding the good in education, in the friendships they made, and in the lessons that have served them throughout life.

## NOTES

1. Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery*, as quoted in *Pawnee Indian School Leader*, April 1956, n.p., Records of the Pawnee Agency and Subagencies, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives-Southwest Region, Fort Worth Texas (hereafter cited as Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth).
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6. Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 16-21; Ellis, *To Change Them Forever*, 3, 11-12; Prucha, *Great Father*, 687-90.
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11. Charlie Tatiah to Hayt, 30 May 1878, Letters Received, Office of Indian Affairs.
12. Chalkley Gittingham to Hayt, Tatiah to Hayt, 30 May 1878, Letters Received, Office of Indian Affairs.
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15. Williams to Hayt, 21 November 1878, Letters Received, Office of Indian Affairs; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1879, 72.
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24. E. C. Osborne to J. D. C. Atkins, 21 May 1888, Letterpress Volume 4, Roll PA4, Quarterly Report of Pawnee Industrial Boarding School, 31 March 1898, 30 September 1890, 31 March 1891, 30 September 1891, 30 September 1893, 30 April 1895, 31 March 1898, 31 March 1903, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1901, 332.

25. Prucha, *Great Father*, 689.

26. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1880, V.

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29. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1896, 270.

30. *Ibid.*, 1900, 345.

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32. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1892, 694, 1893, 441-42; Conway to Morgan, 2 March 1893, Letterpress Volume 9, Roll PA5, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

33. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1893, 442, 1900, 345, 1896, 270.

34. Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 118-20; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1891, 586-87, 1895, 264; C. W. Goodman to Asa C. Sharp, 22 November 1897, Letterpress Volume 11, Roll PA6, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

35. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1893, 441, 1895, 264, 1896,



270; William Light to J. Jensen, 15 February 1900, Letterpress Volume 15, Roll PA6, Goodman to Sharp, 22 November 1897, Letterpress Volume 11, Roll PA6, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

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56. Goodman to Woolsey, 19 August 1896, Letterpress Volume 11, Roll PA6, Harvey to William A. Jones, 21 January 1902, Letterpress Volume 15, Roll PA6, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.
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## V. CONSTRUCTION HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF RESOURCES

The history of the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School presented in the previous two chapters seeks to place the district into the broad historic context of federal Indian policy and Indian education. These two entities, the agency and its associated school, are significant at the local level, both for the Pawnee tribe and in north-central Oklahoma in general. They meet the National Register's Criterion A for their association with events or trends in history – federal Indian policy and Indian education – “that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.”<sup>1</sup> The Pawnee Agency and Boarding School Historic District, made up of fifteen contributing buildings and five contributing structures, retains integrity, and reflects its significance. Two of the buildings, the Pawnee Agency Office and the Superintendent's Residence, were previously listed on the National Register in 1973, but will also be included in the current nomination.

In addition to the broad historic context and significance of the historic district as a whole, the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School contain individual resources that together make up the district. These are the buildings and structures within and around which the history of the agency and school took place, the physical resources that remain to illustrate the significance of the district. While the overall integrity of the district is determined by looking at the district as a whole, this chapter will also break it down into its component parts and examine them individually. After a broad look at the district, the chapter includes a summary of the construction history and use of each building, and a physical description of each, including its basic, current condition. Resource numbers in the text are keyed to the district sketch map on the following page.

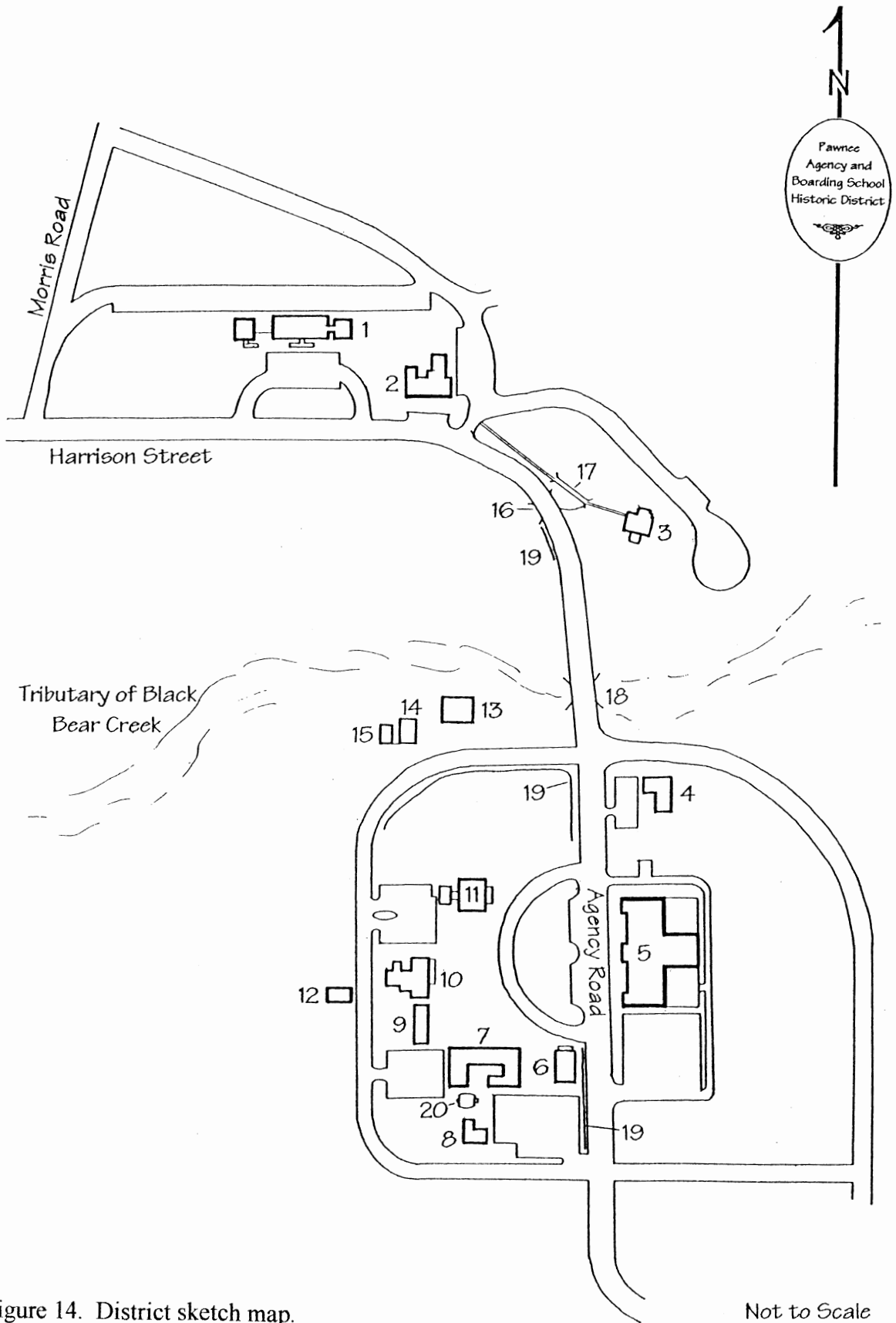


Figure 14. District sketch map.

Not to Scale



## **Overview of the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School Historic District**

The federal government constructed the buildings that comprise the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School Historic District between 1876 and 1932. Several of the buildings within the district have been altered at various times throughout their histories; this work has included the construction of additions, the removal or replacement of these same additions, and, in at least one case, the significant alteration of a roofline. Although these changes have had an impact on the original appearance of the buildings, most of them occurred during the period of significance defined for the district, 1876-1950. There have been a few changes since that time; these will be noted in the construction histories and descriptions that follow.

Throughout the history of the agency and school, the function of buildings also changed periodically, in response to the varying needs of the agency and the school. As noted in the historic context chapters, administrative duties, workload, and even the seat of administration for the combined jurisdiction of several tribes shifted through time, and the enrollment figures and number of employees of the school fluctuated as well. These factors all affected the physical configuration of the buildings as staff made adjustments according to their needs. Undoubtedly, changes in the use of buildings were at times made in order to increase the efficiency of administering the school and to maximize space utilization. As the campus expanded, shifts occurred in the use of many buildings as functions moving into new facilities freed up space in the existing ones.

Although three of the contributing buildings are of wood frame construction, the dominant building material used for the agency and boarding school buildings is locally quarried sandstone, ranging in color from light tan to red. Most of the buildings have

irregularly-coursed, square cut, or ashlar, masonry, although two have regularly-coursed stonework. The cut stone blocks are also quarry- or rough-faced, with the exception of the Superintendent's Residence, which has smoother-faced stone on the building and quarry-faced stone on the porch supports.<sup>2</sup> Several of the predominantly masonry buildings have secondary additions that are of wood frame construction. With a few exceptions, wood trim, porch supports, and gable ends are currently painted white. According to a former student of the boarding school, these features were similarly painted at least in the mid- to late-1940s.<sup>3</sup>

Roof shapes vary from simple hipped or gabled roofs on some buildings to complex rooflines on others. All but one building have sloped roofs; portions of the 1932 School Building have flat or very low-pitched roofs. Although there are exceptions, the majority of the buildings are now roofed with modern, composition shingling materials. Historic documents and photographic documentation indicate that several roofs had metal shingles at one time; these remain on a few buildings.<sup>4</sup>

The condition of the buildings of the district varies considerably. In early 1999, the School of Civil Engineering and Environmental Science of the University of Oklahoma, in consultation with Benjamin Wallace, a practicing engineer, did a structural assessment of several of the buildings. According to Wallace's report of the assessment, the individual stones of most of the buildings are in good condition, but there is "significant mortar deterioration" in places on some buildings. There is much variation between buildings in the condition of the masonry walls, some of which exhibit cracking and/or bowing. Wallace notes that although "several appurtenances," such as porches, have settled, "most main building foundations do not appear to have settled significantly,

based on observations of cracks in walls which would indicate settlement of building corners.” Because of the poor condition of the shingles on many buildings, the report indicates concern over possible “interior structural damage due to moisture problems.”<sup>5</sup>

## **Contributing Resources, Buildings**

### 1. Pawnee-Ponca Hospital

Construction History and Use: Construction of the hospital building, known officially as the Pawnee-Ponca Hospital at the time of its opening, began in 1929. The superintendent supervised the work, and the labor force, at least during the final months, included several Pawnee men employed as day laborers. The completed hospital had a fifty-five bed capacity and Superintendent A. R. Snyder praised it as “a model structure, well-arranged and well-equipped.” He went so far as to claim that it was “said to be one of the best constructed buildings in this part of the State.” The hospital opened on 15 January 1931. Despite its name, the agency intended it for the use of all five tribes under its jurisdiction, as well as the children attending the boarding school.<sup>6</sup>

Construction of the hospital included an attached ward for tubercular patients and a separate, matching building to the west of the main building for use as a nurses’ residence. It had quarters for seven nurses, a living room and laundry room, and a kitchen and dining room in the basement. The buildings were three stories, with two and one-half stories above ground. The combined cost of construction for the hospital and nurses’ home was one-hundred-two thousand dollars; twelve thousand dollars of this amount was for equipment.<sup>7</sup>

The United States Public Health Service operated the Pawnee-Ponca Hospital for

the surrounding tribes. It is now a clinic run by the Indian Health Service, with the former nurses' home used by the clinic's administration. There has been discussion of closing down the clinic in its current location and constructing a medical center, pending funding for the project.

Description and Condition: The original nurses' building to the west of the hospital mimics it in appearance and matches the original tubercular ward on the east end of the hospital. The stone buildings are made of quarry-faced, coursed, ashlar sandstone. They have ample windows with white painted trim, although the sills and lintels are stone. The main body of the hospital has a hipped roof with a centered, south-facing gable. To either side of the gable there is a hipped dormer that reappears on other buildings of the district. The nurses' home and its counterpart to the east of the hospital have pyramidal roofs. The roof covering now consists of modern, composition shingles.



Figure 15. Pawnee-Ponca Hospital building, March 2000.

The steps leading to the doors of the buildings are now covered with modern awnings.

Because it has been in use since its construction through the present, the hospital building has been maintained and presumably renovated to keep it in good condition as a modern hospital and clinic. It was not inspected for the structural assessment done in 1999, but the buildings appear to be in good repair and condition from their exterior appearance. Although the current use as a clinic continues for the present, the discussion of building a new medical center – which would mean vacating the current facility – leaves the hospital building’s future use and continued maintenance uncertain.

## 2. Pawnee Agency Office

Construction History and Use: The Pawnee Agency Office is one of the two buildings in the district already listed on the National Register. The nomination form refers to it as the “original” office building and assumes that it must have been constructed in the late 1870s, shortly after the tribe’s arrival at the new reservation. While this assumption was logical because the agency would have needed an office immediately, independent research has found that this building was constructed in 1906. It appears that the agency originally solved the problem of office space by combining the functions of office and residence in one building. The 1876 *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* mentions only one stone building and it seems more likely that this describes the Superintendent’s Residence, as it refers to a combination office and dwelling. A photograph of the building in the district referred to as the office appears in a circa 1916 report that lists its construction date as 1906.<sup>8</sup>

When Superintendent George W. Nellis reported the erection of the building in 1906, he called it “a fine stone office building, containing a room each for the

superintendent, clerk, financial clerk, and stenographer, and a waiting room for the Indians.” The office had electric lights by 1910, as did all the buildings of the agency and school by that date; electric lighting came from the City of Pawnee. In 1914, the agency remodeled the office interior, and constructed an addition with a vault and a toilet. These two rooms were contained in the ten by fourteen foot addition; the vault alone measured eight by nine feet. Later reports indicate that the purpose of the vault was to store records and files that had outgrown the available space. Work done in 1916 included constructing a cellar and installing a hot water heating system.<sup>9</sup>

In 1920, Superintendent Joseph C. Hart discussed adding on to the building when administration of three subagencies was transferred to the Pawnee Agency, but decided against it the following year when they were transferred back to the Ponca Agency. By 1928, Pawnee again administered the affairs of the Ponca, Otoe, Oakland, and Kaw Agencies and expanding the office became a priority. Superintendent Snyder sketched plans for the additions he planned; see Figure 16 on the following page. In addition to adding space in the office area and another vault to contain the burgeoning records of the agency, Snyder wanted to square up the building to make it rectangular, except for the two vault areas jutting out on the back. Two thousand dollars was expended for the project in fiscal year 1928.<sup>10</sup>

Although the building now has a frame wing extending off the rear, research has not verified its construction date. By the late 1930s, the office space had again proven inadequate to accommodate either the staff working within it or the records generated by the agency. The agency still handled the administration of five tribes, and the main space of the office contained fourteen desks and twenty filing cabinets, reducing the “lobby” to

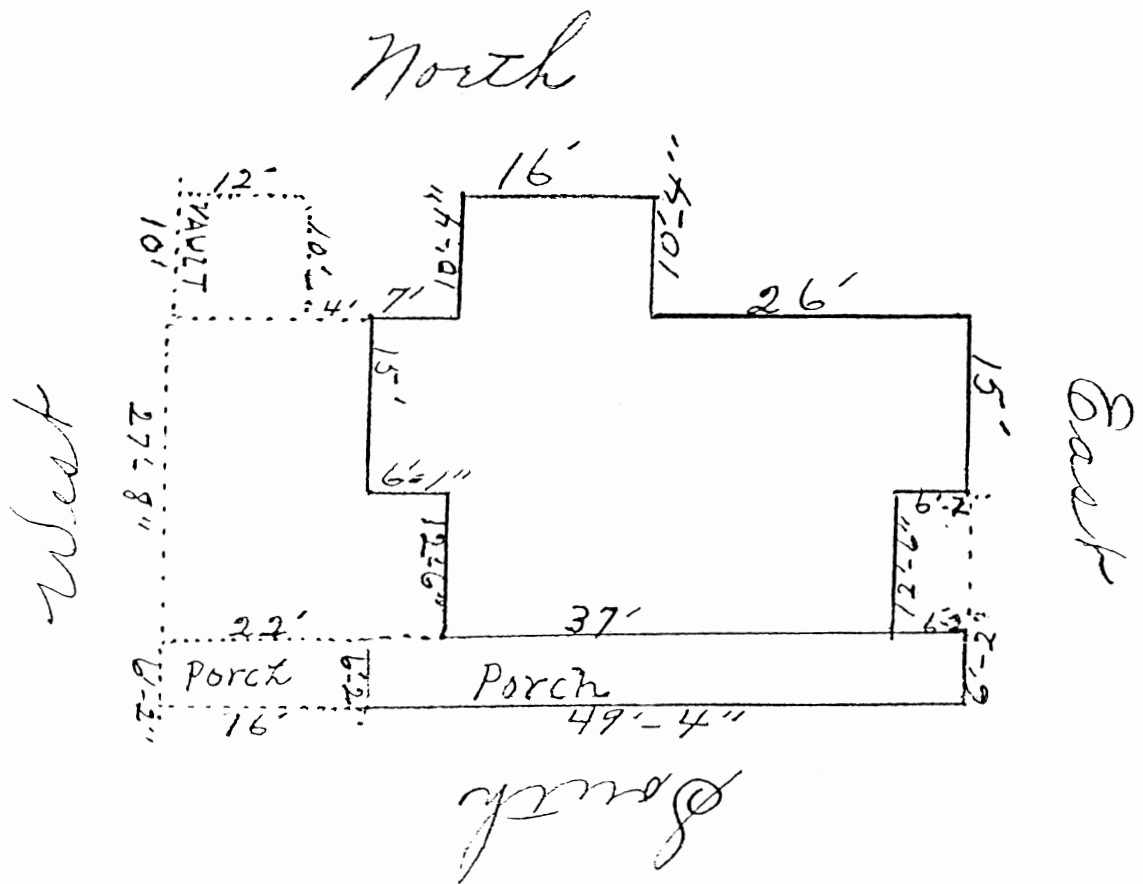


Figure 16. Superintendent A. R. Snyder's plans for adding on to the agency office, 1928. From the Records of the Pawnee Agency and Subagencies, Fort Worth.



Figure 17. Pawnee Agency Office, March 2000.

a space five feet wide running much of the length at the front of the building. The vault space had been “taxed to a dangerous level” and records piled high could only be reached with a ladder; other records and office supplies resided in a frame structure one hundred yards from the building. Although the agency requested a replacement office building in a 1940-45 Construction Program document, it was never built.<sup>11</sup> Possibly the frame addition served as a less expensive alternative to add desperately needed space.

At the time the Pawnee Agency Office building was listed on the National Register, in 1973, the administrative offices of the agency were located in the Roy Lawrence building in downtown Pawnee, and the United States Public Health Service leased the historic office building for use as a pharmacy.<sup>12</sup> The Pawnee tribe currently uses the building for office space.

Description and Condition: The Pawnee Agency Office is a one-story structure. The main stone portion has a hall-and-parlor plan with a side-gabled roof. The stonework is of quarry-faced, coursed, ashlar sandstone blocks. The building has a narrow, full-width porch with very simple supports and a balustrade made of pipe. There is now a small skylight near the ridgeline of the roof. The gable ends are wood, painted white, and have brackets.

The back of the office is complex, with a gable-roofed stone extension at the northwest corner, part of the 1928 addition; a small concrete vault with hipped roof west of center, the 1914 addition; and the longer wood frame addition toward the east end. An exterior window in the vault is now equipped with an overhead door, leading to speculation that the room may have at some time stored annuity monies that were distributed from this window.<sup>13</sup> The wood addition, painted white, has a combination



hipped roof with a very low-pitched gable-like feature at the top. The boards of the addition appear to simply abut the stone of the main body of the building.

There is evidence of some foundation settling at the northeast corner of the stone portion of the building and of the porch slab where it meets the building. The soffit and fascia of the porch also appear to be rotted. The structural assessment notes that the cracks at window and door opening corners are probably “due to thermal expansion and contraction and [are] expected in this type of construction.” The “awkward roof shape and flashing detail” of the frame addition where it meets the stone structure “is likely to result in a continual roof leak problem.” The assessment recommends removal of the addition if the space it provides is not needed. Despite the wisdom of this recommendation from a structural and maintenance perspective, it would compromise the integrity of the building, as its period of significance on the 1973 National Register nomination is “1876 to present”; this time period would include the addition.<sup>14</sup>

### 3. Superintendent’s Residence

Construction History and Use: The Superintendent’s Residence, the oldest building of the historic district and already listed on the National Register, was built in 1876. As noted under the Pawnee Agency Office above, the 1876 annual report refers to the construction of a “neat and substantial stone office with dwelling attached.” A 1916 buildings report contains a photograph of the extant structure and confirms the 1876 construction date. In 1877, the agent called it “the only thoroughly good building at the agency.” The same year, newly-arrived Clerk J. Hertford, lamenting his inadequate accommodations rooming with the farmer, mentioned “the dwelling over the office” and noted that Agent Charles H. Searing had “two spare rooms there” that he would not

share. The building housed the agency superintendent and office until administrative headquarters were moved to Whiteagle on the Ponca Reservation and an on-site clerk took local charge and resided in the building. In 1893, Agent D. J. M. Wood mentioned one “clerk’s residence and office” at Pawnee in a list of buildings; it is clearly referred to as one building.<sup>15</sup> Following the shift of administration to the school superintendent after the turn of the century, this individual occupied the house.

In 1915, the agency constructed an eight by fourteen foot addition to the building. The following year a new porch was built; use of the word “new” seems to indicate that this porch replaced an “older” porch, very likely the one visible in Figure 18. The stone piers of the extant porch supports are finished differently from the stone of the building

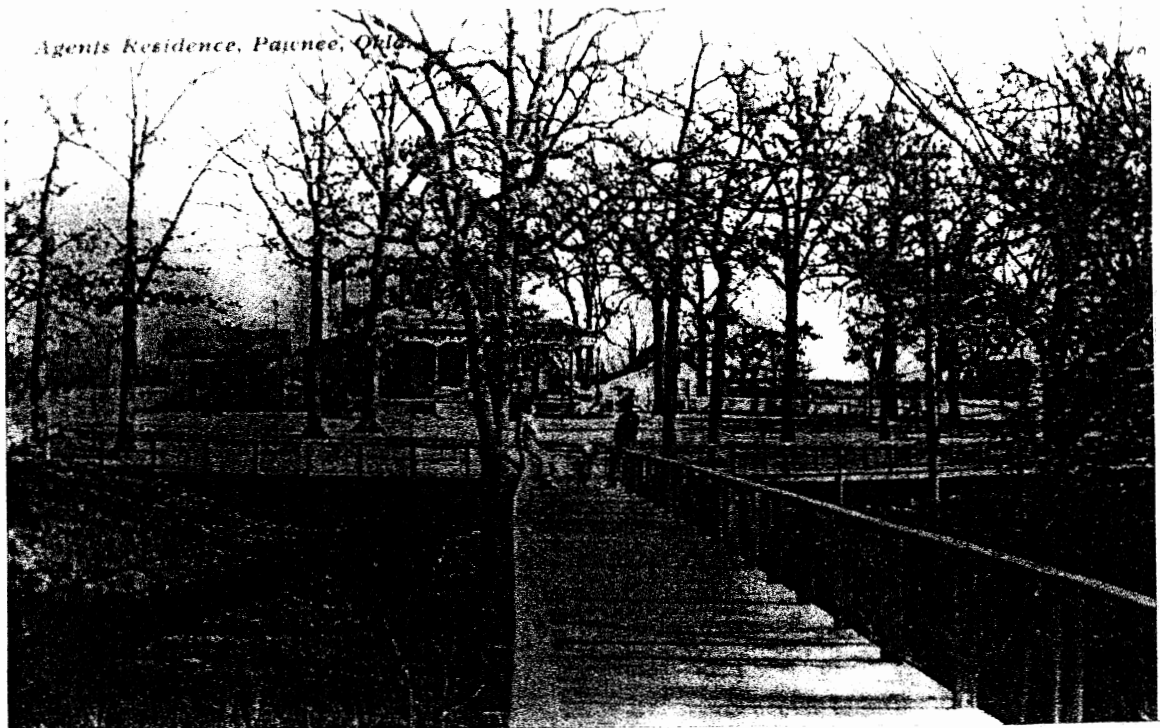


Figure 18. Superintendent’s Residence, identified as the “Agents’ Residence” in a postcard, no date. The porch blends with the Queen Anne style of the house but was replaced in 1915. Oklahoma Historical Society photograph, negative number 742.

and appear to match those in a photograph included in the 1916 buildings report.

Although the piers on a porte cochere present today also match the porch piers, the porte cochere does not appear in this photograph. Half the roof was also resingled in 1916 and the exterior wooden components, such as the upper porch columns, gable ends, and trim, were painted. Stoves still constituted the heating system for the building.<sup>16</sup>

In 1973, when the Superintendent's Residence was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Pawnee tribe rented it out as a family dwelling.<sup>17</sup> It is currently vacant and dilapidated.

Description and Condition: The Superintendent's Residence is a two-story, Queen Anne style building with a front-facing gable and a massed plan. It has a full-width wrap-around porch supported by squared, wooden columns resting on stone piers. The house has an added porte cochere on its west side, with full-height stone piers. The building is of coursed ashlar sandstone with a smoother surface than many of the other buildings of the historic district. The north-facing gable has a pent-like projection at the lower edge of the gable.

The residence is set an angle, with the front facade oriented to the northwest; the building has a cross gable extending across its back side. The second story of the wing, a sleeping porch, is frame but is supported by a stone room on the first floor; the upper room overhangs the lower and has the same diamond and fishscale shingle pattern that appears in the gables. The stone walls of this lower room appear to simply abut the stone wall of the main house, indicating that it is likely an addition.

The Superintendent's Residence has some character-defining features in its architectural details. The gable ends have patterned shingles, diamond and fishscale, that

are painted white and emphasize the Queen Anne style of the house. The stone lintels, also character-defining, project slightly from the plane of the wall and have distinctive, carved, diagonal lines that illustrate craftsmanship in the details of the stonework. If the building is rehabilitated, these distinctive features should be maintained.<sup>18</sup>

The building has a shed-roofed kitchen on the south side and a small, hipped-roof room nestled in the L-shaped space made by the kitchen and the cross-gabled wing. A recent fire has severely damaged the kitchen. The roofs of both these rooms have green composition shingles, while the main house now has asbestos shingles in a large diamond pattern. The building originally had wooden shingles.<sup>19</sup>

The unoccupied Superintendent's Residence is in poor condition. Many of the broken-out windows are boarded over but some are open to the elements and leave the interior vulnerable to the weather. Cracks in some walls indicate settling of the northwest corner of the building. The stonework of the north wall needs repointing. The structural assessment found that the basement walls are not watertight. The porch and porte cochere have significant problems. The roof of the porte cochere is falling in due to rot. The foundation of the porch has settled worse than the main structure and both the floor slab and the perimeter stemwall exhibit major cracks.<sup>20</sup>

#### 4. Home Economics Building

Construction History and Use: Because the fourth building of the historic district had several different uses through the years, it is currently known by the use that most distinguishes it from the other buildings of the district. The Home Economics Building was constructed for four thousand dollars in 1909 as a combination steam laundry and carpenter shop. A 1916 report refers to the building's two rooms as a laundry room and

an engine room, but a notation in pencil says “Dorm.” The structure had cement floors and was heated by stoves and lighted by electricity.<sup>21</sup>

Conflicting reminiscences by former Pawnee Boarding School students testify to the changing function of the building. Mildred Hudson, who went to the school in the late 1920s and early 1930s, remembers the building as home economics, but Mary Wabaunsee, who attended the school circa 1927-1929 and again circa 1932, says it was used as a dorm while she was there. Documentation indicates that, circa 1922, the laundry machinery was moved to another building, number twelve below, thereby converting the former laundry into a storeroom. In 1930, the agency remodeled the “Old Laundry” for use as a dormitory for forty small girls.<sup>22</sup>

By 1934, Superintendent P. W. Danielson noted that the building, which had been used “at different times as laundry, commissary, and dormitory,” was then vacant. He proposed that it be remodeled for employee quarters for three families. The work would require the installation of three bathrooms, but existing doors would remain where they were and no new openings would be added. Although research did not uncover whether or not the commissioner granted Danielson’s request, a report and map of the agency and school grounds from the mid-1930s shows that the old laundry building was being used as employees’ quarters.<sup>23</sup>

The function of the Home Economics Building continues to evolve. It recently housed the tag agency for the Pawnee Nation tribal license plates, but is now the headquarters for Pawnee Nation Law Enforcement and Pawnee Nation District Court.

Description and Condition: The Home Economics Building is a single story structure made of quarry-faced stone, with square-cut, irregular courses. It has an

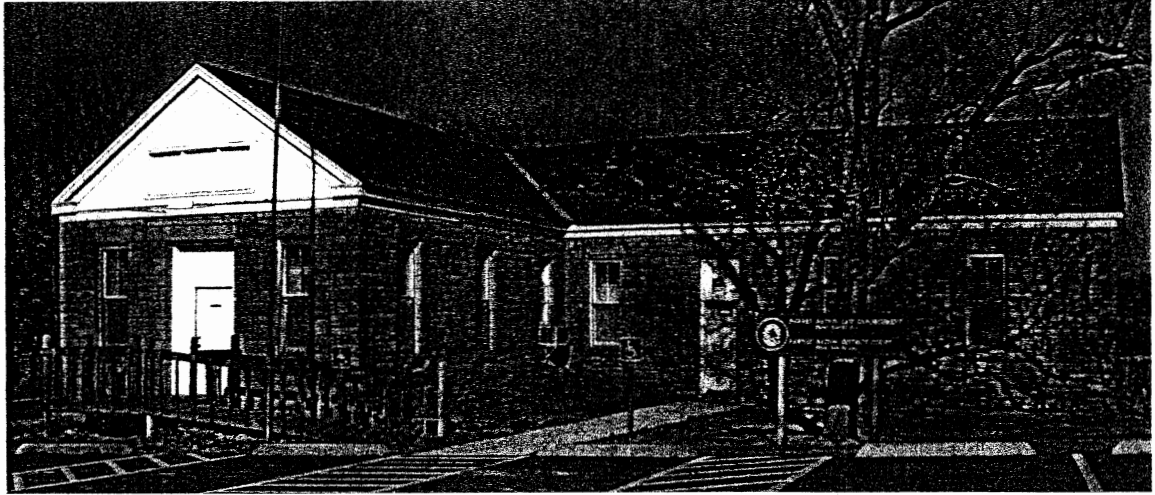


Figure 19. Home Economics Building, March 2000.

L-shaped plan with a front-facing gable on the west-facing extension of the “L.” The other leg of the “L,” on the north-south axis, has a side-facing gable on both ends. These white-painted gable ends retain metal shingles in a large, U-shaped pattern, reminiscent of fishscale but with a vertical ridge bisecting the “U.” These shingled gable ends are a character-defining feature. There is a return on the roofline in all three gables.

The building has undergone some physical changes in recent years. The front-facing gable, which appears to have been the main entrance, has a large door opening that has been filled in to accommodate a modern-scale door. Other historic door openings have tall transom windows, and a door opening on the north side has been completely filled in. The building also originally had metal shingles. In 1999, the Home Economics Building was resingled, although these new composition shingles covered or replaced other replacement shingles and not the original metal shingles.

According to the structural assessment, the Home Economics Building “has significant structural problems” due to “a combination of foundation settlement and roof

structure problems.” The east and west walls of the south end of the building lean outward where they meet the roof, so much so that at some time steel plates were attached to the exterior of these walls and are presumably anchored together in the interior of the building to pull the walls together and stabilize them. Wallace attributes bowing of the north end of the east wall to weakness in the roof and rafter structure where the legs of the “L” meet. Similar problems occur elsewhere in the structure and have caused several cracks in the walls. Settlement of the foundation at the northwest corner of the building has also caused vertical cracks.<sup>24</sup>

#### 5. 1932 School Building

Construction History and Use: In 1929, Superintendent Snyder urged that the Indian Office make a “liberal allowance” in funding improvements for the upcoming two to three years “because of the great need of school facilities.” He pointed out that he had greatly improved the condition and appearance of the plant with available funds but needed a generous appropriation to adequately enlarge the school. In the next few years, the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School benefitted from Snyder’s requests, for by 1931, the Pawnee-Ponca Hospital had been built and was receiving patients, and the Indian Office had appropriated eighty-five thousand dollars for a new school building, auditorium, and heating plant. Snyder noted that the goal of the expansion was to extend educational opportunities “to more pupils whose home and economic conditions would not justify a further attempt to educate them in the public schools.” While the new building displays a date stone inscribed with Snyder’s name and the year 1932, one source indicates that it was not considered completed until October of 1933. The school, though, dedicated the building on 5 September 1932 with a program that included

Oklahoma congressmen and the Director of Indian Education, W. Carson Ryan.

Participants, schoolchildren, and their parents shared in a barbecue after the dedication.<sup>25</sup>

With this construction, classes previously housed in the 1913 Schoolhouse, and at various times in the Girls' Dormitory and another building, were consolidated to the new facility. Superintendent Hart had noted the need to concentrate the dispersed classes in one structure as early as 1924. In addition to the academic lessons that went on in the classrooms, the large auditorium hosted assemblies, school dances, and sporting events such as basketball. This building served as the main school building through the remainder of the boarding school's active history.<sup>26</sup>

Following the closure of the boarding school, the Bureau of Indian Affairs turned the buildings over to the City of Pawnee. The Good Samaritans, a charitable service organization, used the 1932 School Building as a nursing home. By the early 1970s,

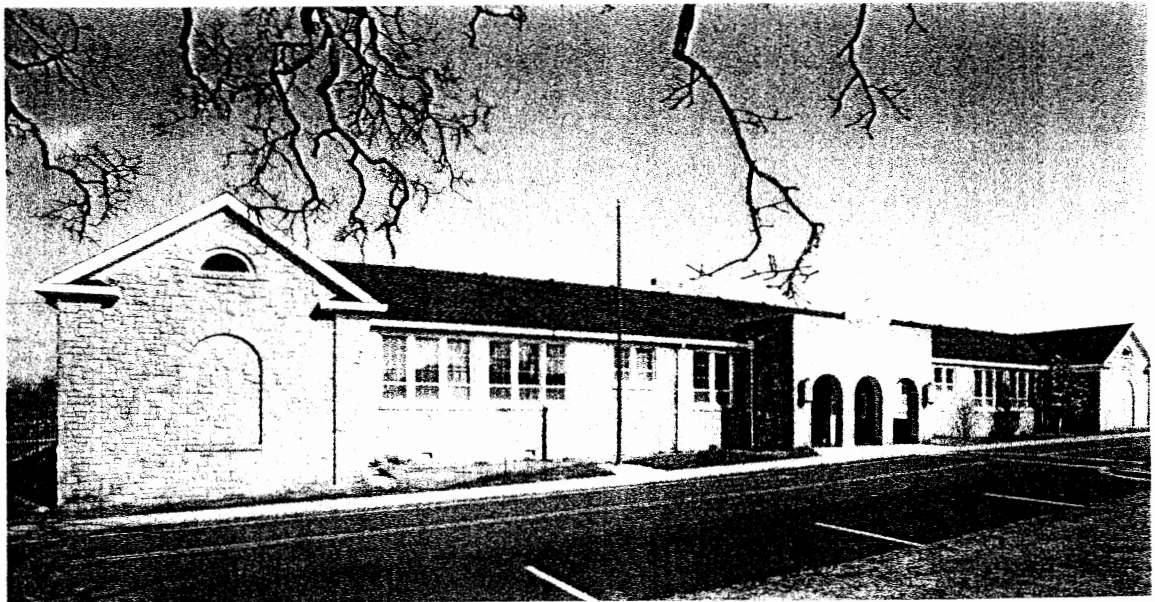


Figure 20. 1932 School Building, March 2000.



when the Pawnee tribe proposed to initiate court proceedings to have the buildings turned over to the tribe, the city complied to transfer ownership of the twenty acres where the school buildings stand. By 1972, the Good Samaritans had moved out of the school. The building was renovated in 1976, and now houses the Bureau of Indian Affairs Pawnee Agency headquarters, still serving the Pawnee, Ponca, Otoe-Missouria, Tonkawa, and Kaw tribes.<sup>27</sup>

Description and Condition: The 1932 School Building has irregular or rubble-coursed, quarry-faced stone. It has one above-ground story but has a basement under only the north wing and the gymnasium. This was the last building constructed on the campus, and has several features that vary from those of the other buildings. It has a T-shaped plan, with classrooms and offices in the cross of the “T” and a gymnasium-assembly hall in the stem. The most distinctive feature is the portico adorning the center entrance, with three round-arched open doorways facing forward and a matching window opening on each side; these arches have large keystones. Centered above the middle arch is a date stone, 1932, that also contains the name of the superintendent at the time of the building’s construction, A. R. Snyder.

The building has character-defining architectural features in its details. Within the portico, the center, double-doored entrance is framed by a large round-headed arch. The lintels on the doors on either side are flat, but have carved diagonal lines with the top of the lines slanted toward the center door. The arched motif that appears on the portico is repeated in decorative form toward the sides of the front facade, where an arched niche is defined by a slight recessing of the stone within it. These arches are also character-defining features.<sup>28</sup>

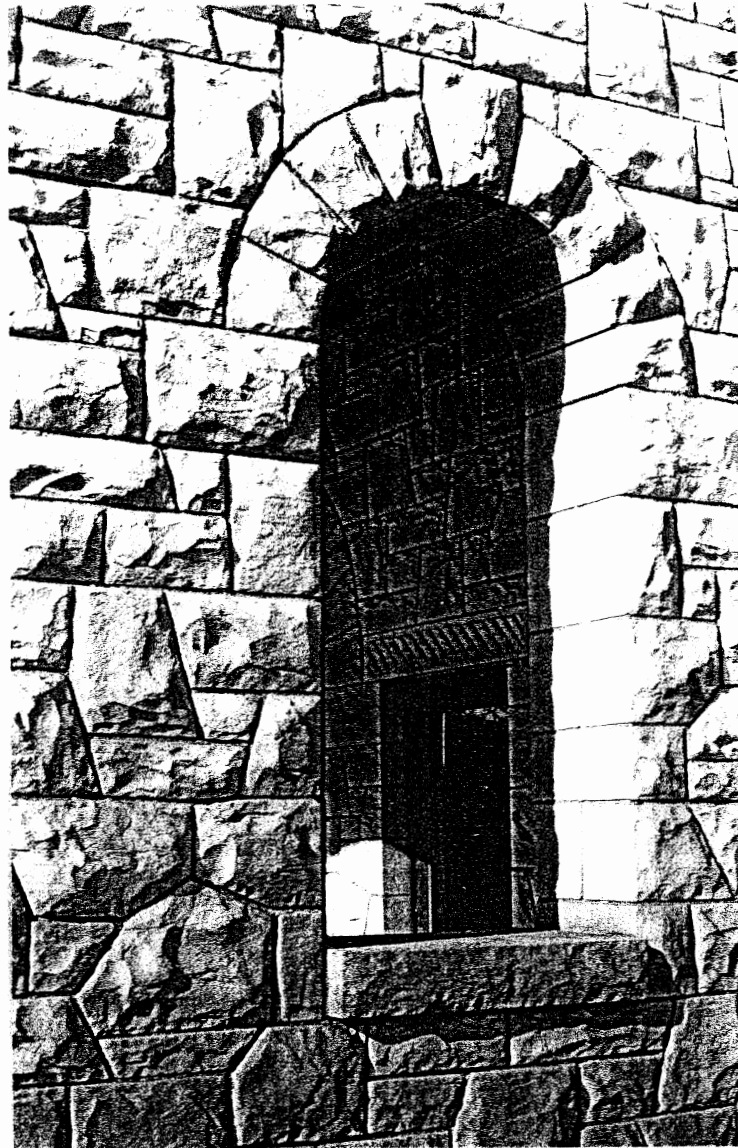


Figure 21. Arched opening on the side of the central portico of 1932 School Building, March 2000. Note diagonal carved lines of stone lintel inside the portico.

The building has a complex roofline. The main part of the building has a mansard or deck roof, with a flat-topped and hipped form. At the corners of the front, or west, facade, the roof extends forward and forms a gable with roofline returns over the decorative arch in the wall. This effect forms a sort of bay at each end of the facade, with the arched niche in the center, and projecting stonework forming pilasters under the

roof returns. A fanlight appears near the peak of the gable of these bays, well above the arched niche. The central portico has a flat roof. The gymnasium has a quite low-pitched gable style roof with no overhang; roofing material appears to be light gray, corrugated metal. The end walls extend straight up into the gable, but where the peak would be, a flat-topped parapet extends above the ridge. The rest of the building has modern, composition shingles.

Because it was remodeled in 1976 and is in use as the Bureau of Indian Affairs headquarters of the Pawnee Agency, the building was not inspected thoroughly for the structural assessment. According to Wallace, “the exterior stone walls appear free of cracks,” although “the composition shingles visible on the sloping roof are quite worn.”<sup>29</sup>

## 6. Employees’ Club

Construction History and Use: Throughout the life of the school, many superintendents complained of the lack of suitable housing for employees. Although the agency provided cottages for several employees, at times some had to board in town, about a mile to the west of the school, and others had rooms within the children’s dormitories.<sup>30</sup> By the mid-1920s, a frame building known as a “club” housed single employees. In 1927, this frame structure was torn down, no longer needed because a new, stone Employees’ Club was built. It was one of two buildings constructed under a twenty-two thousand dollar appropriation. In the mid-1930s, the building was again identified as employees’ quarters, built for roughly half of the appropriation. Theodore Morgan, a student from circa 1944 to 1950, confirmed this use, stating that the building housed the single male and female teachers while he attended the school.<sup>31</sup> The Employees’ Club building is now unoccupied, but is used for storage.

Description and Condition: The two story Employees' Club is rectangular, with a massed plan and a front-facing gable. The original box of the structure is of irregularly-coursed, ashlar, quarry-faced stone like most of the buildings of the district. There is a two story frame addition of unknown date on the back; it has a low-pitched, hipped roof. The building has a nearly full-width front porch with a hipped roof that has exposed rafter tails. The porch has four simple, classical columns for support; these are painted a pinkish-cream and match the color of the clapboard wood in the gable and remnants of paint on the addition. Some remaining wooden support members indicate that the porch may have been screened at one time. Metal shingles remain on the roof of the main, stone portion of the building, while the frame addition appears to have reddish



Figure 22. Employees' Club, March 2000.

composition shingles. The front-facing gable has brackets under the eaves.

According to the structural assessment, the roof of the main building seems to be in good structural condition and the “sheet metal shingles appear reasonably intact.” The porch, however, is in poor condition, with a rotted roof and floor. Wallace also noted minor cracks on the north end of the west wall, but determined they are probably from thermal stress and not from foundation settlement. Minor cracks also appear in the sill of the front door. The windows are boarded over. The structural assessment noted the building’s current use as storage space and found “a forced-air heating system retrofitted with exposed ductwork and equipment in the main halls.”<sup>32</sup>

## 7. Girls’ Dormitory

Construction History and Use: The Girls’ Dormitory, after several delays, was completed in 1878 as the original boarding school building, and housed the boys and girls as well as the classrooms. The building has the most complex construction history of all those in the district. The original stone building, thirty-three by ninety feet, had a kitchen extension that was either part of the original construction or added the same year. By 1881, Agent E. H. Bowman contemplated an addition to the building, and also mentioned his conviction that the boys and girls should be housed in separate buildings, a goal that would not be attained until construction of a boys’ dormitory in 1892.<sup>33</sup>

In 1890, Agent Wood reported that the “defects” of the out-of-repair building had been remedied and a frame addition had been added. The two-story addition, twenty by fifty feet, projected out to the front of the west end of the original stone facade. By 1891, this and the building’s other various additions gave the school an odd-shaped footprint, as shown in Figure 23 on the following page. Wood also noted that the work in 1890

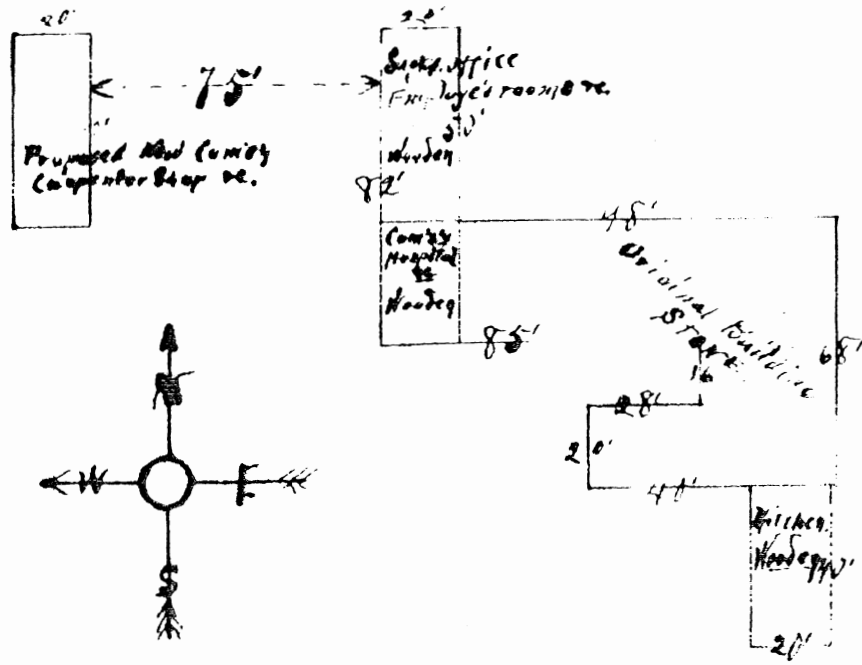


Figure 23. Plan of Girls' Dormitory, original school building, February 1891. From Pawnee Agency and Subagencies microfilm, Oklahoma Historical Society.

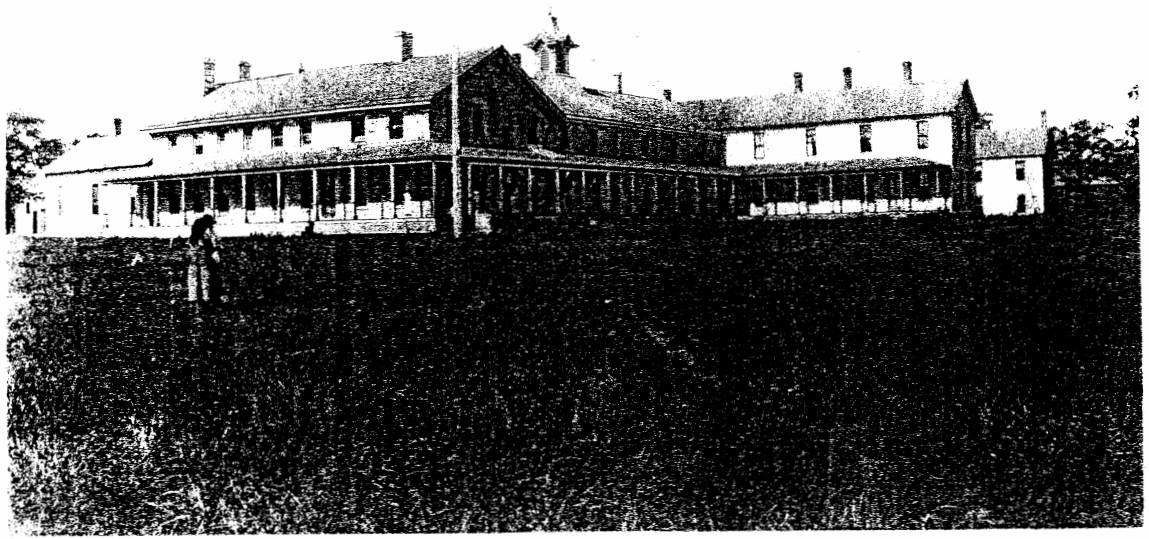


Figure 24. Girls' Dormitory, original school building, 1891. Oklahoma Historical Society photograph, negative number 4163.

included a porch that extended along “the entire length on two sides of the old building.” An 1891 photograph, reproduced as Figure 24, shows the sprawling building with its stone and frame components, a cupola, and the wraparound porch or veranda. A line currently visible on the back of the dormitory suggests that this veranda continued around that side of the building.<sup>34</sup>

Despite the additions intended to improve the building and add space for the many functions within it (by 1897, it housed the girls’ dormitory rooms, clothes rooms, closets, employees rooms, kitchen, bakeshop, dining room, bathrooms, playroom, reading room, chapel, school rooms, and a mess kitchen), superintendents complained about its deficiencies for years. In 1900, William Light described it as “old and dingy, with dark rooms and passages.” Three years later, George I. Harvey noted that the sleeping rooms were “in the roof,” had low ceilings and small windows, and were “entirely inadequate for the school [girl] population.” Nellis, anxious following a fire that destroyed the boys’ dormitory in 1904, worried that staff would have difficulty evacuating the girls’ building should a fire break out. He had little affection for it, calling it “an old, dilapidated affair, poorly constructed, badly arranged, insanitary, inadequate in size, and with no modern appliance for heat, light, or ventilation.”<sup>35</sup>

The agency made four thousand dollars worth of repairs to the Girls’ Dormitory in 1909, and the same year Nellis submitted an estimate for removing the frame additions on the west side and replacing them with stone. When finally accomplished in 1912, the new stone addition and a few other adjustments brought the building to roughly its present form, substantially altering its appearance. The stone addition, with front-facing gable, replaced the earlier twenty by fifty foot frame addition and a frame room of

unknown date directly behind it. This construction project apparently included the addition of two gables on the original stone portion of the building, possibly to increase the amount of natural light reaching the dim second floor. These gables appear in a circa 1916 photograph. The cupola was likely removed at the same time. Also by 1916, the rear portion of the veranda on the east side of the building had been removed, possibly to accommodate the fire escape that had been added in 1914 and that appears in the photograph. The last frame portion of the structure, at the rear of the east end of the building, had also disappeared by 1916. In 1915, the agency installed a burglar alarm in the building but it was still heated by stoves.<sup>36</sup>

In 1923, Superintendent Hart sent the Indian Office a sketch of the floor plan of the dormitory that indicated the use of each room in the building. In addition to housing the girls and a few employees, the Girls' Dormitory still housed the kitchen and dining



Figure 25. Girls' Dormitory as it appeared after substantial alterations in 1912. Oklahoma Historical Society photograph, negative number 7838.



room, one school room, a sewing room, and a small hospital room and dispensary. By the following year, two rooms in the building were used as classrooms. Hart also described some of the physical attributes of the buildings. He called it “a rambling structure” with over one hundred windows, most of which had eight lights, each measuring twelve by sixteen inches. The building had a basement only under the kitchen, and the “open space within the outline of the building,” presumably the courtyard created by the wings, was surfaced with concrete.<sup>37</sup>

By 1928, the poorly designed foundation of the building had caused serious problems with the inadequately supported floors. Visiting District Superintendent John A. Buntin reported that the floors had “given away to such an extent that it ha[d] become necessary to practically work over almost the entire inside of the girls’ building.” Workers leveled the floor by adding support for the sagging joists. Because this raised much of the first floor by four to six inches, the old plaster, which had been applied directly to the stone, cracked throughout the building. Superintendent Snyder opted to “even up” the irregular stone walls with cement and sand, and apply a new, even coat of plaster to the more uniform surface. Snyder also took the opportunity to remove several of the many partitions on the second floor to better utilize the space and increase safety in the event of a fire. The building was rewired at the same time.<sup>38</sup>

A 1954 Annual Report indicates that the Boys’ and Girls’ dormitories were remodeled for total of seventeen thousand dollars in that year, but does not discuss the specifics of the work. Shortly before the Bureau of Indian Affairs closed the boarding school, the boys were moved out of the Boys’ Dormitory and housed in part of the Girls’ Dormitory. This was likely done because of declining enrollment and to lessen the

expense of operating both facilities. The Girls' Dormitory was renovated by James Strider and Associates in 1976 and now houses the Pawnee Tribal Offices.<sup>39</sup>

Description and Condition: The Girls' Dormitory presents a symmetrical facade that masks its complex construction history. As it stands today, the building has a roughly U-shaped plan with an extension attached perpendicular to the end of one leg of the "U." This extension partially encloses the courtyard made inside the "U." The shape is easier to see in plan form (see the district sketch map on page 164). The roof is complex, but gabled over all parts of the building. The front facade has front-facing gables on either end, with two smaller gables between them, on the center linear section of the building. The rear of the structure also has gables, with the extension mentioned above forming a cross-gabled component. A south-facing gable also appears inside the "U" and has wooden, fishscale shingles. The extensive, wrap-around porch that once



Figure 26. Girls' Dormitory, March 2000, with wrap-around porch removed and front entrances adorned with modern porticos.

adorned the building is no longer extant. Small, white vestibules now mark the two front doors of the building.

The stonework of the dormitory is quarry-faced, rubble masonry that varies in appearance among the sections of the building constructed at different times. The lines of stonework on the west, gabled section and on the extension waver more than on the rest of the building, and that of the kitchen extension vary still more, testifying to the different construction episodes of the building. Orderly quoining on the corner of the kitchen is in sharp contrast to the crude appearance of the rest of the stonework on this part of the building. On the front facade, large blocks create a quoin effect that indicates the line where the west addition to the building was joined to the earlier building. While most of the lintels on the Girls' Dormitory consist of one flat stone, the first story windows on the west side have segmental arches made of several individual stones.

The major problems with the Girls' Dormitory noted in the structural assessment relate to the roof structure. Significant sagging along the north side of the roof may be due to "creep of the roof framing over time." According to the assessment, "this may have been caused by a marginal design, past water damage to the roof structure, or removal of interior roof bracing." Sagging of the ridge of the east roof may be related to that of the north roof. Bowing of the south wall of the center section may have been caused by "the horizontal forces" generated by this problematic roof structure. In addition to the roof problems, the Girls' Dormitory requires repointing of the mortar in the south wall. The assessment also mentions deflection of the floors in the building.<sup>40</sup>

## 8. Bakery

Construction History and Use: The Bakery building was constructed in 1909 and

originally contained the bakery and a room “for the care of meat and dairy products.” By 1916, this second room was called the milk room and took up about one third of the space. The building had cement floors. Although the tribe refers to the Bakery as the principal’s residence, it likely remained in service as a bakery until construction of the 1932 School Building, which stimulated a shift of functions between several buildings. After all classes were moved to the new school building, the 1913 Schoolhouse became the dining hall and kitchen, and the bakery was installed in the basement of that building. In 1933, the baker and her student assistants looked forward to “more convenient surroundings” in the new location. She noted that the old bakery was located an undesirable distance from the dining hall.<sup>41</sup>

By the mid-1930s, after construction of the 1932 School Building and the rearrangement of building functions on the campus, the agency converted the Bakery into employee housing. On the report of the school plant from circa 1935, the building is still called the Bakery but its description notes its use as an employee’s quarters. Although this report indicates that a pine structure across the road north of the Boys’ Dormitory, building number thirteen in the district, served as the principal’s residence at that time, it is possible that the former Bakery housed the principal at a later date, accounting for its common name as the principal’s residence.<sup>42</sup> The structure is currently vacant.

Description and Condition: The Bakery, a single story building that originally had a hall-and-parlor plan, has stonework similar to most of the buildings. It is made of quarry-faced, irregularly-coursed, ashlar stone. It has a hipped roof with gabled dormers at each end of the ridgeline. The dormers appear to be for ventilation. The stone portion of the building retains historic metal shingles. A gable-roofed, frame addition of



Figure 27. Bakery, March 2000.

unknown date but likely added when the building became a residence, extends from the back of the building at the northwest corner and converts the original hall-and-parlor plan into an L-shaped plan. The addition's roof has gray composition shingles. Remaining kitchen and bathroom fixtures in the building testify to its later use as a residence.

One of the character-defining features of the building is a very low-pitched segmental arch over the doorway toward the east end of the south-facing wall. The arch is made of red brick, and a matching arch appears over what used to be a doorway toward the opposite end of the wall; this doorway, which would have entered into what is now the bathroom, has been filled in with stone. The gabled dormers at either end of the ridge line recur on the Boys' Dormitory and its bathhouse annex, and also are character-defining features of both of these buildings.

The Principal's Residence was not inspected during the structural assessment of the campus buildings. Because it is unoccupied, it has begun deteriorating from lack of maintenance. The historic windows appear to have been removed and replaced with relatively modern metal-framed windows.

#### 9. Employee Quarters and Guest Building

Construction History and Use: By the mid-1920s, the boarding school had classes scattered among a few buildings. While the 1913 Schoolhouse contained two classrooms, other classes were conducted in the Girls' Dormitory. By 1926, the superintendent reported using "an old cottage" for additional classroom space. Finally, in 1927, the agency received the twenty-two thousand dollar appropriation that funded the Employees' Club and a new building for classroom purposes. The building, placed just to the south of the 1913 schoolhouse, contained two classrooms as well as an office for the school principal. Thelma Cahwee, a student at the boarding school from the late 1920s through the mid-1930s, remembers attending some classes in the building. With the construction of this building, the school had classes consolidated in two good structures located next door to each other.<sup>43</sup>

The building served its intended purpose for only a few years, for when the 1932 School Building opened, all classes were moved into the new facility. With the continued shortage of housing for employees, the administration quickly converted the 1927 structure to "commodious apartments for employees." By the mid-1930s, a report on the school plant noted that the building was used for school employees and any guests visiting the agency or school, calling it Employee Quarters and Guest Building. It likely retained this function up to the school's closure; a later photograph negative identifies



Figure 28. Employee Quarters and Guest Building at left, March 2000. The 1913 Schoolhouse appears at right, with modern awning roof over handicapped access ramp.

the building by the same name.<sup>44</sup> The tribe now uses the building as a fitness center.

Description and Condition: In keeping with the rest of the buildings of the district, the Employee Quarters and Guest Building also has quarry-faced, irregularly-coursed ashlar stone. The building has a rather unique decorative feature that the other buildings lack. On the lower third of the building, some of the rectangular stones are placed vertically in a somewhat uniformly-spaced pattern. This creates a subtle horizontal band of vertical stones on the front, or east, facade. The building is rectangular with a hipped roof, although a gable centrally placed over the front door breaks up the horizontal roofline. Four steps lead up to the door; the original large door opening under a large lintel stone has been filled in to accommodate a smaller, modern door that has replaced the original door.

The structural assessment calls this building “one of the better ones.” Cracks in

the south and east walls indicate minor settling, but some cracks are instead “consistent with typical cracking due to normal thermal stresses.” The assessment notes that the flat roof planes seem to indicate that the roof is structurally sound.<sup>45</sup>

#### 10. 1913 Schoolhouse

Construction History and Use: With classrooms and sleeping quarters crowded together into the Girls’ Dormitory, superintendents began arguing for a building dedicated exclusively to classrooms and an assembly space in the mid-1890s.<sup>46</sup> The Schoolhouse, finally built in 1913, contained two classrooms and an assembly hall. It was completed for just under nine-thousand dollars and was ready for occupancy just after the commencement of the school year in the fall. The basement contained a furnace room, coal room, and storage room, and the structure had electric lighting and furnace heat. In 1914, Superintendent Nellis wrote, “we have a beautiful little school building [with] a good large assembly hall.” Nellis planned the room located to the right, or north, after entering the building, as a classroom for the younger children, five to eight years old; the room on the left would accommodate the eight to fifteen-year-old students. He hoped to fit about fifty desks in each room.<sup>47</sup>

Following completion of the 1932 School Building that caused the reshuffling of functions and space utilization in other buildings, the 1913 Schoolhouse was remodeled for use as the school dining hall. The extensive renovation, completed by the end of June 1933, included outfitting the building for a dining room and kitchen on the main floor; these function were moved from the back of the Girls’ Dormitory. The school bakery and meat locker were also moved from other facilities and installed in the basement of the old schoolhouse.<sup>48</sup>



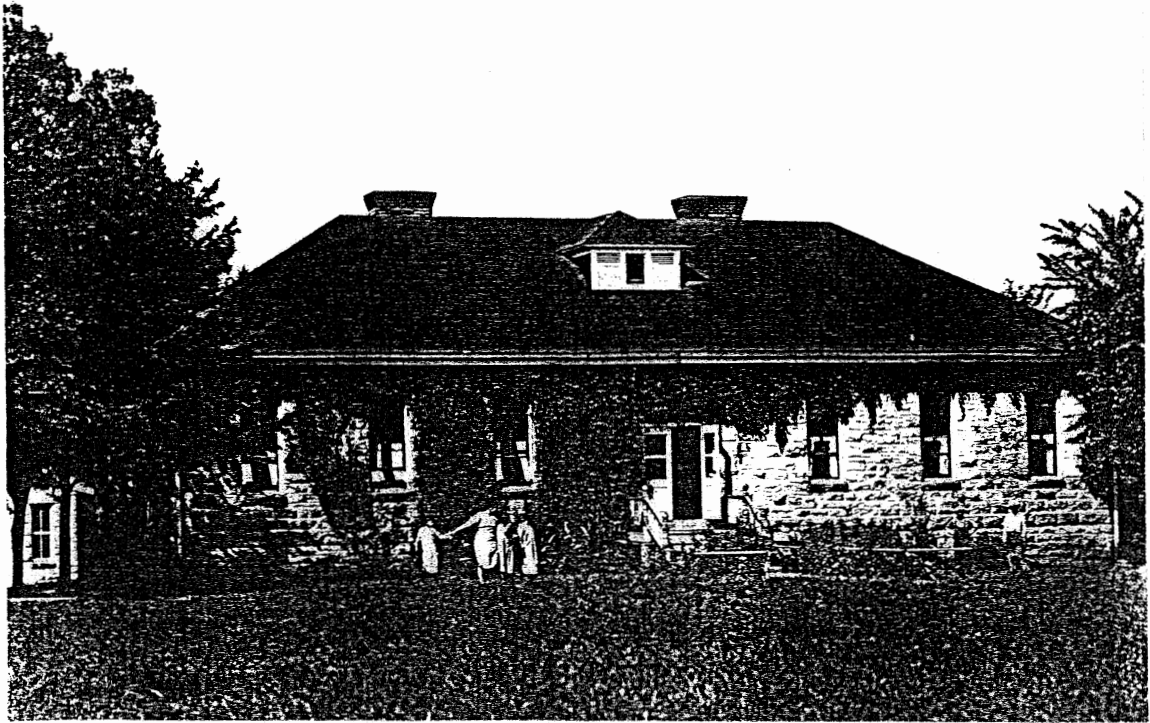


Figure 29. 1913 Schoolhouse, circa 1916. From Records of the Pawnee Agency and Subagencies, Fort Worth.

In 1951 and 1952, the building was again remodeled for \$42,550, including labor and materials. According to a construction report, the remodeling job constituted a substantial project and included work on excavating, concrete, stone, floors, roof, lath and plastering, insulation, equipment, sewer tank, wiring, and plumbing.<sup>49</sup> The Pawnee tribe now serves meals for senior citizens in the former schoolhouse and dining hall.

Description and Condition: The 1913 Schoolhouse has a complex and irregular plan, but the front presents a symmetrical, rectangular facade with centered double doors. The hipped roof has a small, centered, hipped dormer that appears to be for ventilation. The symmetry is now masked by an awning or shed-like roof over a modern handicapped access ramp; compare the building's appearance in Figures 28 and 29. The core of the

plan is essentially T-shaped, with an extension at different locations on each side of the stem that detract from its symmetry. The stem of the “T” also has a hipped roof. The extension on the north side of the building, toward the back, or west, end, and that on the south side may have been added, although what appears to be different color stone on the north extension is actually lichen. Two windows and a door on the south extension have been filled in, with the stones in the windows recessed slightly into the frame.

The stonework on the 1913 Schoolhouse, in particular, exhibits quality craftsmanship. It is quarry-faced and irregularly-coursed like that of many of the buildings of the district, but special care was taken with the details. The corners have drafted margins, meaning the tips of the corner are incised or mitered. Another character-defining feature of the building is a pair of stones that together make up date stones. On the south end of the front facade is a stone carved “A.D.” On the opposite end of the wall another stone is carved “1913.”<sup>50</sup> The stonework also creates a water table or belt-course effect around the building. The stones of this feature are of uniform rectangular blocks, quarry-faced, and projecting slightly from the wall. This can be considered another character-defining feature of the building.

The building has modern composition shingles, although those on the stem of the “T” appear to be older than those on the front cross section. The building also has a basement with a concrete floor; the space is currently used for storage. The structural assessment determined that the 1913 Schoolhouse is one of the buildings in the best condition on the campus. The limited cracking of the walls indicates “little foundation movement” and more likely is due to “normal thermal stresses.” The roof structure appears sound, “without noticeable sagging or other obvious distress.”<sup>51</sup>

## 11. Boys' Dormitory

Construction History and Use: The existing Boys' Dormitory was built in 1909 to replace an 1892 facility that burned down in 1904. It had the distinction of being the first building at the agency and school equipped with a low pressure steam heating system; at the time, the rest of the buildings still utilized stoves for heat. The basement contained the furnace, a sitting room, a large closet, a washroom, and a toilet room; the first floor had rooms for matrons and assistants, an office, and a dormitory room; the second floor was primarily dormitory space. The circa 1916 photograph of the building, shown in Figure 30, shows a classically inspired portico with columns and a center front-facing



Figure 30. Boys' Dormitory with original, classically-inspired porch, circa 1916. From Records of the Pawnee Agency and Subagencies, Fort Worth.

gable. It is not known when this portico was removed and replaced with the one the building now retains, a hip-roofed structure with square, tapered columns.<sup>52</sup>

In 1927, the agency built a nearly full-height, wood frame addition onto the rear of the Boys' Dormitory. Agency correspondence refers to the addition as the sleeping porch.<sup>53</sup> Theodore Morgan, a student at the boarding school during the late 1940s, also used this name when discussing the frame portion of the dormitory. The work was funded through general repair and improvement moneys, and school administrators planned to use it to provide additional dormitory facilities for thirty-two boys.<sup>54</sup>

When District Superintendent John A. Buntin visited and inspected the boarding school plant in July 1928, he and Superintendent Snyder discussed the inadequate bathroom facilities in the basement of the dormitory. After dismissing the idea of taking over part of the playroom area under the front porch for new fixtures, Buntin recommended to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that the agency construct a small annex to the dormitory. By February 1929, the request had been pending in the Indian Office for several month, and Snyder urged approval. He called the washroom and toilets in the building's basement "most unsanitary and unsatisfactory," adding, "This is the only place about the plant that we are ashamed to have visitors come for inspection." Although research has not uncovered the exact date of construction, Snyder indicated that funds were already available and the work would commence as soon as word of approval reached him.<sup>55</sup>

A 1954 annual report indicates that the two dormitories on the campus were remodeled for total of seventeen thousand dollars in that year, but does not discuss the specific work done.<sup>56</sup> By 1958, the year the boarding school closed, use of the Boys'

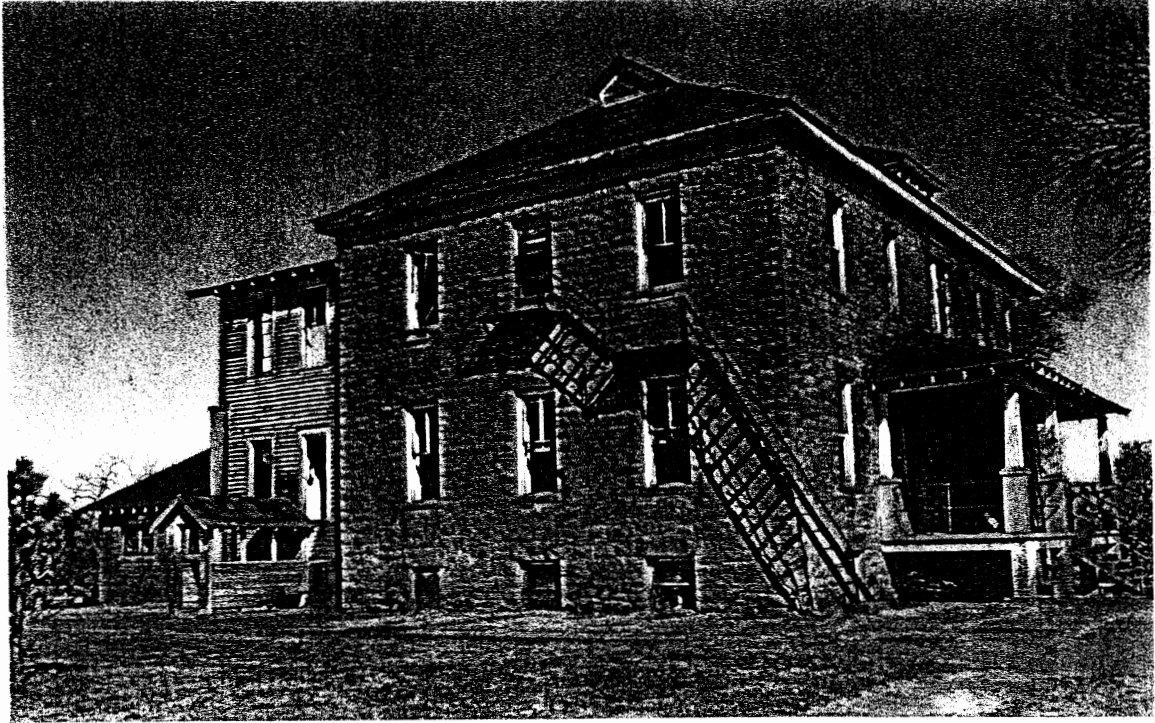


Figure 31. Boys' Dormitory, March 2000, showing the sleeping porch and a glimpse of the stone bathhouse annex.

Dormitory had been discontinued, and the both the male and female students were then housed in the Girls' Dormitory. The Boys' Dormitory building remains unoccupied.

Description and Condition: The original, stone Boys' Dormitory is a large, rectangular building with a massed plan, two-and-a-half stories in height, with the basement window sills at ground level. The masonry is made up of quarry-faced, irregularly-coursed, ashlar sandstone blocks. The structure has a hipped roof, with a small gabled dormer at each end of the ridgeline. These distinctive dormers recur on the bathhouse annex and on the Bakery, and can be considered character-defining features.<sup>57</sup> A hipped dormer, for ventilation, is centered low on the roof near the front roofline. The roof has composition shingles. The lintels and sills of the Boys' Dormitory windows are

each made of one flat stone, are quarry-faced, and project somewhat from the plane of the wall. The front doorway of the dormitory is centered on the east facade, and is accessed by steps up to the front porch. The current porch has a hipped roof with exposed rafter tails. Tapered, square columns, one of which is missing, support the porch roof and rest on square piers.

The sleeping porch addition, of wood frame construction and almost full-height, is attached to the rear of the structure. It has a very slightly-sloped roof that appears to be just barely hipped. Because of the poor condition of the ceiling on the second floor, the eave of the roof over the masonry part of the building can be seen extending under the roof of the frame addition; this at one time was concealed by the addition's ceiling. A small, gable-roofed vestibule projects from the south side of the addition. Behind the addition, an enclosed walkway leads to the small, single-story, stone bathhouse annex. The bathhouse has a hipped roof; it and the enclosed walkway still have metal shingles.

The Boys' Dormitory is in poor condition, and the structural assessment notes that "it appears that the main part of this building would require a complete rebuilding of the roof and floor structures if it were to be restored." Extensive roof leaks over time have severely damaged and rotted ceilings and floors, exposing both ceiling and floor joists in places. The frame addition "has suffered massive water damage," and the assessment states that its "roof and floor structures are rotted beyond repair." Wallace recommends that the addition will require removal and total reconstruction. He also notes that the poor condition of the bathhouse necessitates completely rebuilding the roof and renovating the interior.<sup>58</sup>

## 12. Laundry

Construction History and Use: The building now known as the laundry was constructed in 1909 as a store house or commissary. Because of its function, it did not have lighting, but in 1922, the building was converted into a Laundry, necessitating the addition of electricity and plumbing. The laundry machinery and equipment was removed from the former laundry, now known as the Home Economics Building, and installed in the former store house, which the superintendent considered more appropriate for the purpose. By 1927, some of the equipment in the laundry was badly worn, and Superintendent Snyder promised a medical department inspector that he would enclose the exposed belting of the machinery for the safety of the students detailed to work in the facility. Snyder had boxed in the dangerous equipment a month later. A frame lean-to addition, no longer extant, is visible in a circa 1916 photograph of the building. The Laundry building is currently unoccupied.<sup>59</sup>

Description and Condition: The Laundry building is a single story structure of one rectangular room under a front-facing gabled roof. The door centered in the front facade lines up with the door centered in the back wall. The building is constructed of quarry-faced, irregularly-coursed, rubble masonry. The gable ends appear to be shingled, and the front-facing gable has a louvered vent.

The severely deteriorated Laundry building is in the poorest condition of the buildings of the district and was not inspected for the structural assessment. Much of the roof sheathing is missing, exposing the rafters below. Remnants of the historic metal shingles are present. Because of its condition, there has been discussion in the tribe of dismantling the building rather than attempting to rebuild it.

### 13. 1909 Principal's Residence

Construction History and Use: The largest of the three wood frame buildings designated as contributing to the district is called the Principal's Residence in a circa 1935 report on the school plant. Completion of this building for housing an employee was part of a rather extensive construction expansion undertaken in 1909. In addition to the erection of the stone Boys' Dormitory, the Bakery, the laundry and shop building (Home Economics), and the commissary that later became the Laundry, the work included frame barns and poultry houses, sheds, a coal house, a root cellar, three concrete caves, and four employee residences. It appears that the Principal's Residence is the only one of the residences that survives. It is now being used as a private residence.<sup>60</sup>

Description and Condition: The 1909 Principal's Residence has a complex



Figure 32. 1909 Principal's Residence, March 2000.



roofline. Hipped at its core, the roof has a gabled peak placed on top of the main hipped portion. Other gables appear almost as large dormers; windows in these gables let light into what is likely a small, attic-like second floor. An addition on the east side of the house has a shed roof, and in a circa 1935 photograph appears to have once been a screened porch. The windows in the house have been replaced, and several have had substantial alterations, including the addition of two windows where there originally had been one. The building fabric appears to be somewhat deteriorated, as is the white exterior paint.

#### 14, 15. Garages

Construction History and Use: West and slightly south of the 1909 Principal's Residence stand two wood frame garage buildings. While their date of construction is



Figure 33. Garages west of the 1909 Principal's Residence, March 2000.

uncertain, the circa 1935 map of the campus shows footprints that appear to match their shape and placement. The buildings do not appear on a 1912 block plan that clearly shows the Principal's Residence with no nearby buildings. Because minor buildings and outbuildings are less well-documented in the records of the agency and school than major buildings, no further information has been uncovered to date.<sup>61</sup>

Description and Condition: The garage designated number fourteen, the larger of the two buildings, is rectangular with a hipped roof, and has three garage doors on the east-facing side. The smaller garage to the west, number fifteen, is also rectangular and has one south-facing garage door opening and a gable roof. Both buildings are in rather poor condition and appear to have settled somewhat, with the garage door opening of number fifteen visibly shifted out of square. The larger building is missing some of its wood cladding on the south side. The buildings may now be associated with the Principal's Residence, although it is unclear whether or not the current occupant of the residence also uses the garages.

### **Contributing Resources, Structures**

In addition to the contributing buildings listed above, the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School Historic District also contains several structures. Although less historical information exists about them than about the major buildings, these structures mesh visually with the buildings and qualify as contributing resources of the district. The structures include a culvert and stone fill over a ravine, a stone and concrete footbridge, a concrete bridge, three stone walls, and a concrete cellar.

## 16. Culvert/Stone Fill

Along the curve where Harrison Street turns into Agency Road (see sketch map), the right of way passes over the ravine of a dry or intermittent gully that separates the Hospital and Pawnee Agency Office from the Superintendent's Residence. A culvert and large amount of fill material carries the road across the ravine. The structure is faced with a stone wall on the east side of the road while on the west, it appears only as an embankment of rubble stone. The construction date is unknown.

## 17. Footbridge

A stone footbridge carries a sidewalk across the ravine discussed above. Constructed of the same type of sandstone used in the majority of the district's buildings,



Figure 34. Stone footbridge over the ravine, with Superintendent's Residence in the background, March 2000.

the footbridge has a center arched opening and a concrete sidewalk with metal pipe railing. The date of construction of the footbridge is unknown, but its appearance is in keeping with the district. A curved stone wall beginning perpendicular to the footbridge on its south end connects it with structure number sixteen, with which it is associated.

#### 18. Bridge

The district also contains a concrete bridge over the tributary of Black Bear Creek that passes under Agency Road just north of the road system that encircles the main campus of the boarding school. Although the bridge appears to be newer than the structure over the ravine, according to staff at the State Historic Preservation Office, it may date to the 1930s or 1940s and, therefore, has been designated a contributing structure. The bridge consists of two tunnel-like openings under the road, squared at the outside, upper corners, and angled at the center corners. Wing walls angle out from the sides. The bridge design includes a floor at the bed of the stream. The bridge is in good condition.

#### 19. Stone walls

The historic district contains three stone walls of similar character that qualify as contributing structures. The first and shortest wall parallels the west side of Agency Road just south of the culvert/fill over the ravine. This wall is fairly low and stepped in three levels, the highest along the wall's center section. As shown on the sketch map, the most substantial wall follows along the inside of the road that defines the yard north of the Boys' Dormitory. This wall, which consists of sandstone blocks, has a concrete cap, and contains a set of steps that once allowed access from the road to a building north of

the Boys' Dormitory that is no longer extant. The third wall, largely subsumed by sod, runs north to south along the road to the east of the Employees' Club. This wall also contains a set of steps placed roughly across from the southern end of the Club building.

## 20. Cellar

The last contributing structure in the historic district is a cellar, mostly underground, located between the Girl's Dormitory and the Bakery. The portions of the structure visible are made of concrete, and consist of an enclosed entrance stairway on the east end of the cellar; a low, stepped wall perpendicular to the stairway; an arched wall at the west end of the structure; and a window well at the center of the west, arched wall. The ground over the cellar, between the two walls, is mounded up over the



Figure 35. Concrete cellar, with Bakery in the background, March 2000.

structure. Only one, bent, corrugated metal door remains on the stairway access. It is possible that the cellar is one of three “concrete caves” listed on a 1913 buildings list, although this is only speculation based on currently available sources. The caves mentioned on the report were constructed in 1909 and measured eight by twelve feet.<sup>62</sup>

## NOTES

1. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Guidelines for Completing National Register of Historic Places Forms, Part A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1997), 37.
2. Architectural descriptions based on observation, an overview of some architectural details by Eleanor Weinel of the University of Oklahoma's College of Architecture, and information in McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses*; Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 38-39; Eleanor Weinel, Presentation at Advisory Board Meeting of the Pawnee Tribal Facilities Rehabilitation and Land-Use Project, University of Oklahoma, 22 April 1999.
3. Ronnie Goodeagle, interview by Joseph M. Reed, 28 October 1998, tape recording.
4. Statistics Covering Buildings Report, 1916, Subgroup 91, Records of the Pawnee Agency and Subagencies, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives-Southwest Region, Fort Worth, Texas (hereafter cited as Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth).
5. Benjamin Wallace, *Structural Assessment Report, Pawnee Tribe Complex*, 7 January 1999.
6. *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1929, Health Section, 2, 1931, 1-2, in *Superintendents' Annual Narrative and Statistical Reports from Field Jurisdictions, 1907-1938*, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives (microfilm); Pawnee-Ponca Hospital and Nurses Home, "Construction" file, Box 38, Subgroup 85, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.
7. *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1931, 2; Donald C. Nelson, "Health Safeguards," *The Oklahoma Indian School Magazine* 2 (April 1933): 6.
8. "Pawnee Indian Agency," National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, 11 April 1973, State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1876), 56 (microfiche); Statistics Covering Buildings Report, 1916.
9. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1906, 320; Statistics Covering Buildings Report, 1916; *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1921, 1, 1925, 1, 1926, 1, 1928, 1.
10. Joseph C. Hart to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 6 August 1920, 1 August 1921, Pawnee Agency and Subagencies Collection, Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (hereafter cited as Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society), citations referring to parts of the collection that have been microfilmed include the roll number, if no roll number is noted, reference is to original documents; A. R. Snyder to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 12 July 1928,

Sketch of Office, "Improvements 1928 and 1929" file, Box 5, Subgroup 86, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.

11. "1940-45 Construction Program, Administrative Needs" report, "Construction 403 F.Y. 1938" file, Box 38, Subgroup 85, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.

12. Phyllis Gonzales, Superintendent's Secretary, Pawnee Agency, interview by author, 16 March 2000; "Pawnee Indian Agency," National Register Nomination, 1973.

13. William S. Bryans, personal communication with author, 16 March 1999.

14. Wallace, *Structural Assessment Report*.

15. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1876, 56, 1877, 95, 1893, 261; *Statistics Covering Buildings Report*, 1916; Joseph Stanley Clark, "The Ponca Indian Agency" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1940), 52.

16. *Statistics Covering Buildings Report*, 1916.

17. "Pawnee Indian Agency," National Register Nomination, 1973.

18. Weinel presentation, 22 April 1999.

19. *Statistics Covering Buildings Report*, 1916.

20. Wallace, *Structural Assessment Report*.

21. *Annual Report for 1909*, Pawnee Agency and Subagencies microfilm, Roll PA49, Oklahoma Historical Society; *Annual Statement of Government Buildings and Improvements, Pawnee Training School, 1913*, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; *Statistics Covering Buildings Report*, 1916.

22. Mildred Cleghorn Hudson, interview by Joseph M. Reed, 6 October 1998, tape recording; Mary Louise Wabaunsee, interview by Joseph M. Reed, 12 October 1998, tape recording; "Building Plant, Pawnee Agency, Oklahoma," 30 May 1922, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; *List of work done during fiscal years 1927 through 1933*, "Construction" file, Box 7, Subgroup 86, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.

23. P. W. Danielson to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 4 January 1934, Pawnee Indian School Plant Report, ca. 1935, "Buildings - Pawnee 400" file, Box 38, Subgroup 85, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.

24. Wallace, *Structural Assessment Report*.

25. *Annual Report of the Pawnee Training School and Agency*, 1929, Section III, 1-2, 1931, Section IV, n.p.; *List of work done during fiscal years 1927 through 1933*; 1932 School Building date stone, Pawnee Agency Reserve, Oklahoma; Pawnee Indian School



Plant Report, ca. 1935; Dedication of Indian School, Pawnee, Okla. Program, "Employees - School" file, Box 4, Subgroup 86, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth; Theodore Morgan, interview by Joseph M. Reed, 6 October 1998, tape recording; Goodeagle interview; Elsie Shilling, interview by Joseph M. Reed, 6 October 1998, tape recording.

26. *Annual Report of the Pawnee Training School and Agency*, 1924, 4, 1926, 6; Morgan, Goodeagle interviews.

27. Notes on Pawnee Indian Agency building ownership, ca. 1972, "Pawnee Indian Agency - Correspondence" file, State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Advisory Board Meeting, Pawnee Tribal Facilities Rehabilitation and Land-Use Project, 22 April 1999.

28. Weinel Presentation, 22 April 1999.

29. Wallace, *Structural Assessment Report*.

30. For example, *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1925, 4, 1930, 1.

31. John A. Buntin to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 24 May 1927, "Buntin" file, Box 1, Subgroup 86, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth; List of work done during fiscal years 1927 through 1933; Pawnee Indian School Plant Report, ca. 1935; Morgan interview.

32. Wallace, *Structural Assessment Report*.

33. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1878, 63, 1881, 90. A 1913 list of buildings also notes a stone "wing," nearly the same dimensions as the original building, built in 1881 but no other source corroborates this, and the author cannot reconcile an addition of this size with the buildings dimensions at any time in its history; *Annual Statement of Government Buildings and Improvements*, 1913.

34. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1890, 199; Pawnee School Ground Plan, February 1891, Roll PA5, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Photograph 4163, School Building, Pawnee Agency, Photograph Division, Oklahoma Historical Society.

35. C. W. Goodman to Asa C. Sharpe, 26 October 1897, Letterpress Volume 11, Roll PA6, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1900, 345, 1903, 275, 1904, 303.

36. *Annual Report for 1909*, Roll PA49, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; *Annual Statement of Government Buildings and Improvements*, 1913; *Statistics Covering Buildings Report*, 1916.

37. Sketch, Joseph C. Hart, June 1923, Hart to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 27 June 1923, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1924, 4.
38. John A. Buntin to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 28 July 1928, "Buntin" file, Box 1, A. R. Snyder to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 6 August 1928, "Improvements 1928 and 1929" file, Box 5, List of work done during fiscal years 1927 through 1933, "Construction" file, Box 7, Subgroup 86, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.
39. *Annual Report of the Anadarko Area Office, Branch of Education*, 1954, Box 1, Subgroup 193, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth; Advisory Board Meeting, Pawnee Tribal Facilities Rehabilitation and Land-Use Project, 22 April 1999.
40. Wallace, *Structural Assessment Report*.
41. Statistics Covering Buildings report, 1916; *Annual Report for 1909*, Roll PA49, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Shilling interview; Myrtle Strosnider, "The Bakery Unit of 'Gravy College,'" *The Oklahoma Indian School Magazine* 2 (April 1933): 15.
42. Pawnee Indian School Plant Report, ca. 1935.
43. *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1924, 4, 1926, 6; Buntin to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 25 October 1927, "Buntin" file, Box 1, Subgroup 86, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth; List of work done during fiscal years 1927 through 1933; Thelma Cahwee, interview by Joseph M. Reed, 13 October 1998.
44. Edith Hunter, "Superintendent of Pawnee Indian Agency," *The Oklahoma Indian School Magazine* 2 (April 1933): 13; Pawnee Indian School Plant Report, ca. 1935; Employee Quarters and Guest Building, photographic negative, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.
45. Wallace, *Structural Assessment Report*.
46. For example, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1896, 270, 1897, 246; *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1910, School Section, 2.
47. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1914, 173; Statistics Covering Buildings Report, 1916; *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1913, 1, 1914, 13; George W. Nellis to J. B. Alverson, 18 June 1913, "A" file, Box 1, Nellis to Superintendent of Indian Warehouse, 14 August 1913, "Letters Sent, 1909-1913" file, Box 3, Subgroup 81, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.
48. Goodeagle, Shilling, Hudson interviews.

49. Monthly Construction Report, November 1952, Box 3, Subgroup 193, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.
50. Weinel Presentation, 22 April 1999.
51. Wallace, *Structural Assessment Report*.
52. Statistics Covering Buildings Report, 1916; *Annual Report of the Pawnee Indian Training School and Agency*, 1910, n.p.
53. A letter by District Superintendent John A. Buntin mentions the new sleeping porch on the west side of the building, then writes, "the new porch is well constructed and makes a splendid addition to the building." It is assumed this refers back to the sleeping porch, and not to the hip-roofed front portico; John A. Buntin to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 25 October 1927.
54. Buntin to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 28 July 1928, "Buntin" file, Box 1, List of work done during fiscal years 1927 through 1933, "Construction" file, Box 7, Subgroup 86, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth; Morgan interview.
55. Buntin to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 28 July 1928, Snyder to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 21 September 1928, "Buntin" file, Box 1, Snyder to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 12 February 1929, "Improvements 1928 and 1929" file, Box 5, Subgroup 86, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.
56. *Annual Report of the Anadarko Area Office, Branch of Education*, 1954.
57. Weinel Presentation, 22 April 1999.
58. Wallace, *Structural Assessment Report*.
59. *Annual Report for 1909*, Pawnee Agency and Subagencies microfilm, Roll PA49, Annual Statement of Government Buildings and Improvements, 1913, "Building and Plant, Pawnee Agency, Oklahoma," 30 May 1922, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Statistics Covering Buildings Report, 1916; Pawnee Indian School Plant Report, ca. 1935; Walter S. Stevens to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 13 December 1927, Snyder to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 11 January 1928, "Medical" file, Box 1, Subgroup 86, Records of Pawnee Agency, Fort Worth.
60. Pawnee Indian School Plant Report, ca. 1935; Annual Statement of Government Buildings and Improvements, 1913.
61. Pawnee Indian School Plant Report, ca. 1935; "Block Plan of U.S. Indian School Pawnee Okla.," October 1912, "Pawnee Indian School, Blueprint of School" file, "Pawnee Agency, Pawnee Indian School, Report, Books, School Blueprints, School Seamstress Report" Box, Pawnee Agency Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.
62. Annual Statement of Government Buildings and Improvements, 1913.

## VI. PAWNEE AGENCY AND BOARDING SCHOOL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Research has provided the documentation to write the broad history of the Pawnee Agency and the Pawnee Boarding School, as well as the construction histories of the individual resources of the district. The National Register of Historic Places requires that a property be placed within this broad historic context, but also that its significance in specific areas of history, and during a specific time period, be clearly defined and stated. A historic district must also have definite geographic boundaries that contain its contributing resources and account for any non-contributing resources within the limits of the district. And the overall integrity of the district must be sufficiently intact to convey its significance and enhance its eligibility.

### **Significance**

The Pawnee Agency and Boarding School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district under Criterion A, association with events or trends that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. As the administrative center for interaction between the Pawnee tribe and the federal government, the district has significance in the areas of Native American history and Federal Indian Policy, as well as in Indian Education for the prominent role the boarding school played in the lives of the children and the tribe as a whole. The district is significant at the local level, and in the history of north-central Oklahoma.

The historic district is also eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for the craftsmanship of the stonework and the visual unity of the individual resources that

together make the district a distinguishable entity. Although the buildings of the district do not possess the characteristics of a single, significant architectural style, the use of locally quarried sandstone and similar masonry construction unifies them in a distinct appearance that clearly sets them apart from resources outside the district and from the neighboring town of Pawnee. The buildings also exhibit workmanship in architectural details that relate the buildings to each other as the resources that make up the complex of the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School.

The period of significance for the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School Historic District begins with the construction of the Superintendent's Residence in 1876, shortly after the arrival of the Pawnee tribe in what was then Indian Territory, and currently ends in 1950. Although this appears an arbitrary ending date, it was chosen because National Register guidelines recommend that only properties greater than fifty years old be listed on the register unless it can be successfully argued that they are of exceptional significance. The nomination, though, can include the explanation that the boarding school continued in operation through the spring term of 1958, and the Pawnee Agency continues to function through the present. As the construction dates, alterations, and changing functions of several of the buildings illustrate, the historic district evolved throughout its history, justifying the use of a range of dates for an inclusive period of significance.

The agency and boarding school are primarily significant at the local level, for although they have meaning to the Pawnee tribe and the surrounding area, they were one of many Indian agencies and Indian boarding schools in Oklahoma and the nation as a whole. This historic district fits into this larger context, but derives its significance

primarily as a local, surviving example of its type – a reservation boarding school and Indian agency that functioned for much of their history as a combined administrative unit. The Pawnee Agency and Boarding School represents the administrative structure of an agency placed under the control of a school superintendent, a system that evolved at the turn of the twentieth century in response to civil service reform. This combination is important and binds the resources of the district together as one entity. In the local area, the jurisdiction of the agency encompassed the affairs of four other tribes for substantial periods of its history. The boarding schools for these other tribes had also closed by the 1920s, broadening the enrollment of the Pawnee Boarding School to include the children of several tribes. While northeastern Oklahoma is also the location of another significant Indian boarding school, Chilocco was an off-reservation school that lacked the added component of an attached agency.

### **District Boundaries**

For a property nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the selection of the geographic limits – or boundaries – of the resource is an important part of the registration process. The selected boundaries must “encompass the resources that contribute to the property’s significance,” but, particularly for a historic district that encompasses several resources, the nomination preparer has some flexibility in the selection of the boundaries. Several factors affect the determination of the boundary lines of a district; these include not only the history and significance of the site, but also the modern environment that now surrounds it.<sup>1</sup>

In selecting the boundaries, the preparer should first take the historical

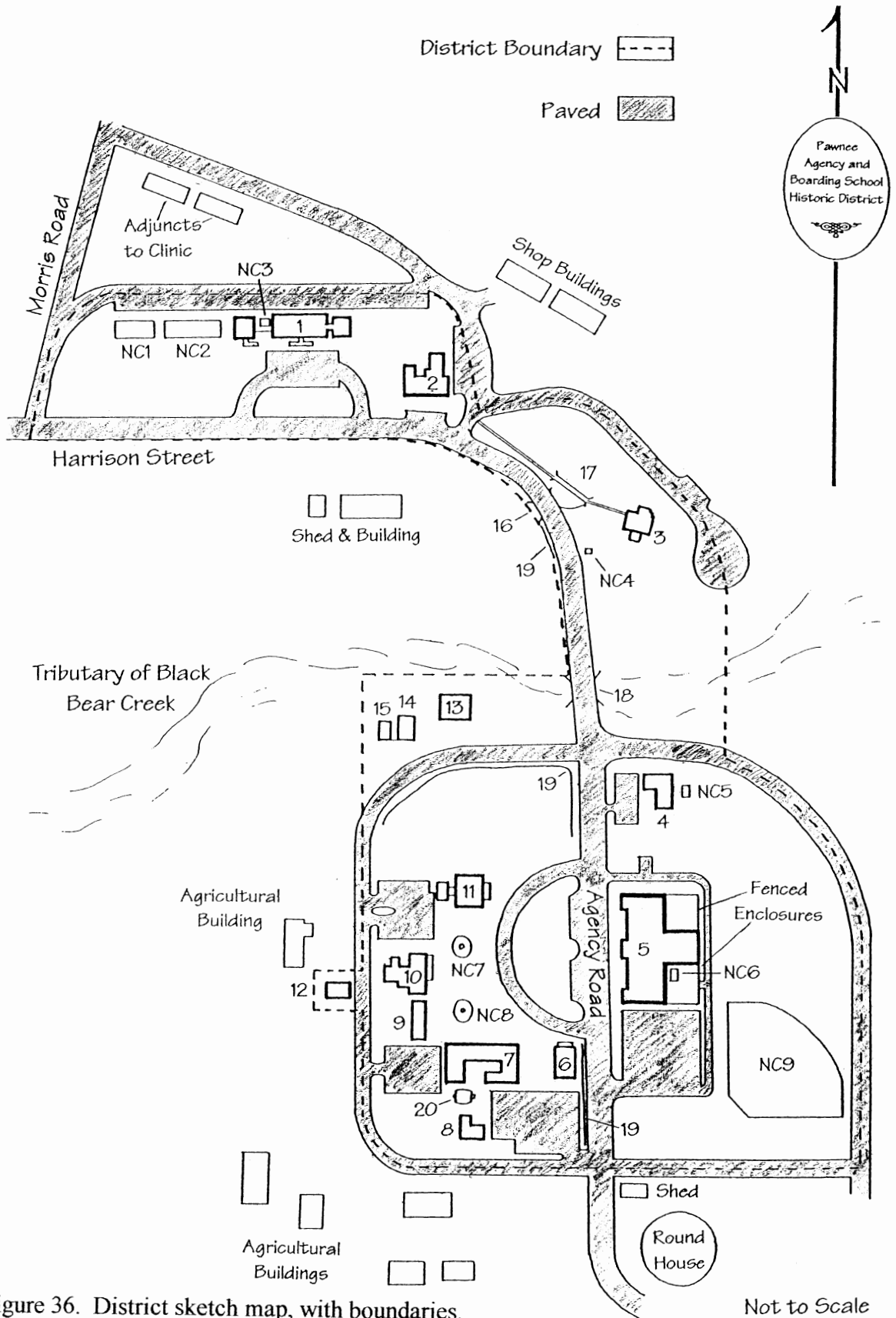
significance and use of the property into consideration and define the extent of the resources that contribute to the overall significance of the district. Although the boundaries should include enough of the surrounding area to retain an appropriate setting for the resources, they should not include peripheral or buffer space that does not relate to the significance of the property. Because a district is also likely to contain resources that do not contribute to its significance, such as those constructed before or after the defined period of significance, these are designated as non-contributing, but can be included within the boundaries. In fact, unless circumstances call for a discontinuous district, National Register guidelines prohibit the exclusion of non-contributing resources that are surrounded by contributing resources, because excluding them would create islands or voids within the district. As long as the overall sense of integrity is maintained when one steps back and looks at the district as one entity, the presence of some non-contributing resources among the contributing resources is acceptable.<sup>2</sup>

Even though the historic significance of the property is the first consideration in the selection of the geographical limits of a district, modern intrusion and the current condition of resources frequently affect the determination of boundaries. New construction near the historic resources can create a physical as well as a visual barrier; in such cases the new construction may serve as a boundary line. Major alterations to historic resources can render them ineligible or non-contributing, and deterioration of resources resulting in a loss of integrity can have the same effect. As with historic resources outside the period of significance, these modern or changed resources are excluded if on the periphery of the district, or designated non-contributing resources if surrounded by contributing resources.<sup>3</sup>

When actually defining the practical boundaries of the district and justifying their selection, several methods can be used. District boundaries often utilize more than one of the following methods: distribution of resources, including the extent of historic resources and their setting; current legal boundaries according to plat maps and tax records, especially if these correspond to historic boundaries; historic boundaries from historic plats, especially if these no longer correspond to current legal boundaries; natural features in the landscape that bound the resources; and cultural features such as fences, walls, or roadways that bound the resources. Some properties are more complicated or are as yet difficult to define, such as buried archaeological resources with research potential; these may warrant the use of cartographic features like contour lines or topographic features, or reasonable limits. Reasonable limits may involve simply measuring a certain distance from known resources or drawing lines between resources to determine boundaries. For historic districts, it is often easiest and clearest to denote the boundaries on a sketch map of the district rather than simply trying to describe them in text.<sup>4</sup>

The boundaries of the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School Historic District are delineated on the map in Figure 36 on the following page. Beginning at the northwest of the district at the intersection of Harrison Street and Morris Road, the boundary follows Harrison as it proceeds east and then curves south, at which point Harrison becomes Agency Road. The boundary includes the stone wall near the culvert/fill and footbridge over the ravine and the bridge over the stream; at the bridge, the boundary follows the stream west to a point due north of the westernmost portion of the road that encircles the campus. It then proceeds straight south to meet the road, encompassing the 1909





Principal's Residence and the nearby garages. With an extension to surround the Laundry building, the boundary then follows the road system counterclockwise, eventually proceeding north along the easternmost section of road. As it rounds the curve heading back toward the intersection, the boundary turns north before reaching the intersection, and meets the southernmost curve of the paved circle near the modern campgrounds. It then follows the camping grounds drive back to where it meets the road system that encircles the Agency Office and the Hospital. The west end of this road meets Morris, at which the boundary follows Morris to the point of beginning, at its intersection with Harrison.

These district boundaries encompass the core of the historic resources related to the agency and boarding school, utilizing cultural resources (the road system, which has evolved throughout the history of the district and has recently been paved) and the distribution of resources. The boundaries do not follow the historic boundary lines that originally retained 840 acres of the original Pawnee reservation for administrative and school purposes. The acreage of this reserve has varied at times during history, and its original boundaries no longer pertain to the property, which now includes only 726 acres. In addition, much of the acreage encompassed agricultural lands used for growing food and for training students in farming and gardening techniques. While this was an important function of the boarding school, it took place outside the core of the campus. Buildings associated with the farmwork, including barns and various other outbuildings, were of a less permanent nature than the sandstone buildings of the campus core. Many were of frame or metal construction and were frequently replaced. For these reasons and for their relatively poor condition, those buildings that remain from the agricultural

function of the school have been excluded from the district.

The rationale for the district boundaries also included the desire to exclude buildings of more recent construction that can reasonably be separated from the historic resources because of their placement on the periphery of the historic core area. These buildings are outside the period of historic significance for the property. Buildings kept outside of the district boundary for these reasons include two buildings behind and to the northwest of the Hospital that now serve as the Pawnee Dental Clinic and an Office of Environmental Health and Engineering (these are identified on the sketch map as “adjuncts to clinic”), the shop buildings to the northeast of the Office building, the wood frame building and shed on the south side of the road fronting the Hospital and Office, and the modern Roundhouse just to the south of the district and another shed near it. As with the agricultural buildings, these modern buildings are also visually distinct from the sandstone buildings of the agency and boarding school in the core of the district.

With the boundaries of the historic district thus defined, it includes only a few non-contributing resources, designated as “NC” on the boundary map for Non-Contributing. The resources include two buildings (NC1 and 2), both corrugated metal buildings just to the west of the Hospital complex. These are modern, utilitarian supply and maintenance buildings of a different character than the contributing buildings. They are also recent additions outside the period of significance, and not associated with the historical function or purpose of the agency and school. Because of their proximity to the Hospital and their placement within the yard and road system surrounding the Hospital, they are inside the district boundaries, but designated non-contributing. Three small, wooden sheds, one between the Hospital and nurses’ home (NC3), one behind the

Home Economics Building (NC5), and one behind the 1932 Schoolhouse (NC6), also qualify as non-contributing buildings.

The district also contains a memorial to the Pawnee Scouts, members of the tribe who served in the United States Army during the 1860s and 1870s. While this object (NC4) commemorates an important episode in the history of the Pawnees, it is ineligible for the National Register both because of recent age – erected in 1986 – and because the register excludes commemorative objects unless they have attained significance on their own and not for the event they commemorate. The monument is a three-sided metal pyramid, painted tan, and placed on a two-tiered concrete pad. A bronze plaque discusses the role of the Pawnee Scouts and the removal of the tribe to Indian Territory.

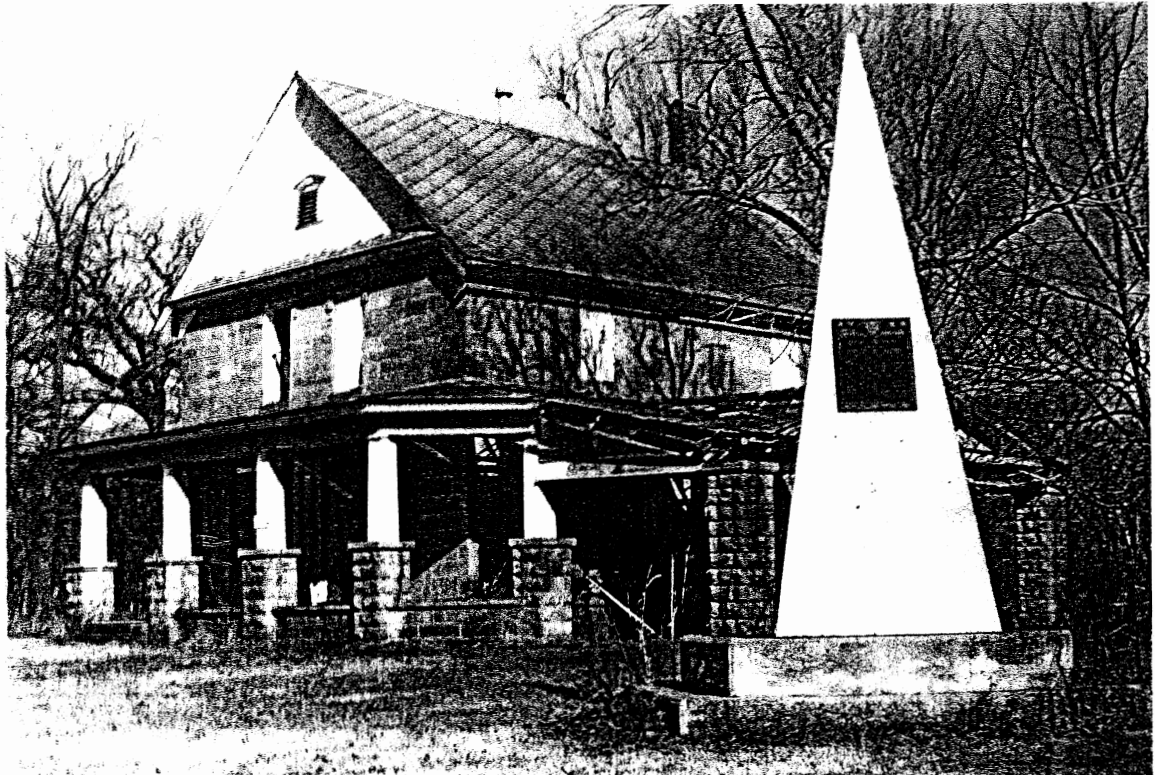


Figure 37. Monument to the Pawnee Scouts, with Superintendent's Residence in the background, March 2000.

The campus contains two other non-contributing objects with obscure histories. Located on the lawn between the Boys' and Girls' dormitories, the matching objects (NC7 and 8) consist of a center circular basin encircled by a low concrete curb. It appears that these may have served as flowerbeds at one time, and grass and small shrubs now fill in the space inside the curbs. Oral interviews indicate that the center basins may have originally been wash basins in the basement of the Boys' Dormitory. Wash and toilet facilities were transferred to the stone annex to the dormitory when it was built circa 1930; it is unknown when the basement basins would have been removed from the main building. Because the basins no longer serve their original purpose and the date of their current use is unknown, these objects are non-contributing resources of the district.

A baseball field, located to the southeast of the 1932 School Building, is also located within the historic district and designated a non-contributing structure (NC9).

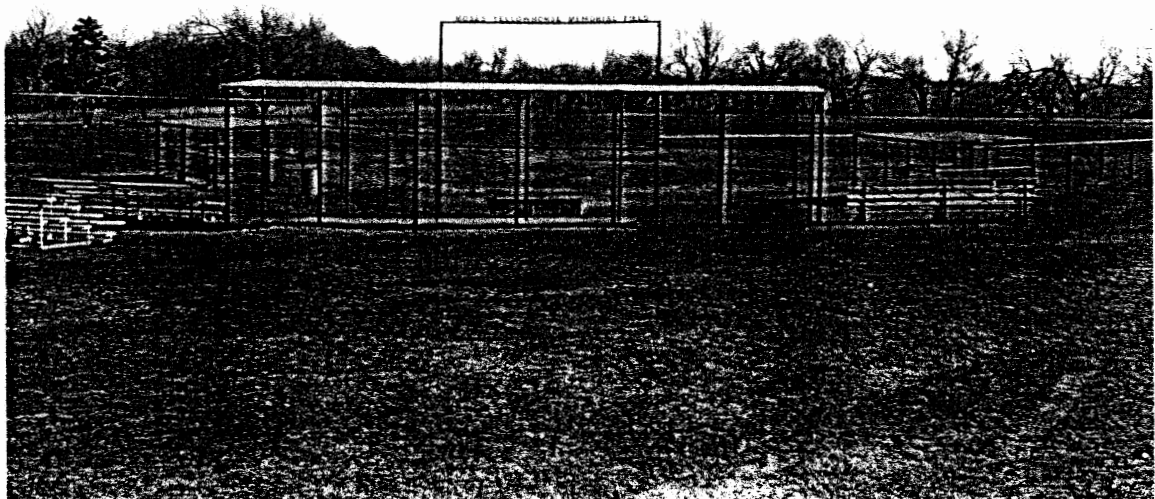


Figure 38. Moses Yellowhorse Memorial Field.

The ballfield now consists simply of fences extending from a backstop and around the outfield, a canopy behind what would have been home plate, and lettering identifying it as Moses Yellowhorse Memorial Field. According to Theodore Morgan, who attended the boarding school in the late 1940s, this field was in use when he went to school, although he remembers that there was then no fence around the outfield.<sup>5</sup> Because the date of the current fencing and backstop is uncertain, the field is currently non-contributing. Tentatively assuming that the fence would have pre-dated the closure of the school in 1958, this resource could be designated contributing in 2008, when it reaches the fifty-year requirement for eligibility.

### **Integrity**

As noted in Chapter 2, the integrity of a nominated property refers to the retention of the physical characteristics and intangible qualities that convey the resource's historic identity. The National Register defines seven aspects of integrity, including integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The property must retain integrity in enough of these aspects to illustrate its historic significance and identity, but does not need to possess all seven aspects. When evaluating the integrity of a historic district, this flexibility is important, for a district must be viewed as a holistic entity. Even though some of the individual components of the district may have lost integrity when viewed by themselves, the district as a whole can still convey a broad sense of historic character, appearance, and significance. Such a property retains its *overall* integrity and is thus still eligible for the National Register as a historic district.<sup>6</sup>

When viewing the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School Historic District from

this broad perspective, as a single entity, it retains at least partial integrity in all seven aspects and significant integrity in many of them. In evaluating the integrity of the district, it is important to keep in mind its long period of significance, 1876 through 1950. Construction dates of the contributing buildings range from 1876 to 1932, attesting to the continued use of the district and its evolution as a dynamic institution that grew and changed according to its needs. These changes are reflected particularly in some of the alterations that have been made to the buildings during, and, in some cases, possibly after the period of significance.

Such alterations and the condition of some of the buildings constitute the greatest threat to overall integrity and relate to the aspects of design, materials, and workmanship. Despite the alterations and additions to certain resources, however, the district as a whole retains enough integrity in these areas to remain eligible for the register. The design of the campus, including space utilization, the relationship of buildings to each other, and the “visual rhythms” of the plan, remain largely unchanged, with the exception of the parking lots that have been added.<sup>7</sup> The material of the major resources, the native sandstone that gives the buildings their character and visual unity, strongly contributes to integrity; even the later frame additions on the Office and the Bakery do not mar the main, sandstone facades of the buildings. The frame portion of the Boys’ Dormitory dates to the period of significance and reflects the historic evolution of the building. Integrity of workmanship is evident in the architectural details identified as defining characteristics of several buildings.

The aspects of location and setting share related characteristics, and can also be discussed together in an evaluation of the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School Historic

District. The district strongly retains integrity of location, for its resources remain situated in their original locations and so convey a truthful sense of the place where the significant events of history for which they are significant occurred. Integrity of setting is also present, although the presence of modern secondary features such as paved streets and traffic signs may slightly diminish it. But the district retains its overall sense of a place apart from the nearby town of Pawnee, an important element in the historic relationship between the tribe and the federal government on the one hand and the largely separate white community on the other. When passing through the town and into the historic district on the present tribal reserve, a visitor gets the same sense of a place apart because of the integrity of setting that still remains.

In a similar sense, the historic district retains integrity of feeling and association. The National Register defines feeling as “a property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.” Association is the direct link between the property and, in the case of the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School, the important historic events with which the district is associated. While these aspects are somewhat intangible and subjective, they both depend on the presence of enough intact physical features to convey the historic character of the property. Because feeling and association depend on the perception of an observer, they cannot by themselves support eligibility of a property in the absence of other aspects of integrity<sup>8</sup>; yet, when present, they profoundly add to the sense of historical presence that a significant property with integrity can convey. The presence of the remaining physical features of the historic agency and boarding school resources give a visitor this sense of feeling and association and add greatly to the historic integrity of the property.



## NOTES

1. Donna J. Seifert, *Defining Boundaries for National Register Properties* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1997), 1.
2. *Ibid.*, 2-3.
3. *Ibid.*, 2.
4. *Ibid.*, 3, 13; U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Guidelines for Completing National Register of Historic Places Forms, Part A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1997), 55.
5. Theodore Morgan, interview by Joseph M. Reed, 6 October 1998, tape recording.
6. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1997), 44-46.
7. *Ibid.*, 44.
8. *Ibid.*, 45.

## VII. CONCLUSION

As argued in the previous chapters and shown by the history and evidence presented, the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School is an important and significant part of the American past worthy of listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The property is associated with trends that have made a significant contribution to the patterns of our history, including the long-standing relationship of American Indian tribes to the federal government, federal Indian policy, and federal Indian education. The resources have been a significant part of the lives of the members of the Pawnee tribe, and the tribe, in turn, along with many other native peoples, has had a presence in north-central Oklahoma since its removal to Indian Territory in the 1870s. The resources that make up the historic district, reflecting and illustrating this history, are significant on the local level and in north-central Oklahoma. They are also significant for their workmanship and the visual unity of the stonework used in their construction. The district retains its integrity and evokes its association with the history that took place within its boundaries.

Although National Register listing would recognize the significance of the property in the American past, one of the most important aspects of the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School Historic District may be its meaning to the present generation of the Pawnee tribe. Once the symbol of a paternalistic government advocating the complete assimilation of American Indians into the dominant white society, the buildings on the Pawnee Tribal Reserve are now a focus of tribal identity. Built by the federal government as the center for carrying out the programs of the Office of Indian Affairs, the buildings are now the property of the tribe. In what is perhaps an ironic turn of

history, the administration of the Pawnee Agency now leases office space in the former School Building from its current owner – the Pawnee Nation.

The path to tribal ownership of the buildings was not an easy one. Following the closure of the Pawnee Boarding School in 1958, the federal government transferred ownership of the buildings associated with the school to the City of Pawnee, rather than to the tribe for whose advancement they had ostensibly been built. The government claimed that the land on which the buildings stood, originally part of the Pawnee reservation purchased in 1876, became the property of the government upon ratification of the 1893 allotment agreement and cession of surplus lands. The tribe, citing the documentation of past treaties and other government agreements, including the allotment act, argued instead that the land had been reserved from settlement and cession for the use and benefit of the Pawnees, and therefore was reserved tribal property that the government had no right to transfer to the city. It was not until the early 1970s that the Pawnees got the twenty acre tract and the school buildings transferred back to the tribe.<sup>1</sup>

The tribe has worked in recent years to improve the Tribal Reserve to better serve the needs of the Pawnee people. In addition to improvements in infrastructure that make the reserve largely self-sufficient and independent of the city, several of the buildings are currently in use. Tribal government offices, service facilities such as a fitness center and meals for seniors, the clinic, law enforcement and tribal court, and various maintenance functions, as well as the Pawnee Agency, utilize seven of the stone buildings of the district, and the contributing wood frame residence is still a dwelling. While many of these buildings could benefit from restoration, they now receive some maintenance because they are in use on a daily basis; those that are unoccupied suffer from a lack of

maintenance and considerable deterioration. The tribe must soon address their condition and stop further deterioration to prevent an irreversible loss of integrity if they are to remain contributing resources of the historic district.

Many of the members of the Pawnee Nation recognize the historic value of the resources of the Tribal Reserve, as evidenced by the desire to list them on the National Register. Yet, the tribe also sees them as buildings that must continue to meet current needs – for members who use them, for tribal government that maintains offices in them, and possibly for future economic development as the Pawnees move forward with plans to rehabilitate the buildings. It is important that the Tribal Reserve remain a living entity to serve the needs of present and future generations while still maintaining its historic character. Perhaps the greatest challenge in planning for the reuse of the buildings will be to find the proper balance between preservation and rehabilitation that will preserve the historic integrity of the district and, at the same time, provide for these current needs. Although the Pawnees still see the central plains as their traditional homelands, Robert Chapman points out that they now have a history in Oklahoma extending back over one hundred years, and feel strong ties to their present home.<sup>2</sup> The resources of the Pawnee Agency and Boarding School Historic District, now owned by the tribe, continue to serve as a focal point in the lives of its members, and connect the Pawnee Nation with its history in Oklahoma.

## NOTES

1. Notes on ownership of reserve lands, included in Minutes of Pawnee Business Council, 17 February 1965, "Pawnee Minutes 1-1-61 through 12-31-65" file, Box 4, Subgroup 87A, Records of the Pawnee Agency and Subagencies, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives-Southwest Region, Fort Worth, Texas; Robert L. Chapman, President, Pawnee Business Council, interview by author, 16 March 2000; Notes on Pawnee Indian Agency building ownership, ca. 1972, "Pawnee Indian Agency - Correspondence" file, State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

2. Chapman interview.

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