ANGIE DEBO: IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

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PREFACE

I never met Angie Debo. Like many Oklahomans I did not know who she was until recently. I heard her name for the first time in 1989 when I viewed the documentary film, Indians, Outlaws and Angie Debo as a graduate student in history. The film left many questions unanswered and stimulated my interest in her career as a historian. Angie Debo possessed characteristics that set her apart from her peers. She was a woman in a field dominated by men. She wrote as a freelance writer who worked without the benefit of peer associates because she was not affiliated with a university. Debo was a prolific writer and her writings embodied a different approach to Indian history. Debo wrote of Indian history at a time when few historians found it interesting. She wrote from a different perspective than historians at the time; she incorporated elements derived from the Indian perspective by using tribal documents that had not been examined previously. She sympathized with the cause of the Native American and wrote as an Indian advocate. Where she found omission or neglect in historical work, Debo attempted to correct the account.

Debo's legacy is based on her extensive writings and how her peers in the historical field assess her approach to writing history. Her struggles in acquiring a tenured position in academe bring up the issue of gender discrimination. In Debo's case, other factors complicated the issue. Gender discrimination is apparent in Debo's early career as a historian, but did not compromise her ability to enter the literary world.

Debo's personal characteristics more closely resemble a late twentieth century woman than one from earlier in the century. She was aggressive in achieving her goals to the point of being cantankerous. She expressed herself freely both verbally and in print in her area of expertise to the dismay of those who worked to get her manuscripts published. She suffered from an inflated view of her own abilities. Debo was no ordinary woman. She became an activist in her later years rallying citizens to support legislation protecting Indian rights in Alaska and Arizona. Debo completed her final work in her eighties and was richly rewarded, not in money, but in acclaim for a lifelong dedication to historical research.

Angie Debo made important contributions to the historical field through the research she conducted during a long productive life. Early in her career she produced tribal histories. Her doctoral dissertation, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic was published in 1934. Debo authored two books about the Creeks; The Road to Disappearance was published in 1941 and Tulsa: From Creek Town to Oil Capital in 1943. Her book, And Still the Waters Run (1940) revised Oklahoma history by documenting the dispossession of Indian lands in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Prairie City (1944) she wrote a fictional pioneer history that provided a historical glimpse into early Oklahoma settlements and their development. Debo contributed to the understanding of Oklahomans in an interpretation of the spirit of the people in Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free (1949). In 1951 Debo presented a follow-up work, The Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma: Report on Social and Economic Conditions, on the status of the full-bloods among the Five Tribes that she studied in And Still the Waters Run. In 1970 she authored a textbook on American Indians titled A

History of the Indians of the United States. In her last book, Geronimo: The Man, His Time, His Place, Debo altered the perception of the famous warrior by dispelling the myths that surrounded his legacy in a sympathetic biography.

This dissertation is divided into seven chapters and an addendum. Chapter 1 presents the pioneer background that framed the life of Angie Debo. A woman from the small rural town of Marshall, Oklahoma, who benefited from the serenity of her surroundings. She acquired the kind of self-discipline that allowed her to succeed as a non-traditional woman. She never married and supported herself through various jobs and royalties from her published books. This self-discipline provided her with the patience and dedication needed in conducting historical research. It required long hours of solitary work. She grounded herself in the importance of historical writing by falling back on her own personal experiences and interest in history. She considered herself a pioneer because her family migrated from Kansas when she was a young girl. She witnessed the hardships of establishing a new home in a new location under unusual circumstances. Debo's hometown became her extended family, her support group after her parents and brother died, and her work station. After the research had been completed she retreated to the solitude of Marshall to write her manuscripts. Education became the cornerstone to Debo's success. At the age of seventeen she accepted a teaching position at a nearby high school. This work enabled her to save money to attend college, to continue her studies into graduate school, and finally to pursue a terminal degree in history. Her inquisitive mind was evident in the activities she pursued as a child. She possessed an insatiable desire for knowledge and this desire served her well as a researcher. On the college level Debo

encountered E. E. Dale who shared a similar background and who would become her mentor and a lifelong friend.

Chapter II begins with a brief history of the University of Oklahoma Press under Joseph Brandt and his association with Angie Debo. Debo's doctoral dissertation launched her writing career. Proof of her writing ability, the publishing of her dissertation and subsequent receipt of the prestigious Dunning award from the American Historical Association, led Debo to dedicate her time to historical research and publication. The dissertation also led to her first confrontation with Muriel Wright who was offended by Debo's interpretation of her kin. The writing of The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic encouraged Debo to find answers to her questions concerning the liquidation of tribal governments and lands among the Five Tribes, the subject of her second book. The controversy surrounding the publication of And Still the Waters Run by the University of Oklahoma Press is discussed in its entirety.

Chapter III investigates the question of gender discrimination. A brief review of educational opportunities for women in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century provides an introduction. Debo took advantage of the changes occurring in the educational system to fulfill her personal goals but she became a historian long before women were welcomed into the field. Studies by Jacqueline Goggin, Jesse Bernard, Barbara Solomon, Patricia Graham, and Susan Carter examine different aspects of gender-related issues. Debo's personal experiences parallel the discussion of gender issues for women historians with Ph.D.'s Her experiences as a teacher at West Texas State Teachers' College and subsequent decision to leave the college for a writing career are fully explored.

Chapter IV presents Debo's work with the Indian Pioneer History Project under Grant Foreman in 1937 and as the director of the Oklahoma Federal Writers' Project in 1940. A passion to write drove her to sabotage the jobs she obtained, particularly early in her career, resulting in a poor work record. She was awarded a Knopf fellowship in 1942 and a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship in 1947 that provided financial assistance for the continuation of her writing career in the 1940s.

Chapter V explores Debo's career at Oklahoma State University as curator of maps, her work as a writer in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, and her role as an Indian activist and a member of the board of the Oklahoma ACLU. It includes the story behind the writing of Geronimo: The Man. His Time, His Place.

Chapter VI analyzes Debo's legacy and her approach to writing Indian history. A critique of the documentary, Indians, Outlaws and Angie Debo, provides the platform to assess what Debo's peers say about her contribution to the historical field. It is difficult to place Debo in a particular historiographical school because several trends influenced her writing over a career spanning sixty-five years. Her work places her in the "New History" written in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Debo's initial work on tribal histories predated the emergence of ethnohistory yet she applied some of the elements later employed. She has been identified as a pioneer in Indian history. She deviated from the way Indian history had been written previously. Historians used state and federal government documents to write Indian history from the non-Indian perspective. Debo used tribal records, unpublished travel reports, missionary correspondence, and anthropological studies to present Indians as an active force in determining their own future. Debo included a new component of social consciousness in writing about the

cultural conflict between Euroamericans and Indians. Although not of Indian heritage, Debo was able to incorporate certain elements into her writing that made her approach more sympathetic to the Indian cause. Different factors influenced Debo in this new approach. Joseph Brandt's establishment of an Indian series at the University of Oklahoma Press provided the platform for Debo's work. E. E. Dale and Grant Foreman and their respective work in Indian history established mentors to guide Debo's research. Changes within the historical field during the 1930s brought to light various new avenues to historical research. Debo's work as an Indian historian has lasting value due to the approach she used to interpret her findings.

The final chapter utilizes an article by James Axtell, "A Moral History of Indian-White Relations Revisited." The article lends itself to a discussion on the tone that Debo used in writing And Still the Waters Run. Her approach to writing history as an Indian advocate is considered; The problems all Indian historians have in attempting to recover the Indian voice is recognized. Finally a review of recent literature is presented.

An addendum has been included to give access to material from the unpublished manuscript of And Still the Waters Run not previously available to researchers. Until this material was placed on microfilm in 1992, researchers could not use it because of its fragility. The first part of the addendum revisits the publication difficulties surrounding And Still the Waters Run. It highlights Chapter Four of the book with the intention of explaining the revisions Brandt and Debo made in order to get Princeton Press to publish it. The following parts of the addendum use Debo's published edition from Chapter Five to Chapter Fourteen to fill in the details of circumstances found in the unpublished manuscript. The information is part of the historical record emphasizing the enormity of

the scandal involving the removal of land from the Five Tribes. It adds details to the schemes of land speculators, to the rationale of government officials, and to the motivations of politicians that enables readers to comprehend the historical period more fully. The value of the addendum can be measured in the actual work undertaken in reweaving the two parts together. In other words, parts of the unpublished manuscript have been placed within the expunged edition that is discussed. For a researcher wanting to use the unpublished manuscript as a source, the painstaking working of making sense of it has been done for them.

A comprehensive biography has not been written about Angie Debo. Her life spanned ninety-eight years. She lived through the major historical events shaping the twentieth century. She witnessed the impact of historical events on American society and the State of Oklahoma. Outside the academic community, the general public does not know who Angie Debo is. The writing of all historians is influenced by various factors – life experiences, religious beliefs, political affiliations, and the genre in which the writing takes place. Debo's writing reflects the impact of a pioneer background, a strong religious faith, a political ideology in line with Progressivism, and the opportunity to live and write at a time when major historic events were occurring. As a historian she found much fault with the Progressive reform movement and became a detractor as she continued her research into the liquidation of the estates of the Five Tribes. She did not ever waiver concerning her opinion of the role of government in a democratic society. She supported New Deal policies, and fought for just legislation in the 1970s for Alaska's Inuits and Arizona's Pimas and Havasupais, all in an effort to indicate that government had the capacity to make the society more inclusive. Debo adapted to changes withing the society

as well as changes within the historical field. She began writing as "New Social History" emerged among historians, used her own innovative methods to predate ethnohistory by contributing to a more Indian-centered history. Debo does not fit neatly into one historiographical or political slot; this makes for a challenging biographical study. Debo left a wealth of documentation, not only of her writings, but also of her life experiences in the form of diaries and interviews.

There are two main repositories of information about Debo. She left her business and personal papers, diaries, research material, recent interviews, and memorabilia to the Edmon Low library on the Oklahoma State University campus in Stillwater, Oklahoma. The Western History Collections at the University of Oklahoma in Norman contain Debo's papers from 1939 to 1976. It also contains additional files pertaining to her writings and correspondence with the editors of the University of Oklahoma Press and correspondence with E. E. Dale and Grant Foreman. In the archives and manuscript division of the Oklahoma Historical Society, files containing information about Debo's work on the WPA Project in Oklahoma, including the Writers' Project, provide information about Debo's work record. There are additional sources of information in Muriel Wright's papers and those of Grant Foreman. Files on Debo's activities can be found at West Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University (formerly West Texas State Teachers' College) in Canyon, Texas, where Debo began her academic career as well as at the Panhandle Plains Museum where Debo served as the curator. A close friend of Angie Debo, Gerry Schaefer, lives in Marshall and provided personal details spanning almost a half century that proved invaluable to me in completing the story I wanted to tell. Recent

interviews with prominent historians who knew Debo are available in her papers in Stillwater.

In writing a biography of Angie Debo I ran into a problem with language usage; particularly in discussing Debo's books on the Choctaws, Creeks, and the Five Tribes. I made a decision initially to reconstruct Debo's life and writings using the language of her time period. In discussing the book And Still the Waters Run Debo used the term "Indian" to describe the Native American population. She used the term "grafter" because it best described those individuals involved in the corruption she documented. Debo used the folk imagery of "blood quantum" to describe the cultural divisions among tribal members. These terms are considered dated and have been changed to more acceptable ones in the last two decades. Problems arise in writing a biography because the subject's language contributes to the overall understanding of the time period. Ethnohistorians and American Indian historians have eliminated terms that they found ethnocentric and have replaced them. The Five Civilized Tribes are now referred to as the Five Tribes because the word *civilized* implied a European connotation of what was considered civilized. Until the "savages" could be Christianized, America's settlers classified them outside the realms of civilized society. The term full-blood, mixed-blood or mixed-breed referred to quantum blood. The idea that culture could be transmitted through a full-blood distinction is out-dated. Europeans used their concept of race in reference to the mixing of blood lines as Indians and whites intermarried and produced children. The European class structure, in the minds of those who migrated to a new country, demanded a distinction between those who were considered full-bloods and those who were not. These terms took on added significance for both cultural groups as interaction increased and particularly as whites

required tribal members to assimilate. When Debo wrote of registering tribal members on the rolls for allotment of land, the determination of status, full-blood, mixed-blood or freedman, was noted. These terms are part of the history of the relationship between Indians and Euroamericans and cannot be effectively altered to establish the same meaning and understanding.

Many people helped make this dissertation possible. Heather Lloyd in Special Collections at the Edmon Low library made documents available to me and provided additional information from her personal knowledge of Debo. John Lovett at the Western History Collections assisted me in reviewing files relating to Debo. Mary Jane Warde encouraged me throughout the process sharing her experiences with me. I want to acknowledge my appreciation to a special educator, Lou Seig, who has been steadfast in his tireless support of my efforts. I appreciate the time George Moses spent editing and giving constructive criticism to the dissertation as chairman of my committee. I would like to also thank the other members of the committee, Paul Bischoff and James Cooper.

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CHAPTER I

DEBO'S PIONEER BACKGROUND

Angie Debo moved to Oklahoma as white settlement permanently altered Indian Territory. Debo arrived in Oklahoma Territory amidst historic changes. Congressional directives required a land survey of Indian Territory in 1895, enrollment of tribal members in 1896, and with the Curtis Act, ended tribal government in 1898. Congress changed the status of Indian inhabitants to prepare for the settlement of the land by whites. Conditions favoring white settlement stripped Native Americans of tribal government, forced relinquishment of communal land holdings, and reduced many to poverty. Debo wrote about the plight of Native Americans during this period and beyond; she documented the Five Tribes' battle against land-hungry white interests well into the twentieth century.

Debo's books filled a void in the historical recounting of this period. Prior to her work, historians had not researched the consequences of government policies upon the Five Tribes nor had historians written much about Indians in general. Debo encountered trouble publishing the data she documented because she saw Oklahoma History as a history of omission. Early Oklahoma historians laced their writings with a "booster" spirit.[1] Debo was a nontraditional historian who objected to this portrayal, once she discovered the truth behind the legends of pioneer Oklahoma. Controversy erupted over the publication of the manuscript, <u>And Still the Waters Run</u>, pitting Debo and Joseph

Brandt, editor of the University of Oklahoma Press, against the University of Oklahoma President W. B. Bizzell, and history professor, Morris Wardell. After a great deal of frustration, Angie Debo decided to nullify her contract with the University of Oklahoma Press.[2]

The publication of And Still The Waters Run led Debo into a lifelong investigation of Native Americans, specifically the Five Tribes, and their experiences within the Euroamerican society. Debo's publications expanded beyond the narrow subject of the dispossession of Indian lands. She wrote extensive histories of the Creeks and Choctaws; she wrote a frontier history based on her hometown of Marshall, and she contributed to a fuller understanding of the Native American in an important biography of Geronimo after his capture. She authored nine books and edited four. She contributed chapters in three other works and made contributions to encyclopedias, historical dictionaries, almanacs, newspapers, and periodicals. She wrote hundreds of book reviews and articles and wrote forewards to four other works.[3]

This dissertation examines the life of a woman who became a unique historian. Debo's accomplishments include a lifetime of historical writing and activism for Native American groups and the Oklahoma Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. Debo distinguished herself as a historian of Native American history.

The story of Angie Debo, often told in her own words through diaries and interviews, is filled with details of a focused woman. From early childhood Debo expressed an interest in writing. She pursued an accurate portrayal of history in childhood games and learned the meaning of precision in writing early in her life. Born January 30, 1890 on a farm near Beattie in Geary County, Kansas, Angie Debo lived to be ninety-eight

years old. Debo described her family as sharecroppers in Kansas. Debo's father, Edward, gave one third of his annual crop to the landowner. Young farmers often had to start this way in order to buy land of their own someday. Debo lived in Beattie until she was five and a half years of age. Debo's father moved the family three times while in Kansas in an attempt to gain enough capital to purchase a farm.[4] Kansas farmers were facing hard times as the 1893 depression lowered prices for wheat and corn.[5] When Debo was almost six, the family moved to an area north of present day Geary County. She recalled in later years the limestone hills covered with blue stem grass. The cattle grazed on the rich grass all summer. A farm community developed in the eight-mile flat region within the hills. Edward rented the land he farmed north of Geary County. They lived in the rural community called Welcome for four and a half years. The nearest town was nine miles away. One had to cross the limestone hills to go anywhere. Fort Riley was on the other side of the hills. The fort served as the county seat and had a rural school and churches. The Debo family occasionally attended the German Baptist Church. Angie worked with her father in the fields and helped her mother, Lina, with domestic chores. She had a younger brother, Edwin, and she remembered in great detail the family's financial troubles, the lean times, and the various places she lived.[6]

At the age of six, Debo discovered an unusual ability to speak before an audience. She was given a part in a community play and relished her newly-discovered ability to capture the attention of a crowd. At this point she decided she wanted to be a teacher. Several families acquainted with the Debos moved to Oklahoma, so Edward decided to follow their lead. Debo's father traveled in a buckboard with the farm equipment piled in the back, while the mother and two children followed in a small covered wagon. Angie was almost nine years old when she made the trek across the Kansas border into Oklahoma Territory. She remembered

walking intermittently with her brother to break up the long wagon ride. The Debo family arrived in March; but it was not until November, 1899 that Edward bought a farm from an original homesteader for $1,400. A good farm with potential sold for $2,000. Edward had $600 in his pocket when he arrived in Oklahoma. When Angie and Edwin decided on a spot on the farm to establish their playhouse, she remembered feeling like a true Oklahoman.[7] Debo spent much of the remainder of her life of eighty-nine years in Marshall, Oklahoma, the small town that became her home. Debo vividly recorded her experiences in daily entries in a diary.[8]

By the time Oklahoma gained statehood, Marshall had a population of three hundred sixty-four people, and it was the center of the farming community and a crossroads for trade. The Santa Fe railroad conducted a lively passenger service through the town.[9] In later life, Debo was one of a few Marshall inhabitants who could recall its settlement days. She remembered seeing sod houses, hearing about the "land run" of 1889, and recalled the crossroads trading post that gave birth to the town of Marshall. She recalled the stories of difficult early years when money was scarce and the settlers went shoeless.[10]

As a young child, Debo possessed an unusual devotion to nature. She noted in her diary the arrival and departure date of the mockingbird. She named all of the family's barnyard animals, treating them with great care. She described her father tucking the trees into the ground when he planted them and noted certain classifications of flowers in her diary. At the age of sixty, when she interviewed Apache Indians at Fort Sill for her research on Geronimo, she impressed the Apaches with the number of wildflowers she recognized. Debo's close attention to detail and her gift of keen observation, traits that carried over into her research and writing, appeared early and remained with her throughout her long life.

The early diary entries also illustrate Debo's interest in history. She noted the date March 11, 1898, the day the Maine sank in Havana harbor. Her teacher pointed out where it had happened on the map. In her diary she noted seeing the Cuban flag flying under the flag of the United States in Marshall that day. She named two ponds near her home Lake Superior and Lake Michigan, and she and her younger brother, Edwin, battled Indians at their imaginary fort called Saint Augustine. The games she and her brother played on the prairies held a special place in the young writer's heart because they often reflected her affection for historical and geographic subjects. Debo's brother is mentioned infrequently in the diaries. Edwin and Angie experienced a normal childhood in Marshall, but he died early in adulthood.

Debo was a pious child who noted the Sunday school lesson in her diary and discussed its meaning. Even when the family did not attend services at the Methodist Church, Angie noted the chapters included in the lesson for the week. Genuine piety led Debo to serve as special minister of the Methodist Church in Marshall during World War II when men were in short supply. Though pious, Debo was a typical child who begrudgingly rewrote her diary entries at her mother's request. Her mother complained that childhood laziness contributed to the general sloppiness of Debo's entries. Perhaps her mother had planted the seed in Debo's mind about the importance of careful, clear writing.[11]

The passage of the Organic Act of 1890 enabled the newly-elected Oklahoma Legislature to establish school systems for developing towns like Marshall. Debo characterized Marshall as distinctive because of the creativity and drive of its citizenry who decided to make Marshall an educational center. Early in her life, Debo sensed the importance of education. Debo's interest in recording daily experiences in a diary, her attention to historical events, and her inquisitive mind encouraged the need for continuing education. The men in the town of

Marshall traveled to the banks of the Cimarron River for lumber to use in the construction of the schoolhouse. By spring the community completed the construction of the schoolhouse that doubled as a community center. Marshall's first school term lasted only three months but eventually extended to eight months. The Organic Act provided $50,000 to fund teachers' salaries for the territory until taxes could be collected; teachers' salaries amounted to $27.50 per month. Teachers in Marshall attended at least two years of college to qualify as instructors. Other schools in Oklahoma Territory held six-month sessions for their children; their teachers were considered undereducated. If they passed a teacher certification examination and possessed some experience, they could teach.[12]

From an early age, Debo loved to read and write. She enjoyed McGuffy's readers and, at the age of eight, read Uncle Tom's Cabin on her mother's recommendation. In her diary she copied her favorite chapters, word for word. Due to financial limitations, her parents could provide her with few books to read.[13] In school she and her brother bought books used by the older students to challenge themselves. She was so eager to learn, she sat on the front row of the class; the teacher helped Angie with difficult words each time she asked.[14] One of Debo's teachers, Miss Gleason, recognized her love for reading and encouraged her by having her stay after school to read aloud daily. What Debo gleaned from her early infatuation with books was their ability to transport the reader beyond a limited personal experience.

Miss Gleason was accused of discrimination and was called before the school board. Her career hung in the balance because parents accused her of favoring Catholic children. Even though she was not terminated, she left that particular school. Debo was upset about Miss Gleason's departure and related her feelings to her parents. She knew the accusations were not true because she was not Catholic, and Miss Gleason gave her extra time each day.

Debo proclaimed she would never be a part of such discriminatory actions.[15] This early experience with discrimination developed in Debo a sensitivity toward interpersonal relationships. In her life she would experience job discrimination and perceived attacks on her writing from critics. The focus of much of her research, the Five Tribes, represented a group relegated to a peripheral position in the American society. Debo's advocacy framed the histories she wrote of the Choctaws and Creeks, formed the basis for her work in the liquidation of tribal lands, and laid the foundation for a sympathetic treatment of Geronimo in her last work. No doubt this childhood experience was a defining one for Debo. It influenced her perceptions, her work, and later manifested itself into political activism.

Debo's enthusiasm for reading led ultimately to her career as a writer. As a young child she dreamed of writing a book about prairie wildflowers. In 1902 Debo finished primary school and received a common school diploma at twelve years of age. Debo postponed further education because a high school had not been incorporated in Marshall. She remembered the four years between her last year in school and her sixteenth birthday as a frustrating time; she was stifled intellectually. Debo took the territorial examination at age twelve, passed it, and began looking for work at age fourteen, though she looked too young to be hired for most jobs. At the age of sixteen, she took the examination that certified her as a teacher. In 1907 she obtained her first job at a school called Cracker Box located outside of Covington. She was called to finish the term for a teacher. With this experience, she was able to gain employment later in the environs of Marshall. She taught high school two years from 1908-1910. Debo averaged a salary of thirty-five dollars a month, two dollars of which paid monthly room and board. She made about $100 for three months work and with the remainder of her salary, Debo created a college fund for herself.[16]

Throughout her early adult years, Debo's teaching career provided the vehicle to further her own education. Debo taught school until the upper three grades of the high school in Marshall were incorporated. In order to attend high school Debo took a two-day examination required by the Territorial Superintendent of Public Instruction; she qualified with a high score. At the age of nineteen, she entered secondary school with the other students of high school age. When Marshall did incorporate the first year of high school, Debo rode three and a half miles each day to complete her freshman year.[17] As an older student with teaching experience, Debo was a serious student. She often took over the role of disciplinarian from Miss Floy, the assigned teacher, by establishing consequences for misbehavior. She was not going to allow unruly farm boys to disrupt the education she valued so highly.[18]

Debo graduated in 1913 at the age of twenty-three with the first graduating class of Marshall. Mr. Castleberry, one of Debo's teachers, had advised her to major in English in college and pursue a writing career. She returned to the teaching profession for two more years to augment her college savings. She entered the University of Oklahoma in 1915 with the idea of majoring in English, but professional writing still intrigued her. As a result of her years in the classroom, Debo knew she did not want to grade English themes for the rest of her life. Unfortunately, courses in professional writing did not exist at the time. Based on her love of nature, Debo considered a degree in Geology, but she suspected that field was impractical for women; men dominated the field. Debo reached a critical point in her college studies. She had to decide what career to pursue.

As an undergraduate, Debo met Edward Everett Dale, a graduate student in history at the University of Oklahoma who had just completed a year of study at Harvard under Fredrick Jackson Turner. Turner instilled an appreciation of the study of the American West in Dale.

Dale obtained his Master's degree from Harvard in 1913 and completed his doctorate eleven years later in 1922. He held a position as an instructor at the University of Oklahoma in 1915 and became an assistant professor in 1918. Dale incorporated Turner's methods of conducting historical research into his undergraduate courses at the University of Oklahoma.[19] Turner, an archivist and researcher, instilled in his students the importance of framing historical writing within a regional context. He stressed the use of maps, geography, geology, and county records as sources of historical research.[20] As a sophomore Debo took Dale's Colonial American History class where she learned how to take notes, organize material, outline, and write term papers. Dale's instruction in historical research equipped the aspiring writer with the only formal training she received. Dale imparted the uniqueness of Oklahoma History to his students from the interest he developed in the West under the tutelage of Turner. Debo graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1918 with a degree in history.[21]

Debo developed a lifelong relationship with Dale because they had similar backgrounds. They both grew up on the frontier; both obtained high school diplomas as older students, a rarity at that time. Dale was twenty-seven when he graduated from high school. Both used their income from teaching to supplement funds for education. Both possessed writing abilities. Dale's enthusiasm for historical research influenced Debo's writing career. He served as a role model by instructing her in the methods of conducting historical research.[22]

After applying to numerous graduate schools, Debo returned to her teaching career to save money for tuition. She served as village principal in North Enid from 1918 to 1919 and taught history for four years at Enid high school (1919-1923).[23]

Two graduate schools, Columbia University and the University of Chicago, accepted Debo into their programs. After careful consideration, she decided to attend Chicago, instead

of the more distant Columbia. In Debo's opinion Chicago offered a better history department than Columbia and possessed a national reputation for innovation in graduate education. Chicago's History department also attracted Debo because of well-known historians like Avery Craven and William E. Dodd. She expected the level of scholarship to be superior to other schools. She thought Chicago's urban environment would be beneficial for a rural girl like herself.

As a student, Debo took advantage of the outstanding group of historians assembled at the university. She took Dodd's course on the Old South. Debo impressed her professors, particularly J. Fred Rippy who taught a course about the Americas in World Affairs. Debo questioned the origins of American isolationism suggesting it dated back to a statement by John Adams before independence. She uncovered information on the topic that historians had overlooked; Rippy agreed and encouraged Debo to advance her interpretation of American isolationism based on material she researched for a master's thesis. Dodd encouraged her to work exclusively on this thesis and accepted it in his class as a term theme.

Isolationism was a significant issue in American foreign policy in 1923. Woodrow Wilson had just failed to win senate approval for the Versailles Treaty and the League of Nations, so it was the subject of much discourse at the time. Historians assumed America's isolationism stemmed from Washington's comments about foreign entanglements in his farewell address. Debo discovered that prior discussions ensued among American leaders as early as the debate over independence. Those who did not want to declare independence spoke in favor of isolationism as well as those who desired independence. Debo claimed the Europeans accepted America's desire for isolation even though the U.S. eventually made an alliance with France. Debo read the Treaty of Alliance and found two treaties instead of one, a

commercial one and the one spelling out an alliance. The alliance carefully indicated the protection given a neutral ally to prevent entanglement. She produced a well-written work that Rippy co-authored and Smith College published in 1924 called The Historical Background of the American Policy of Isolation. Her thoroughness and attention to detail paid off. The publication of her Master's thesis confirmed Debo's ability to write and brought her great satisfaction.[24]

After completing her Master's degree at the University of Chicago, Debo returned to Marshall and applied for jobs in the academic field. As the top graduate from the University of Chicago, she wrote to every college for which she could obtain an address. As she filled out job applications, Debo was aware the history department at the University of Chicago received inquiries from universities throughout the country searching for history professors. The year Debo searched for an academic position, the history department received notification of thirty open teaching positions in the field. All but one school accepted applications from men only. Debo feared the academic field was closed to women. She asked the only female professor at the University of Chicago how she secured a teaching position. She was hired to replace a male professor during World War I; but the University did not let her go when the war ended because she had become indispensable.[25]

Debo received and accepted a job offer from West Texas State Teachers' College in Canyon, Texas. J. Fred Rippy helped her secure the position. She was comfortable in the Texas Panhandle because of her rural background. The historic legacy of West Texas and the cattle industry reminded Debo of her homesteading days in Marshall. The region was called the high plains and was so flat one could not discern the canyon near the West Texas State campus. It was comparable to the Grand Canyon but not so deep. Its walls measured 800 feet

high in some places, and the Red River had carved these steep sides over time. From 1924 until 1933, Debo was a faculty member in the teaching facility and in the history department. In 1933, she took a job as the curator of the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum on the West Texas State campus. Debo found time to write several short stories but sold only one for publication. She discovered a need to further her education because her writing lacked a professional touch. As an instructor at West Texas State, Debo taught methods courses to prospective high school history teachers. She considered her work at West Texas important to the educational development of the panhandle area. West Texas supplied well-trained teachers to teach in the schools in this region. In addition to her teaching duties, Debo made an important decision regarding the literary path she wished to pursue. One semester she taught a course using Walter Prescott Webb's book, The Great Plains. Her students shared songs their fathers had taught them while corralling cattle herds at night. Their infectious enthusiasm toward their heritage as cowboys influenced Debo to change her literary focus to Western history, particularly local history. Debo established a valuable foundation for future work by exposing herself to the pioneer history of Texas cow country. It enhanced her vast personal knowledge of homesteading in Oklahoma.[26]

With few available books and limited resources at West Texas State, Debo was unable to conduct meaningful research in Canyon. Writing had been her ultimate goal. In assessing the situation, Debo decided the only way to continue her writing career and eventually bridge the gap with publishing companies was through more education. After a decade of work at West Texas State, Debo decided to continue her education at the University of Oklahoma where plans were underway to develop a doctoral program in the history department.[27] The specific dates regarding Debo's attendance at the University of Oklahoma are discussed in

detail in Chapter III. Debo thought that a higher degree was needed to gain academic positions, but these positions were male-dominated. Getting her work published was Debo's goal. She completed the doctoral program in 1933 hoping the degree would help gain access to publishing companies.[28]

As a doctoral candidate, Debo submitted numerous papers from seminar classes to professional historical journals; all were published. Her advisor, Dr. E. E. Dale, recommended a dissertation on the Choctaw Indians because no one had used the original manuscripts, "Acts of the Choctaw Nation," and related documents located at the University of Oklahoma.[29] Frank Phillips, a wealthy oil man, financed the project to preserve documents of interest for the use of western historians. Dale organized and administered the "Frank Phillips Collection" later renamed the "Western History Collections."[30] Debo knew little about the Choctaws. The memory of her father's stories about his ventures to California during the 1849 Gold Rush heightened her curiosity about Indians. Her father encountered only peaceful Indians. He respected their culture by referring to them by their distinctive tribal names.[31]

Debo was fortunate to have access to primary source materials from the Choctaw records. Grant Foreman, a reader for Debo's dissertation, was responsible for having the "Choctaw Union Agency Files" classified. After the Civil War, the four agencies of the Five Tribes were consolidated into the Union Agency under a single federal official–the superintendent.[32] The Choctaw Union Agency files contained documents from the principle chiefs, census data, election returns, county and court records that were housed in the office of the Superintendent for the Five Tribes in Muskogee, Oklahoma.[33] Foreman visited Washington, D.C. and convinced W. W. Hastings, congressional member from the second district, to help him. They petitioned the Interior Department to release tribal records to

Oklahoma for safekeeping in a new museum. The officials agreed to the release when the building was completed. Once the Oklahoma Historical Society was established, Foreman gained permission to sift through the mounds of tribal manuscripts and organize them so historians like Debo could use them. In 1929 Foreman hired a capable woman, Rella Watts, to classify and card them. When she completed the task in 1934 she had amassed 40,000 cards representing the tribal manuscripts. These materials became the Indian Archives Division of the society.[34]

The history of Native Americans intrigued Debo because of her lack of general knowledge about the subject. After Dale's suggestion, Debo completed the dissertation that, in turn, launched a lifelong literary career concerning the struggle between the white and Native American cultures. Debo knew she could write but wondered whether she could find anyone to publish her work. She feared the publishing world, as academe, might be closed to female historians.

NOTES

[1]For information on early literature, see Anne H. and H. Wayne Morgan's Oklahoma New Views of the Forty-Sixth State (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982):175. Also Chapter VI, "Oklahoma's Story Recording the History of the Forty-sixth State," by Rennard Strickland.

[2]Angie Debo to Joseph Brandt, July 23, 1937, University of Oklahoma Press Collection, hereafter referred to as UOPC, Western History Collection, hereafter referred to as WHC, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma).

[3]"Debo autobiographical sketch," 14-21. Stillwater: College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of History, Oklahoma State University, 1988.

[4]Oral History, Box 29 Debo Interview 7-10-85, Angie Debo Collection, hereafter referred to as ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[5]Kenneth McIntosh, "Geronimo's Friend: Angie Debo and the New History," The Chronicles of Oklahoma 66 (Summer 1988):164.

[6]Oral History, Box 29 Debo Interview 7-10-85, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Angie Debo diary entry, March 1898 to May 22, 1898. May 4, 1901 to June 25, 1901, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[9]Debo Interview 84-11-11 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Diary, May 4, 1901- June 25, 1901, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Oral History, Box 29, Debo Interview 7-10-85, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[15]McIntosh, "Geronimo's Friend Angie Debo," 165.

[16]Oral History, Winnie Braden Interview, Box 29, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[17]Debo Interview 81-11-20 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[18]Connie Cronley, "Miss Floy's Disciplinarian," Oklahoma Monthly, April 1977, 42-44, Box 100c, folder 27, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[19]Oral History, Box 29 Debo Interview 7-10-85, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[20]McIntosh, "Geronimo's Friend: Angie Debo,"170.

[21]Debo Interview 81-11-20 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[22]Ibid.

[23]"Debo autobiographical sketch," ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[24]Debo Interview 81-11-20 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[25]Debo Interview 81-12-12 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[26]Debo Interview 81-12-16 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[27]Richard Lowitt, "Dear Miss Debo: The Correspondence of E. E. Dale and Angie Debo," The Chronicles of Oklahoma LXXVII (Winter 2000):374.

[28]Debo Interview 81-12-12 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Lowitt, "Dear Miss Debo,"404.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Arrel Gibson, Oklahoma: A History of Five Centuries (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981): 132.

[33]Angie Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934): x.

[34]Grant Foreman to Brandt, August 3, 1933, Box 65, folder 7, University of Oklahoma Press Collection, Norman, Oklahoma. The name of the woman was not mentioned in the letter but was mentioned in the article by Stanley Clark, "Grant Foreman, The Chronicles of Oklahoma 31 (Autumn 1953):226-242.

CHAPTER II

DEBO'S EARLY WRITING CAREER

In 1928 the University of Oklahoma Press hired Joseph Brandt as its first editor. Two years later Brandt conceived an idea to promote Indian studies on the university campus. Upon this initiative and with the approval of Oklahoma University's President William Bizzell, Brandt pursued the idea of establishing an Indian Institute, a library containing Indian works. The institute would also allow Indians and non-Indians to meet at annual conferences to discuss pertinent issues. Brandt suggested Indian courses be introduced into the college curriculum. These ideas stood to date as the most advanced program of Indian study programs in the United States. Indian students had been pressing for a museum since 1915. Faculty members E. E. Dale of the history department and Maurice Smith of the Anthropology department encouraged Indian studies. Dale had been a member of the Meriam Commission and a participant in drafting the Meriam Report published in 1928 stating that Indian assimilation could not be forced and created a change of policy.[1] He favored Indian courses in art, culture, and history for Indian students. He taught a course on the American Indian, the first of its kind on the college level in the country.[2] Although the institute did not materialize along the lines Brandt and Bizzell envisioned, Brandt inaugurated a series of publications through the University of Oklahoma Press titled "The Civilization of the American Indian" in 1932.[3] This series

incorporated the publication aspect of the institute as envisioned by Brandt. The University of Oklahoma Press gained a national reputation of excellence among academic publishing companies through its Indian series.[4] Brandt and the series would give Angie Debo the impetus she needed to launch a successful writing career.

Debo worked on her dissertation during the Depression with grants-in-aid and with a fellowship from the University of Oklahoma. Debo held the position of university fellow from 1930 to 1931.[5] When she had finished each chapter, Debo would send them to Dale for review. Dale shared the first chapters with colleagues, Morris Wardell and Ralph Records. They all suggested shortening the first chapter, but Dale thought Debo used too much secondary source material. Debo defended herself by explaining she had used upwards of six primary for every secondary source in each footnote. Dale had looked at one chapter where there were 128 citations out of which 6 were secondary. He warned Debo about citing information found in articles from The Chronicles of Oklahoma. The authors of the articles had limited experience in historical research and must be used carefully. Dale criticized the use of Muriel Wright and Joseph Thoburn's work. Thoburn was the director of the Oklahoma Historical Society. Both knew Oklahoma history well but were not trained historians. Dale did not believe their 1929 book Oklahoma: A History of the State and its People was a significant source. Morris Wardell, one of the readers for Debo's dissertation agreed with Dale's criticism.[6]

In this first encounter as Debo's mentor, Dale established the ground rules for their association. As a mentor Dale did not like to argue with his students on research topics about which they had become experts. He said that he could not imagine arguing with Frederick Turner who oversaw his dissertation. He refused to defend his criticisms once

he made suggestions. He simply wanted the students to have the suggestions and to evaluate them from their own perspective. The thesis belonged to the student. Nor did he mind if students defended their positions believing they must be able to think for themselves. Dale made his suggestions after careful consideration.[7] He did remind Debo that she had to satisfy her committee consisting of C. C. Coker, Cortez Ewing, Asa K. Christian, and Alfred B. Thomas.[8]

Debo responded to Dale's criticisms in a cooperative spirit. She defended her use of limited secondary sources. She would remove the information by Wright and Thorburn if Dale did not care for them. Dale left the decision up to Debo who did not remove the information from the dissertation.[9] In this important initial confrontation Dale and Debo established their positions. Dale's response indicated an unwillingness to be confrontational in his dealings with people. He preferred an informal relationship with students yet realized it left him in a precarious position in his role as mentor. Debo, on the other hand, was a strong-willed individual whose drive to become a writer was passionate. She said she would have complied with Dale's suggestions about Wright and Thorburn but was, most probably, testing his position. Debo, by staunchly defending her ideas, established herself as an independent scholar. She was free to interpret her research as she saw fit with few objections from peers. The dynamics between these two historians explain much about their future interactions and help reveal Debo's professional and personal character.[10]

When Debo completed her research on the Choctaws, she believed the dissertation suited Brandt's criteria for the Indian series. Brandt read Debo's dissertation and agreed that it enhanced the Indian series. A problem arose when the director of the press notified Debo that the graduate school required free distribution of one hundred copies of her dissertation.

The press could not publish her manuscript because this action would have decreased the size of the market. She would have to pay for the printing of these copies, and she had no extra funds to spend at this point in time. Debo wrote to the dean of the graduate school inquiring about possible solutions. She suggested providing a summary instead of the manuscript. She enlisted the help of Dale who served on the graduate council. The dean allowed Debo to submit an abstract for a minimum cost of ten dollars to satisfy the requirement.[11]

The University of Oklahoma Press published Debo's dissertation under the title The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Nation in 1934. She decided on the title because the book described the disintegration of an Indian culture. Debo dedicated the work to the memory of her younger brother because he had encouraged her in this project.[12] Debo chose not to dedicate the book to Dale who had been instrumental in its inception and completion. In fact she made no acknowledgment of his help or interest. She found it difficult to put her gratitude in words; later she rationalized it by saying she agreed with Oklahoma press editor, Joseph Brandt, who thought identifying the book with her dissertation might hamper its sales. She asked Dale if he had considered sending a copy of her book to Frank Phillips to thank him for his interest and financial support of Western history. He thought that was a good idea. At this point in Debo's life she was unwilling to acknowledge that her literary success, to a certain degree, was the result of an effort involving many people in addition to her own efforts. Over time she became more confident of her abilities and less threatened by acknowledging those who helped her.[13]

Debo's work received widespread newspaper coverage as well as national recognition from scholarly journals. Annie H. Able, reviewed the book in The American Historical Review, July 1935, and called the work, "a genuine contribution to our knowledge…the

narrative is most illuminating and instructive and to American pride, not at all flattering."[14] The significance of the review by a respected female historian should be noted. The New York Times called it "the first thorough treatment of the Choctaw people."[15]

Debo thought the recognition significant because so little had been written about this subject. The University of Oklahoma Press published John Joseph Mathew's Wah' Kon-tah the Osage and the White Man's Road in 1932. Mathews depicted life on the Osage reservation by using the diaries of Indian Agent Laban Miles. The author became an interpreter of Osage actions thereby presenting a view of the tribe from inside out. The book was the New York Times Book of the Month Club selection.[16] Debo thought Matthew's success may have indirectly influenced the positive reception of her book.

Debo wrote this account of the Choctaw Nation from an interdisciplinary perspective by including information about clans. She used anthropological data in describing Native Americans from the time of European contact to the early decades of the twentieth century. Debo used several of John R. Swanton's works as anthropological sources. She found two articles particularly helpful, "Aboriginal Culture of the Southeast," published by the Bureau of American Ethnology in 1928 and "Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians"(1931). She also used Swanton's translation of a French manuscript of Louisiana providing an early account of the Choctaws. It was published in the Memoirs of American Anthropological Association in 1918.[17] Debo believed an anthropologic approach could provide a foundation for an audience of scholarly readers who would appreciate the detailed background information. The body of the work covered the time period from the end of the Civil War to the close of the tribal period, but Debo enlarged her introductory anthropological chapter into three

before publication. By including anthropological material, Indian documents, and correspondence, Debo incorporated elements of what would later be called an ethnohistorical approach to writing Indian history.

The focus of ethnohistory is the study of culture. The ethnic group as it develops over time and space demonstrates patterns of behavior. A second element is an emphasis on social and cultural changes and the historical causes determining change. A final element is the use of historical methods and materials. Historians traditionally use written sources whereas ethnohistorians rely on anthropological sources such as oral history, archeological artifacts, and cultural traditions. Ethnohistory is considered interdisciplinary due to the mixing of archeological, ethnological, historical, and linguistic approaches of its practitioners.[18]

Debo explained why she included an anthropological view in the writing of Choctaw history. Her favorite subject outside her primary areas of research was Greek history. The Greeks always provided background for the readers to enhance the telling of the story. Debo incorporated that aspect of Greek literature into her own writing. She wrote from Indian documents to provide insight into their worldview.[19]

The AHA chose Debo as a recipient of the John H. Dunning Prize in 1935 but neglected to notify her of the award. The Dunning Award represented the most outstanding contribution to American history in 1934. She was thrilled by the award and would have attended the presentation if she had known about it. She needed a job and thought the recognition might have helped her gain employment. Debo did not receive a letter confirming the award; she heard about it from the University of Oklahoma faculty

members who attended the meeting. She wrote the AHA to ask if she had indeed won the award. The AHA did send her the two hundred dollar prize.[20]

Initially 1,200 copies of the manuscript were printed. By 1948, over 600 copies had sold. The book was out of print by 1940 and Debo's friends told her they could not find it in the bookstores. Debo wrote to the University of Oklahoma Press in 1940 requesting information about possible remaining unbound copies of the manuscript at the press. Debo understood only 600 were bound initially.[21] It is unclear if there were any copies at the press. The University of Oklahoma Press reprinted the book in 1960. Savoie Lottinville, Director at the time, told Debo "not many authors get published again twenty-six years after the initial printing. The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic now has met this criteria."[22]

Not all the reviews were positive. Muriel Wright wrote a scathing review of Debo's work. Throughout their careers as historians Wright and Debo collided on a number of issues. Wright was outraged at Debo's assertion in The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic that her grandfather, Allen Wright, took kick-backs. The findings regarding these kick-backs troubled Debo greatly, but she included such evidence of wrongdoing in her work.[23]

Debo's research exposed kick-backs from the attorney of the Choctaws and Chickasaws, John H. B. Latrobe, to the Choctaw delegates. Debo found no evidence that implicated the Chickasaw delegation. Two other attorneys, John D. Cochrane and Douglas H. Cooper, were associates of Latrobe, but they were southerners with Confederate backgrounds, so Latrobe kept them out of sight. Wright, tribal national treasurer, was a member of the Choctaw delegation negotiating a treaty with the United

States government in Washington, D.C., after the Civil War. Other delegates were Alfred Wade, James Riley, and Robert M. Jones. Chief Peter Pitchlynn played a leading role in the negotiations. Wright collected the money September 3, 1866, when congress appropriated $200,000 to be divided between the two tribes for payment of the Leased District. The Choctaws received $150,000 as their part. Congress used the allocation to influence the decision of the Choctaws to adopt their freedmen. Wright distributed $10,000 to each of the delegates and himself. Wright paid the attorneys $100,000, half of which was returned to him. Debo identified Chief Pitchlynn as the party responsible for the wrongdoing. Pitchlynn thought up the idea and helped carry it out. Debo called him an obvious crook. Muriel Wright's grandfather, Allen Wright, accepted the money from Pitchlynn implicating him in the kick-back. When the Choctaws found out about the kick-back, a scandal resulted that left the delegates tainted.[24]

David Baird who wrote a biography of Peter Pitchlynn concurred with Debo's allegations. He claimed half of the $100,000 returned to Wright was a result of an oral agreement between Wright and Cochrane. The kick-back was meant to go to Robert M. Jones, the Choctaw delegate. Even though Pitchlyn was not an official delegate, he demanded Jones's share because he acted in place of Jones. When the scandal broke, Pitchlynn claimed the money was an advance for his work in prosecuting the net proceeds cases. Jones accepted the explanation. Wright said that the money was paid to him for services to Latrobe and for personal expenses. This was a highly suspect explanation because delegates were reimbursed by the tribe and by the government.[25]

Debo's published dissertation offended Muriel Wright, and her review in the Chronicles of Oklahoma illustrated her anger. Wright took exception to the title, stating that

the Choctaw Republic rose but never fell. In Wright's interpretation the Choctaw Nation successfully reached the end of an almost century-long effort to become citizens of the United States and active participants in the new State of Oklahoma. Wright denigrated Debo's findings claiming the book was full of falsehoods. She suggested Debo wrote from a prejudiced view.[26]

Wright asked Grant Foreman, a historian as well as an attorney, about a possible libel suit against Debo. Foreman informed Wright that the information of the kick-back case was in the U.S. Supreme Court decisions for everyone to see. Debo argued Wright's indignation arose from her heritage. Wright saw herself and her relatives as successful leaders in the white society of Oklahoma, and she could not tolerate Debo's invasion into a proud Choctaw heritage to set the historical record straight. Wright, as a member of the tribe, assumed she was the person best suited to relate accurate history of the Choctaw people.[27]

Debo placed the kick-back in a wider context, suggesting the way in which treaties were negotiated with the tribes invited corruption and bribery. Wright's analysis differed; she said that unforeseen circumstances and expediency caused the problems with treaties. The government never purposely defrauded the Indians. She claimed those who thought so were biased against the government.[28] With strong institutional ties to the Oklahoma Historical Society, Wright commanded respect as an Oklahoma historian, but she did not possess a Ph.D. as Debo did. She did not have the success Debo did in the literary field. Debo could not attain an institutional base even with the terminal degree. The two historians had originally respected each other's work; the exposure of sensitive family matters caused a lifelong rift between them.[29]

The best known feud between the two historians occurred over location of a historic site. In the 1940s the site of the battle of Round Mountain, November, 19, 1861, came under scrutiny. Debo used the accepted site in two of her books but believed the battle had not occurred where historians placed it. Debo's argument centered on a map at the National Archives placing the site at the confluence of the Cimarron and the Arkansas Rivers near the former town of Keystone, Oklahoma. Debo corrected the location in her books locating what she thought was the accurate site on the Cimarron near Yale east of Stillwater. Wright never accepted the change. In fact historians have not been able to agree on the correct site to this day. The disagreement over the battle site represents the trivial squabbles of local history, among the most hotly contested. Historic markers can be found at both locations.[30]

Based on the favorable reception of The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Nation from scholarly journals as well as national and local newspapers, Debo resigned from her position at Panhandle Plains Historical Museum in Canyon to pursue professional writing as a free lance writer. Debo remembered the farewell party given for her at the museum. Her co-workers kidded her about leaving the security of a job at the museum to write books on subjects she knew nothing about.[31] It is remarkable that Debo would quit a job in order to pursue a writing career on the strength of a published dissertation.

Debo left Canyon at the end of the summer in 1934 and returned to Marshall to launch her professional literary career. Debo's departure from West Texas State is intriguing. Debo contends the successful publication of her dissertation convinced her she could make a living as a writer.[32] A question remains concerning her decision to leave. Documents indicate jealousy among less-educated faculty members. In fact the head of the department was threatened by Debo's academic credentials. The president of the college had to deal with economic issues

involving budget cuts due to the Depression. Evidence suggests she was fired and replaced by a less-experienced teacher.[33] The subject of her termination will be revisited in Chapter III on gender issues.

Debo's dissertation addressed the issue of the liquidation of the Choctaw Nation which stimulated further interest in the Five Tribes. She questioned what had transpired between government officials representing the interests of white settlers and individual tribal experiences with liquidation. She expressed total ignorance on the subject, and she knew Oklahomans and Americans, in general, were equally naïve about Indian affairs. Once she realized the impact of the information she acquired from further research, Debo inquired about a sequel to The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic; Joseph Brandt expressed genuine enthusiasm. In her words, "Oklahoma was dominated by a criminal conspiracy to cheat Indians out of their lands."[34]

Once again, E. E. Dale was instrumental in guiding Debo's research of the Five Tribes. Dr. Dale was one of ten members asked to survey the status of Native Americans for the Meriam Survey and knew John Collier, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, personally. Collier headed a reformed Indian administration. Dale encouraged Debo to pursue further research of Indian documents. Collier was interested in finding out what the documents contained; he did not know if Debo's research would support or oppose his policies for reform. Collier allowed Debo complete access to the documents she needed to research her sequel. The research took Debo to Washington, D.C. No one at the Bureau of Indian Affairs knew how Debo would express her findings.[35]

When she initiated her work, Debo remembered feeling apprehensive as she walked down the dark corridors of the old Department of Interior building where she searched through files never before used by researchers. The files were actually tied together by red tape and had

not been touched since the Civil War![36] She realized that prominent state officials had gained wealth and power by obtaining land from the Native Americans in Oklahoma. Debo characterized the documents as "slime covered." She documented her findings in the book, And Still the Waters Run.[37]

Debo had no way of knowing what her research would uncover; she expressed shock and sadness about unexpected findings involving a statewide criminal conspiracy that deliberately and illegally removed land from Native Americans. Debo experienced a sense of naïveté because she lived in Oklahoma when the scandals broke and knew nothing about them. She even taught in Oklahoma Territory for a year and could not believe that she was completely unaware of what was happening in Indian Territory. She realized her proximity to Indian Territory meant little in terms of awareness. She thought it would be very difficult for Oklahomans to appreciate the division and distance of the two parts of the state in the years after allotment and early statehood. She said it was like living in another world for those in the West. She was seventeen years of age at the time of statehood. At the time she believed single statehood would benefit the Indians as much as the white settlers. Her frame of reference at this point in her life was narrow and uninformed. She recalled the intelligent energetic Native American graduate students she met at the University of Oklahoma. She assumed these potential leaders were the result of successful assimilation. She had been absent from the state from 1923 to 1934. The absence diminished her ability to keep up with events during those years. Debo indicated that if she had known where her research was leading, she might have abandoned the project. One can only speculate what she meant by this statement. Perhaps she feared she did not possess the fortitude to follow through with the disclosure of such shocking scandals, the magnitude of which astounded

her. Once she discovered the truth she knew it had to be documented. Others could benefit from her findings. The historian in Debo perceived a larger issue. The illumination of the past was the only way a nation could successfully chart its future. Debo reacted strongly about publishing the truth thereby exposing the scandals; she did not wish to shield the guilty parties even though many were still alive. Her family, on the other hand, did not believe anyone would publish this book and her writing career could be jeopardized. She also experienced fears that her emerging writing career could be effectively silenced if she were unable to publish what she had uncovered.[38]

In July of 1936, Debo sent the preliminary manuscript to Brandt who, in turn, sent it out to readers. The first reader was John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, who referred the book to D'Arcy McNickle a noted Native American anthropologist, author, and a member of the Indian service in Washington at the time. McNickel, a Flathead Indian, was Oxford-educated and wrote Native American Tribalism (1973).[40] Collier and others in the Department of Interior thought Debo's findings confirmed what they suspected. McNickle expressed the need for serious scholarship on Indian history. They praised her work because of its competence and scope but asked her to shorten it.[41] Debo spent the remainder of the summer revising it, but she kept all the pages she cut out because they supplied the interesting details. Debo remembered the summer of 1936 as one of the hottest on record, and she slaved over the typewriter until she had eliminated about a third of the pages.[42]

Brandt expressed concern about possible libel suits. In order to alleviate his fears, Brandt submitted the manuscript to a University of Oklahoma law professor, Floyd A. Wright, in June of 1937. Initially, Wright thought that the book, by its very nature, would

elicit a number of libel suits and that Debo ought to be prepared to defend her findings. Wright suggested she locate a Native American lawyer who might be more interested in seeing justice rendered to his people than collecting a legal fee from her. Wright issued a comprehensive report calling the book a "masterpiece" and recommending its publication.[43]

Debo mistakenly identified the person who objected to the publishing of her manuscript by the University of Oklahoma Press as her mentor, E. E. Dale. She penned a correction in her interview notes to indicate Dale was the person who objected. Brandt sent the readers' criticisms to Debo but did not include the names of the readers, a standard practice for publishers; she never knew who the dissenter was. The reader responsible for expressing concern over the named conspirators in the manuscript was actually Morris Wardell. He recommended the press reject the manuscript. Wardell was a history professor and held the position of assistant to the president of the University of Oklahoma. Wardell had written A Political History of the Cherokee Nation 1838-1907.[44]

Conjecture about mistaken perception remains just that. Why Debo thought Dale kept the University of Oklahoma Press from publishing And Still the Waters Run is less a mystery if one keeps in mind the number of Debo manuscripts Dale read; and he was critical of her work in all of them. From previous and subsequent chapters information indicated Dale assumed the role of Debo's mentor. He was chairman of her doctoral committee and worked closely with Debo on her dissertation. Later as head of the WPA writers' project Debo contacted Dale about her concerns with mistakes in the history chapter in the WPA state guide. She asked Dale to write a chapter for the guide. Still later in her career Dale voiced dissatisfaction about Debo's work Oklahoma, Foot-loose

and Fancy-free . It seemed that Dale expressed displeasure at Debo's interpretation of Oklahoma history in each instance. Debo must have concluded that Dale held strong sentiments about her revelations in And Still the Waters Run. In fact this was Debo's self-inflicted nemesis; she refused to soften the historical record in her writing in order to placate historians who did not acknowledge the full implications of the American historical experience.

Those who research the publication of And Still the Waters Run by using the Archives of the University Press in the Western History Collection at the University of Oklahoma should experience no confusion concerning the Wardell report. In it Wardell criticizes Debo's manuscript. The archives contain the letter from Wardell to Bizzell recommending the University of Oklahoma Press not publish the book. The problem researchers might have with this issue involved Debo's penciled-in note on her copy of Wardell's report in her collection in Stillwater. Another aspect of the history behind the Wardell report must be included.[45] In the late 1980s Savoie Lottinville shed more light on the subject of Morris Wardell, who was next in line to the presidency of the University of Oklahoma when Bizzell retired in 1941.[46] Lottinville found evidence that Wardell could not tolerate Debo's attack on the history of Oklahoma. Wardell was very conservative and considered an excellent professor, but he was livid over what was revealed in And Still the Waters Run.[47]

As a member of Debo's doctoral committee, Wardell was familiar with the work she had done on the Choctaw Nation. He feared the impact because Debo condemned some of Oklahoma's highest government officials in the conspiracy to seize land from

Native Americans. Many of the accused individuals were alive at the time Debo wrote the book.

As editor of the University of Oklahoma Press, Brandt strongly supported publication of Debo's work. He voiced his belief that the work was one of the more valuable books ever submitted to the press. Brandt wanted to publish Debo's manuscript to gain respect for his "Civilization of the American Indian Series." As a former editor of The Tulsa Tribune, Brandt knew about some of the difficulties with guardianships of Native Americans, particularly when oil was involved. Debo's depiction of the documented story behind the white man's greed and how that greed led to the impoverishment of the Five Tribes in Oklahoma was extremely important. Brandt submitted the issue to the University of Oklahoma President William Bizzell.[48] Brandt's comment about the impact of Debo's work shows his unique sense of humor.

> There will be some tough problems, I can see, with some of the grafters still living, and if the book passes our readers, I can see that the Wailing Wall of Jerusalem will have no monopoly on tears.[49]

Dr. Bizzell was a literary scholar and valued literary achievements. Bizzell and Brandt were responsible for furthering the reputation of the University of Oklahoma Press through their efforts to encourage the writing and publishing of scholarly works on Indian history. Bizzell asked Wardell as a neutral reader for his recommendation and in the final analysis agreed with his assessment of the manuscript. Bizzell feared the book would generate considerable ill will toward the university, and Bizzell denied Brandt permission to publish Debo's work.[50]

Two minor intrigues influenced the outcome of the publication by the press and played a role in Bizzell's decision. One involved senior faculty members who tried to gain

control of the University of Oklahoma Press, and the other involved Oklahoma politics. Bizzell appointed senior members of the faculty to a committee to oversee university activities. Jealousy developed between Brandt and the president's committee because they wanted to approve manuscripts for publication before they reached Brandt. Although the committee was unable to wrest control from Brandt, tensions remained strained between the two.[51]

Bizzell became embroiled in Oklahoma politics because he backed Oklahoma Regent Frank Buttram in the 1930 gubernatorial election against victorious "Alfalfa Bill" Murray. Governor Murray threatened to cut appropriations and to eliminate duplication by cutting departments at the University of Oklahoma and giving them to Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College. Bizzell exercised great caution during Murray's term, particularly about the kind of material the press published.[52]

Wardell assessed the book as a personal attack written along the lines of an exposé rather than from a historical perspective. He questioned the slanderous nature of the work. He feared the University of Oklahoma Press would receive criticism if it published Debo's work. Wardell thought the book would offend many "friends" of the University of Oklahoma. He believed the extent of criticism leveled at the book would eliminate its effectiveness by bringing the author's objectivity into question. Wardell acknowledged the book had been "fearlessly written." He agreed the period called for coverage from historians but without indicting specific personalities. Wardell criticized Debo's use of the words "loot, rob, plunder, and vultures" as too harsh in reference to white land dealings with Native Americans. He disliked Debo's conclusion about Oklahoma's integrity concerning its Native American population. He questioned her ability to prove her claim

that these scandals were as extensive as she stated. He found fault with Debo's term "grafter" in the title of chapter 4. Wardell claimed readers would not understand the meaning of grafter because it had a different connotation in the early twentieth century than it did in the 1940s. Wardell concluded that chapter 4 contained libelous statements. He admitted the information was well researched and accurate yet should not be written in a history text. In the final report Wardell strongly recommended not publishing the book because it would offend Dr. B. D. Weeks, a particular friend of the University of Oklahoma who was mentioned in the book. The university had been active in recruiting the support of B. D. Weeks. Wardell's reference concerning the exact connection between the University of Oklahoma and B. D. Weeks is unclear. Wardell thought Debo's references would embarrass both Weeks and the university.[53]

B. D. Weeks was the president of Bacone College in Muskogee, an institution maintained by the American Baptist Home Mission Society for the education of Indians. Debo uncovered information indicating Bacone administrators solicited funds from wealthy Indians for an endowment fund for the college, and within four years assets had surpassed a million dollars. This subject will be discussed at length in a subsequent chapter.[54]

Even before Brandt informed Debo of Bizzell's decision, she had returned her contract to Brandt marked "cancelled by mutual consent." Debo was concerned about the effect of her findings but had already removed a substantial amount of additional information and was not interested in destroying the evidence to gain publication.[55] Debo worried about the state legislature and possible ramifications for the University of Oklahoma Press. She realized the legislature and close associates of its members had

benefitted from the scandals surrounding the graft and corruption documented in her book. Debo's research spelled out what happened to Kate Barnard. She was the first woman to hold a statewide office in any state in the country before women were allowed to vote in federal elections. She was elected to the position of Commissioner of Charities and Corrections. When she tried to protect Indian orphans from unscrupulous guardians, the state legislature cut appropriations to her department, and Barnard's work ended.[56] The state legislature could also cut appropriations and destroy the University of Oklahoma Press. Brandt was not intimidated by such fears; he encouraged Debo because the work provided needed documentation in the field of Indian history.[57]

Debo raised these concerns with Brandt because the press was too important to see its prestige jeopardized. Brandt promised he would find a publisher for the manuscript, but he told her to be very open with those who asked why the publication of the book had been delayed. Debo knew why the book was facing difficulties. Oklahoma historians had ignored this painful and embarrassing segment of history deliberately. Also she thought the Oklahoma legislature was jealous of the international reputation held by the university press. In 1931 when Debo was in Washington, D.C., researching Choctaw history, she first heard about the excellent work of the press. Oklahomans, in general, did not appreciate the high degree of scholarship published in their own state at the time.[58]

Brandt reassured Debo that her thorough research could withstand the heat generated by the controversy. He began to search for another publisher but this was not an easy task. The University of Oklahoma Press was one of only a few publishers interested in books on Indian affairs. Two eastern publishers, Simon and Schuster and Bobbs-Merrill, rejected the manuscript fearing it would not generate commercial returns.

Simon and Schuster suggested a larger publisher or a university press. Duke University Press rejected the manuscript. Houghton Mifflin also rejected it and suggested the Oklahoma Historical Society publish it.[59]

In 1938 in the midst of his search for a publisher, Brandt accepted a position with Princeton University Press. Brandt asked Princeton to publish Debo's manuscript. The trustees agreed to publish it if it was free of libelous content. Princeton Press expressed a desire to print it in order to provide the public with this revision of the historical record.[60] Brandt sent the manuscript to readers. One reader was John Joseph Mathews, an Osage from Pawhuska referred to earlier in this chapter concerning his connection to the University of Oklahoma Press. Mathews warned that the threat of libel would emerge from the grafters' circle of political friends. Brandt asked Wilbur La Roe, Jr., a Washington D.C. lawyer, to analyze its contents for possible libel suits. La Roe recommended the elimination of the names of minor conspirators because, more than likely, no one outside of Oklahoma would care who they were. La Roe told Brandt and Debo to concentrate on the principles involved in the story of corruption. The individual names of people were unimportant to the readers. If the manuscript remained unchanged, the lawyer thought the material was libelous, but the suits could be defused by removing the names of minor characters without altering the story. La Roe told Debo that authors had to support quotations from newspapers with facts in order to include them in a book. He warned Debo to be careful of accusing people of wrongdoing unless she had the facts to back it up legally. He noted that an author who charged people with a breach of trust is libelous at least if unproven in a court of law. He further stated that written words that

suggested political influence, dishonesty, and collusion are libelous. Brandt had experience in this area from his previous position as editor of The Tulsa Tribune.[61]

Brandt reminded Debo of the purpose of the book: to establish a corrected version of historical data, not to correct the inequities. Brandt told Debo he could change the wording of some passages to provide security from libel, and he had to edit statements that endangered the publisher. Debo agreed to eliminate some names of minor grafters because she knew the footnotes provided the answers for those who wanted more specific information. Debo and Brandt corresponded often over the next few months as editing continued. Brandt removed certain passages charging people with committing crimes and accusations of corruption for which they had been cleared in courts of law. Brandt concluded that La Roe's assessment was accurate. Brandt and Debo were too close to the Oklahoma scene to realize the importance of principle over people.[62]

Debo made an agreement with Brandt; she wanted to name those in administrative positions especially when they exercised control over the situation. She agreed to excise the local grafters because no one outside of the immediate region would know their names. When Brandt was still at the University of Oklahoma Press he stated he would rather have the press go down to defeat over moral scholarship than to submit to the whim of the legislature that could cut his appropriation at any in time. [63]

Princeton Press published Debo's book And Still the Waters Run in November of 1940, four years after she submitted it to Joseph Brandt in Norman, Oklahoma.[64] During the four-year period between submission and publication, Debo had to change her title. She initially called the book As Long as the Waters Run, but Oliver LaFarge titled one of his books, As Long as the Grass Shall Grow. Debo adopted a new title. Even though

scholars praised Debo's work, it did not receive the widespread exposure of her doctoral dissertation. World events stripped Debo of this opportunity. German armies occupied France and the Lowland Countries of Western Europe when And Still the Waters Run was released in the bookstores. The focus of the nation was consumed by the events in Europe.[65]

Debo expressed concern that her work would not be taken seriously. She imagined reviewers seeing her as a "hysterical female who knew nothing about Indians." Debo wondered if the historical publishing world was open to women. She feared scholars would not acknowledge her precision and thoroughness, but the reviews alleviated her fears. More important she received favorable reviews from specialists in the field of Native American history in such periodicals as the Journal of the Social Studies, The Pacific Northwest Quarterly, Journal of Southern History, and The American Historical Review.[66] One reviewer commended Debo's style. He did not find it melodramatic but rather an effective deliverance of facts that captured the reader's interest.[67] Debo's book filled a need to portray the Indian in transition. She accomplished the task by meticulous research. Her description of exploitation was convincing and unsettling.[68] One reviewer described Debo's scholarly work as a study of history of the Dawes Commission to the Five Tribes and its results.[69]

Princeton Press printed 948 copies of the first edition of which 875 were sold, and the remaining books were used as gifts.[70] Debo wrote Princeton Press in 1957 lamenting the fact the book was out of print and requesting a reprint. Debo had an additional motive asking for a reprint. She was interested in incorporating timely information concerning the Klamath and Menominee Indians. She found a common thread between what happened to

the Five Tribes in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and what was transpiring in the Northwest in the 1950s.[71] The editor of Princeton Press at the time, Herbert Bailey, suggested Debo write an article for a magazine or newspaper to express her findings about the Indians in the Northwest. Princeton declined her request for a reprint because they did not think the demand for the book was sufficient. Bailey expressed his regret to Debo but assured her the book was available through libraries. He stated that Princeton had published the book, in the first place, as a public service. Bailey suggested Debo write to the University of Oklahoma Press and see if they were interested in a reprint for their Indian series.[72]

Three years later in 1960 Debo again corresponded with Princeton Press about a reprint. Princeton advised her to contact University Microfilms Incorporated.[73] In 1960 Debo found that University Microfilms Incorporated could photocopy And Still the Waters Run for special orders. Nothing came of this. The book was out of print for a decade from 1956-1966. In 1967 a letter from Gordian Press acknowledged an agreement with Princeton Press to reprint the book. The reprint was accomplished in the fall of 1968, but Gordian Press had forgotten to send Debo her two free copies. Debo made sure she received the copies. Gordian Press printed 402 copies. All of these sold by 1968 and the book went out of print again.[74]

In 1972 Princeton Press wrote Debo and informed her of another reprinting of And Still the Waters Run. Princeton had canceled its contract with Gordian Press and planned to reissue about two thousand copies in hardback in 1972. Editor Roy E. Thomas stated the press was considering a paperback for the spring of 1973. At this point Princeton was planning to reprint the book exactly as it was written in 1940. The editor told Debo it

would not be possible to bring the work up-to-date, but suggested she write a new introduction explaining the book contained no new information. This changed later. It is unclear why Thomas did not want Debo to add new material then later changed his mind.[75] The press agreed to print four thousand copies. Princeton asked approval to add a subtitle, "The Betrayal of the Five Civilized Tribes," to the book and to add four to eight pages of illustrations.[76] The 1972 preface contained the new information, and in 1973 Princeton Press completed a second printing of both the hardback and paperback. Princeton printed 1,426 hardbacks and 7,500 paperbacks.[77] Both sold well. Later editions, particularly the reprint of the book in 1973, were well received because of the increased interest in Indian affairs at this time.[78] The University of Oklahoma Press obtained the copyrights for the book and printed a paperback edition in 1984 with subsequent printings in 1986 (second), 1989 (third), and 1991 (fourth).[79] And Still the Waters Run had come full circle.[80]

Once Debo discovered the scandals involved in the transfer of land it seemed she was much more interested as a historian to present the facts. She wanted all the facts made available, regardless of libelous implications or regardless of whether those she accused had been found guilty in a court of law. She had an obligation to make the facts known. Debo was concerned that Oklahomans would vent their displeasure about fraud and corruption at her, but this did not happen. She claimed she did not hear a single derogatory comment about the disclosures in the book from the non-Indian population. She did not think the "grafters" would cause a stir because she had more information to put on paper. Debo met Charles Haskell's daughter once, but the subject never came up because Haskell had not read the book and did not know Debo had written about her

father.[81] Debo tied governmental responsibility to control in her assessment of Indian-white relations. For example she found that once tribal governments were dismantled and tribal taxes abolished, the Department of Interior received tribal revenues. As the Indians lost control of revenues, they lost control of their educational system. Placed in situations where the government took responsibility for income, education, and other aspects of their lives, Indians found it increasingly difficult to react in a way that altered their position of dependency.

The Native American people exhibited great respect toward Debo and appreciated the corrected history she wrote of the destruction of their tribal governments and the wholesale plunder of their land. Debo accepted responsibility for disseminating the information because she wanted people to know how corruption and fraud systematically reduced the Oklahoma full-blood population to poverty. Debo believed that opinions could be changed if the truth were known. The author thought this was her most important work because it illustrated the violence of economic absorption. Debo accused American historians of ignoring the tragic consequence of white greed. With the exception of Arrell Gibson of American Indian heritage who wrote about the Kickapoos, Debo claimed historians failed to expose the white man's intentions. And Still the Waters Run left little unsaid. It is the full account, and Debo tied all the loose ends together, leaving no questions unanswered.[82]

Rennard Strickland, part Cherokee, part Osage, is a renowned scholar of Indian law and history. In Debo's work Strickland recognized a profound historical lesson:

> Policies advocated for the best motives may produce in practice the worst results. Purity of purpose does not guarantee wisdom of policy, especially when the potential for illegal profit is so great.[83]

Debo had a book in mind that she never published. Debo thought that books written in the late 1930s and early 40s about federal Indian policy lacked substance. She sensed they did not contain a solid understanding of the conditions leading to the policies nor did they determine if the policies were implemented or consider the effects such policies had on the people. Debo created a draft called True American Imperialism claiming as she had in one of her earliest seminar papers that federal policy began long before the nation became independent. She wrote the Social Studies Research Council for a grant to complete research on this subject. Debo told the Social Studies Council that Grant Foreman agreed to allow Debo to use the documents he obtained from the Public Record Office in London and from the French Archives. The council verified what Debo told them with Foreman. Foreman wanted the book written because of the reform in the Indian administration beginning with the Hoover Administration in 1928. The council also wrote to John Collier who had been appointed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Collier gave his approval of Debo's project. He complimented her contributions to Indian history. This project was interrupted by the Knopf Fellowship awarded to Debo in 1942. Debo wrote the Social Science Council explaining her decision to decline the $500 grant they offered her. She did not think the amount was adequate to complete the research needed for such a project. Laura Barrett representing the Social Science Council congratulated Debo on the Knopf Fellowship.[84]

Debo remembered this time period well. She was heading to Norman, Oklahoma, in December of 1941 when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. She was in Norman visiting Joseph Brandt when President Roosevelt addressed the nation. Brandt had returned to Norman to become the president of the University of Oklahoma after holding

the position as editor of Princeton Press from 1938 to 1941. His tenure as president was short-lived because he implemented changes that were unpopular. He eliminated the powerful heads of departments and the influence of the governor in university affairs. He was educated at Oxford and tried to apply their system of administration to the university. Each department head was elected for a couple of years then gave up the job for a newly-elected head. Debo knew that Dr. Dale resented the change as did others at the university. Brandt forced Dale out as department head by appointing him to research professor after Dale threatened to take a position at Oklahoma Agriculture and Mechanical College. Brandt held the position of president from 1941 to 1943.[85]

Debo had established an important connection with one of the most important persons in her career. Brandt recognized her abilities. He found a publisher for her manuscript after all others had turned it down. Brandt convinced Debo to follow his lead in editing out libelous parts. He was willing to fight for publication because the book would be a great addition to his Indian series at the University of Oklahoma Press. There was a time when Debo worried about the publishing field being as closed to women as the academic field. She was afraid gender discrimination might end her life-long plans to write. Early in her writing career Debo realized her potential as a writer. She would pursue this course; the possibility of an academic career materialized in a different way than she anticipated.

NOTES

[1]Harold Driver, Indians of North America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961): 482.

[2]Steve Crum, "Bizzel and Brandt: Pioneers in Indian Studies 1929-1931," Chronicles of Oklahoma 66 (Summer 1988): 179.

[3]Stanley Clark, "Grant Foreman," Chronicles of Oklahoma 31 (Autumn 1953): 232.

[4]Crum, "Bizzel and Brandt," 179.

[5]Angie Debo to E. E. Dale July 16, 1933. E. E. Dale Collection, Box 17, folder 12-17, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[6]Debo Interview 81-12-12 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[7]E. E. Dale to Debo, October 7, 14, 1931. Debo to Dale, October 9, 1931 from Canyon, Texas. Dale Collection Box 17, file 12, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[8]Lowitt, "Dear Dr. Debo," 380, 383.

[9]Debo to Dale, October 9, 1931, Dale Collection, Box 17, folder 12, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[10]Lowitt, "Dear Dr. Debo," 378.

[11]Lowitt, "Dear Dr. Debo," 386.

[12]Debo circular- UOPC- Box 7, Norman, Oklahoma.

[13]Lowitt, "Dear Dr. Debo," 387.

[14]Annie H. Able, review, American Historical Review, Box 118-1A, folder 17, ADC Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[15]Review of The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic by Angie Debo in The New York Times (August 26, 1934):10. Women's History Project Collection, W 34, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[16]Morgan, Oklahoma New Views, 181.

[17]Debo, The Rise and Fall, 296, 297, 299.

[18]Ethnohistory is defined as the historical and ethnological methods and materials used to gain insight into the nature and causes of changes in cultures. (James Axtell, Ethnohistory: An Historian's Viewpoint." Ethnohistory 26, (Winter, 1979):2. The stated goal of ethnohistorians is the study of Native Americans and their history. A decade ago ethnohistorians assessed their contributions as important but limited. Through their efforts, ethnohistorians have been able to expose biases associated with Euroamerican

views of Native Americans that distorted historical interpretation. The anthropologists among those who write ethnohistory, like Bruce Trigger, suggest the pioneer in the field, Franz Boas helped invalidate racism within anthropology. Today's ethnohistorians have moved beyond Boas's belief that native peoples were static in prehistoric times. In the 1930s the study of acculturation broadened interest in anthropology. At that time it became apparent that native cultures were not disappearing and perhaps anthropologists could aid officials making government policies dealing with Indians. (Bruce Trigger, "Ethnohistory: The Unfinished Edifice." Ethnohistory 33, [March 1986]: 253.)

[19]Debo, interview 81-12-12 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Savoie Lottinville to Debo, February 11, 1948. Box 118 folder 11, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[22]Lottinville to Debo, January 28, 1960. UOPC, Box 236, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[23]Debo Interview 81-12-16 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[24]Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, 88.

[25]David Baird, Peter Pitchlyn Chief of the Choctaws (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972):172.

[26]Muriel Wright, Book Review, Chronicles of Oklahoma 13, (March-December 1935):108.

[27]Debo Interview 81-12-16 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[28]Jane Taylor "Angie Debo An Artery to our Past," 1977. Women's History Project Collection, W 34, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[29]Patricia Loughlin, "The Battle of The Historians of Round Mountain: An Examination of Muriel Wright and Angie Debo," Heritage of the Great Plains 31, (Spring/Summer 1998):5-18.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Debo Interview 81-12-12 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[32]Glenna Matthews and Gloria Valencia-Weber, "Against Great Odds: The Life of Angie Debo," Oklahoma Association of Historians Newsletter, (May 1895): 8 Box 240 f.12, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[33]Debo to Dale, May 15, 1933, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[34] Debo Interview 85-06-08 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[35]Tulsa Tribune, March 19, 1973, Box 1 folder 2, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[36]Debo Interview 81-11-20 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[37]Debo Interview 81-12-12 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[38]Debo Interview 85-06-08 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[40]Donald Fixico, Rethinking American Indian History (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1997):40.

[41]Suzanne Schreme and Cynthia Wolff, "Politics and Libel: Angie Debo and the Publication of And Still the Waters Run." Western History Quarterly 22 (May, 1991):191.

[42]Debo Interview 81-12-12 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[43]Schreme, "Politics and Libel," 192

[44]Ibid.

[45]Debo Interview 85-06-08 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[46]William Bennett Bizzell Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[47]Lottinville to Hicks, 6-22-89. Jimmie Hicks to Heather Lloyd, 5-22-89. Debo Collection, Princeton University Press file, Box d-34, WHC , Norman, Oklahoma.

[48]Brandt to Bizzell, July 20, 1937, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[49]Brandt to Debo, July 25, 1936, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[50]Bizzell to Brandt, July 20, 1937, Bizzell Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[51]Schreme, 195

[52]Ibid.,196

[53]Morris Wardell to Brandt, July 19, 1937, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[54]Angie Debo, And Still the Waters Run. The Betrayal of the Five Civilized Tribes. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940), 325.

[55]Brandt to Debo, July 21, 1937,UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[56]Danney Goble and David Baird, The Story of Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 428.

[57]"When politics intimidated the Oklahoma Press," Tulsa Tribune, March 19, 1973, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[58] Debo Interview 81-12-12 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[59]Brandt to Debo, April 26,1938, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma. Bobbs-Merrill to Brandt, September 11, 1937. Simon Schuster Publishers to Debo, December 21, 1937. Houghton-Mifflin Publishing Company to Debo, April 26, 1938, ADC, box 24, folder 55, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[60]Brandt to Debo, July 6,1938, June 15, 1939, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[61]Debo Interview 81-12-12 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[62]Brandt to Debo, November 21, 1939, December 1, 1939, January 15, 1940, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[63]Oral History, Debo Interview 7-10-85, Box 29, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[64]Brandt to Debo April 23, 1940, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[65]Debo Interview 81-12-12 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[66]Diary, January 16, 1941, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[67]Alban W. Hoopes, review of And Still the Waters Run by Angie Debo, in The Social Studies (March 1941): 136.

[68]Rupert N. Richardson, review of And Still the Waters Run by Angie Debo, in The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly (September 1941): 189.

[69]Review of And Still the Waters Run by Angie Debo, in Pacific Northwest Quarterly (October 1941): 465.

[70]"When politics intimidated the Oklahoma Press," Tulsa Tribune.

[71]Tribes such as the Menominees in Wisconsin and the Klamaths in Oregon witnessed the end of their reservation status during the era of termination. Congress, as well as the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, followed a policy established to end federal protection of Indians. Termination was supposed to liberate the Indians from dependency on federal policy; it was aimed at placing Indians in the "mainstream' of American society. Those whose reservation status ended found state and local agencies unwilling to assume the responsibilities once held by federal officials. They had to contend with housing problem, unemployment, and health issues. Roger L. Nichols, ed. The American Indian Past and Present. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992): 252.

[72]Herbert Bailey, Jr, editor of Princeton Press to Debo, February 14, 1957, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[73]University Microfilms Incorporated to Debo, December 30, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[74]Gordian Press to Debo, March 3, 1967, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[75]Princeton Press to Debo, March 14, 1972, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[76]Princeton Press to Debo, March 22, 1972, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[77]"When Politics intimidated the Oklahoma Press," Tulsa Tribune.

[78]Judith M. Kuzma, "Angie Debo, Friend of the Indian" research paper, St Mary College, December 1978: 14. Debo visited St Mary College in 1977. Sister Mary Mark drove Debo to Marysville to locate one of the family farms.

[79]The University of Oklahoma Press to Debo, October 1, 1984- ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[80]Loren Hoehzema to Debo, reprint manager, November 25,1980, Box 24, folder 57, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[81]Debo Interview 85-06-08 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[82]Debo Interview 81-12-12 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[83] Rennard Strickland, "Oklahoma's Story: Recording the History of the Forty-Sixth State," in Anne Hodges and H. Wayne Morgan, Oklahoma: New Views of the Forty-Sixth State. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982):238.

[84] Oral History, Box 29, Debo Interview 7-31-85, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[85] Oral History, Box 29, Debo Interview 7-31-85, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma. Lowitt, "Dear Dr. Debo," 397.

CHAPTER III

THE ISSUE OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION

The career of Angie Debo inevitably raises questions of gender discrimination. During Debo's long career as a historian she was unable to secure a tenured position at the university level. However, a case can be made to support gender discrimination only early in Debo's career. Once she established her writing career, Debo chose to continue her lifelong pursuit of research and writing in lieu of teaching.

The subject of job discrimination among female historians is addressed extensively in the literature. Early in the 1940s William Hesseltine and Louis Kaplan compiled a statistical study on women who had earned Ph.D.'s. Their findings indicated few women with terminal degrees held teaching positions at the college or university level. Hesseltine and Kaplan found similar results with activities associated with the Ph.D., such as historical research. Hesseltine and Kaplan did not identify causes relating to the results of their study. They failed to consider gender discrimination in light of statistics indicating women were outnumbered by their male counterparts.[1]

University education for women is a relatively recent phenomenon in this country's history. Debo, as well as many other educated women, benefitted from the mid-nineteenth century democratization and expansion of higher education. The pursuit of graduate level degrees was a manifestation of broadened opportunities for women. The daughters of

middle class families, as well as the daughters of farmers and industrial workers gained college degrees. The numbers were not large but were significant. For women like Debo, a college degree provided a chance to escape the isolation of rural life as well as to stimulate the intellect.[3]

Many of the women who benefitted from these opportunities attained terminal degrees from Midwestern co-educational colleges and universities. Prior to the nineteenth century educational expansion, only two women's colleges, Radcliffe and Bryn Mawr, awarded a higher degree in history to women. For men, terminal degrees were concentrated in a very few institutions as well. Only Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Columbia, Michigan, and Yale conferred Ph.D. degrees in history between 1873 and 1885. Chicago joined Minnesota, Wisconsin, Brown, George Washington, Nebraska, and Western Reserve to increase the number of institutions conferring the doctorate for men in the decades between 1885 and 1905. Between 1906 and 1915 the number of history departments conferring higher degrees increased to twenty.[4]

Debo took advantage of this expansion of higher education. By deciding on the graduate program at the University of Chicago, Debo chose one of the better schools in the Midwest. She finished her Master's degree in one year under the quarter system. This marked the only year Debo lived outside of the "frontier" environment in which she had been raised. At the University of Chicago Debo, for the first time, lived in an urban setting and was exposed to its broadening experiences.

In 1900 eight women held doctorates in history. During the decade between 1900 and 1910 an additional twenty-four women had received doctorates. By 1920 another fifty women had gained Ph.D. degrees. The number of terminal degrees for women in

history increased to one hundred thirty-one from 1920 to 1930 and an additional one hundred twenty-two from 1931 to 1935. From 1900 to 1935 women accounted for about 16 percent of all doctorates awarded in the United States in the field of history.[5] Debo finished her doctoral work at the University of Oklahoma in 1933. Between 1931 and 1935 the University of Oklahoma awarded four doctorates; all in American History.[6] In 1933 Debo was the second Ph.D. to be awarded at the University of Oklahoma and was the first of two woman that year to receive a doctorate in history. The other woman who received her doctorate was Emma Estelle Harbor.[7] Half of the Oklahoma graduates receiving Ph D.'s pursued jobs as teachers at teacher colleges. None of the graduates obtained employment on the university level immediately. It is unclear how many of these graduates applied for university positions and found jobs, so it is difficult to assess if this was a gender-related issue.[8]

Teaching became the means to an end for many women, especially Debo. Through teaching she was able to finance her college education, and support herself until she could earn a living exclusively as a writer. Often a woman's teaching experience served as a catalyst to greater achievements. Unfortunately the more desired positions in academe were dominated by men and were effectively limited to the few women who through luck or serendipity were able to secure positions.[9]

Early in her career as a historian, Debo actively pursued jobs at the University of Oklahoma when she heard of vacancies. Dale had become head of the history department in 1924. In 1932 she asked Dale to write a letter of recommendation to Professor Robert Binkley at Western Reserve University where there was a history position available. Binkley was looking for a female to fill the position. J. Fred Rippy, Debo's co-author of

the book based on her Master's thesis, now at Duke University, wrote a letter for Debo as well. Debo had great recommendations but did not have course work in the fields of Modern and Latin America or Far Eastern and Russian history to qualify for the job. In 1937 when Morris Wardell moved to the position of assistant to the president, Debo asked her mentor, E. E. Dale, if she could replace him. Nothing came of her request. In the same year Dr. Thomas, who had become a scholar of Spanish American history, resigned, Debo applied for the vacancy. Dale told Debo he needed to hire someone who could teach graduate courses in Spanish American History. She was not qualified for this position. Debo thought Dale had several opportunities over time to hire her but never did.[10]

In 1947 Dale hired a young historian he met at an AHA meeting. As they visited over the banquet meal, Dale found many similarities between John S. Ezell and himself. Dale and Ezell's wife were born in Texas. Ezell and Dale obtained graduate degrees at Harvard and knew many of the same professors. Dale asked Ezell if he would like to move to the University of Oklahoma. Ezell sent his resume to Dale but did not expect anything to materialize. Ezell received a job offer. He did not go through the interview process and never saw the campus before he arrived to assume his new position. Ezell and Dale joked about the motive behind the job, Ezell's attractive redheaded wife.[11] The comment might have been considered a compliment at the time but it suggests Dale was as impressed with the wife's appearance as he was with Ezell's credentials for a position at the university.

Debo looked elsewhere for jobs. She applied to the Carnegie Institute in May of 1938. She asked Dale to write a letter of recommendation to one of his former associates,

W. Carson Ryan. They were looking for a specialist in Native American history, but Debo was unsuccessful in obtaining the position.[12] At this time in Debo's career she had published her dissertation about the Choctaws, and had completed her manuscript on the Five Tribes. Even though she was becoming an expert on the Five Tribes, she could not be considered an expert in Native American history. In May of 1938 Debo applied for a position at Texas State College for Women in Denton, Texas, after J. Fred Rippy, her mentor at the University of Chicago, alerted her to the possibility of a job opening. She did not get the job.[13] She applied to the Guggenheim Foundation for a position as archivist but did not secure the job even with a sterling recommendation from Joseph Brandt who knew her abilities.[14] It is unclear why Debo did not secure these positions.

Of those women with Ph.D.'s who found employment, few found jobs at the same Midwestern co-educational institutions where they were trained. Many acquired teaching positions on the secondary level, or in libraries or archives. Women's colleges provided opportunities for some, but had a paradoxical impact on women historians. These institutions were isolated from the mainstream. Women worked and supported each other in these instances, but the reality of the work environment at women's colleges confirmed their inability to break into the field on the university level.[15] The environment at women's colleges may have been considered an opportunity for women but it was a limited one at best.

The most advantageous period for job placement of Ph.D.'s, both male and female, occurred after World War I. Debo's experiences after graduation from Chicago reflected the need for historians during this time period. She noted the University of Chicago received thirty letters from history departments throughout the nation searching for

qualified candidates; but only one would consider a woman applicant. When she graduated in 1923 she even applied to Texas A and M and received a letter from its president, William Bizzell, explaining its all-male status to Debo.[16]

In 1930 16 percent of academic women historians held jobs as full professors.[17] After 1940 women hoped job opportunities on the university level would improve, but that was not the case. Statistics indicate fewer women gained academic positions, and conditions continued to deteriorate from the 1940s through the 1970s. Fewer women experienced success in pursuit of academic careers in the 1940s and 1950s. Less than 10 percent of the doctoral degrees were awarded to women in the 1950s.[18] Female membership in the AHA declined as well as the number of women delivering papers at the annual meetings.[19]

Women took the more traditional avenue of marriage and family in the forties and fifties. The birthrate reached its highest point in 1957 confirming a trend for early marriage and families. Jesse Bernard agreed with the conclusions concerning women's changing attitudes in the middle decades from academic achievement to the feminine role of mother and wife. Fewer women were seeking terminal degrees. Women historians made inroads into the academic field in the 1960s, but the succeeding decade did not sustain the reentrance of women into the field.[20] A downturn in the economy in the 1970s constricted the job market nationwide. Historians, both male and female, found few job opportunities. The AHA conducted a study in 1973 of a small number of well-known coeducational liberal arts colleges. The findings revealed a decline of full time female professors of history from 16 percent to 0 percent in 1970. The percentage of female full

professors and associate professors fell between 1974 and 1975, and the gap between male and female salaries continued to widen.[21]

The information related to gender studies is problematic. Drawing conclusions about discrimination must be viewed with a critical eye because of the data utilized. Susan Carter disputed some of Jesse Bernard's assertions. Carter pointed out the problems inherent in Bernard's Academic Women. Bernard used data from the United States Office of Education, Statistics of Higher Education, 1955 -1956 Report to arrive at certain conclusions. Bernard claimed fewer women were employed in academic positions during the period between 1930 and 1960 because fewer women sought higher degrees. Women chose the traditional role of wife and mother over careers. Bernard tied two factors together. Women receiving higher degrees began to decline after 1930 as marriage and birth rates increased. She failed to take into account the changing composition of higher education institutions at this time. The institutions that had been favorable to the employment of women, junior colleges and teachers' colleges, changed into state colleges thereby altering the complexion of the job market. Bernard did not consider increasing gender discrimination due to the change as a possible explanation for the figures she included. She used figures stating the percentage of women in the work force with five or more years of college was equal to the percentage of all female faculty members at the university and college level in 1962 as a viable explanation for the conclusions she reached concerning gender issues.[22] Women were overrepresented in college teaching because they represented 10 percent of all those holding doctorates. Yet not all of them were in the labor force.

To refute Bernard's assertion that 1930 was the peak year for women doctorates, Carter relied on figures compiled by the National Research Council. The figures indicated less than a one percent difference in doctorates awarded in the early twenties and late twenties and between 1936 and 1939. Not until 1940 did the decline in higher degrees awarded surpass one percentage point from the peak year. The figures showed growth in the twenties (from 15.1 percent to 15.4 percent), consistency through the late thirties (14.7 percent to 14.8 percent), and no dramatic decline until 1950. From 1945-1949 to 1950-1954, the percent fell 4 percent from 13.4 percent to 9.4 percent.[23]

In comparing Bernard's findings with those of Patricia Graham, Carter emphasized the use of different data that produced different outcomes. Graham used information from the 1976 Digest of Educational Statistics, compiled by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, an update of the 1956 Report. According to these figures, 1930 was not an accurate time period for declining employment of women in higher education. It continued to increase until 1940 and did not actually decline until 1947. Carter compared Graham and Bernard's findings with census figures in a study by Rudolph C. Blitz, "Women in the Professions, 1870-1970." The census figures confirmed 1930 as a high point for women in the workforce but are confusing to understand. The census figures reflected university and college presidents as well as faculty members. The percent of females in the complete university setting according to the census figures indicated a rise from 6.4 percent in 1900 to 32.5 percent in 1930, a decrease to 23.9 percent by 1960 and a rise to 31.7 percent by 1977. The census figures led to an inaccurate assessment of the time period. The schools involved in these figures, teachers colleges, declined after 1930 thereby indicating the subsequent decline in numbers of women faculty and

presidents.[24] Carter believed the figures from the Office of Education were more reliable than those published by the Census, but neither Graham or Bernard used the more detailed information presented by the data. The Office of Education sent out questionnaires to institutions asking specific gender questions about the faculty, and the full text of the responses shed light on gender issues.[25] Graham and Barnard missed the turning point by more than fifteen years.

Scholars have argued about the peak year for women Ph.D.'s, but the figures indicated the high percent of women receiving doctoral degrees did not decline after 1930 but continued to grow throughout the 1940s; the percent declined in the 1950s. In the 1950s if women were forced to choose between marriage and career, the vast majority became wives.[26] The percentage of women holding jobs as academic personnel dropped the following two decades after the highs in the 1940s. Even though percentages for women Ph.D.'s decreased in the 1950s and 1960s (10-12 percent compared to 16-18 percent in the 1930s), a greater number of women gained the terminal degree. In 1930 about 350 women received the terminal degree compared to 1,030 in 1960.[27]

Graham's data concerning gender discrimination is valid according to the data used. Few women held faculty positions at all-male institutions. Private women's colleges, public and private teachers' colleges, and normal schools employed 70 percent of women in 1900 who held academic positions. Gender was not given for independent professional schools in 1900. Forty years later the figures reflect the discriminatory environment in academe. By 1940 women comprised only 43 percent of the faculty. This figure reflects statistics drawn nationally from private and public institutions.[28]

Carter analyzed the question of changing institutional standards and found a contradiction in Graham's conclusions. Graham claimed women were able to gain representation only in institutions where they were already established. Data indicated all-male institutions kept male-dominated faculties, but women gained in land grant colleges and other four-year institutions. During the 1930s and 1940s when Debo was seeking employment, Carter asserted the institutional changes diminished the ability of women to secure positions on university faculties. Overall employment of women did not change dramatically; but in the women's sector, (which included women's colleges, teachers' colleges, and normal schools) the total number of faculty positions contracted. Total faculty positions in the women's sector fell from 21 percent in 1930 to 13 percent by 1940. Public universities, colleges, and land grant institutions eventually picked up the losses in the women's sectors.[29]

Carter also found fewer women at research institutions than at other institutions, yet women did find jobs in the research sector until the 1950s. The proportion of women employed at land grant institutions and universities increased from 3.5 percent in 1890 to 20 percent in 1940. Between 1930 and 1940, the percentage of women employed increased from 17 to 20 percent. Again this is the time when Debo was seeking employment. In fact land grant colleges and four-year universities provided the opportunity for women to gain employment at prestigious, research-oriented institutions. Carter described land-grant colleges as "the least tradition-bound element of the higher education system." She asserted that the land grant colleges became a force in breaking down discrimination in hiring practices. Land grant colleges hired more women than other institutions as women qualified as candidates for academic jobs.[30]

Debo never married. She dedicated her life to research and writing. She took her work seriously and seemed unwilling to consider compromising her career for any reason. In the early decades of the 1900s married women were not hired because of the possibility of a family interfering with a permanent position. Debo's single status should have been an advantage for her for a certain period of time. From 1875 to 1924, 75 percent of women who earned terminal degrees remained single. This began to change about the time Debo entered the profession.[31] In addition to marital status other factors influenced hiring practices. During the Depression years when Debo was searching for employment women were not hired in place of men who were seen as the breadwinners of the families.[32]

The critical time period for Debo is the focus of the gender issue. Debo found the academic field closed to women when she graduated from the University of Chicago and applied for jobs in the field in 1923. She called her inability to gain employment on the university level discriminatory at this point in her life. The more important fact about Debo was her lifelong desire to write; she was not sure if she would encounter discrimination in the field of scholarly publication as well. It bears repeating that once Debo published her dissertation in 1934 she gained the confidence she needed to follow a career in writing even though it meant hard times financially. Other factors were involved in her decision to write full time. She lost her job at West Texas State. She continued to apply for other jobs, some on the academic level; it must be remembered she quit several jobs after a year so she could continue researching and writing. Although Debo's work record reflected excellent production, the short length of time she held jobs may have been a hindrance in obtaining future employment.

Debo's lifelong commitment to research and the amount of work she produced defied the early pattern of women historians who were unproductive by comparison. In 1927 only 25 percent of historians conducted research. The main barrier to productivity was lack of intellectual stimulation and encouragement from graduate level instructors. In the 1920s and 1930s the primary focus of graduate programs in history concentrated on teaching research techniques. Research enabled historians to contribute to scholarly journals and books providing continuous intellectual reinvigoration in the field. The AHA added incentive to research by awarding outstanding work with monetary rewards and by developing a way to communicate progress in the field of research through AHA publications. Universities added publishing capabilities on campuses that competed with each other for the best works available. The Social Science Research Council stimulated research among scholars by providing grants-in-aid and post-doctoral fellowships to historians. The Guggenheim Foundation followed suit with blue ribbon award fellowships. Debo applied for and received fellowships and grants-in-aid to work on several of her book projects. By 1936 the number of Ph.D.'s conducting research grew to 50 percent. Of the four Ph.D.'s who graduated from the University of Oklahoma, three conducted research and published four books between 1931 and 1935. One of these books was Debo's revised dissertation.[33]

Funding for many of Debo's projects came from various sources. A grant-in-aid from the Social Science Research Council assisted Debo in writing And Still the Waters Run. A fellowship in 1937 from the Social Science Research Council allowed her to complete research on the Creeks that evolved into two books. She received a Knopf

fellowship to write Prairie City and a Rockefeller grant to write Oklahoma Foot-loose and Fancy-free.[34]

Debo was not always successful securing grants. She applied to the American Association of University Women for scholarship awards in 1933 and 1936 and was rejected on both occasions.[35] Fellowships were hard to obtain during the Depression due to an economic climate that limited financial opportunities for many, especially women. Foundations and universities were skeptical about funding research by women historians.[36] For those women who did not have adequate financial support, few fellowships were available. Women who received the fellowships found them absolutely essential for the completion of their terminal degrees and for completion of research projects.[37]

Statistics indicate women were less productive than men in submitting articles to scholarly journals. Of seven hundred articles published in the American Historical Review from 1895 to 1940, women wrote 21 or 3 percent of them. At that time women's membership in the AHA stood at 15-20 percent.[38] Early in her writing career and as a graduate student at the University of Oklahoma, Debo submitted numerous articles to scholarly journals. Six were published from 1930 to 1934 in local and regional journals such as The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Panhandle-Plains Historical Review, Southwest Review, and Southwestern Historical Quarterly. Perhaps one explanation for Debo's unique literary success can be attributed to the subjects she pursued in her research. Her mentor guided her wisely into researching primary source materials on Oklahoma's Native Americans. The subjects Debo chose to investigate and submit to journals included "Education in the Choctaw Country after the Civil War," "History and Customs of the

Kiowa," "John Rollin Ridge," "The Social and Economic Life of the Commanches," and "Southern Refugees of the Cherokee Nation."[39]

Women historians more frequently wrote about women's history, but the AHR was not receptive to such works. Women were more successful in getting monographs and textbooks about women's history published.[40] Debo's interest in subjects other than women's history and her subsequent connection with Joseph Brandt and "The Civilization of American Indian Series" at the University of Oklahoma Press assured her initial success as a credible historian. Debo's inability to gain an academic position allowed her to publish early and continue to write extensively throughout her career. Women who gained employment on the university level found it difficult to conduct research due to heavy teaching loads and inadequate library resources. Debo's articles were published early in her career even though statistics indicated only 3 percent of women historians shared her literary success.[41] Later Debo made decisions that placed her in the kind of jobs that did not detract from her writing schedule.

Male historians who trained female Ph.D.'s did not address the gender discrimination that kept women out of the field. It would have required a collective effort on the part of men in the field to bring about changes. Men in positions to recommend and hire females viewed women, no matter how capable in the classroom, as inferior intellectually and difficult to work with. Men conducting interviews of potential female candidates were more interested in appearance, age, and personality than teaching credentials and research production. Men interviewed for similar positions were judged by their credentials.[42]

Under such circumstances one wonders if Angie Debo's appearance and personality had been a detriment in acquiring a position on the university level when she did obtain interviews for prospective positions. Little evidence exists indicating Debo secured interviews for the positions she desired. She was a small woman, not unattractive but definitely a woman who knew her mind and voiced strong opinions. She would have been labeled "a difficult woman." Today's term would be "strong willed." An example illustrates the point. When Debo was about to complete her requirements for her Ph.D., she made a suggestion that appeared rational and frugal from her perspective. She asked if "she could be relieved of the written examination." She taught classes six days a week, and the expense of a round trip ticket from Canyon, Texas, to Norman, Oklahoma, and back was forty dollars. She mentioned that her academic record indicated she would not fail the exams; she pointed out there was no such requirement when she was accepted into the program in 1929. A second suggestion would permit her to take them in Canyon over Christmas break. A third possibility allowed Debo to take them in the morning before her oral exams. When the time came she took her exams like all graduate students on a Saturday and the following Monday.[43]

One could say Debo did not take direction well. Once she completed research in a certain area and formulated her ideas about what she wanted to put on paper, she was adamant against making changes to her work. She did not admit mistakes. She was mistaken in thinking that E. E. Dale advised against publishing <u>And Still the Waters Run</u>. One can see her insisting on the accuracy of the information because of her long-held opinion. In her field of expertise, she was unrelenting in her criticism of those who wrote about Oklahoma without knowing its history, such as John Steinbeck and Edna Ferber.

Dale represented a typical male view of women in his relationship with Debo. Initially he did not seem to be threatened by either her intellect or achievements as was the case at West Texas State; he simply assumed women had no place in the realm of academe. Dale's opinion of women and their capabilities was not unusual and reflected the views of his male contemporaries at this time. Dale knew Debo very well and had a lifelong close relationship with her as a mentor, friend, and peer.[44] He knew Debo was an excellent researcher, but his frustration in dealing with her in reviewing the manuscript, Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free, indicated some chauvinistic feelings. Dale was a board member serving on the university committee that determined the details of grant money from the Rockefeller Foundation. This committee awarded Debo money to write a book about the Oklahoma spirit. Her manuscript presented a broad perspective of the Oklahoma spirit, an evaluation not completely positive. Angered by her unwillingness to accept the readers' critical review of her conclusions about Oklahomans, Dale intervened in attempting to get Debo to acquiesce. He told her to liberalize her thinking; he reminded her of the obligations of publishers to their audience. He stressed that she would be well served if her peers challenged her to produce her best work. Dale had a clear idea of what the university expected from the Rockefeller fellowship. Correspondence between Dale and his male peers reinforced the view that Debo had not carried out her obligation to write a cultural interpretation that the press would be proud to publish.[45] A complete discussion of Dale's concerns about Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free is covered in a later chapter.

Debo taught history at Stephen F. Austin Teachers' College in Nacogdoches, Texas, one summer. She taught at Oklahoma State University several summers and as a

temporary replacement one semester for B. B. Chapman. Her only full-time teaching position in higher education was limited to a position at West Texas State Teachers' College. West Texas State was the educational center for the Texas Panhandle; Texas Tech had not yet been established. Debo was the first female professor at West Texas State to earn a Ph.D. As an instructor at a teachers' college, Debo was insulated initially from the change overtaking higher education in the early twentieth century. During the decade Debo spent at West Texas State from 1924-1934 fundamental changes occurred across the nation in higher education. From 1875 to 1925 the institutions of higher education competed to provide a broad education to male and a larger number of female students than ever before. After 1925, higher education changed. Universities moved toward graduate research and away from the traditional role of training teachers at normal schools.[46]

The trend began earlier in the late 1870s along with the introduction of co-education. Boston College with its foundations firmly established in the ideals of Methodism welcomed women to every department in 1873. In the same period of time, the expansion of scientific knowledge captivated the academic leaders in the elite schools. The questions arising from the new information challenged Harvard's President Charles W. Eliot. Eliot's goal was to change colleges into research universities. There was little place for women in these institutions.[47]

Public support and acceptance made it difficult for institutions of higher education to veer from the incorporation of this new standard. Institutions had to create knowledge under this new standard, not just impart it. Women were affected by this change. Research became the new ideal. Teacher training institutions had a carefully defined

curriculum restricting and limiting change to a minimum. Teachers' colleges did not employ a liberal arts approach until after World War II. A teachers' college such as West Texas State, no doubt, had been the normal school of the 1890s when training teachers was held in high esteem.[48]

West Texas State training school included kindergarten through tenth grade students. Teachers used the school as an opportunity to experiment with different approaches and teaching techniques. Student teachers completed their student teaching at the training school, not in the public school system. This arrangement provided more freedom for student teachers but was not an effective method because they actually taught less than thirty minutes per day.[49]

The "demonstration school," as Debo referred to the training facility, was the focus of the college. But there was little status connected to the position. The teachers at the demonstration school did not march in the graduation procession and they often, in fact, sought jobs at the college level to improve their salaries and status.[50]

Debo's job at West Texas consisted of training instructors to teach on the high school level. Debo's time at West Texas State amounted to five years of actual teaching. She is listed as a high school faculty member of the training school from 1924 to 1929.[51] By 1928 she had decided to return to school for a doctorate. Debo had convinced herself a higher degree would present opportunities in the publishing world.[52] In 1930 Debo asked for a leave of absence to attend the University of Oklahoma to work on a doctorate. She assumed she held a permanent position on the faculty at this point. She received a university fellowship and asked for a second year of leave to complete her dissertation. Debo was ready to return to Canyon when her brother took ill in Kansas, so she spent the

summer caring for him because she was the only family member who was gainfully employed. Her brother Edwin died in 1931.[53]

At West Texas State, Hattie Anderson, who taught the college-level history courses, was planning to take a leave in 1932 to return to the University of Missouri to work on a Ph.D. Anderson's decision to pursue a terminal degree threatened the head of the department, L. F. Sheffy. Anderson was a woman on the rise. If she finished her degree, she would have a designation that Sheffy lacked. When others in the department received salary raises and Anderson did not, she took her case beyond Sheffy to the dean and got a raise. Anderson tried to warn Debo about what she perceived as Sheffy's attitude toward women. He would try to restrict a woman's advancement if it threatened his position. President S. A. Hill told Debo she could teach Anderson's college-level courses while she was on leave. Anderson made sure Hill guaranteed her job before she considered leaving. When Anderson did return to Canyon, she obtained her former position and remained at the college until retirement.

While Debo was finishing her second year in Norman, West Texas State hired a history professor, Ima Barlow, in a permanent position. In the second semester of her second year at the University of Oklahoma, Debo received a letter from Hill. In the kindest terms possible, Hill told Debo he did not have a place for her in the history department.[54] Hill knew of Debo's ability and had received a letter from Dale when she successfully passed her examinations to complete her Ph.D. work. He replied to Dale that unfortunately he might lose Debo because of hostile actions by the Texas legislature that denied funding to the college.[55] Sheffy made the final decision about who would remain on the faculty as the Depression deepened, and as students were forced to drop out of

school. Sheffy chose Barlow over others. Barlow's career extended to thirty-four years at West Texas State. Barlow felt badly for Debo but indicated no extenuating circumstances that may have swayed Sheffy's decision. When the choice was made between Debo and Barlow, Sheffy could not be persuaded even by President Hill to reconsider his choice.[56]

Dub West, a student at West Texas State University at the time, knew Debo as a history professor. He added his recollections of the situation by claiming Sheffy attended the University of Chicago as a graduate student at the same time as Debo and obtained a master's degree. Sheffy discontinued his graduate work because his wife failed to support his efforts. She did not want to live on the meager salary of a graduate student any longer. He could have taken an assistantship at the University of California to pursue a Ph.D. but turned it down. Instead Sheffy took a job at West Texas State. When Debo graduated in 1923, Dr. Rippy wrote Sheffy to recommend her for the job in Canyon.[57]

When Debo realized what had transpired in the history department, she was appalled. She could not understand why a permanent position went to someone with less education, particularly when she planned to return upon completion of her degree. In 1932 she moved from the training school to become a member of the history department at the college replacing Anderson, a position she held for one year from 1932-1933. The history courses did not fill up, so Debo taught freshmen English one semester. She received the same salary as Anderson and never alerted the department of the mistake. She needed the money desperately and thought she deserved it because of the treatment she had received at the hands of the department. At that point Hill reminded her of the letter he sent explaining there was no permanent position for her. Hill tried to find Debo a

job, but the Texas legislature cut appropriations for West Texas State by 50 percent that year. The Depression was catching up with the academic communities.[58]

Debo was humiliated. She could not understand how she could be replaced when her credentials were excellent. She knew she had performed well in the classroom. It was a devastating winter as she began to question her qualities as a teacher. She spent the winter writing letters looking for work. She decided she was not cut out to be a teacher. She would instead become a freelance writer. It was then that she made a concerted effort to get her dissertation published. It was not merely a doctoral dissertation but a test of her ability to write. She submitted the manuscript to the Social Studies Research Council in hopes of getting a grant to continue her research. The council rejected her request. Debo was discouraged and hit a low point emotionally with no job prospects and no grant money to continue her research. Hill offered Debo a position at the Panhandle Plains Museum. Debo reported making $50 monthly the year she worked for the museum.[59]

The job involved cataloguing, hosting visitors, instructing students, and working with archival material. In 1933 she invented her own job description as curator, a job she held for one year. Because of the location of West Texas State, she was isolated from educational institutions where she could pursue her research. Debo thought Sheffy slighted her when he brought a well-known archeologist, Warren K. Moorehead, to the museum to lecture. Debo was not invited to attend the lecture. She had a great interest in hearing someone like Moorehead. Later she received a letter from Moorehead after he had read The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic. He wondered why she stopped when she did in her research of the Choctaws. As a member of the Board of Indian Commissioners, Moorehead knew what had transpired after liquidation, so he suggested a

meeting in St. Louis to discuss further research. He offered to pay her way by railroad but took ill and could not keep the appointment. She claimed Sheffy had short-circuited her opportunity to meet people who came to the college and museum that could have helped her. Later Debo met the president of Stephan F. Austin State Teachers' College who employed her for a summer school session. She reapplied for the grant from the Social Studies Research Council and received $700 in 1935. She submitted the book in the same form as before but because it had been published and had won the Dunning prize, the grant money was made available.[60]

Debo recognized the difference between a school like the University of Chicago that stressed research and the limited scope of instruction at West Texas State. The changes occurring throughout higher education finally altered the educational environment at West Texas State. Debo understood the importance of this school to the panhandle of Texas. In fact she identified with the students at West Texas State because their background was similar to hers. They were from "pioneer" families in cow country; they had little opportunity to continue their schooling, and they were severely limited in accessing books and materials. She became so involved in her work at West Texas that she set aside the research she hoped to continue after graduation from Chicago. She enjoyed her work until budget constraints and politics entered the picture. Most of her peers had college degrees, were experienced in instruction, but were not gaining higher degrees or doing research. As problems arose, Debo lost her enthusiasm for her job. The problems were related to the Depression and its impact on higher education. Many students could not continue their education as the source for loans dried up. As student enrollment decreased so did the demand for instructors.

Debo expressed displeasure toward the West Texas State Administration because it was hiring more and more graduates from Peabody and Columbia Teachers' Colleges. Debo interpreted this practice as a potential lowering of the academic standards. One can assume that Debo evaluated the standards set at Peabody and Columbia to be lower than those at four-year universities.[61] In addition Debo's criticism about the school centered on the poor library collection that stifled any ability to conduct research. She stated that it was a small school without standards, and believed that the administration did not appreciate her advanced degree. Debo lost her position at West Texas State, but she appeared to be ready to make a move so she could write.[62]

In summary, Debo's situation must be viewed from her perspective as well as from the over-all opportunity for employment of women with doctorates in history. Initially she tried to gain an academic position. She took the only position offered her as an instructor at West Texas State. She taught at the teachers' college for five years. Once she gained success as a writer, Debo was unable to secure another teaching position in academe. The shift to research on the university level limited opportunities for women who were trained as teachers primarily. She realized it would be hard to make a living as a writer, but preferred to follow that avenue. That does not mean she would not have taken a job at a prestigious university if offered. Debo considered the University of Oklahoma favorably but was unable to secure a position there after several attempts. From 1941, when she left the Federal Writer's Project, until 1947, when she secured a position as the curator of maps at Edmon Low Library on the Oklahoma State University campus, Debo struggled to make a living.

The previous discussion concerning the high point in employment of women historians on the college level concluded the date well beyond Bernard's date of 1930. Carter found no decline until 1950; Graham, no decline until 1947. In fact the decline in percentage in the 1950s and 1960s was matched by an increase in the number of women who gained the degree during the same time period. In April of 1947, Dr. T. H. Reynolds offered Debo a position in the history department at Oklahoma State University, but she turned it down.[63] This position, if accepted, could have given Debo the academic exposure she had been seeking earlier in her career. It should also be noted that 1947 marked the turning point for women with Ph.D.'s seeking employment in academe. Oklahoma State University formerly Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (a land grant school), is located less than 50 miles from Debo's home in Marshall where she transformed her extensive research into manuscript form for the many books she wrote over a lifetime. She had established a writing career after the disappointing job loss suffered at West Texas State. She rationalized that she must not have been an effective teacher if she had been terminated. One must question the rationale of this conclusion. Debo knew she could teach, yet it appears she was convincing herself otherwise. With the last opportunity of a college-level teaching position gone, she was free to pursue the writing career she desperately wanted. There were disadvantages to abandoning academic jobs for the solitary life of a writer in a small Oklahoma town. She did not have colleagues with whom she could discuss research projects. She did not attend professional meetings for lack of funds. She never trained graduate students. Debo developed support for her work in her hometown of Marshall and from her co-workers. At the Edmon Low Library she would make a name for herself as a writer and historian.[64]

After termination from West Texas State, Debo made a conscious decision to concentrate on writing. From experience she knew a teaching position limited a historian's ability to conduct research. Instead of the teaching position offered her, Debo took a job in a library. As curator of maps she could support herself yet pursue her writing career. Freed from course preparation and students, she could concentrate on her research and writing.

NOTES

[1]Jacqueline Goggin, "Challenging Sexual Discrimination in the Historical Profession. Women Historians and the American Historical Association, 1890-1940." American Historical Review. 97 (June 1992): 769-802.

[2]Goggin, 771, William Hesseltine and Louis Kaplan, "Doctors of Philosophy in History A Statistical Study." American History Review 47(July 1942):770-1.

[3]Barbara Miller Solomon, In the Company of Educated Women A History of Women and Higher Education in America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 69.

[4]Goggin, 771, Hesseltine and Kaplan, 770-1

[5]Goggin, 771.

[6]Hesseltine and Kaplan, 770-1.

[7]Oral History, Box 29, R# 41 EKKK Interview, 7/14/85 ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma. 41st Commencement Program, June 5, 1933, University Archives, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[8]Hesseltine and Kaplan, 773,775, 780, 789.

[9]Solomon, 127

[10]Debo from Dale, June 23, 1937, Debo Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[11]Arrell M. Gibson, editor. Frontier Historian. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), 39.

[12]Debo to Dale, May 2, May 5, May 8, 1938. Debo Collection, Dale to Debo May 14, May 24, 1938, Dale Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[13]Debo to Dale, May 20, 1938. Dale Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[14]Debo to Brandt, March 26, 1937, Box 35f2, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[15]Goggin, 771

[16]Bizzel to Debo, exact date unknown but must have been 1923, Debo's correspondence, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma

[17]Goggin, 802

[18]Jesse Bernard, Academic Women (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1964), 37, 215.

[19]Goggin, 802

[20]Bernard, 37, 215

[21]Patricia A. Graham, "Expansion and Seclusion: A History of Women in Higher Education," Signs 3 (Summer 1978): 72.

[22]Susan Carter, "Academic Women Revisited: An Empirical Study of Changing Patterns in Women's Employment as College and University Faculty 1890-1963." Journal of Social History 14, 4 (Summer 1981): 676.

[23]Carter, 678

[24]Rudolph C. Blitz, "Women in the Professions, 1870-1970," Monthly Labor Review (May 1974): 34-39 as seen in "Academic Women Revisited" by Susan Carter.

[25]Ibid., 678

[26]Solomon, 173, 195

[27]Ibid., 189

[28]Carter, 680

[29]Ibid., 683

[30]Ibid., 690

[31]Graham, 771

[32]Goggin, 774

[33]Hesseltine and Kaplan, 795

[34]Foreman from Debo, April 2, 1937-, Box 35, folder 2, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[35]Dale from Debo, February 11,1933, letter from Brandt to AAUW committee, December 14,1936, Box 35f2, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[36]Goggin, 777

[37]Solomon,136

[38]Hesseltine and Kaplan, 254-59

[39]Debo, "A Biographical Sketch", ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[40]Goggin, 781

[41]Ibid., 778

[42]Ibid., 774

[43]Lowitt, "Dr. Dr. Debo,"381.

[44]Minutes of meeting, March 11, 1948, University Committee on the Rockefeller Grant, UOPC, WHC. Letter from Dale to Lottinville, August 19,1948. Dale Collection, Box 210f5, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Graham, 761

[47]Solomon, 51.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Interview with Ruth Lowes by Scott Hollabaugh April 26, 1989, Panhandle Plains Historical Museum, Archives Center, Canyon, Texas.

[50]Oral History, Box 29, Interview 7/14/85, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[51]West Texas State Teachers College, The West Texas State Teachers College Quarterly. Bulletins #39-69)

[52]Debo to Dale, May 28, 1928. Dale Collection, Box 17, folder 12-17, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[53]Oral History, ADC, Box 29, Interview 7/14/85, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Dale to Hill, May 8, 1933, Debo to Dale May 4, May 15, 1933, Dale Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[56]Interview with Ima Barlow by A.K.Knott, November 24, 1978, Archives Center, Panhandle Plains Museum, Canyon, Texas.

[57]Angie Debo, Oral History, Box 29, folder 42, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[58]Oral History, ADC, Box 29, Interview 7/14/85, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[59]Dale to Debo, September 1, 1933, Box 17, Dale Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[60]Oral History, ADC, Box 29, Interview 7/14/85, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[61]Debo to Dale, August 4, 1932. Dale Collection, Box 17f12-17, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[62]Debo to Dale, June 19,1937, Dale Collection, Box 17, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

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[63]Debo to Dale, April 8, 1947, Dale Collection, Box 17, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma. Reynolds was appointed head of the History department in 1926. His tenure elevated the level of professional development within the department by publishing and hiring historians of varied specialities. Reynolds published works on Latin America. He was responsible for hiring B. B. Chapman who specialized in local history. Cited from Adelia H. Hanson and Joseph A. Stout, Jr., A History of the Oklahoma State College of Arts and Sciences, Arts and Sciences Centennial History Series, (Stillwater, Oklahoma: Oklahoma State University, 1992): 92.

[64]Matthews "Against Great Odds: 10.

CHAPTER IV

WPA PROJECTS, CREEKS, AND LOCAL HISTORY

Between the summer of 1936 when Debo revised And Still The Waters Run and 1940 when Princeton Press agreed to publish it, she revisited her childhood habit of writing daily entries in a diary. She recorded the financial difficulties she faced and the jobs she found during the Depression years. She borrowed money from her life insurance policy while waiting to hear from Princeton. During that time, Debo worked on the Indian Pioneer History Project and the Federal Writers' Project, both Works Progress Administration-sponsored enterprises.

The University of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Historical Society co-sponsored an Indian Pioneer History Project that conducted interviews, chartered trails and roads, and recovered diaries and manuscripts throughout the state. The project under the leadership of Grant Foreman progressed slowly. Debo thought Grant's wife, Carolyn Thomas Foreman, was the catalyst behind this unique oral history project. Carolyn Foreman had many Indian acquaintances in Oklahoma and wanted to capture their individual stories for posterity. Debo read about the Indian Pioneer History Project in the newspaper and expressed an interest in heading the project.[1] Debo knew Foreman from her days of researching Choctaw history at the superintendency of the Five Tribes in Muskogee.

Foreman's research required the use of the documents of the Five Tribes, so their paths crossed early in Debo's career.[2]

Grant Foreman worked as an attorney for the Dawes Commission in Muskogee from 1899-1903. Congress mandated the Dawes Commission to change the title of Indian landholdings from communal to individual ownership to conform with the land practices of the United States citizenry. He lived with Judge John R. Thomas who was a prominent man when he came to Oklahoma. Thomas was a federal judge before he was appointed to work with the Dawes Commission. Before he moved to Oklahoma he was a congressman from Illinois. He bought property in Muskogee in 1897. Thomas and Grant became partners in law. Foreman's income from oil and farm holdings allowed him to retire from the practice of law in the early 1920s.[3] A story alleging Foreman profited from a land transaction and was able to retire on the $75,000 attorney fee he obtained is probably just that.[4] Debo did not find anything in her research suggesting that Foreman profited in any way from Indian land transactions. Debo mentioned Foreman's name in And Still the Waters Run on two occasions. Foreman was called on to estimate the number of "mixed-blood" Indians who retained their land. He claimed less than one in ten held a sizeable part of their allotment. Foreman helped Warren K. Moorehead publish his findings concerning the exploitation of minors' estates by putting the results on paper in a publishable form.[5]

After retirement from his law practice, Foreman dedicated the remainder of his life to historical research and writing. He launched his writing career in 1926 with the publication of his first book, Pioneer Days in the Early Southwest. During his writing career, Foreman authored numerous books, magazines, newspaper articles, scholarly

articles, and reviews. Foreman's research was confined to the time period of removal and arrival of the Five Tribes in Indian Territory.[6] Grant Foreman contributed five volumes to Brandt's "Civilization of the American Indian" series.[7]

He was instrumental in addressing the issue of preservation of archival records in Oklahoma, particularly in establishing the Indian Archives Division of the Oklahoma Historical Society. When OHS director Robert L. Williams nominated Foreman to a position on the board of the historical society, it gave Foreman the opportunity to realize his dream of building a great repository for Oklahoma's historical records and artifacts. From his position as board member Foreman assumed the position of director and conducted the affairs of the historical society from 1924 to 1943. His accomplishments included cataloguing the records held by the Superintendent of the Five Tribes, supervising the Indian-Pioneer History project, marking historic sites, and providing articles of lasting value to The Chronicles of Oklahoma. The 112 volumes of the Indian Pioneer History Project completed in 1934 and housed in the Oklahoma Historical Society became known as the Foreman Collection.[8]

As a prominent resident in Muskogee, Foreman was unwilling to delve into the kind of research Debo was doing for And Still the Waters Run; he had friends in the community that were involved in land speculation and real estate. Foreman was a member of the Muskogee City Council and was instrumental in adopting a commission form of government. When Creek freedmen were allowed to sell their surplus lands, Foreman witnessed, first hand "the orgy of speculation" occurring in Muskogee. It made a deep impression on Foreman who became an active member of the Indian Rights Association

and spoke out against the removal of restrictions. Because of these actions he gained the respect from the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes which he greatly valued.[9]

Carolyn Foreman's background was totally different from Angie Debo's; the two became close friends because they shared a love for historical research. Foreman was the daughter of Judge Thomas and was well-educated. She married Grant Foreman in 1905. The Foremans used their own resources to go to Washington, D.C., for training in the administration of Red Cross centers. Grant Foreman became volunteer head of the Muskogee Red Cross, and Carolyn headed the women's work. She was prominent on the social scene and was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Carolyn shared her husband's interest in writing and published numerous books, newspaper and scholarly articles of her own. They traveled to over one hundred libraries and institutions investigating and collecting source material.[10] During the 1920s the Foremans collected a vast amount of records relating to Indian Territory. It was considered one of the most functional collections available to historians of Oklahoma history.[11] The Foremans and Angie Debo respected each other as historians and developed a lifelong relationship. Debo spent a great deal of time at the Foreman home. Through her association with Grant Foreman, Debo became an adherent to the scholarly use of archival sources.[12]

In 1936 Debo wrote to Foreman asking for a job. She was desperate for work during the Depression. Grant Foreman told Debo he needed an editor for a WPA project and hired her on January 23, 1937.[13]

The work for the Indian Pioneer History Project was completed in Muskogee after WPA workers in the field conducted interviews with the elderly members of the Five Tribes. The interviewers listened to the various members of the tribes then wrote the

commentary from memory. Debo's job was to organize, outline, and edit the oral history. She changed very little of the actual information because she determined that the credibility of the interviews was intact. She found the data based on accurate historical events. When collecting oral history, Debo found the best and more accurate accounts came from those participants interviewed by people who were familiar with the history of the period. Informed interviewers asked questions of the participants that produced an accurate rendering of the story. The interviewers did not ask pointed questions but rather fit the remarks into the context of the history being recorded. Debo was amazed at the memory of the Native Americans who could recall details of events one hundred years old. She credited the interviewers who were knowledgeable about Creek history in producing accurate histories based on oral traditions. While she was working on this project she applied for and received a stipend of $1,000 from the Social Science Research Council to conduct further research about the Creeks. After a year Debo terminated her work with the Indian History Pioneer Project to continue her research on the Creeks.[14]

Debo used the oral histories from the Indian Pioneer History Project in her subsequent work on the Creeks. She expressed the usefulness of oral history within an accurate historical background.[15] The study of oral history is a tradition recognized as part of ethnohistory. It is not a major element of the discipline but one that continues to gain significance as ethnic groups are studied.[16] Debo heard a story about a Creek Indian schoolboy who claimed his people had lived in Tulsa since 1828. This story contradicted the myth that the area was uninhabited until 1882. Debo challenged herself to find the Indian records and establish a verifiable history of the Creeks.[17] She completed her research on the Creeks during the years of 1938 and 1939. Debo's sources included

letters and communications from the chiefs to the tribal members, Creek court records, original laws enacted by their tribal council, and reports from Creek diplomatic representatives.[18]

Historians Grant Forman and Annie H. Abel addressed the history of the Creeks as they covered broader subjects in their research. Foreman wrote of their removal and early settlement in Indian Territory. Abel researched the Civil War period and their involvement. Debo concentrated on Creek history from the time of their arrival in Indian Territory to the end of the tribal period.[19] She was intrigued with the Creeks whom she perceived as "warlike and conservative." Debo admitted she knew nothing about the Creeks prior to researching their history. This mistaken perception regarding them as warlike changed as she familiarized herself with their culture and traditions. Once she concluded her research on the Creeks, she possessed enough material to write ten or twelve volumes. She wrote two volumes from this material including a history of Tulsa. Debo encountered unexpected problems when the publication of her book on Creek history was delayed because of budget constraints. She asked the University of Oklahoma Press to release the manuscript so she could secure publication elsewhere. She explained to Savoie Lottinville, director of the press, she had not published anything in more than five years.[20] When Debo was working on the Creek manuscript, she learned Princeton Press had agreed to publish And Still the Waters Run. Debo thought the publishing of And Still the Waters Run would help get her book on the Creeks, The Road to Disappearance, published. At the time Lottinville did not have money to publish The Road to Disappearance. The legislature had cut his appropriations and the Creek book was a lengthy one with a large number of footnotes. Debo was wrong about the effects of

And Still the Waters Run. It came out during the war years and people were distracted by events in Europe. It had little impact at the time.[21]

The University of Oklahoma Press published Debo's history of the Creeks, The Road to Disappearance, as Volume 22 of "The Civilization of the American Indian Series" in 1939. The book was dedicated to Carolyn and Grant Foreman.[22] Historian Michael Green recognized Debo's careful and thorough work in his essay on Creek historiography. Green thought serious scholars of the Creek Nation could not fully understand their history without becoming familiar with the information in The Road to Disappearance. Green voiced such confidence in the book that he claimed, the work ". . . remains the standard by which other scholars must measure their work."[23] Some reviewers acknowledged the need for a study of the Creeks after 1865. By using Indian sources, Debo approached her subject from their perspective. Debo's thesis, the Creeks' struggle with white contact, culminated when tribal lands were divided among the members through allotment. This struggle framed Debo's road to disappearance.[24] Other reviewers were critical of Debo's work. One questioned Debo's assertion that the tribe had disappeared, unless in a legal and technical sense only. This criticism came from Morris Opler who had studied the Creeks in 1937 and found overwhelming evidence of their survival.[25] Debo's title and thesis did not suggest the disappearance of the Creeks but of their institutions of self-government and of their communally-held lands.

The Social Studies Research Council stipend in 1937 allowed Debo to continue the research she started with her dissertation. The notes she accumulated about the Creek Nation but did not use in The Road to Disappearance led to a history of the city of Tulsa. The University of Oklahoma Press published Tulsa: From Creek Town to Oil Capital in

1943. The book was reprinted as a textbook in 1960. The Tulsa school system required all sixth-grade students to take one unit of Tulsa history and ninth graders to take a unit of Oklahoma history. Teachers used Debo's book as the text to fulfill these academic requirements.[26]

As Debo waited for publication of The Road to Disappearance, she took another WPA job. Before Debo took over the position of state director of the Oklahoma Federal Writers' Project, problems existed concerning the publication of the state guide. State WPA officials sought funds for publication but had a difficult time securing a publisher. The Oklahoma Legislature could not be counted on to appropriate funds for publication; it was busy defeating Governor E. W. Marland's attempts to bring the New Deal to Oklahoma. The University of Oklahoma Press was expected to publish the guide after the federal government relinquished publication efforts to the states or to private organizations. When the guide was first submitted to the press in 1937, editor Joseph Brandt found the guide poorly written and filled with many historical errors. Even after the guide passed Brandt's publishing criteria, there were problems related to other issues that kept the press from publishing it.[27]

A second attempt to get the University of Oklahoma Press to publish the guide ended in 1939 when Governor Leon C. Phillips attacked the university for teaching courses about communism and harboring communists among the faculty. Controversy over a chapter on labor provided the impetus for dissension among various Oklahoma and Federal Writers' Project officials and eventually disrupted Oklahoma's completion of the project. The Federal One programs ended in June of 1939 with an extension of three months to allow states to find a sponsor. Because the ideological philosophy of

Oklahoma's director, James Thompson, collided with the traditionally conservative views of Oklahomans, the state WPA, in collaboration with the University of Oklahoma, ousted the director and left the project headless for nine months. The accusations of communists on the University of Oklahoma faculty left the university vulnerable to criticism. Conservatives in Oklahoma as well as on the national level, mounted attacks on the WPA, forcing the end of programs. The Oklahoma project remained closed until Debo became the director in the spring of 1940.[28]

Debo held the position of state director of the Oklahoma Federal Writer's Project from 1940-1941. She was hired immediately after an interview even though she did not remember actively applying for the position. Favorable reviews of her doctoral dissertation enhanced Debo's reputation in Oklahoma as a writer. Debo recalled that a friend recommended her to WPA officials. She was contacted and subsequently borrowed money to make a trip to Oklahoma City for a conference with WPA officials. She paid $75 for railroad fare and an overnight stay at the Y.W.C.A. and brought meals from home to sustain her. At the conference Debo was told to report to work immediately, so she returned to Marshall to gather clothes. Debo started her job as the state director on April 22, 1940. Even as an employed writer during the Depression, she constantly dealt with the scarcity of money. She sewed her own clothes, bought her first winter coat in nine years for $15, and sold her watch for $2.25 to pay for dental care.[29]

When asked how she obtained the director's job, Debo made a reference to the University of Oklahoma who co-sponsored the project. Morris Wardell represented the University of Oklahoma history department as head of the project. Wardell was assistant to President William Bizzell and coordinator for the WPA projects. Debo assumed

Wardell was somewhat responsible for the poor performance of the project to date. She held little respect for Wardell as an academician and thought he attained his position through manipulation. She found him uninformed historically, and thought of him as a poor writer.[30] She indicated that the position should have been offered to her long before it was because of her reputation as a writer. The members of the history department, particularly Wardell and Dale, knew Debo's abilities well. Debo assumed the project lacked guidance because of the appointed directors, so someone Debo called a friend suggested that she be hired.[31] It is unclear who the friend was.

When Debo took over, the project was faltering. The goal of the national project included providing forty-eight state guides to replace the outdated travel guides published in 1893 and updated in 1909. The federal officials expected these guides to be written as attractive and marketable items. The guides were meant to document American life as portrayed by local writers. The directives came from Washington. The states were required to follow a specific format for gathering information and writing an informative guide.[32] Many of these state guides are regarded as treasures today. The guides are valuable because they represent a historical sketch of local towns and communities in Oklahoma in the 1930s. They provide an important link with the past by illuminating the development of the state at this point in time.

The previous state director, James Thompson, oversaw the collection of information from local chambers of commerce and city officials. Thompson provided little direction concerning the writing of the guide. After Debo took over the director's position, she noted some local Oklahoma officials were so opposed to projects associated with the New Deal that they refused to cooperate with the Federal Writers' Project. The

vast majority of officials cooperated with the project and provided vital local data for the guide. Debo had to organize the material and write the guidebook. She wrote an introductory chapter but mainly supervised forty other workers. Debo acknowledged Dorothy Halcolm as the person who actually did most of the writing. Her name did not appear in the book because none of the workers names were listed; Debo believed Halcolm was most responsible for the guide's completion.

This information is confusing because very few names are associated with the material in the guide. E. E. Dale's name appears as the author of "The Spirit of Oklahoma," the first essay of Part 1. Debo wrote the essay on history. Kenneth Kaufman contributed the essay on literature, and William B. Bizzell, the material in the Preface. John M. Oskison and Debo were listed as editors. If Halcom had written essays for Part 1, her name would have been mentioned. Specific authors for the written material for Part 2 that contained the travel portion, locations of historic sites, and towns were not acknowledged.[33]

Debo was dismayed that her assistants did not know how to conduct historical research. She thought most of the workers were capable of gathering data; she did not think they were good writers. In fact Debo praised the quality of workers and thought they deserved jobs, but she did not think she could make researchers and writers of them. She worked alongside those whom she considered uneducated as well as those who could have done graduate level work at a university. Although Debo acknowledged the integrity of the project because it appeared to be free of political influence, she disliked the idea behind it. She did not think it actually employed writers. To Debo scholarly writers conducted research, preferably on primary source documents. The Federal Writers'

Project sought out unemployed writers to fill these jobs. Debo disagreed with the whole premise of unemployed writers. In her opinion, writers continued working during the Depression; they may not have been very successful in getting their work published but she thought there were few truly "unemployed writers." In other words, their research was their work; it just did not pay them a salary. She also disagreed with the assumption that an educated person who had access to the facts could write.[34]

In Debo's opinion, the WPA did not secure the level of the skilled writers necessary to do the job asked of them. Federal constraints requiring that 75 percent of project employees come from relief rolls caused further problems in Oklahoma where few writers could be found on the relief rolls. To find qualified writers, often state officials asked federal officials for more non-relief workers.[35] Anne Hodges Morgan commented on the level of work on the Oklahoma guide. She claimed the workers were well qualified to undertake the project. She said, "That was probably the first time in American history that there were enough well-trained analytical scholars–historians, folklorists, anthropologists, ethnologists, geographers, and musicologists–to do such a thing."[36]

Once Debo familiarized herself with the problems over the publication of the Oklahoma State guide, the political wrangling and bureaucratic bungling became evident. Debo criticized the federal WPA officials for retarding the completion of the guide because of their ignorance of Oklahoma history. By initially approving text that contained historic errors, Debo claimed, federal officials forced the state office to concentrate on making corrections rather than contributing to historical writing.[37] Perhaps this explains Debo's concerns about the limitations of a project employing inexperienced researchers. Eternally frustrated in this job, Debo's work centered on bureaucratic duties leaving her

little time to write.[38] Frustration seemed to characterize many of the jobs Debo held in her younger years.

Debo asked E. E. Dale to write an introductory essay for the guide. The federal editor, Stella Hanau, was concerned that articles added to the guide would be written in a different style from the rest of the text. Hanau suggested Debo prepare an outline for Dale to follow. Such a suggestion must have seemed ludicrous to Debo who viewed Dale as one of the most capable Oklahoma historians of his time.[39] Federal Director J. D. Newsom did not like the Dale essay titled "Spirit of Oklahoma" because it focused on the history of the state rather than on contemporary conditions. Newsom's concern centered on the need to make the guide marketable. Promoting the guide for tourism met one of the main goals for the project.[40] The state WPA officials supported Dale's essay over Washington's disapproval. They agreed to eliminate any duplication between Dale's essay and the chapter on history.[41] Debo led the battle against federal directives editing the Dale essay. She wanted the essay published intact to preserve the integrity of the guide.[42] Debo was working with Dale as an equal, something she had always wanted to do. She had tried to do so as a graduate student in defending her position against Dale's revisions. She merely established the ground rules on which their future relationship would be defined. Now she was a respected author on a level with Dale.[43]

Although the guidebook, Guide to the Sooner State, had Debo's name on it, someone else rewrote the first chapter she had written. The substituted chapter depicted white settlers opening vacant land to progress, and it differed substantially from Debo's chapter that focused on the struggle between the Indians and whites for land. The substituted chapter contained historical errors. It is unclear who authored the revised

chapter; Debo worried that such mistakes would diminish her credibility.[44] When Debo lamented her dilemma about the history chapter to E. E. Dale, he remarked that she took the errors much too seriously and tried to calm her concerns about losing credibility.[45] Debo asked Savoie Lottinville, director of the University of Oklahoma Press, if he had removed the chapter. He said he had not removed it and was as surprised as Debo when the guide book came back in altered form. To Debo, Lottinville was the likely suspect because he was a history major and was the director of the printing project. She knew that Lottinville would not have made numerous historical mistakes in the revised chapter. This episode may have sown doubts in Debo's mind about the loyalty of Lottinville to accurate history. This doubt would play an important role when she worked with him on Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free. Eventually Debo became convinced that someone outside the state substituted a different chapter.[46]

The University of Oklahoma became the official sponsor for the Oklahoma State guide in 1940 after earlier difficulties with the publication subsided. The press finally published the guide, Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State, in 1941. The year preceding publication was a trying time for all associated with the guide. Debo found much of the guide unacceptable for publication because of historical errors. She did not condemn those who had written the guide but emphasized the unique aspects of Oklahoma history. Because of the state's young age, the writers possessed few secondary sources to establish a historical foundation. They had to rely on primary documents. This presented problems to workers who were not experienced researchers. In addition to this Debo asserted that Oklahoma history presented complex cultural and political issues. A

valid assessment of the history would have required insight and understanding well beyond the capabilities of those asked to compile a comprehensive account.[47]

In order for Debo to work on the revision of the guide, she was given an assistant to relieve her of the time-consuming administrative details of the office. She requested time away from the office to complete work on the guide. She often worked at home. Unfortunately, there was a high turnover of administrative assistants, so Debo resumed the responsibility for the administration of the writer's project. Debo's experience as a teacher provided her with the necessary skills to supervise those working on the guide. She issued instructions, guided their work closely, and tried to make good researchers of them all. She had to reprimand workers for writing in library books, for not following her directions, and read every word written to eliminate mistakes and inaccuracies. Debo's need for perfection created a stressful and tense workplace for those under her supervision. Some of those working under Debo came off the relief rolls, so they had no formal training for the job they were doing.[48]

Commercial publishers completed the printing for most of the state guides published for the Federal Writer's Project. In the second editions, these publishers simply copied the first edition. Debo found the use of old census material in second editions unacceptable. She credited the high publishing standards set by the University of Oklahoma Press for printing a first class guide by updating each edition. Kent Ruth edited the first edition for the University of Oklahoma Press. Ruth used a wheelchair for mobility because of a crippling disease; his sister drove him around the state to investigate needed changes.[49] A second edition was published in 1945 then reissued in 1947.[50]

Debo found the project frustrating because of bureaucratic paperwork that left her little time to write. Once the guidebook on Oklahoma, the last in the series of state guides published, was completed, she quit the project. She worked there one year. Debo explained her brief tenure by complaining that the project imprisoned her. After she resigned she was free to do what she wanted – to write.[51]

Debo's work record reflected little patience with jobs that did not directly reinforce her need to conduct research and write. She would have been considered a difficult employee by many. She stayed with a job long enough to support herself temporarily but complained about the work conditions and lamented her inability to write. Eventually she found what she considered ideal for a writer, a day job that supported her but allowed her to research and write as much as she preferred. She knew what she wanted to do with her life; to achieve her goal, Debo had to selfishly pursue it.

Debo's original introduction to the guide was restored when the University Press of Kansas asked Anne Hodges Morgan to write a new introduction for the reprint of the 1941 edition. In 1981 Morgan contacted Debo who was ninety-one years old; she wanted to dedicate the reprint to Debo. Morgan asked Debo for permission to reprint her original chapter. Debo sent Morgan a carbon copy of the original that was yellow and brittle with age. In 1986 the essay was restored in the reprinted guide. Morgan dedicated the book to Angie Debo. The interest in reprinting the book evolved when an Oklahoma City advertising agency conducted a national survey to determine the perceptions others had of Oklahoma. The survey indicated few people outside the state knew where Oklahoma was located, knew any distinguishing characteristics about the people, or even knew the stereotypical impressions associated with the state. No one mentioned Will Rogers,

Indians, oil wells, or Oklahoma football. The reprint was an effort to redefine the state, and it was an opportunity to include Debo's original chapter.[52] Debo had used the information in that chapter as the foundation for chapters 2 and 3 in Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free.[53]

Few guide books written for the Federal Writer's Project contained the unusual descriptive chapters on the flora and fauna of the state that can be found in the Oklahoma guide. Debo's love and interest in native flowers provided direction in including this aspect in the guide. When the guide was first published, Lewis Gannett, a literary critic for the New York Herald Tribune, praised it as one of the best written because of the expertise of Debo. The director of the Federal Writers' Project, Henry G. Alsberg, anticipated the success and longevity of the state guides.[54]

Debo's chapter on the history of the state began with the Spanish explorer Coronado. One wonders why Debo did not begin the history of the state with its true inhabitants. Debo's experiences were tainted with the prejudice of all pioneer history–that history did not really begin until Europeans arrived. Characteristic of the way Debo wrote, the words she used to describe the removal of the Five Tribes were honest yet harsh. Her description of the politics of Oklahoma included intense partisanship, localism, distrust of the executive branch, legislative control of administration, and the spoils system.[55]

Debo worked on the two WPA projects briefly before pursuing her next writing assignment. In 1942, the publisher, Alfred A. Knopf awarded Debo a fellowship of $1,200 to write a book about local history.[56] Knopf's interest in historical accuracy challenged Debo to write a story of a frontier settlement in Oklahoma. Debo expanded a

graduate paper on the history of Marshall depicting events in a typical pioneer town in Oklahoma. She explained in her preface that she used location, dates, and population figures from Marshall for convenience, but Prairie City was not based on the history of her hometown. Using newspapers from Hennessey, and The Kingfisher Free Press, Debo established a historical framework for her story. She interviewed elderly residents of Hennessey and read diaries of old-timers to fill in details of certain events.[57]

Debo worked under wartime restrictions when writing this book. She could not travel very far due to government rationing of gasoline; she drove to nearby towns where she had interviews. She used the railroad as much as possible. She read newspapers at the Oklahoma Historical Society and did much of her research in the newspaper room.[58] Debo learned from her experience with And Still The Waters Run that it was not important to identify the actual characters in a book. She made up the names of people whose stories she used claiming most of the events took place in Kansas and the north central part of Oklahoma. She submitted chapters of Prairie City to Knopf who found her work acceptable.[59]

From the pages of George Bebee's diary, Debo discovered the exact date when he was able to cut the first successful wheat crop ending the drought that had made settlement so difficult during the early years. Debo saw similarities between the difficulties encountered by the settlers of Jamestown and those who made the run of 1889. She found the diet of early settlers interesting. In Prairie City she explained the consumption of kaffir corn, the first of the grain sorghums brought to Oklahoma. Debo interviewed the widow of one of Marshall's founders about the early development of the town from a crossroads trade store. She detailed the gradual development of the school system as the

area gained population. She related the industrious activities of women like her mother who made quilts, whitewashed the inside walls of their houses in addition to keeping a garden, caring for chickens and turkeys, and helping with the field work. Debo's rendition of frontier history in Prairie City represented a microcosm of American history. American history was a story of successive generations of settlers moving westward and experiencing similar situations over time. Debo claimed Oklahoma had a unique history because its settlement occurred all at once.[60]

One must consider the nature of this statement. In this context pioneer history related exclusively to the white settlers. Debo's conventional view is exposed in Prairie City. The Indian population was completely ignored. It is only fair to include a comment possibly explaining this oversight by Debo. As a youngster Debo said that Indian Territory was so removed from her knowledge and experiences in Oklahoma Territory as to be considered a foreign country. Lest the reader forget she was a young child during this time. What appeared distant and unimportant then did not appear any differently when she wrote of this time period in Marshall's history. Debo could have greatly altered traditional frontier history had she chosen to include all the inhabitants of the territories as participants in the process. She mentioned traders at crossroads stores seeing the Poncas and Cheyennes moving across the lands to visit each other. She commented on the few men making the run for the Cherokee Strip alone fearing they would be scalped by Indians. Debo stated that the people in Prairie City had been anticipating statehood since the summer of 1890 when they almost starved. They did not want to wait for the liquidation of Indian lands fearing it would take a decade. Once statehood occurred Debo described in detail "the marriage of the Indian girl to a cowboy," representing unification

of Indian and Oklahoma Territory. She included information about the towns involved in the oil boom who spent money paving roads and building modern homes.[61] Prairie City is a story about white settlers exclusively. Debo wrote about the events of statehood as a frontier historian, not an Indian advocate. She expressed the sentiments of a predominately Euroamerican population who had succeeded in bringing progress to what was viewed as the last remnant of the frontier.

The University of Oklahoma Press published Prairie City The Story of an American Community in 1944.[62] Debo dedicated the book to Dale.[63] In part she was trying to redeem herself for having failed to acknowledge Dale's help with her dissertation. She thought this book, more than any other she wrote, fit the interests of her mentor who enjoyed popular culture in a historical context.

Prairie City received numerous positive reviews from widespread sources. Some reviewers claimed the book expressed a post-World War II concern about the future role of the local community. Others believed it illustrated the strength of local communities. Oklahoma reviewers claimed Debo's work represented a model community affirming the strength of family, religion, and the values of a small town. Regional reviewers from Texas and Kansas saw Debo's book as a social history documenting the pioneer spirit for future generations.[64] Rennard Strickland wrote that the book was more than a historical account. Strickland said:

> Debo condenses the most complex of motivations and summarizes epic movements . . . conquest, challenge, opportunity, individual worth, collective responsibility, generosity, greed, man's resilience, man's vanity, nature's bounty, and nature's cruelty.[65]

During the early 1940s Debo became acquainted with Oliver Nelson. He lived west of Hennessey on a claim he staked after the Cherokee Strip opened. He was a cowboy and worked a stage station in the Texas panhandle prior to homesteading in Oklahoma. Nelson wrote his experiences down and brought them to Debo because he knew of her interest in local history. She found Nelson's reminiscences historically accurate and intriguing but unorganized. She suggested they organize the information and publish it. She agreed to edit the manuscript and split any royalties with Nelson. Arthur H. Clark Co. published the book under the title of The Cowman's Southwest; Being the Reminiscences of Oliver Nelson, Freighter, Camp Cook, Cowboy, Frontiersman in Kansas, Indian Territory, Texas, and Oklahoma, 1878-1893. The Western Frontiersmen, Volume 4 in 1953. Debo preferred a colloquial heading. She wanted the book called 'Lite and Fill-up. When the publisher requested a change Debo thought he did not know what 'lite meant. It meant to get down from your horse.[66] Arthur Clark was one of the most knowledgeable publishers in Western history, yet Debo found his request for a different title unenlightened.

The Rockefeller Foundation established a $25,000 fellowship created for the purpose of research and writing in the field of humanities and in the fields relating to the Southwest.[67] In 1947 the foundation awarded funds to the University of Oklahoma to commission Angie Debo to compile a work on "the cultural interpretation of Oklahoma."[68] Debo tried to capture the Oklahoma pioneer spirit in her book, Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free, published in 1949. She combined her extensive knowledge of Oklahoma history, geology, and geography to chronicle Oklahoma's industrial and cultural development· This book differed substantially from her others. Debo interpreted the data

she found to develop specific characteristics for the people of Oklahoma. Debo wrote that Oklahomans possessed different characteristics from citizens of other states that border it. Before she began work on the book, she read several of the other books funded by the Rockefeller Foundation; she read the interpretations about the characteristics of the people of Texas, Indiana, and Montana. No doubt she intended to make her interpretation different from other states.[69]

In Chapter 2 titled, "Red People," she credited the Indian population of the Five Tribes with many accomplishments that influenced the way the state developed. The Creeks and Choctaws organized the first Presbyterian churches in 1830. The Choctaws held the first elections for tribal leaders in 1831. In 1832 the Cherokees passed a public school law. Missionaries helped further their educational work. The Choctaws wrote the territory's first constitution in 1834 after completing the document begun before removal. With the help of missionaries, the Creeks printed the first book at Union Mission in 1835. Debo was unsure whether it was a Creek primer or a Choctaw or Cherokee almanac that was the first to be printed since they all had the same date. The Choctaws built the first state capitol building in 1838 at Tuskahoma. By 1844 Cherokee and English bilingual newspapers were printed. The Cherokee capital, Tahlequah, became the first incorporated town under tribal law in 1852; Cherokee tribal members chartered the first Masonic lodge.[70]

Debo's rendering of Oklahoma history emphasized the important contributions of the Indians and the rich heritage they left as a legacy. It is the characteristics of the non-Indian that take center stage in And Still the Waters Run. Regardless of this fact, Debo claimed the Indian legacy was cultural and had permeated the collective memory of

Oklahomans. The power of the Indian was disproportionate to his small numbers. Debo bolstered her argument in Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free by reminding readers that the two statues chosen for Statuary Hall in the nation's capitol, Sequoyah and Will Rogers, were both Cherokee Indians (Roger's parents had some Cherokee blood). Debo paid tribute to Oklahoman writers who had treated the Indian peoples with respect and had been responsible for a broad dissemination of their traditions and histories. Writers such as John Joseph Mathews, Alice Marriott, Grant Foreman, Stanley Vestal (Walter Campbell), and John H. Seger have helped correct the inaccuracies of histories written previously.[71]

Debo's personal memories of settlement established a basis for her research. Remembering her own experiences, interviewing others about their particular circumstances, scouring the newspapers to fill in details, she was able to construct what she always said was a unique story. Debo included Oklahoma flora and fauna that differed from what she was familiar with in Kansas. She celebrated the strength of character developed as settlers weathered the difficult conditions encountered on the plains. She understood their feeling of community through her shared experiences in Marshall.[72]

Aside from the physical and cultural aspects, Debo thought Oklahoma possessed a special history. She saw the rapidity of the settlement process as crucial. Oklahoma's history signified the epitome of the larger American experience. Debo claimed white settlement occurred in a comparatively short span of time and the displacement of the Indians was so total as to suggest uniqueness.[73] Debo was referring to the allotment process and the subsequent removal of Indian lands from their owners. Debo seemed to be interpreting the final outcome that took place in Oklahoma as a microcosm of the entire

federal Indian policy. What made the experience unique in Debo's view was the speed at which white settlers came into possession of lands promised to Indians in perpetuity. The designation of "Indian Territory" was destined to become obsolete as modern Oklahoma emerged. "Thus Oklahomans, no better no worse than other frontiersmen, seized the greatest opportunity for wholesale looting that was ever placed before any American population."[74]

Debo ran into problems publishing Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free with the University of Oklahoma Press because her portrayal of Oklahoma was not completely positive. As frequently happened, the press submitted her manuscript to E. E. Dale for a review. In fact Dale found the manuscript disappointing. He insinuated Debo wrote from a subjective perspective. She went well beyond acceptable limits by giving what he thought to be undue attention to Oklahoma's unpleasant treatment of the Native American population. Dale envisioned a more wholesome, generalized story of Oklahoma that would attract the interest of an outsider without exposing the state's blemishes. His interpretation of history differed from Debo's in one important way. In Dale's mind, once history could be explained and understood, the mistakes of the past should be forgiven and forgotten. He suggested criticism of the people of Oklahoma be cloaked in the type of humor reminiscent of Will Rogers. It appeared that Dale had a preconceived idea of how the character of Oklahomans could be described. It did not resemble Debo's characterizations.[75]

Lottinville recommended that Dale correspond with Debo directly. The editor was getting nowhere in convincing Debo to alter her manuscript. He believed that Dale could influence Debo if anyone could.[76] Eventually Debo complied with enough of Dale's

suggestions to pass inspection by the readers; she tried to satisfy her own high standards with careful research and accurate documentation. Debo rationalized the problems she encountered with the Rockefeller Committee by claiming she was being stifled by a group of people who were paying her to write in a certain manner. In her other writing experiences, she did not write to please publishers but rather to satisfy her own historical inquisitiveness.[77] Debo regularly submitted manuscripts to the University of Oklahoma Press. With the exception of And Still the Waters Run, she did not ask the press if they were interested in her prospective works. By submitting an unsolicited completed manuscript, she had freedom to research and write the book as she wished. She was not tied to the approval or disapproval of the publisher.[78]

In fact Debo did not submit her manuscripts to peers, as historians in an academic setting did, before they went to publishers. At this point in her career Debo understood that university presses submitted manuscripts to peer review; publishers were not interested in telling an author what to write but rather in accuracy of the content. With Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free, Debo experienced the kind of criticism she despised. In fact she wrote to Lottinville that she would abandon her contract with the University of Oklahoma Press rather than compromise her historical perspective. Debo's opinion of the publisher's role was to add or delete material with her approval only.[79]

Undoubtedly Debo meant that she did not like to soften or distort the historic record. She was ready to withdraw from the contract with the University of Oklahoma Press if the committee required a different rendition of her historical interpretation. She simply did not think the criticism was valid. One reader called Debo's work "too colloquial" yet others thought she had been "too scholarly." She stated that readers

expected a chamber of commerce brochure.[80] Lottinville appealed to Debo's sense of accomplishment by praising her previous books while establishing the necessity for changes. Lottinville wrote to Debo, ". . . the first obligation of an editor, namely never to permit an author and a friend to appear in anything but his best light." He reiterated it was his job and that of the readers to help the author. Lottinville strengthened his argument by disclosing to Debo that three of the five readers were not native Oklahomans yet knew Debo and admired her previous work. All five agreed that this was not Debo's best effort. Their reaction to the book would mirror those of the general public. Lottinville reminded Debo that the readers were unknown to authors and as such remained impersonal in their remarks. They presented literary and intellectual criticism only; while they disagreed with her opinion, no one was asking Debo to alter her analysis.[81]

Dale wrote Debo as Lottinville requested. He told her he was writing as a "friend and former teacher" not as a member of the editorial board. Dale was responsible for choosing Debo and the subject for the Rockefeller fellowship; he wanted to avoid problems in getting the manuscript published. He told Debo he had planned to take advantage of the fellowship himself but did not have time to do so. In giving the work to Debo, he had provided her a great opportunity as well as a challenge. He told Debo she was up to the challenge but needed to accept the advice from those who shared her pride in its outcome. Dale reiterated the fundamental need of cooperation between a writer and a publisher for any book to succeed. He reminded her that she had been paid for work done to the present time. For her work, Debo received $2,025.[82] Dale explained a publisher had to concern himself with the product he was trying to sell. He reminded Debo that all five readers recommended changes. He addressed Debo's threat to have the

work published elsewhere with a stern rebuke. A book about Oklahoma written by an Oklahoman with a grant awarded to the University of Oklahoma should be published by the University of Oklahoma Press. In essence Dale told Debo she had taken the criticism much too seriously and too personally. He attempted to secure a change in Debo's attitude by giving her examples of revisions required on manuscripts he had turned over to publishers.[83] He did not want to give in to her on these revisions. In Dale's mind the alternative, letting Debo present Oklahoma as she interpreted it, reflected badly on the University of Oklahoma Press and E. E. Dale himself.

The correspondence sounded much like a parent reprimanding a recalcitrant child about how to act properly. Debo resented the suggestions. Lottinville had difficulty getting Debo to agree to his suggestions. Dale may not have been completely honest with Debo because he told her he had not looked at the manuscript critically and would be happy to do so at that time. In fact he sent his comments to Lottinville about Debo's disappointing manuscript two months before the letter he wrote to Debo. It appears that Dale gave Debo's manuscript only a cursory look initially. Debo responded to Dale's letter with graciousness yet uncompromising resolve. She would alter it where she thought it might clarify her intent. In her opinion the unjustified criticism resembled a hostile attack of her work.[84]

Once Debo finished the revisions, she mailed the manuscript to Dale to review. She asked that he read George Sessions Perry's Texas. Debo read this book, because it was also sponsored by a Rockefeller fellowship, as well as those about Indiana and Montana; she found them well-written. She also asked that Dale reread the initial letter he sent her about his proposed use of the fellowship. In other words, Debo was not giving

in. She wanted to remind Dale that she had followed through with her responsibility by incorporating his suggestion for the book in the first place as well as his revisions.[85]

Dale did not think Debo adequately expressed her full appreciation in her book to the university for the Rockefeller fellowship, so he asked her to do so in the preface. One of his final requests to Debo was to change the wording of her dedication in Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free. Initially she used the words "Dedicated to Joseph Brandt whom Oklahoma lost." Dale disliked Debo's wording thinking it inappropriate. Such wording would stir up unpleasant memories of past problems with the university press. Dale was particularly sensitive to public opinion. Such sentiments would be counterproductive for Debo.[86] Debo changed the wording to "Joseph Brandt, ex-Oklahoman." She considered Brandt the catalyst behind her successful writing career and never forgot the courage he displayed in attempting to get And Still the Waters Run published by the University of Oklahoma Press. Perhaps this confirmed Debo's perception about Dale's role in the publication controversy.

Dale accepted Debo's revisions but still found fault with the over-all tone of the book. He surmised Lottinville and the committee had pushed Debo about as far as they could. He told the editor to make whatever changes he deemed necessary, and not to inform Debo of any further revisions.[87] The first chapter, titled "They Write About Oklahoma," portraying white land settlement at the expense of the Indians, was edited out of the final copy. Unaware of the ongoing correspondence between Lottinville and Dale, Debo believed the press simply did not want to offend well-known and popular writers such as Edna Ferber and John Steinbeck. She did not find Ferber and Steinbeck's accounts of Oklahoma history factual.[88] More will be said about this subject later.

According to Debo, the character of Oklahomans did not change appreciatively from the time she wrote Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free in 1949 to present-day Oklahoma when she wrote on this subject in 1987. She found special significance in the fact that Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free was published fifty years after she and her family moved to the state as homesteaders. She took the opportunity to express her views about changes in an addendum written in 1987. She claimed the original analysis was accurate in laying the foundation for the present and future. The spirit Oklahomans possess consisted of a creative drive, a ready friendliness, practical common sense, and community loyalty. These traits were present in 1949 when she wrote the book and had not changed. She pointed out a shift in athletic interest. Oklahoma had its share of big league baseball players who emerged from localities throughout the state. But the interest in baseball changed to that of football, a phenomenon adopted by enthusiasts at the college and high school level. Debo found little change in the way government operated, particularly on the county level. She found county governments in 1981 as corrupted by money and power as the probate courts after 1907.[89] She referred to Oklahoma's overzealous love of athletics and a general lack of cultural appreciation that had remained constant over time.[90] On the more positive side, Debo's assessment of the high quality of Oklahoma's writers is interesting. She found few Oklahomans who read enough books by Oklahoma authors to appreciate their uniqueness. In fact Debo stated that Oklahomans did not read enough books of any kind.

Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free had been out of print for a number of years when Greenwood Press decided to reissue it in 1982 during Oklahoma's celebration of statehood. The University of Oklahoma Press did not inform Debo about Greenwood's

plans to reissue. Even though this is standard publishing procedure, she was upset when she found out. She wanted to correct the typographical errors in the 1949 edition. She updated the work and added some of her reflections in the event the book would be reissued in the future.[91]

The problems Debo and Dale had over Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free illustrate an ongoing life long pattern. For many reasons, tension seemed to exist between Dale and Debo even though she regarded him as a mentor and good friend. Dale was a member of the academic establishment that Debo had been unable to penetrate. She had penetrated the world of publishing successfully. In this arena she had gained the self confidence needed to continue her career. Criticism of her writing, particularly by peers, appeared to threaten her very livelihood. Because her work was not evaluated by others in the academic setting as is the practice she did not benefit from peer criticism. The subject of how other historians assess Debo's influence on Indian history is discussed in Chapter XI. One can only speculate how she would have handled peer review, probably not well. Once a successful writer it appeared that she could not tolerate anyone questioning her abilities. The arrogance demonstrated toward critical remarks about her work may have resulted from Debo's perception that she wrote more accurate, therefore better history than Dale who refused to engage in controversy, either in personal relationships or in writing of history.

Tension between Dale and Debo represented the securely-positioned male who was unwilling to stand up for his convictions publicly pitted against the head-strong woman with few opportunities in this field who mastered the subjects about which she wrote. Dale did not feel comfortable questioning an expert about ongoing research. He

stated this reluctance in the first letter he wrote Debo after making critical comments about her dissertation. He was obviously an effective undergraduate instructor but by allowing graduate students such latitude concerning his suggestions for revisions, he did not completely fulfill his role as mentor. He could give them constructive criticism but did not care to pursue it beyond suggestions they could take or leave. Over time Debo solidified her position and rarely backed down against a critic. There are numerous examples of Debo's steadfastness such as her squabbles with Muriel Wright and J. Brooks Wright, and with Lottinville and Dale over Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free. Witness the careful editing of And Still the Waters Run, in which she consistently required Princeton Press editor, Joseph Brandt, to justify each and every effort he made to accommodate publishing requirements.

Dale referred to the episode with Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free later. In 1955 he responded to a request from J. Fred Rippy, who wanted to send a manuscript to the University of Oklahoma Press. He wanted Debo to put in a good word for him with Lottinville. Dale's comments were interesting. He made the statement to Rippy that she almost drove Lottinville crazy with her manuscript about the Oklahoma spirit. He did not hesitate to say she did not have any influence with Lottinville. Dale stated that Debo had developed a mindset that her writing was above reproach. He claimed he considered her a friend and spoke highly of her work but that she was not easy to work with and Lottinville concurred.[92] Later Lottinville softened his stance when he read Debo's review of the revised WPA state guide in the New York Times. She complimented Lottinville on the essay he contributed titled "The Spirit of Oklahoma." Debo gave it her highest praise calling it the best interpretive analysis ever written. In a way this comment was a slap at

Dale who had written the original essay. Debo doubted Dale's abilities at historic interpretation even though she defended the essay when it was submitted. Dale may have been threatened by Debo's expertise, so the two were friends but not truly peers.[93]

It is obvious from the documents that Debo continued her long friendship with Dale in spite of their differences over how to write history. He wrote popular studies whereas Debo concentrated on monographs often dealing with conflict between cultures. To substantiate the relationship between Debo and Dale, one of Debo's best friends related this story. Gerry Schaefer drove Debo to Norman to personally deliver the index of the book, Geronimo, to the University of Oklahoma Press. Debo had experienced difficulty when the index for A History of the Indians of the United States was lost in the mail temporarily. Debo wanted to make sure the press received the index because it was such a difficult part of any book to complete. After they dropped off the index Debo visited Dale. He was ninety-one years old. When they saw each other, they hugged like long lost friends. Dale was so excited to see Debo he wanted the two "girls" to stay the night so they could visit. The women did not want to overstay their welcome and when Dale dropped off for a nap, they left. Debo realized she might not see Dale again, and she drove home quietly reflecting a lifetime of work and friendship with the man who shared her love of history. Dale died six months later.[94]

Dale's autobiography, The West Wind Blows, was published posthumously. Angie Debo's name is found only once referring to a grant she received to write Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free. The book also mentioned she was not a member of the university faculty. He chose not to include a lifetime association with her or his work with her as a mentor or to mention her award-winning dissertation under his

supervision. One might find this puzzling. Evidence suggests that Dale considered Debo one of his oldest friends. Dale obviously made a distinction between her professional life and a personal one that did not threaten his own professional position. In the end it appeared Dale could not endure the success of a woman he considered the best scholar he had supervised. In 1975 Debo wrote an essay on Dale for Frontier Historian: The Life and Work of Edward Everett Dale that Arrell Gibson was editing. Debo's essay, "Edward Everett Dale: The Teacher," gave generous credit to a man who taught her the methodology of historical research. His instruction enabled her to create a successful career in writing for herself. She was genuinely indebted to him and had mentioned her gratitude to him as she progressed in her career.[95]

Debo criticized popular writers whose inaccuracies contributed to Oklahomans' unusual sensitivity to public opinion. She said Oklahomans shared in such misperceptions as well. For example, the idea of a wild west with cowboys and Indians was encouraged initially when Oklahomans brought visiting groups to the 101 Ranch to see Geronimo perform in a buffalo hunt. Those who attended such events reported them as the way Oklahomans lived; misrepresentation overtook reality. This inaccuracy promoted an indifference to reality among Oklahomans. Debo thought her efforts to create an accurate history encouraged other historians to address subjects that had been largely ignored previously.[96]

Debo was upset at the way Oklahoma history was portrayed by popular writers. Debo's remarks concerning perceptions about Oklahoma history stemmed from her dislike of two particular writers. She attacked the writings of Edna Ferber and John Steinbeck for their inaccurate portrayal of events in Oklahoma. Because of the wide circulation of

their books, Cimarron and Grapes of Wrath, the history of the state incurred a negative reputation. Debo thought the books misrepresented the history. She claimed Steinbeck invented the setting for his book, a setting that was not based on historically accurate information. Debo's examples of these inaccuracies include Steinbeck's account of white settlers killing off the Indians in Oklahoma, corporate foreclosures of land during the Depression, and wholesale turning out of tenants in favor of vast cotton farms. Further, Steinbeck did not accurately portray the extent of the Dust Bowl in Oklahoma. Debo lambasted Steinbeck's ignorance and literary license. He did not understand the Dust Bowl was limited to the high plains in the panhandle of the state. Debo claimed Steinbeck's rendition of hard times in Oklahoma created self-consciousness on the part of Oklahomans. Debo implied that Oklahomans were embarrassed by his portrayal and thought public opinion viewed them in the same light as the Jobes in the book. More importantly, she said that Oklahomans saw through the inaccuracies. Perhaps she was referring to the few scholarly individuals who did know their Oklahoma history. For some one who wrote history from research and careful documentation, Debo could not understand how popular writers could get by with major inaccuracies in their work. It angered Debo that the general public read such work and believed it to be true.[97]

Debo held equally strong feelings about Edna Ferber who spent two weeks in the state in 1928 to conduct research. In her preface Ferber stated that she left out much of the factual material about Oklahoma, even though it was true, because of its absurdity.[98] In Debo's view, Ferber's portrayal of the Land Run of 1889 was laughable and incorrect. According to Debo, Ferber depicted the mechanics of the land run improperly as well as the geographic setting in which it took place. Ferber could have interviewed persons who

made the run if she wanted to know details of the event. Instead she invented a story that did not reflect actual history. The hero of Cimarron was a white man who sympathized with the plight of the Indians and wanted them freed from reservations. Debo concluded from her own research that the vast majority of white men wanted to break up the reservations to make room for white settlement; federal policy and reactions of the white population had been misrepresented. Such misrepresentation could mislead the most conscientious citizen. Debo wondered if this kind of literature influenced those who later made policies such as "the disastrous termination policy of the 1950s." Debo claimed Oklahomans resented the inaccuracies because they could not relate to them. Debo acknowledged that Ferber was not interested in an exact setting but rather was portraying the spirit of the event.[99]

Debo had little tolerance for inaccuracy. Even in fiction, Debo thought a writer had a responsibility to portray an accurate setting. An example of this intolerance was Debo's reference to the use of the Conestoga wagons in Oklahoma. She knew Conestoga wagons were not used west of the Mississippi River, yet Oklahoma artists drew murals depicting these wagons making the Run of 1889. She was adamant in stating there were none of these wagons in Oklahoma. She objected to the painting of the "Run into the Strip" at the state capitol, a copy of which hangs in the Cowboy Hall of Fame. It is unclear if Debo was relying on her memory in this instance or if she found documentation confirming this piece of information. The wagon was a broad-wheeled covered wagon used to carry freight across the prairies.[100]

Oklahomans misunderstood the term Cherokee Strip. She maintained it was called the Cherokee Outlet. The strip was a small amount of land on the Kansas border bought

from the Cherokees. The settlers coming from Kansas adopted the slogan, "In God We Trusted, in Kansas We Busted, Now Let Us Rip for the Cherokee Strip," and the settlers were known as "strippers." Prior to September, 1893, strippers awaiting the opening of the Cherokee Outlet assembled in Marshall.[101] Debo told what she considered a humorous story about her mentor, Dr. Dale. Dale related this story in one of his history courses. The government convinced the Cherokees to release the outlet through a clever manipulation of an old treaty with the Cherokee Livestock Association. There was no treaty but somehow the government officials convinced the Cherokees of its existence. The officials of the association wrote a document, placed it in a folder, and stomped on it until it looked old. They dated the fraudulent document back in time and presented it to the Cherokees. According to Dale, that is how Oklahoma gained the Cherokee Outlet from its rightful owners.[102] Perhaps Dr. Dale was testing his students to see how gullible they were. It does seem unusual that Debo did not condemn Dale for the same kind of inaccuracy that she did others. She was an undergraduate student at the time and did not have the broad knowledge her research provided. It seems incongruent that Debo would relate it as a humorous story.

Debo's dogged determination to be accurate could be surprising. One of her close friends in Marshall, Hugh O'Neill, remembered Debo's unhappiness about a sign on the highway near Marshall that read, "Mulhall, Oklahoma Territory." It should have read "Mulhall, Indian Territory." It was not Oklahoma Territory until 1890. When a sign was erected to celebrate Marshall's founding, Debo made sure the sign read, Marshall, Indian Territory.[103] It's difficult to determine if she was merely a perfectionist or if she was excessively demanding to the point of absurdity.

Debo described her motivation in choosing the subjects for research in simple terms. She wrote about subjects she knew little about. She relentlessly searched the records to educate herself about the Native American peoples of her interest. Once she uncovered the information needed to construct an accurate history, she withheld nothing. She let the record speak for itself. She did not intend to offend anyone or slander their name but rather to present the entire story.[104]

By 1948 after more than a decade of writing, Debo's books registered sales of 640 copies of Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, 500 copies of The Road to Disappearance, 1,465 copies of Tulsa, and 500 copies of And Still the Waters Run.[105] It has been suggested that Debo did not really receive substantial royalties from her books. It is difficult to retrieve records from the press to calculate such amounts. Books written by assistant professors are under contract that waive royalties for manuscripts accepted for publication. By not being associated with a university, Debo, as a free-lance writer, received royalties for her manuscript, but they obviously were not enough to support her completely. She worked from 1947-1955 as map curator in the library on the Oklahoma State University campus then retired. Her retirement plus royalties from books that have been reprinted must have provided her ample income. For a single woman whose pioneer background had taught her frugality she lived a simple life in Marshall, Oklahoma.

NOTES

[1] Debo to Dale, August 26, 1936. E.E. Dale Collection, Box 17,f12-17, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[2] Debo Interview 83-05-04 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[3] Clark, "Grant Foreman," 226. Martin W. Wiesendanger, Grant and Carolyn Foreman, A Bibliography (Tulsa: University of Tulsa, 1948), 7.

[4] Oral History, Box 29, Interview Dub West, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[5] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 182, 239.

[6] Wiesendanger, 7. Oral History, Box 29, Interview Dub West, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[7] Clark, "Grant Foreman," 230

[8] Ibid., 228.

[9] Clark, 227.

[10] Wiesendanger, 6.

[11] McIntosh, 173.

[12] McIntosh, "Geronimo's Friend: Angie Debo,"172.

[13] Debo Interview 83-05-04 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16]Bruce Trigger, "Ethnohistory: The Unfinished Edifice." Ethnohistory, 33 (March 1986):253.

[17] West Texas State Archives, Panhandle Plains Museum, Debo file, Canyon, Texas.

[18]Debo, The Road to Disappearance, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941: preface, xi.

[19] The American Academy of Political and Social Science, Volume 221, May 1942, 233-4. Box 120-2f32, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[20] Debo Interview 81-12-12 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC. Lottinville to Debo, October 10,1939, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[21] Oral history, Box 29, Debo Interview 7-31-85, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[22] Debo Interview 81-12-12 by Matthews andValencia-Weber, ADC. Lottinville to Debo, October 10,1939, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[23] McIntosh, "Geronimo's Friend: Angie Debo, 168.

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[24]R. S. Cotterill, review of The Road to Disappearance by Angie Debo in The Journal of Southern History, Box 120-2f35, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[25]Morris E. Opler, review of The Road to Disappearance by Angie Debo in The American Academy of Political and Social Science 221 (May 1942): 233.

[26]Allie Beth Martin, head of the Extension Department, to Lottinville, August 15,1960, Box 236, f14, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[27]Mary Ann Slater, "The Oklahoma Writers Project 1935-1942." Graduate College, Oklahoma State University Library, Stillwater, Oklahoma, (1985): 55.

[28] Ibid., p.95

[29] Diary March 11, 1940, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[30] Diary, March 20, 1940, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[31] Debo Interview 83-05-04 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[32] Slater, "Oklahoma Writers Project," 5.

[33]Angie Debo and John M. Oskison, ed. Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State. American Guide Series. Compiled by Workers of the Writers' Program of the Works Project Administration in the State of Oklahoma. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941): table of contents.

[34] Debo Interview 83-05-04 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[35] Slater, 36.

[36] The WPA Guide to 1930's Oklahoma Restored essay by Angie Debo New Introduction by Anne Hodges Morgan (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986):xi.

[37] Lyle Saxon to J.D.Newson, 22 August 1940, WPA, Oklahoma Writers' Project, Oklahoma Historical Society referred to as OHS, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

[38] Slater,107.

[39] Stella Hanau to Debo, 7 February, 1941, WPA, Oklahoma Writers' Project, OHS.

[40] Ron Stephens to Newsom, February 7, 1941, WPA, Oklahoma Writers' Project, OHS.

[41]Fullerton to Florence Kerr, 11 February, 1941, WPA, Oklahoma Writers' Project, OHS.

[42]Debo to Fullerton, February 13, 1941, WPA, Oklahoma Writers' Project, OHS.

[43]Lowitt, "Dear Dr. Debo," 394.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Debo to Dale March 24, 1941, Dale to Debo, January 13, 1942. E.E. Dale Collection, Box 17, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[46]Lottinville to Debo, January 15, 1942, UOPC, Box 65f7, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[47]Debo Interview 83-05-04 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[48]Debo to Eula Fullerton, Director Division of Professional and Services Project, 8 January 1941, WPA, Oklahoma Writers' Project, OHS.

[49]Debo Interview 83-05-04 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma. Kent authored Oklahoma Travel Handbook (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1977, Trip Teasers (1977), and Windows on the Past: Historical Sites in Oklahoma (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Publishing Company, 1974).

[50]J. L. Cozby, "Turning 92 doesn't slow down author Angie Debo," Guthrie Daily Leader, January 28, 1982. Debo file, OHS.

[51]Debo Interview 83-06-03 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[52]The WPA Guide to 1930s Oklahoma Restored essay by Angie Debo, viii.

[53]Debo, Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1949): 5.

[54]The WPA Guide to 1930's Oklahoma Restored essay by Angie Debo, ix.

[55] Ibid., 20.

[56]Debo to Dale, May 22,1942. E.E. Dale Collection, , Box 17f12-17 WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[57]Debo Interview 81-10-23 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[58]Oral History, Debo Interview 7-31-85, Box 29, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[59]Debo Interview 81-10-23 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[60]Debo Interview 81-10-23 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[61]Debo, Prairie City, the Story of an American Community (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1944): 44, 120-1, 124, 128.

[62] Ibid.

[63]Dale to Debo, October 14, 1943. E.E.Dale Collection, WHC, Box 17f12-17.

[64]Debo, Prairie City, ix-xxiii.

[65]Debo, Prairie City, xx.

[66]Debo Interview 81-12-16 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[67]Savoie Lottinville to Oklahoma University faculty, 24 October, 1947, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[68]University Committee on the Rockefeller Grant, Minutes of the Meeting, March 3, 1948, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[69]Debo Interview 83-04-08 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[70]Debo, Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free, 20.

[71]Ibid., 141.

[72]Debo Interview 83-04-08 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[73]Ibid.

[74]Debo, Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free, 44.

[75]Dale Memorandum to Savoie Lottinville in re the Debo manuscript, 13 January 13,1948, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[76]Minutes of Meeting, Rockefeller Committee, 11 March 1948. UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[77]Debo Interview 83-04-08 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[78]Debo Interview 84-02-16 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[79]Debo Interview 83-04-08 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[80]Ibid.

[81]Lottinville to Debo, February 11, 1948. UOPC, WHC. Norman, Oklahoma.

[82]Report on receipts and reimbursements, October 1, 1948, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[83]Dale to Debo, March 22, 1948. UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[84]Debo to Dale, March 27, 1948, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[85]Debo to Dale, April 7, 1948, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[86]Letter from Dale to Debo, June 7, 1948. UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[87]Dale to Lottinville, August 19, 1948. UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[88]Debo Interview 82-01-20 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[89]Debo, Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free, 175.

[90]Debo Interview 83-04-08 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[91]Cozby, "Turning 92 doesn't slow down author Angie Debo." Guthrie Daily Leader.

[92]Lowitt, "Dear Dr. Debo," 378, 404. Dale to Debo October 14, 1931. Dale Collection, Box 17, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[93]Lowitt, "Dear Dr. Debo," 401. Lottinville to Debo, September 16, 1957, UOPC, WHC, Norman Oklahoma.

[94]Oral interview with Gerry Schaefer, Marshall, Oklahoma, June 8, 1999.

[95]Gibson , ed., Frontier Historian, 21-27. Lowitt, "Dear Dr. Debo," 402.

[96]Debo, Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free, 246, Debo Interview 82-01-20 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[97] Debo, Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free, 249, Debo Interview 82-1-20 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[98]Edna Ferber, Cimarron (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1930): ix as cited by Morgan in The WPA Guide to 1930's Oklahoma, Restored Essay by Angie Debo, viii.

[99]Debo, Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free, 247. Debo Interview 82-1-20 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[100]Debo Interview 83-04-08 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[101]Debo Interview 81-10-23 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[102]Debo Interview 85-06-08 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[103]Jean Devlin, "Miss Angie, " Oklahoma Today, September/October 1988. ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[104]Debo Interview 84-02-16 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[105]Lottinville to Debo, February 11, 1948. UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

CHAPTER V

ACTIVISM IN THE SIXTIES AND THE WRITING OF GERONIMO

During the post-war years Debo established the longest and most satisfying work record of her career. She continued to write during and after these years. She updated the status of the Five Tribes that brought her into contention with the Wright family once again. She contributed a weekly column to a newspaper and edited several books. Funded by the National Defense Education Act, Debo taught an institute at the University of Oklahoma that eventually led to the writing of a textbook. Once she retired from the workforce she entered into the arena of political activism characteristic of the 1960s. At the age of eighty-six Debo ended her literary career when the University of Oklahoma Press published her book about Geronimo.

Debo held a full-time job from 1947 to 1955 as curator of maps at the Oklahoma State University Library. She retired from this position at the age of sixty-five. Debo continued to publish during her years as curator. The Indian Rights Association asked Debo to update the status of the full-blood settlement of the Five Tribes. She saw the opportunity to add a sequel to And Still the Waters Run. She traveled throughout Oklahoma during the summer of 1949 to gather data. The president of Oklahoma State University, called Oklahoma Agriculture and Mechanical College at the time, encouraged

Debo. President Henry G. Bennett agreed to pay her salary while she conducted research to write the survey. The library allowed her time off during the summer months. The Indian Rights Association (IRA) agreed to pay her expenses, but she never collected money from them. The IRA published Debo's research in the form of a pamphlet called The Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma: Report on Social and Economic Conditions and was responsible for its wide distribution. They charged twenty-five cents per copy. Debo wrote the pamphlet in hopes of raising public awareness for the plight of the full-bloods. The pamphlet included information about the background of the survey, poor land conditions, farm loan policy in the Ozarks, land purchases for the Indians, supervision of individual Indian property, social and educational rehabilitation, assets of rehabilitation, and findings and conclusions. Debo uncovered a large degree of economic disparity among the full-bloods. Some advanced to become successful leaders in the economic and political life of Oklahoma while others lived in isolated rural areas under impoverished conditions. Debo identified these full-bloods as the ones who had suffered the most from the allotment process.[1]

The question of the status of the full-bloods had troubled Debo as she wrote And Still the Waters Run. In fact she ended the book with a question asking if the full-bloods could be saved. Because the Indian agency had changed its focus in the 1930s, Debo ended the book on a positive note stating that the economic and social situation of the full-bloods could be improved because of a reformed Indian service. The pamphlet supplied the answer she sought. She noted how little they had progressed economically and socially since she wrote of them in the late 30s. In the report Debo advanced specific suggestions for improving the living standards of the full-bloods. In general she

recommended an adequate amount of arable land for those who wished to farm and social and economic opportunity for those in other occupations. Specifically Debo called for a halt to the loss of land allocated to full-bloods. She recommended an increase in the services of the farm extension program as well as an expansion of the revolving loan fund. She suggested the over-all improvement of educational services and a change of policy in the collection of individual Indian money from county courts to the old Indian agency.[2]

By exposing the economic and political inequality among the full-bloods, Debo further antagonized an old acquaintance, Muriel Wright and her relatives. Wright resented her assertions concerning the unfortunate branch of full-bloods because they cast a bad light on the successful ones in the state.[3] A relative of Muriel Wright, J. Brooks Wright, wrote a critical review of Debo's survey in the Chronicles of Oklahoma. Wright, was a Choctaw citizen who served in the Indian service as a United States Field Clerk for sixteen years. Wright was associated with the tribe for more than seventy years and was obligated to respond to Debo's assessment. Newspaper reports that concentrated on the plight of the disadvantaged full-bloods prompted Wright to express his views in the Chronicles of Oklahoma. Wright said that the newspapers distorted the degree of poverty and economic deprivation among the full-bloods. He did not believe actual conditions merited Debo's depressing assessment. Wright criticized Debo for generalizing and placing all Indians in the same category. He claimed to be as competent and knowledgeable about the status of the full-bloods as any other writer of Indian affairs because he lived among the Choctaws and Chickasaws, and had worked among the Creeks and Seminoles. He was educated in Texas and Tennessee and attended college near Philadelphia giving him a national perspective of the conditions of his people. Wright's defense of the full-bloods included

his belief that all groups have their poor and unproductive citizens. This statement demonstrates a willingness to generalize that is hardly sustainable in the face of factual evidence. He knew the full-bloods did not want to alter their traditional lifestyles and did not progress along the lines established by the white society through allotment by choice. He thought Debo should have emphasized those full-bloods who had made their way successfully in the white-dominated society. Wright did not like Debo's use of the word "slum" in describing the extent of poverty in her survey. The word insinuated that all full-bloods lived in dire poverty. He claimed that relief destroyed the independence and individualism of the Indian that was slowly returning after allotment. This would suggest that Indians had weathered the impact of white settlement and were rebounding culturally. Wright disputed Debo's suggestions about improving agriculture claiming Indians were not farmers by nature but were stockmen. Indians had always been able to support themselves from the land, but not as commercial farmers. Wright refuted Debo's claims concerning illegitimacy among Indian children, delinquency, alcoholism, and crime among the Five Tribes. He stated all groups have these problems. Wright refused to believe Debo was assisted by the Indian service in her survey or that her findings were authorized by them.[4]

Debo could not let what she considered a personal attack go unanswered, so she wrote to the Chronicles in 1952. During her writing career she had never replied to a review of her work but only because reviewers were usually scholars in the field, and she respected their expertise. Wright did not fit into the category of an Indian scholar. Debo assumed he was embarrassed and injured as a proud member of the Choctaw tribe and could not view Debo's survey objectively. She refuted the accusation about generalities

and cited specific instances where she distinguished between successful groups of full-bloods and those unable to make the transition into white society.[5] Her research illustrated the extent of the poverty; among the Five Tribes, Cherokees were in the worst situation with Choctaws and Chickasaws next. Even though they owned more property, they did not use it efficiently. The Creeks had less land, but they were able to sustain themselves. Even though the Seminoles did not possess the skills of the other tribes, the discovery of oil helped support them.[6]

Debo recorded the results of the failed assimilationist policy, particularly its impact on those who never wanted to conform to non-Indian standards in the first place–the full-bloods. Even as an Indian advocate, Debo was limited in her options for a suitable solution for an Indian population caught up in this failed policy. She suggested the government put more money and effort in agricultural training. More credit should be made available for those interested in entering into businesses. The failed assimilationist policy eventually gave way to New Deal efforts at reform. In the 1950s the federal officials embarked on a new trend called termination and relocation. Debo's interest focused not so much on those who left the land to find other forms of employment but rather those who needed rehabilitation. The extension service of the Indian agency established in 1930, tried to instruct the full-bloods in modern farming techniques. Debo pointed out these Indians did not have access to any farm equipment nor did they own any cattle.[7] She acknowledged the many successful farmers as well as the many college-educated members among the tribes.

As an example of successful farming, Debo wrote about the strawberry-growing industry around Stilwell. In the 1930s Herbert Kinnard helped those in the area borrow

$2,800 to purchase a team of horses and set aside twenty acres to grow strawberries. Data revealed an annual income of $54 per family. Kinnard engaged 150 families in the business of growing strawberries and expected to double the number the next year. The cooperative paid each of the Indian families $600 a year until 1946 when the coop dissolved. When Debo conducted her survey the strawberry industry had fallen into the hands of the non-Indians, but the Indians profited from half the earnings as pickers. Kinnard encouraged Indians to get into the cattle business, to can food, and to grow vegetables commercially but his work was restricted to those who owned land.[8]

Debo's emphasis in writing the survey was to highlight the problems and to encourage expansion of the programs Indians found helpful. Some Choctaws near Idabel secured loans and rejuvenated the land where the old cotton plantations operated a century ago. Debo found their success with the land resulted from using scientific agricultural principles. Some Choctaws were successful cattle ranchers but the best farmers were the Creek Indians. The land was more productive, and Debo did not think their status ever sank to the poverty level of the Cherokee hill people.[9] She did not think Wright's comments represented a valid criticism of the work because of the accuracy of the facts she presented.[10]

Debo's focus on the extent of poverty among the Cherokee full-bloods remains constant in her writing. Ideally she expected that the government programs needed to accommodate those in dire poverty would be enacted. Debo's roots as a Progressive Democrat mirrored her advocacy for Indians by writing about the need to correct social injustice due to a modernization of the American society. Debo was not one to admit failure. To her, the facts spoke volumes. It probably did not occur to her that others might

have a valid yet different view of the same situation. This particular dispute had been prefaced by earlier ones with Muriel Wright over contentious, often personal issues. The Wrights were examples of Indians who had been successfully assimilated into the white society. Debo's research studied those Indians left out of the transitional process either by their own choice or by changes that overwhelmed them.

Debo wrote a weekly newspaper column from 1952 to 1954. She wrote for The Oklahoma City Times under the heading "This Day in Oklahoma History." She also contributed articles to The Americana Encyclopedia. In 1955 she wrote about the Catawbas, Chickasaws, and Choctaws. Americana published an annual synopsis, and Debo wrote the 1954 and 1955 ones by combing the newspapers for chronological documentation. She contributed articles to The Oklahoma Almanac including one about the Civil War in Oklahoma, early Euroamerican settlers, railroads, roads, traces, and trails in the state. In 1971 Debo submitted a number of articles about women such as Alice Brown Davis, Milly Francis, Roberta Campbell Lawson, Cynthia Ann Parker, and Ann Eliza Worcester Robertson for Notable American Women. Grant Foreman had recommended Debo to the New York Times Book Review. She wrote many reviews of books for the paper and was paid for her work. At that time she needed the extra money because of the care her mother required prior to her death. American Historical Review, American Indian Quarterly, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science and Pacific Historical Review were a few of the many journals that carried her reviews. Debo wrote chapters for several monographs after she finished Geronimo. She wrote "Apaches as Southeastern Indians" for the book, Indians of the Lower South: Past and Present edited by John K. Mahon. She contributed a chapter, "Edward Everett Dale:

The Teacher," for Frontier Historian: The Life and Work of Edward Everett Dale edited by Arrell M. Gibson. In the book, Indian-White Relations: A Persistent Paradox, edited by Jane F. Smith and Robert M. Kvasnicka, Debo wrote a chapter called, "Major Indian Record Collections in Oklahoma." The list of Debo's contributions to periodicals and scholarly journals is too lengthy to present here; she wrote her first article in 1930 and her last in 1975. Many articles were published in the Chronicles of Oklahoma and the Panhandle Plains Historical Review. The Southwestern Historical Quarterly and The Western Historical Quarterly published Debo's articles.[11]

In 1955 Debo edited The History of the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Natchez Indians by H. B. Cushman. Cushman and Debo shared an interest in Native American history, and Cushman provided a valuable resource for her research on the Choctaws. Debo included information Cushman shared with her about memories of his life as the son of a missionary to the Choctaws in Mississippi. Cushman was especially valuable to Debo because of his relationship to the old Choctaw warriors. When he was eight or ten years old, the Choctaws were removed to Oklahoma. He discovered some of his former Choctaw playmates at the college he later attended and rekindled his interest in their experiences. Cushman returned to visit his old Choctaw friends in 1899 just as they were losing their tribal sovereignty. Cushman committed his valuable reflections to paper but included too much extraneous information for it to be published. Stillwater bookstore owner John Hinkle asked Debo to edit Cushman's manuscript to ready it for publication. Debo obliged and the book was published.[12]

In the summer of 1967 the National Defense Education Act funded a seven week institute at the University of Oklahoma to benefit Indian children. The institute promoted

the education of teachers of Indian children in public schools as well as in mission and Indian bureau schools. Initially the history department asked Debo to prepare a course on Indian removal, but Debo suggested a thorough history of American Indian tribes would be more beneficial to these students. Debo spent six months preparing for the institute and developed a course on the history of Indians in the United States. She used the research she compiled over forty years as a basis for the course. Debo taught the course as a survey. She described her students as the most industrious and motivated young people she had ever taught. The students went to the library and read well beyond the assignments for the course. They bought numerous books for their own libraries and were insatiable in their desire for knowledge about their Native American heritage. The planners of the Institute took Debo's suggestion to include Muriel Wright's book, A Guide to the Indians of Oklahoma, (University of Oklahoma Press: 1951) in the study of American Indians. Federal grants provided a copy of Wright's book to each of the students free of charge. Students found Debo's presentation fascinating and asked to copy her notes on more than one occasion. Debo enjoyed her thirty-five students, one of whom was from a Reformed Church Mission School at Zuni. The student asked Debo to visit her area and speak to a group of missionaries. She complied with the request. Debo visited a student from St. Michael's Catholic boarding school in Arizona on the same trip westward to Zuni. Her visit confirmed her beliefs in the strength of Native American cultures.[13]

Debo contacted the University of Oklahoma Press to inquire if there was any interest in a survey text about American Indians. The time was right for such a work. With a heightened awareness of minority groups in the 1960s and a more favorable

attitude toward the plight of Indians, the press accepted Debo's survey. The University of Oklahoma Press published A History of the Indians of the United States in 1970 when Debo was eighty years old. The book sold very well, and Debo received $8,400 in royalties.[14] The book was a comprehensive if traditional study from the arrival of Euroamericans to the present with an emphasis on the Five Tribes. Federal Indian policy, particularly a discussion of New Deal efforts at reform was included to update Debo's ongoing revision of And Still The Waters Run.[15] Although Debo admitted Oklahoma Indians garnered a more thorough treatment than the others, it was her belief "in many ways the history of Oklahoma was the epitome of Indian history."[16] Debo's perception of Oklahoma history was inflated at best. From her work one can assume she attached a special symbolism to the Indians of Oklahoma as representing all native peoples who experienced dispossession of their lands at the hands of non-Indians.

Debo's writing career took an unexpected turn in the late 1960s. The book Debo wrote after teaching the NDEA institute provided a catalyst for this new direction in her career. In The History of the Indians of the United States, Debo included a chapter on the status of Native Americans in Alaska. Debo wrote her students about the publication of the book because of their expressed interest in her notes during the institute. She instructed her students to read the chapter "White Man Gets a New Chance" first because it covered a contemporary issue. Debo had become an activist, and the cause she championed aroused within her deep passion.[17]

Debo's findings during a lifetime of research led her into activism after retirement from Oklahoma State University. She made attempts to explain this transition from writing about Indians to actively supporting them. She never admitted to a pro-Indian bias

in her writing because she had no fixed ideas about Native Americans when she began her research. She did not enter into the research as a proponent or advocate of the Indians. After she presented the facts and developed the interpretation that best fit the facts, then she realized she could alter attitudes if she became active in contemporary issues. She had the same obligation as any other citizen of a democracy to try and call attention to the abuses of the past and improve life for everyone. Her defense to those who say all historians write from a biased position would be simple. She stated that the facts she found often supported one side of an issue more substantially than the other, particularly when the subject involved federal Indian policy and Native Americans.[18]

Debo visited Alaska and found the Inuits to be exceptional. In her opinion Indians who lived in that kind of climate required unusual skills and intelligence. She suggested the Alaskan Natives had not been subjected to the destructive governmental policies she had written about concerning the dispossession of the lands of the Five Tribes. In her opinion, the late 1960s presented a strategic opportunity for Americans to alter the pattern of American history by influencing legislation regarding land rights of Native Americans. Debo attacked the Alaskan land issue with the same thoroughness she displayed as a researcher. She viewed the activist role in a humble way. She spent a lifetime researching the relationship between white settlement and Native American land rights and understood the impact on the native cultures very well. She was knowledgeable about the issue of the Alaskan Natives and happened to be involved at a strategic time as legislation involving their future was considered in congress. Debo served on the Board of Directors for the Association on American Indian Affairs, and she took their suggestion to ask each of her students from the institute at the University of Oklahoma to write six letters to someone

else who might be interested in supporting the Alaskan Natives. In 1969 Debo encouraged those she wrote at Christmas to take up her cause concerning the plight of these peoples. Debo knew the voice of one carried little weight in the overall scheme of things, so she called up an army of voices.[19] She referred to her personal lobbyists in letters as "my friends who are concerned about justice for the Alaskan Natives." And her letters always closed with the words "Trusting you." She encouraged interested parties to write to the Association of American Indian Affairs for their newsletter. The list of "interested people" grew to 200. The newsletter gave a comprehensive analysis of the topic.[20] Those who joined the ranks of Debo's correspondents were other writers, both professional and journalists, college professors, high school teachers, church officials, and even an influential college president.[21]

Alaskan Natives used the land for subsistence hunting but had not been displaced by white settlement or warfare over land, a pattern established in the lower forty-eight states. According to the Organic Act of 1884, Alaskan Natives were entitled to 90 percent of the land. When Alaska gained statehood in 1959, congress granted the Alaskan Natives their rights, but failed to establish title to the land. The Alaskan Federation of Natives brought attention to the issue. The state, given 102,550,000 acres at statehood, began to infringe on the land of the Native Americans as time passed. Stuart Udall, Secretary of the Interior, issued a freeze in 1966 that halted the loss of native lands but planned to let the freeze lapse after 1970.[22]

The Alaskan Natives were asking for forty million acres, representing about 10 percent of the state's land. The population of Indians numbered between fifty or sixty thousand, approximately 20 percent of the population. Much of the land was tundra, but

the Indians adapted to it and lived off of it by hunting. The Alaskan Natives argued that forty million acres was the minimum amount of land needed to sustain themselves. As industries developed in Alaska, the employment opportunities did not open up for natives because companies controlled by outside contractors brought in their own workers. A good example of what was happening involved the discovery of oil on the North Slope. The state owned a tract of land on the edge of the Inuit village of Barrow. Alaska made enormous profit, close to a million dollars from the sale of oil leases in this area, yet the Inuits could not obtain title to the land they had occupied in Barrow for centuries.[23]

One of Marshall's own citizens, Raymond Bryson, member of the Board for Homeland Ministries for the United Church of Christ, supported Debo in her activist cause by asking her to write to the official publication for his denomination to educate and enlist the support of Christian leaders. Debo contacted the director of the Washington office of the United Church of Christ to gain access to a group for Christian Social Action. Debo wrote an article published in the United Christian Herald, the official publication of the United Methodist Church. The publication was sent to every member of congress from Oklahoma.[24] Bryson knew LaDonna Harris, wife of Oklahoma's United States Senator, Fred Harris. LaDonna, of Comanche heritage, suggested Debo go to Washington as a lobbyist to provide support for the Native American cause. Debo talked to the chairman of the Indian Affairs Subcommittee in the House of Representatives. She brought her manuscript, The History of Indians of the United States, with her to influence the attitudes of the committee. She impressed on the congressmen their ability to write a productive final chapter for Alaskan Natives' land rights. The AAIA paid her plane fare to Washington. Bryson introduced Debo to John Happy Camp, Oklahoma Representative in

congress. Camp was unaware of the Alaskan situation. Debo predicted that Camp would follow Ed Edmondson's lead in congress; Edmondson had been an advocate of Indian rights throughout his years in congress.[25]

Debo's Christmas letter reached such personal acquaintances as Dr. James Scales, former President of Oklahoma Baptist University, former Dean at Oklahoma State University and President of Wake Forest University during this time. Dr. Scales took up the letter writing campaign and influenced members of congress from North Carolina. Debo heard from Marguerite Bumgartner, a writer who was in Wisconsin at the time. She wrote articles that appeared in publications influencing the people of the northern states. Debo's list of interested citizens continued to grow as the letter-writing campaign gained momentum. Another interested party who helped Debo establish a network to disseminate the information to others was Elma Phillips, State Chairman of the committee of Christian Social Concern. She used her position to publicize the issue.[26] Debo's Christmas letter in 1970 explained the issue more fully and recruited people to write their respective representatives in congress. She encouraged writers to include President Richard Nixon in their campaign. Debo thought Nixon was sympathetic to Native American issues, and he recognized the strategic position his administration was in. Nixon had the chance to reverse a century of government policy toward land occupied by Native peoples.[27]

Debo took on the activist role by speaking out on all possible occasions and leaving behind pertinent information at such gatherings as district and state conventions of the Oklahoma State Federation of Women's Clubs and book autograph parties. She wrote weekly to her network of supporters shouldering the burden of postage and paper. Debo

kept up with the progress of the bill through a tax-free organization that lobbied congress for Native American rights. Executive Director of the AAIA, William Byler, informed Debo of current progress of legislative action. Debo was concerned that the organization might lose its tax-free status if the government found out about its lobbying efforts. She phoned this group weekly to stay abreast of congressional sentiment. She sent several editorials from The New York Times to her network of letter-writers to emphasize the importance of the issue. Debo had a subscription to the Times and wanted those writing letters to benefit from this respected source.[28]

Debo kept up a running commentary not only on progress of the legislation but also on members of critical committees, presidential hopefuls, and effective public pressure. In 1970 the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs reported a bill allotting 9.5 million acres of land in small tracts around Indian villages and a cash compensation. Debo likened the senate effort "to deeding a farmer his house and barn but cutting off his fields and pasture."[29] Debo's advice was to forget about amending the senate bill and concentrate on the bill in the house. In the house, writers should target Chairman of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Wayne Aspinall, Oklahoma's own Ed Edmondson, Happy Camp, and James Haley. Haley wished to redress the ills of past U. S. Indian policy.[30]

Debo condemned the senate bill passed in July of 1970 limiting the amount of land to less than ten million acres. She read the 150 page bill and consulted the Congressional Record to become familiar with the floor debate that followed the introduction of the bill. The bill contained a sizeable monetary compensation, but the Alaskan Natives feared it would result in the same kind of trinkets and annuities offered to the Indians in the lower

forty-eight states. Alaskan Natives called this an unwanted welfare bill. If the Native Americans lost the land, they would be unable to support their families or maintain their culture. Debo called on her writers to include Senator Henry Bellmon even though the issue had been addressed in the senate. She believed it would inform Bellmon about the feelings of his constituents.[31]

Congress adjourned without further action. In February, 1971, Senator Fred Harris introduced Senate Bill 835 favoring the desires of Alaskan Natives. Debo sent out the names of committee members to her writers and encouraged them to add presidential hopefuls to their list. Debo was convinced that the greatest danger to just legislation stemmed from the remoteness of Alaska, the ignorance of the American public about the type of land involved, and specific economic conditions in Alaska.[32]

In April President Nixon sent to congress a bill enabling Alaskan Natives fee simple title to forty million acres. The bill included a monetary compensation for the loss of the remainder of the land. A Washington State congressman introduced House Bill 7039 the end of March. It had twenty-five sponsors.[33] A Presidential hopeful, Senator Henry Jackson, chairman of the senate committee, did not want to jeopardize his campaign for the Presidency because his committee was saddled with the unpopular bill passed in 1970. With better legislation before congress now, Jackson's position could be defeated. Jackson kept quiet and let the house take action first. Debo suggested her writers concentrate on the house. John Happy Camp was a new member of the committee and was considered a friend of the Native American.[34] The Indian Affairs Subcommittee reported the bill granting forty million acres to Alaskan Natives to the full House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs for consideration in August. Debo was

instructed to get her letter writers into action again because Chairman Aspinall who supported the bill still needed six additional votes to get it out of committee successfully.[35] The house committee approved House bill 10367 and the senate passed its own version of native land legislation, S. 35 as amended, giving Alaskan Natives a choice of forty million acres or a second option. Debo asked her supporters to write letters thanking Chairman Jackson for his efforts.[36] The passage of the bills occurred in the house and senate in November, 1971. At this point Debo instructed her letter-writers to support the senate bill because it provided for immediate land selection. The house bill called for native land selection of eighteen million acres around their villages, then the State of Alaska would claim 102,550,000 acres with the process continuing until 1984. After 1984 the natives could select the remaining twenty-two million acres. Natives did not like the stages because eighteen million acres was inadequate to protect the village land. Native Americans feared the remaining twenty-two million acres would be the least desirable land left.[37]

Debo kept her followers informed on other aspects of the situation. The oil companies did not apply pressure to congress because they simply wanted the land titles settled; they did not care who owned it. Alaskan Governor, William Egan, did not always support native claims but favored the bill when he spoke before the committee.[38] Developers, as well as miners and recreational groups, inundated congress with pleas to keep Alaska intact for white settlement and development. The Alaskan Coalition formed their own letter-writing campaign against the legislation. The National Rifle Association feared Alaska would be closed to sportsmen. Inuits, as early as 1961, acknowledged the possibility of restrictions placed on hunting because of the carnage white hunters left

behind. They claimed light planes carried hunters into Alaska in late winter to hunt polar bears. The hunters would take the skin and leave behind the meat of the animal. The National Wildlife Federation feared many of the lakes, streams, and hunting grounds would be closed to the general public.[39]

Debo found that agencies within the government fought against each other on such issues as land allotment for Indians. The Bureau of Land Management worked against the Indians while the Bureau of Indian Affairs championed their causes. The National Wildlife Federation argued that the Alaskan Native American population was too small for the size of the land allotment. Environmental groups claimed the land would not be adequately protected. Debo's comment to environmentalists arose from her understanding of the Native American cultures. She believed nature stood a better chance at preservation from the native population than it would have from the non-native settlers.[40]

Debo with her network of letter-writers, successfully petitioned congress to bring about just legislation for Alaska's native population. Twenty-five townships around each village were titled to the natives so that the state could not infringe on the native lands. Then Alaska could acquire title to land it wanted before the 1966 freeze went into effect. Four townships were permanently exempted from the selection process. In the end Alaska and the natives alternatively selected the remainder of their allotments. The monetary reward totaled approximately $462,500,000 to be paid by the federal treasury in ten year installments. The native population formed and controlled a dozen regional corporations to act as caretakers of the financial assets.[41] The letter campaign lasted two years but provided a hands-on example of how a lobbying effort works and how individuals can become a viable part of their government.

Debo continued her activist work with the land rights issue of the Havasupai in the Grand Canyon area. She battled the national Sierra Club even though the local Sierra Club in Arizona supported the Havasupai. The difference between the plight of the Alaskan Indians and the Havasupai was a chance to correct an age-old wrong. The Alaskan Indians benefitted from a change in public policy in America's last frontier region. The Havasupais had inhabited the area south of the Grand Canyon since at least A.D.700. Each summer they descended into the canyon for farming purposes. At the end of the growing season they moved back to the plateau. In the late nineteenth century western ranchers and government departments such as the Forestry Service and the Park Service began to push the Havasupais off the plateau. The Forest Service recognized the potential of the Grand Canyon for tourism and suggested the banning of the tribe from its domain. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs did not protest the banning even though the Indian agent reported the tribe to be hard-working and very progressive farmers. The agent lost his job when he tried to support the tribe. The tribe was allowed to operate in a 518 acre tract on the floor of the canyon. They did not have access to the plateau or the walls of the canyon. The tribe numbered 437 and they were expected to exist on less than a square mile of land. Their children were sent to a boarding school 300 miles away because living conditions were so cramped. Each tribal member was given a cottonwood tree to use for firewood because of the scarcity of wood. Finally the Park Service agreed to allow the tribe to graze their livestock on the plateau, but they could not remain on the plateau permanently.

In 1973 Senator Barry Goldwater took up the cause of the Havasupais. He introduced a bill that gave the tribe title to a sizeable amount of upland range. The

Departments of Agriculture and Interior lobbied against the bill. The area did not interfere with the tourist areas of the Grand Canyon. In 1974 the senate passed the bill but excluded the provisions concerning the Havasupais. The house agreed with the decision of the senate because few had heard of this tribe. Debo motivated her letter-writing acquaintances to take up this new cause. Indian historians highlighted the background of this tribe and raised the level of interest among the larger American citizenry. The house was favorably influenced by the letter-writing campaign and restored the provision as an amendment. The senate concurred with this action. Debo was prepared to send out her annual Christmas letter congratulating her fellow activists on their success when she learned of the chance the bill would be subjected to a pocket veto. Debo had two days to act. She telephoned some of her more influential supporters and asked them to call President Gerald Ford. The calls and telegrams Ford received persuaded him to sign the bill into law.[42]

Debo supported the water rights of the Pima Indians in Arizona. Over time the Pimas had raised cotton and corn in Arizona by digging an irrigation ditch from the Gila River. Their agricultural success provided many settlers traveling westward with sustenance. The ability to continue with their irrigation procedures lessened as non-Indians began to divert more of the water from the river. The tribe hoped the Central Arizona Project would rescue them from disaster. The date for completion of the project was 1985, but at the last minute Secretary of the Interior Rogers Morton severely limited the amount of water the Pimas could expect to receive. Debo fired up her letter-writers asking them to address their concerns to Senator Jackson, head of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. They made officials in the newly-elected Carter

Administration aware of the issue and urged them to take no action until they had time to study the outcome of the hearings. The letter-writers responded to Debo's call to action once again. The result of their efforts was congressional approval of a comprehensive water policy for the Pima Indians of the southwest.[43] The Indians respected Debo's knowledge and activism.[44]

Debo claimed to feel strongly about the women's suffrage movement, but her only support came during a high school debate on the subject. As women activists fought for their right to vote, Debo did not think a small community, like Marshall, could have had an impact on a national issue such as suffrage because of its remoteness. She obviously changed her view about the impact of individuals as she aged. She realized her clout as a well-known Oklahoma writer and was successful in rallying those who shared her enlightened views.[45]

Debo held a position as board member of the American Civil Liberties Union. Her involvement in the ACLU began when she received a questionnaire from them. After she filled out the answers she realized she agreed with most of the ideas of the organization and decided to become a member. She participated in a number of forums discussing constitutional rights, particularly during the Civil Rights era and the Vietnam War years, Debo spoke out about upholding the rights of Americans to dissent and be heard. To Debo freedom of speech and of the press were the two most important rights Americans possessed. She participated fully and without reservation or fear of harming her reputation because of her association with the ACLU. In fact she was more effective because of her reputation and stature but her age gained her the respect of the younger members. There were all sorts of persons involved. In her opinion Americans distrusted

the ACLU because of the people they defended and because of their physical appearance that included long hair, non-traditional clothing, and their religion. She thought all Americans should love the ACLU because of their goal to preserve constitutionally-protected rights for all citizens.[46]

In 1977 the Oklahoma chapter of the ACLU established the Angie Debo Civil Liberties Award. The award was meant to acknowledge the work of people who fight to preserve constitutional rights. Henry Bellmon was a previous recipient of the award for his stand on the equality of women and minorities. Hannah Atkins won it for a lifetime of dedication to civil liberties. Phil Wahl won the award for his work in educating the public against the death penalty, and Steve Norick was honored for his fight to protect the rights of institutionalized juveniles.[47]

Debo showed an interest throughout her literary career in the Society of American Historians who published a historical magazine for the general public. As time passed the society collaborated with the Association of State and Local history to publish, "American Heritage," a hardback magazine. In the new "American Heritage" magazine, the subject matter was expanded beyond local and state history to include American history in general. Debo became a charter member of the magazine in 1954. She wrote an article for the magazine about Quanah and Cynthia Ann Parker. In the mid-1950s the co-editors of the magazine, Bruce Catton and Earl Newton, commissioned Debo to write an article on Geronimo. Debo wrote the article during the winter of 1954-1955 and was paid two hundred dollars. It never appeared in the magazine. She criticized the poor organization of the magazine staff. She surmised that problems between the co-editors kept the article from reaching publication. The editors may have found the quality of Debo's prose

substandard. Catton did not care for the article. He asked Debo to rewrite it using his suggestions. Debo responded she was not in the habit of rewriting her work. For the article she took extensive notes from personal interviews with Geronimo's acquaintances at Fort Sill in 1955. Debo interviewed former tribal warriors living in Apache, some of whom fought in the Apache Wars. She visited the Mescalero Reservation in New Mexico where some of Geronimo's warriors and his son and granddaughter lived at the time.[48]

Twenty years after Debo wrote her first article on Geronimo she decided to correct the misconceptions surrounding him. Debo possessed interviews that provided her with priceless recollections, and she wanted to make the information public. Many of those Debo interviewed were no longer living when she wrote her biography. She found her notes taken in the fifties and the article written about Geronimo and began work.[49]

Debo wrote to the University of Oklahoma Press to find out if "American Heritage" owned the copyright to her 1955 article. The press responded that she could rewrite the information, but the magazine did own it. Debo wrote the editors of "American Heritage" magazine asking them to return the article. The editors complied and returned the researched article. She proceeded to write her biography of the well-known Native American. The University of Oklahoma Press published Geronimo The Man, His Time His Place in 1976 as Debo entered her eighty-sixth year. The Border Regional Library Association rewarded Debo by presenting her the Southwest Association's Biennial Book Award for Biography in 1977.[50]

Using the early interviews Debo conducted with those who lived as contemporaries of Geronimo, she added the additional interviews taken in the 1970s to provide a detailed story of Geronimo. During her research for the book Debo talked with

Benedict Jozhe who was a small child during Geronimo's lifetime. Jozhe held the position as tribal chairman of the Chiricahua Apaches. When Debo met him, Jozhe was the chairman of the organization of the former prisoners of war who were released in 1913. Jozhe remembered his mother telling him about the night Geronimo left her house intoxicated, and she found him the next morning on the ground outside her house. Evidently he failed to mount his horse, had fallen and passed out. Jozhe's mother told her young son that Geronimo, lying in a puddle of water all night, contracted pneumonia soon after. He was gravely ill and wanted to see his daughter and son who lived in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, but he died before they were actually notified. The commandant of Fort Sill wrote a letter to the relatives instead of telephoning to inform them of Geronimo's impending death. According to the story Jozhe's mother told, Geronimo lasted through the night and the next day until the evening train failed to produce his children; then he died.[51]

Debo interviewed Sam Houses at Fort Sill in the 1950s who recalled the details of the capture of Geronimo. His account differed from the rumors circulated about the dramatic and humiliating capture of Geronimo described by others. One of Debo's friends at the Edmon Low library, Ruth Hammond, had a personal tie to Geronimo. Her father was the chaplin at Fort Sill. Hammond remembered Geronimo bringing produce to the fort to sell. She did not perceive him as the fierce warrior portrayed by many historians but as a kind old man.[52]

When Debo visited the Mescalero Reservation in 1957 she interviewed Eve Ball. Ball, who ran a trading post, shared her vast knowledge of the Apache chief and warriors with Debo. Moses Loco, grandson of Chief Loco, helped in the research by introducing

Debo to James Kaywaykla who was the only surviving Apache who remembered the battle with the Mexicans that ended in the death of the great Victorio. John Shabber, Jr., who worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, was married to the great granddaughter of Chief Loco. An important link to the past, the great granddaughter provided Debo with invaluable information. Debo met with Ora E. Musko, a young enlisted man later stationed at Fort Sill who recorded the surrender at the time and later researched the tribe for the National Archives. He added the information he found to data Debo uncovered.[53]

When Debo researched information for the Geronimo book in the 1970s, she visited the home of Jason Betzinez who had written about his experiences as an Apache. Betzinez was educated at the Indian school in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and his assimilation into the white society was thorough. Betzinez was a rich source of information for Debo.[54]

Comparing the interviews Debo took from the Apaches with the oral history interviews of the Five Tribes during the Indian Pioneer History Project, she found the Apaches unable to substantiate their oral stories with details of historic accuracy. Debo found that the Apaches lacked the historic foundation of written documents possessed by the Five Tribes. The Five Tribes were able to collaborate details of removal to the historic events as researched by historians such as Grant Foreman. Debo speculated the Apaches had endured so much misery that perhaps their collective memory had lost its accuracy. She admired the Apaches for their survival skills, and believed they were mentally and emotionally superior as survivalists to other native ethnic groups.[55]

One must consider the significant differences between the Apaches and the Five Tribes in traditions, culture, and worldview. Debo's statement reflects on the experiences

of these two tribes in relation to their contact with Euroamericans and policies regarding their way of life. Due to their high level of education and the development of a political system and social structure that was somewhat similar to the agrarian republic of the Euroamericans, the Five Tribes were more capable of assimilation into the American society. The opposite could be said of the Apaches whose hunting lifestyle could not be tamed without conquest and whose assimilation would require a complete change in their way of life. Debo's comparison is problematic. Her comparison implies the two groups can accurately be compared just because they are of Native American ethnicity. Such an assessment might be possible if experts were consulted but the results, no doubt, would be controversial. Debo may have missed a great deal in the interview process with the Apaches because she was not really a trained ethnohistorian. Armed with solid research, she wanted to dispel myths about Geronimo, but her approach lacked the training needed to write ethnohistory.

Debo discovered that writing a biographical history of a famous Indian leader is difficult. The subject of the biography does not attain his status as tribal chief until well into his adult years. The difficulty lies in accurately representing his earlier years. This often becomes guesswork for the historian. Understanding the traditions of the tribe can be helpful in filling in details of the unknown data. Often a biographical history is a story of conflict between the leader and the United States military. The state and federal documents used in the research frame the leader in the context of this conflict primarily. In other words historians know Indians through the documentation of their conversations with their enemies. Because historians are tied closely to written documents for information, they must recognize the possibility of inaccuracy, misrepresentation, and

deceit. The myths surrounding Geronimo are a classic example of this kind of misrepresentation. Debo, through the interviews she acquired in the 1950s and those she collected in the mid-1970s, had a substantial body of information about Geronimo. From her research she was able to discern the details of a man who did not live up to the myths that followed him throughout his life. She reconstructed a more compassionate character, an understandable one. She talked to his relatives and friends to gain insight into his personality.

Debo heard about Geronimo throughout her life, and she relished the opportunity to dispel the myths behind the man. The myths surrounding Geronimo were numerous. Debo heard Geronimo was wearing a blanket of human scalps when he was captured. She discovered Apaches did not practice scalping. Debo thought the story about scalps originated from Mexican campaigns where the rare use of a scalp in a story dance occurred. Her Apache sources told her they never saw scalps used or the remains of mutilated bodies. After Geronimo was captured, newspapers carried various stories about him. Debo remembered seeing the accounts as she grew up in Marshall. A degree of sensationalism permeated the written accounts. According to the story that General Nelson Miles wrote, Geronimo traveled with four or five hundred other hostile Apaches and was finally subdued after a military unit defeated his men. Debo found this account utterly false. When she wrote about the event, Debo's portrayal of Geronimo's capture was less dramatic. Less than fifty men, women and children accompanied Geronimo in his last days of freedom in 1886. Debo claimed two Indians living peacefully on the reservation but serving with the United States Army as scouts were instrumental in Geronimo's capture. They risked their lives by entering Geronimo's hideout and

convincing him to come forward and talk with army officials about terms of surrender. Geronimo met General Nelson Miles at Skeleton Canyon where he and the tribal leader, Naichee, surrendered.[56] Reports that Geronimo was chained throughout his stay at Fort Sill were untrue.[57]

Debo did not address the warfare between Geronimo and the U. S. Army. Historians provided excellent information about this subject. Frank C. Lockwood established the historical background of the period in his book, The Apache Indians, published in 1938. In 1940 Ralph Headrick Ogle wrote about government policy toward the Apaches in Federal Control of the Western Apaches 1848-1886. Debo used information in Dan L. Thrapp's books, Al Sieber, Chief of Scouts(1964), Conquest of Apacheria (1967), and General Crook and the Sierra Madre Adventure (1972), and articles, "Geronimo's Mysterious Surrender," "Juh: An Incredible Indian," and "Victorio and the Mimbres Apaches."[58]

Debo focused on the untold story of a Native American whom she portrayed as a passionate warrior fighting for the survival of his tribe and a way of life. As she concentrated on the individual, the motivations driving his decisions, and the analysis of his character, Debo created a compassionate portrayal. Geronimo possessed tremendous energy and exhibited extreme perseverance in his flight from captivity. He valued his independence to a greater degree than those who hunted him realized. The Apaches who knew Geronimo remembered the strength of his determination. Debo described a ruthless and fierce warrior defending his people as well as a loyal friend, an affectionate family man, and a sentimentalist about his mountain homeland.[59]

Geronimo understood his role as a provider, both a hunter and raider, and as a profitable businessman later. With the exception of his time at Fort Sill, the War Department confined Geronimo's appearances to official celebrations. Geronimo appeared at the Trans-Mississippi International Exposition in 1898 in Omaha, Nebraska, the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, in 1901, the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1904, and Theodore Roosevelt's inaugural parade in 1905. Private promoters were not allowed to exploit Geronimo, but he turned out to be very popular wherever he appeared. He used his appearance as a forum to express the desire of his people to return to their homeland in Arizona. He sold autographs and photographs to the crowds who came to see him. The number of visitors who came to see Geronimo in Pensacola averaged at least 20 a day. He learned to write his name while imprisoned in Mount Vernon, Alabama. In Oklahoma, Fort Sill authorities allowed the exploitation of Geronimo as a commercial venture. He would sell buttons from his shirts and engrave his name on Indian souvenirs. His lucrative souvenir business allowed him to open an account in a Lawton bank.[60] Debo enlightened her readers about Geronimo's life as a prisoner of war. The Apaches were imprisoned for twenty-six years and were finally released in 1913. One can only surmise the feelings of the Apaches who witnessed the incarceration of men, women, and children. Some of the children were taken away from their parents and sent to Carlisle school.[61]

At Fort Sill the Apaches possessed a degree of freedom. As long as they worked five and one-half days a week, they could spend the rest of their time as they wished within Army guidelines. Behavior outside the approved guidelines resulted in confinement. Geronimo did not understand why he was confined to the guard house when

he became intoxicated. Some Apache men were enlisted members of the United States Army, Troop L of the Seventh Cavalry, as well as prisoners of war, so they received pay and earned ranks accordingly. The Apaches told Debo they always longed for their freedom and homeland. The Indians worked under a supervisor who controlled a structured schedule and accomplished many important things. From the perspective of the non-Indians in charge of the Apaches at Fort Sill, the learning process included the Indians making accommodations to more acceptable activities. The Apaches learned to be cowboys; they built fences around the reservation and dug water wells. The Apaches built their own homes and villages, plowed the land, and cut the hay. Geronimo died a prisoner in 1909 and was buried at the Apache cemetery in Fort Sill. His people were released from captivity four years after his death but were not allowed to return to Arizona. Fort Sill, like other frontier military posts, eventually would have been abandoned by the Army and the land given to the released captives as a permanent home.

Debo was careful to dispel the rumor promising the Apaches the land containing Fort Sill. Debo never found any validation for such a promise. Debo believed the Apaches preferred to return to Arizona but that desire did not materialize. The military refused to consider a return to Arizona or Mescalero because of the objection of the Euroamerican population who believed the Apaches incapable of a peaceful co-existence with whites. Once the Indian wars on the southern plains ended, Fort Sill declined in importance. The War Department decided on a new role for the base when an assessment of the rugged and diverse terrain determined its use as an artillery school. The Apaches who herded cattle, grew hay, and farmed the land around Fort Sill were in the way of this proposal. Congress passed legislation to free them and appropriated funds for their

resettlement. The Mescalero Apaches invited those freed from Fort Sill to settle in New Mexico among their kin. Of the 261 freed, 183 traveled west to New Mexico while about 78 remained in Oklahoma. Those who stayed in Oklahoma settled on government-purchased land near Apache where rich agricultural land could be farmed. The original allotment was 160 acres per tribal head of a household, but the size was reduced to 80 acres when the Army could not meet its obligations. The Oklahoma Chiricahuas and the Arizona Mescalero bands remained close and exhibited a common legacy throughout the years.[62]

An article in the spring 2000 issue of The Chronicles of Oklahoma by Brenda L. Haes sheds light on the subject of promised lands for the Apaches. As early as 1888 while the Apaches were still being held in Alabama after being transferred from Florida, Secretary of War William C. Endicott stated that Fort Sill would be a suitable permanent place for the Apaches because of the climate and topography. The Apaches could learn agricultural techniques and farm the land. By 1894 the Apaches had been transferred to Fort Sill but congress had not taken action about a permanent settlement. James Kaywaykla claimed that General Nelson A. Miles visited Fort Sill early in 1894 or 1895 and told the Apaches this was their new permanent home. He encouraged them to improve the land by building fences, and water tanks. The government would give them cattle for the land. [63] It is interesting to note that Debo did not find the same information or did not interview any Apaches who could collaborate Kaywaykla's claim. It is part of the record in the Indian files at the Fort Sill Museum as a notarized manuscript dated 1963.[64] Debo interviewed Kaywaykla in 1959 and the manuscripts in the museum were filed later. The question of why Kaywaykla would not remember something in an interview but four years

later document the information in a manuscript is not difficult to understand if one considers the problems of oral history. To produce complete oral history requires interviews be taken over the span of many years. People who are interviewed recall information and rely on their memories at the time. Often additional details are remembered or even invented at a later date after oral interviews. The person conducting the interview may have failed to ask the kinds of questions needed to prompt a fuller recollection of events under scrutiny.

Two years before removal to Fort Sill, the government purchased lands from the Kiowa, Comanche, and Kiowa-Apache tribes and added more land four years later. The acquisition of land was noted in the records for the express purpose of providing land for the Apaches. In 1897 more land was purchased to assure that each Apache would receive 160 acres.[65]

In the meantime, officials who visited the Apaches found many improvements on the land. In addition to those made for agricultural purposes, they built a mission and a day school for children; later they added an orphanage and a home for mission workers. On the ten acre family plots, the Apaches practiced subsistent farming. They fenced 50,000 acres for ranching. The Apaches were settling into a sedentary life as farmers. [66] Once Geronimo died in 1909, an obstacle to permanent settlement was removed. He was the reason for their imprisonment. The IRA began to educate the American people concerning permanent status for the Apaches in Oklahoma. Commissioner Robert Valentine backed the effort by stressing the history of government statements regarding the issue. In 1902 in a legislative clause congress had recognized the rights of the Apaches to the land as a permanent home at Fort Sill. In 1911 Judge Advocate General George B.

Davis concluded that the government, by its actions, had created a permanent residence at Fort Sill even though it had not been officially recorded in a treaty or official document.[67]

In 1902 after the Spanish-American War, military officials began to consider Fort Sill for a potential field artillery school. Once the American government recognized the German threat in 1910, the fate of the Apaches was sealed.[68] At the same time military officials began to deal with the problems inherent in mixing cattle and soldiers on the field artillery range.

By 1912 Assistant Secretary of War Robert Shaw Oliver suggested the release of the Apaches from their prisoner status. The government would release only those Apaches willing to go to the Mescalero Reservation in Arizona, not those staying at Fort Sill. Only 78 Apaches remained at Fort Sill; the other 183 removed to Arizona. In 1914 those who remained prisoners were finally allotted land outside the boundaries of Fort Sill. The allotments varied from 23 to 158 acres. If the government had followed through with its early intentions, each of the 261 Apaches at Fort Sill would have been allotted 160 acres of land.[69] Although the intention was obvious, once the use of Fort Sill became important to the government as an artillery school, decisions were made to change the stated idea of a permanent residence for the Apaches. It was a pattern that had been repeated too many times to count in dealing with America's Indians.

Legal disputes between the Apaches and the federal government are current today. Mildred Cleghorn's parents were contemporaries of Geronimo. She was born to Apache parents who were prisoners of war at Fort Sill. Cleghorn was tribal chairman for the Fort Sill Apaches from 1976 to 1996. She had difficulties over the way her land was managed. As tribal leader she still had to obtain permission to spend money from her own account.

Attorney Keith Harper represented Cleghorn and five other plaintiffs who initiated a lawsuit against the Bureau of Indian Affairs for mismanagement of Indian trust funds. Cleghorn died in 1997 at the age of 86 in a car accident. Her daughter, Penny, has taken up the case in her mother's absence. Penny said her mother supported the suit. Penny remembered the 1991 anthropological meeting when her mother reminded the audience that Apache prisoners of war had been promised 160 acres each when they were freed. Penny's mother received 80 acres; her father received 80 and the daughter received 50. Cleghorn reiterated that it was another manifestation of the inability of the federal government to keep its promises.[70]

Debo knew of Cleghorn and credited her with keeping their culture alive for the Apache children. Debo became acquainted with the efforts Cleghorn made on behalf of the Apaches when a question of burial arose concerning whether Apaches born in captivity then released could be buried in the cemetery at Fort Sill. The burial question included two of Debo's sources at Fort Sill, Moses Loco and Benedict Jozhe. The burial issue was the focus of Cleghorn's effort when Debo was working on Geronimo.[71]

Debo did not change the historic record concerning Geronimo but provided a unique analysis of the personality behind the myth. She highlighted Geronimo's years as a prisoner of war through the close contacts she made with his family and friends. Debo's contribution to the historical record focused on a corrected version thereby eliminating the wild stories previously associated with Geronimo.[72]

Historians found both positive and negative aspects of Geronimo. Dan L. Thrapp found an important weakness in Debo's research in spite of his general praise for the book. Thrapp took exception to Debo's recounting of an adventure involving the release

of Loco and a group of Apaches from San Carlos in 1882. Debo left out the name of the Apache–Juh, who devised and carried out the plan. Debo credited Geronimo with the feat. Thrapp made a strong argument against Geronimo because there was nothing in his past that resembled that kind of leadership. Debo left out Juh because her source, Betzinez, did not mention him. Betzinez was not a part of Juh's band and was more interested in his dealings with Geronimo. An American official placed Juh at Casa Grandes when the raid was being organized, and Juh led it. Thrapp's extensive research about Juh brought to mind a similar adventure orchestrated in 1879 to help Victorio escape to Mexico. Thrapp's research claimed that Juh, not Geronimo, was the one who masterminded the strategy behind the various escapades. Thrapp faults Debo for distorting the personality of Geronimo in this instance. Thrapp did not think Debo used S. M. Barrett's Geronimo's Story of His Life written in 1906 to make a critical analysis of Geronimo. Debo used this book extensively to gain information about the early life of Geronimo. Barrett obtained information for his book with the aid of an interview and interpretation by Ace Daklugie, son of Juh. Thrapp questioned how much Barrett altered the information given by Geronimo but interpreted by Daklugie a second party. Thrapp cited the disapproval of Eve Ball of Barrett's book thereby supporting his concerns. Thrapp thought Ball would have been a likely candidate to check the interpretation at a latter date and compare what Barrett wrote and what Geronimo actually told Daklugie. Ball did not follow through with Thrapp's suggestion.[73]

Robert A. Trennert, Jr., criticized Debo for softening Apache violence while rationalizing Geronimo's actions. Trennert stated that Debo portrayed Geronimo as a victim whose violence was motivated by the injustices of the whites. He claimed Debo

wrote about the violence against Mexicans and Americans in a way reminiscent of whites writing of violence against Indians and dismissed examples of Apache atrocities. Trennert accused Debo of making editorial comments about non-Indians throughout the book thereby undermining her objectivity.[74]

Frederick Turner believed the subject itself left Debo in a difficult position as a historian. Because Geronimo lived a fugitive's life, his life could not be recorded in a fashion normally used by historians. Turner also questioned the objectivity of Barrett's interpreted memoirs claiming Geronimo would present only the information he wanted known. Turner faulted Debo for not including anthropological data to provide a foundation for her understanding of the Apache tribe. Turner saw this weakness as crucial. The absence of an ethnological approach deprived the story of the depth needed to enrich the world view of this particular tribe.[75]

Reviews of Geronimo were overwhelmingly positive. Peter Iverson praised Debo for dedicating a third of the book to Geronimo's imprisonment because it allowed readers to see him in a different light. No longer the feared warrior, Geronimo's personality included a kind and gentle nature.[76] Veronica E. Tiller agreed with Iverson's assessment in her review in the Western Historical Quarterly.[77]

Geronimo was Debo's final work. Throughout her writing career she was asked how she conducted her research and why she chose the subjects she did. Debo conducted her work in a deliberate, determined manner. Debo did her initial research in the archives to build a structural framework for the events she planned to cover. Then she conducted interviews that provided necessary details and color. Debo's ability to glean information from interviewees stemmed from the knowledge she amassed over a lifetime of research.

As she posed questions to old timers, Debo's background allowed her to use the details provided by those interviewed. Debo developed a relationship with those she interviewed. She realized how distrustful Native Americans were of the non-Indians, so she always prefaced her question period with a conversation to indicate her genuine interest in the person. Indians that knew Debo saw her as an advocate but also as a well-informed observer of Native American culture. Debo's ability to communicate gave her access to people who provided an important understanding of the particular culture of the Native American people she researched.[78] Debo stated that she wrote about subjects of which she had limited knowledge yet wished to expand. Once she found the information she sought in the records she was obliged to write it down and get it published. Debo credited the University of Oklahoma Press, particularly Joseph Brandt, with providing the vehicle to extend her findings to the general audience.[79] Debo, a prolific writer, produced historical works throughout a long life dedicated to her interest in disseminating accurate information about the history of Native Americans.

Debo's personal letters, diaries, and interviews provide glimpses at Debo's thoughts about writing. Her goals in writing history were singular initially. As a historian her job was completed once she located information pertinent to a certain topic and documented it in her writings. Later she expressed an obligation to right the wrongs of the past by becoming an activist. Because of the significance she placed on writing Debo demonstrated a fondness for librarians who were responsible for making books and knowledge accessible to the masses. The job at the Edmon Low Library in Stillwater fit Debo for reasons that may not have been recognized. It has already been said that she chose it over an academic position because it allowed her to write. One cannot measure

the significance associated with the fact that she was surrounded by those who supported her work as a writer. Debo knew the loneliness of a researcher. Perhaps that is why Debo returned to Marshall after completing her research. She rediscovered her roots on the prairies; she could work effectively in the quiet of her surroundings yet have her parents and neighbors available when she emerged from her work room. She must have concluded that the lonely job was worth it if the writer accomplished her purpose, writing something worthwhile for others to read.[80]

Debo's post-war years were productive ones. She completed a timely update on the status of the full-bloods, she authored a textbook about the American Indians, and a biography of Geronimo, and she contributed articles to local newspapers and reviews to The New York Times. She was employed steadily for almost a decade in a full-time position. In the late 1960s Debo's advocacy turned into active lobbying for legislation concerning Indian rights. She also joined the ACLU, became a board member, and spoke as a proponent for civil liberties during the years of civil rights marches and Viet Nam war protests. In the remaining years of her life, Angie Debo received many honors for a lifetime dedicated to historical research. She participated in annual celebrations in Marshall in her honor. She was the principal character in a documentary that aired throughout the nation.

NOTES

[1]Debo Interview 81-12-16 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[2]Angie Debo, The Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma, Report on Social and Economic Conditions, (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, April, 1951): Chapter X, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[3]Debo Interview 81-12-16 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[4] J. Brooks Wright, review of "Report on Conditions Among the Full-blood Indian Groups of the Five Civilized Tribes in Oklahoma," Chronicles of Oklahoma 29, (Summer, 1951): 244-47.

[5]Notes and Documents, Chronicles of Oklahoma 30 (1952): 121-22.

[6] Debo, And Still The Waters Run, Preface: xiv.

[7] Ibid., xv.

[8] Ibid., xviii.

[9] Ibid., xx.

[10] Notes and Documents, Chronicles of Oklahoma 30 (1952): 121-22.

[11]Debo 1890-1988 An autobiographical sketch.

[12]Debo Interview 81-12-16 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[13]Debo to Dale, Christmas 1967. E. E. Dale Collection, Box 17 Folder 14, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[14]Debo Interview 81-12-16 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma. A later interview conducted in August of 1985 indicates that Debo received $12,301 in royalties in the fall of 1971. The discrepancy in amount could be explained as two different checks both of which equaled the larger amount or the same check with mistaken information on the part of Debo. She may not have remembered it correctly. She always said she received small amounts in royalties until this book and this one sold very well.

[15] William H. Cartwright and Richard L. Watson, ed. The Reinterpretation of American History and Culture (Washington, D.C.: National Council of the Social Studies, 1973): 497.

[16] Angie Debo, A History of Indians of the United States (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970): xi.

[17] Debo Interview 83-08-15 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[18] Angie Debo, "To Establish Justice," Western Historical Quarterly VII no. 4 (October, 1976): 405. Debo wrote these comments to the Western History Quarterly in response to criticism about her bias toward the Indian.)

[19] Cozby, "Turning 92 doesn't slow down Angie Debo," Guthrie Daily Leader.

[20] Debo Interview 83-08-15 by Matthews andValencia-Weber, ADC, "Indian History's Unfinished Chapter," Oklahoma's Orbit (November 21, 1971): 15.

[21] Debo, "To Establish Justice," Western Historical Quarterly, 407.

[22]Debo to friends, Christmas, 1969. D33 folder 1 WHC, Norman, Oklahoma. Ivy Coffey, "Indian History's Unfinished Chapter," Oklahoma's Orbit, (November 21, 1971): 15.

[23] Debo to network of writers, June 23, 1970, Debo Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[23]Debo to friends, Christmas 1969. D33 folder 1 WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[25] Debo Interview 83-08-15 by Matthews and Valencia Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[26]Ibid.

[27] Debo to writers, September 30, 1970. Debo Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Debo to network, June 23, 1970. Debo Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Debo to network, October 1970. Debo Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[32] Debo to network, March 3 1971. Debo Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[33] Debo to network, April 6,1971. Debo Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[34] Debo to network, June 8, 1971. Debo Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[35] Debo to network, August 31, 1971. Debo Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[36] Debo to network, September 27, 1971. Debo Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[37] Debo to network, November 2, 1971. Debo Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[38] Debo to network, May 13, 1971. Debo Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[39] Debo Interview 83-08-15 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Debo to network, December 15, 1971. Debo Collection, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[42] Debo, "To Establish Justice," Western Historical Quarterly, 409.

[43] Ibid., 412.

[44] Debo Interview 83-06-17 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC,Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[45] Debo Interview 84-06-08 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[46] Debo Interview 83-06-03 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[47] "Angie Debo Civil Liberties Award," Liberty Magazine, Fall, 1986, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[48] Debo Interview 81-12-16 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[49] Debo Interview 81-12-16 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[50] Debo Interview 84-02-16 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[51] Debo Interview 84-06-08 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Debo Interview 84-07-25 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[54] Debo Interview 84-06-08 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[55] Debo Interview 84-02-16 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[56] Debo Interview 81-12-16 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[57] Debo Interview 84-08-09 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[58] Debo Interview 84-07-25 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Debo Interview 84-08-09 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[61] Oral History, Moses Interview, Box 29, ADC, video, Indians, Outlaws and Angie Debo, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Congress House, Report of the Secretary of War, "Apache Prisoners of War" 53 d Congress, 3d session, Ex. Doc. 1, part 2, volume 4:27. Congress, Senate,"Apache Indians," 51st Congress, 1st. session, 1890, S. Doc. 35, serial 2682,11. In Brenda L. Haes, "Fort Sill, the Chiricahua Apaches, and the Government's Promise of Permanent Residence," (The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Spring 2000):30.

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[64] James Kaywaykla, "State of Oklahoma County of Caddo,"notarized manuscript, April 25,1963, 2 Indian Files-Biography/Kaywaykla, James, Fort Sill Museum Archives, U.S. Army Field Artillery and Fort Sill Museum, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. In Haes's, "Fort Sill, the Chiracahua Apaches," 31.

[65] Hugh L. Scott, Fort Sill, Oklahoma Territory, to Adjunct General, Department of Missouri, June 30, 1897, 1-2, Hugh L. Scott Collection, Apache Prisoners of War, Fort Sill Museum. In Haes's "Fort Sill, the Chiricahua Apaches," 32.

[66] Ruth McDonald Boyer and Narcissus Duffy Gayton, Apache Mothers and Daughters: Four Generations of a Family (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992):117. Frank C. Lockwood, The Apache Indians (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987): 322. Hugh Lenox Scott, Some Memories of a Soldier (New York: The Century Company, 1928): 198. In Haes's "Fort Sill, the Chiricahua Apaches," 34.

[67] Congress, Senate, "Inquiry Concerning Apache Indians," 62 Congress, 2nd session, 1912, Senate Document 432, serial 6175,5. In Haes's "Fort Sill," 36.

[68]Interview with Towana Spivey, director of the Fort Sill Museum, 1997. In Haes's "Fort Sill, the Chiricahua Apaches," 33.

[69] Haes,"Fort Sill, the Chiricahua Apaches," 39. For the complete story concerning the land that was allotted, see Haes's article.

[70] Jessica, Wehrman, " Daughter Carries on Apache Mom's Fight," The Daily Oklahoman, June 28, 1999.

[71] Oral History, Box 29, Debo Interview 7-10-85, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[72] Debo Interview 84-08-09 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[73] Dan L. Thrapp, review of Geronimo,"Journal of Arizona History"18 (Spring, 1977):99, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[74] Robert A Trennert, Jr., review of Geronimo, "Pacific Historical Review" (May 1977):300-302, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[75] Frederick Turner, review of Geronimo, The Journal of Ethnic Studies, (Spring, 1978):116-7, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[76] Peter Iverson, review of Geronimo, "The American Historical Review" (October, 1977):1081-2., ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[77] Veronica E. Tiller, review of Geronimo, "Western Historical Quarterly" (January, 1977):66, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[78] Debo Interview 84-02-16 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Angie Debo, "Realizing Oklahoma's Literary Potential," Oklahoma Librarian, Vol. 16 no. 3, (July, 1966): 67. ADC. Debo presented these remarks about writing to the 59th Annual Conference Oklahoma Librarians Association in Tulsa.

CHAPTER VI

DEBO'S LEGACY AND HER IDEAS ABOUT WRITING HISTORY

Angie Debo lived to be ninety-eight years old. She left a legacy at the local level in her hometown of Marshall, on the state level within the halls of the capitol building, and on the national level as an important contributor to Indian and Oklahoma history. For those who are not aware of her significance in writing state history, a living legacy exists in the form of a documentary film. Although it may not present a completely accurate or thorough account of Debo's life, it may stimulate viewers to find out more about her. It is important to discuss Debo's legacy as a historian and how her peers viewed her works. A discussion of Debo's motivation in writing history is important. Debo left researchers information about her writing style.

Angie Debo's hometown of Marshall began an annual event in her honor in 1968 called "Prairie City Days." The town's residents and Debo's friends, and supporters referred to her as "Miss Angie." They were very fond of this unassuming woman who had made such an important mark as a historian, particularly in Oklahoma history. The festivities lasted a week and everyone in the community participated in the celebration of Marshall's "First Lady" and the pioneer heritage she wrote about.[1] Debo was just as comfortable driving her car to the edge of town late at night in her bathrobe to view a

comet as she was in a convertible waving to a crowd of friends as the "First Lady" of the parade in the Prairie Days festivities. She led a simple life and preferred it that way. Residents in Marshall knew when Debo was working on a book because she instructed them not to call her between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. When Debo's age caught up with her and she could no longer live alone, her friends took shifts to care for her, so she could remain at home.[2]

In 1978 Debo was preparing to attend a special event when she was beset by a sudden physical collapse. She did not think it was a stroke but a general slowing down and weakening. She did not have the strength to write any longer. She was planning to go to North Carolina to receive an honorary degree from Wake Forest University. This occasion held special significance for Debo because her old friend, Dr. James Scales, was the president of the school. A couple of days before her scheduled departure Debo had a second mishap. She fell and cut her head. She did not break any bones in the fall but had to see a doctor to close the wound. When she left the doctor's office, she went to the beauty shop to have her hair fixed. Afterwards she had arranged to have a friend take her to the airport in Oklahoma City. After her arrival in North Carolina she stayed at the home of her friends, James and Betty Scales. At the time Wake Forest awarded honorary degrees to those who were in attendance only. Debo saw this event as the culmination of her career as a historian, and she was very honored by this accolade.[3]

In 1983 Oklahoma University President Bill Banowsky traveled to Marshall to give Debo the highest award from the university. It was the first time the award had been conferred off campus. Former Governor Henry Bellmon was one of the recipients of the award at the graduation ceremonies the same year Debo was honored. Banowsky

awarded Debo the university's Distinguished Service Citation begun in 1948. Anne and Wayne Morgan planned the special ceremony held in Marshall. Morgan remarked, "Angie was the first on the ground . . . in studying in any kind of sophisticated way the history of the state."[4]

To honor Debo's lifelong contributions to the historical record of Oklahoma, the state legislature commissioned a portrait of Debo. Representatives Robert Henry, Democrat from Shawnee and Penny Williams, Democrat from Tulsa were responsible for contacting Charles Banks Wilson, a world-renowned Oklahoma artist to paint the portrait. Wilson made trips to Marshall on four different occasions to sketch Debo in her home. The sketch Debo liked best was a partial profile. She was holding her glasses, and had a pensive look on her face. The background for the portrait consisted of Debo in her living room sitting in front of a bookcase containing the thirteen books she authored or edited. Wilson called Debo "a woman of authority" who possessed a bright intellect and could carry on an interesting conversation about any number of subjects. At 95 years of age, Wilson found Debo's mind as alert as a much younger person. He recalled one of her more humorous comments. She said, "I read about Judge Parker, the hanging Judge, but I never thought I would be in on a hanging."[5]

In 1984 the state of Oklahoma honored Debo in a ceremony to hang her portrait in the capitol rotunda alongside Oklahoma's other famous citizens. Debo was the first woman and the first historian to be so honored and only the sixth person to be honored by the state.[6] In a letter of appreciation to Wilson, she expressed her gratitude for highlighting those characteristics that dominated her life: drive, service, and integrity. These traits distinguished Angie Debo as an Oklahoman, but her legacy will be measured,

most probably, by her ability to preserve the integrity of historical writings.[7] In 1988 former Governor Henry Bellmon traveled to Marshall to deliver a national award to Debo from the AHA. She was honored with the Award for Scholarly Distinction, a distinction she shared with other historians who held prestigious academic positions such as Edmund Morgan of Yale who won the award in 1986.[8] The citation recognized her groundbreaking work in ethnohistory due to her emphasis on Native American culture when writing about federal Indian policy.

In October 1988 the American public became acquainted with Angie Debo, a name few knew. In her home state, Debo was not well-known by the general public even though she was honored by the state government. Public Broadcasting System presented a documentary titled Indians, Outlaws and Angie Debo as part of "The American Experience Series." The project began in 1982 when the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Oklahoma Foundation for the Humanities approved a grant to finance a documentary film on the life and works of Angie Debo. Gloria Valencia-Weber and Glenna Matthews conducted the research. Matthews was an Oklahoma State University faculty member in the history department. Her colleague, Valencia-Weber, was Director of Minority Programs at the university. They added historian Barbara Abrash, director of Media Projects for the Institute for Research in History, an independent non-profit scholarly organization. Through the participation of Valencia-Weber and Matthews, Oklahoma State University co-sponsored the making of the film with the Institute for Research in History. Filmmaker Martha Sandlin, a native of Holdenville, Oklahoma, co-produced and directed the film. Having a director from Oklahoma was Debo's only stipulation in agreeing to make the documentary.[9]

The Oklahoma Foundation for the Humanities, under the direction of Anita May, provided encouragement throughout the project. Donations from private individuals, corporations and foundations helped finance the project. State legislator Penny Williams and Connie Cronley, managing director of the Tulsa Ballet Theater, coordinated the fund-raising efforts. They raised about $114,000. When asked about a theme for the documentary, Sandlin said it would have to be a question. "How did such an avant-garde personality out of a small prairie town of Oklahoma, become such a scholar of her stature and yet remain very much Oklahoman?"[10] The film would be featured in a state humanities program because it highlighted the significance of scholarship. The producers of the film highlighted an additional aspect. Debo was able to carve out her own niche in historical research through a meticulous devotion to accuracy and a persistent desire to portray history truthfully, a goal of all historians.[11] The film would be distributed to museums, schools, libraries, senior citizens groups, and tribal organizations.[12]

Debo's pioneer background was the centerpiece of the film, but her life and work were examined in the context of historical writing. The filmmaker called on scholars in Western and Native American history and in women's biographies for commentary. Hundreds of interviews were gathered from friends, colleagues, and tribal members with whom Debo was acquainted. Matthews and Valencia-Weber explained that one of the important legacies to emerge from the project was the thirty hours of interviews that now reside in Debo's collection at Oklahoma State University. Although somewhat hesitant at first, Debo agreed to review her personal records such as diaries and letters to enhance her recollections. She remembered when she wrote the book about Geronimo how she

wished he had been alive to verify her research. If the filmmaker was going to document Debo's life experiences, she wanted the account to be accurate.[13]

She did not think the film needed to dwell on her own life story; she hoped her legacy lay in the books she had written. One had to leave something tangible as a legacy to be remembered for posterity. Debo's books provide a tangible legacy. She allowed the professionals to do their work on the film. She did not ask to see any footage and had no say in the way the film evolved. In fact she never saw the finished product because she died the day the finished documentary reached her home in Marshall. It would have pleased Debo to know about the increased interest in her books as a result of the national airing of the documentary. The University of Oklahoma Press experienced a brisk business from the sale of Debo's books. The film confirmed Debo's belief that historical scholarship, a valuable pursuit for those so inclined, has immense value to the public, both lay and scholarly.[14]

Martha Sandlin spent five years making the Debo film, but she emerged from the project with a new perspective. Although Debo had lived through almost a century of history, Sandlin concluded that she belonged in the nineteenth century. Her love of local people and their story resembled the previous century more than the fast-paced development she witnessed in Oklahoma in the twentieth century. Debo was described as the First Lady of Oklahoma History. She was referred to as the big lady from a small town. Some stated that she had a calling that she recognized at the age of six.[15] Upon reflection she realized how much she enjoyed speaking in front of an audience.

Western historian Richard White reacted to the film about Angie Debo from an interesting standpoint; films must tell stories. This film had two story lines. One story

detailed the life of the writer while the other focused on the story of betrayal of Native Americans at the hands of the white population. White's main criticism resulted from his assessment that the film did not fully develop Debo's life nor did it account for the complex history of Native Americans. In the introduction of the film, the narrator, David McCullough set the tone by comparing historical research to detective work. Both interpret the past no matter what the consequences. Historians like Debo might agree with the comparison. The film suggested Debo's life was in danger because of the publication of the book, And Still The Waters Run. The origin of this idea is unclear. This statement probably referred to Debo's concern about the legislature and its ability to cut off appropriations to the University of Oklahoma Press if they published a book naming prominent citizens involved in scandals concerning Indian lands. The suggestion that her life was endangered no doubt referred to her career as a writer. White did not think the film fully developed the complexities of federal policy and its impact on Oklahoma's Indian population. In his opinion the film was too conventional in its victimization of Indians.[16]

White faulted the early part of the film because it failed to differentiate between the tribes being considered nor did it accurately explain the work of the Dawes Commission. White determined that the best part of the film was the main character herself, Angie Debo. In a very unassuming way Debo gave a first-hand account of her struggles as a female historian and of her inability to get the University of Oklahoma Press to publish what she considered her most important book, And Still the Waters Run. For White the film had diminished educational potential; it would have to be accompanied by a thorough examination of the issues involved for a full understanding. Although the filmmakers tried

to prevent a simplistic analysis, the grafters Debo spoke of in the film appeared as the "bad" guys. White concluded a more thorough understanding of government policy would have eliminated this problem. He believed the film had several dimensions. The film could be used in gender studies as an example of a persistent woman who knew what she wanted and met those goals on her terms. White envisioned spirited discussions as students might conclude that Debo brought on her own problems by printing the unpleasant facts of her research. He complimented the film's portrayal of Debo but suggested that it failed to capture the essence of this remarkable woman and her works.[17]

Jimmie Hicks wrote a critique of the film. Hicks was a student of E. E. Dale at the University of Houston in 1954 and had written an article about Dale that appeared in The Chronicles of Oklahoma in 1967.[18] Hicks found little to compliment in the film. Much of his criticism was based on erroneous information in the film about Edward Everett Dale. Debo claimed Dale was the one who denied publication of And Still the Waters Run at the University of Oklahoma Press. The record is quite clear about who made the recommendation not to publish. Debo was mistaken. Suzanne H. Schreme and Cynthia J. Wolff wrote an article that appeared in the Western Historical Quarterly in 1991 setting the record straight. It appears Hicks took the attack on Dale personally because he was one of Dale's students. Hicks reacted to Dale's role in the film as if he was one of the principal characters. Dale was one of many people mentioned in the film.[19]

Hicks criticized the filmmakers because they took liberties in portraying the publishing scenario by turning reality into melodrama. Hicks found the opening remarks about a criminal conspiracy dominating the entire eastern part of the state melodramatic. In fact the way Debo framed her remarks sounded overly dramatic. Unfortunately the

conspiracy itself dominated the substance of the film instead of Debo's discovery of the conspiracy. Debo had always been vocal about And Still the Waters Run and referred to her findings in terms of a criminal conspiracy from the start. A viewer who had not read And Still the Waters Run would have little background to understand the complexity of the statements about a criminal conspiracy made in the film. Hicks found the following statement from the film upsetting: "But there was once an attempt to keep Angie Debo from publishing the truth about the history of Oklahoma," Hicks believed the statement misled its audience. He defended the rejection of the manuscript by the University of Oklahoma Press in its original form.[20]

To reiterate the point, Brandt had no choice but turn it down when President Bizzell agreed with his assistant's rejection of the manuscript in its present state. There was never an attempt to keep the book from being published by others. Brandt was Debo's strongest supporter. He avidly pursued publication of such an important work to give his series, "The Civilization of the American Indian," substance. The point Hicks made remains important; Princeton suggested important changes and could not publish the book in its original form because of libelous material. Until Brandt and Debo edited out the names of minor characters, the book was unacceptable.

Hicks faulted the film for omitting the significance of Joseph Brandt in the struggle to publish this book, a legitimate criticism. Hicks took exception to another statement in the film, "It was not the story Angie's professor and friend, Edward Everett Dale, expected her to tell." Hicks adamantly denied that Dale would have tried to influence Debo's conclusions. The question of influence misses the mark.[21]

Arrell Gibson substantiates the point Hicks was trying to make. Gibson mentioned that Dale would have never written such a history himself. Debo was quite aware of that fact. In Gibson's opinion Dale might have cautioned Debo about her findings, but she would have taken that as a direct challenge to continue her work. The audience would not have concluded from the film that Dale tried to influence Debo one way or the other. Arrell Gibson's comment that Dale never wrote anything "that would test the academic mettle" offended Hicks. Debo appreciated Dale because he taught her how to do historical research. She did not critique his work, but she understood his historical philosophy. Hicks implied that Debo's dissertation, under the guidance of Dale, won the Dunning Award, not because of how it was written but because Dale was so involved with it. Dale suggested the topic and pointed out the materials she should use. With the exception of the obvious error concerning Dale, Hicks' sensitivity about the film's portrayal of Dale is unnecessary. The film was not about Dale. The only people able to recognize Debo's mistake about who suggested the book not be published are those who had done extensive research on the subject.[22]

Hicks claimed Debo wanted to follow in Dale's footsteps, and she came close to plagiarism in an attempt to do so. Hicks source was Frontier Historian edited by Arrell Gibson. Debo admitted that she had unintentionally copied Dale's wording on one occasion. She wrote to Dale to apologize. He told her he was flattered and was glad he could add something to her work This is a surprising statement by a college mentor. Dale's nonconfrontational nature seemed to be willing to overlook such a potentially serious problem as plagiarism. Debo's inability to get a job in the academic community, particularly at the University of Oklahoma under Dale should not be construed as wanting

to follow in his footsteps.[23] There is no evidence solid or implied that suggested Debo wanted to emulated Dale. Debo's relationship with Dale was that of a mentor and a lifelong acquaintance who shared a love of history. Hicks' commentary about the Dale-Debo relationship was influenced by a need to defend Dale.

It appeared Hicks classified Debo as an aggressive woman who really did not deserve the accolades she was receiving in her declining years. He did not see her as a major historian. He believed she constructed a myth for herself and was given the opportunity to live up to that myth in the film. Hicks continued to defend his argument about myth-making in discussing the hanging of her portrait in the Capitol. He stated that she must have convinced her fan club that she deserved such an honor.[24]

The honor of hanging Debo's portrait appeared to be a genuine effort on the part of the state to recognize one of its own for a lifelong commitment to historical writing. This is not simply myth-making. Evidently there were Oklahomans who recognized Debo as an important historian who received her Alma Mater's highest honors, Distinguished Service Citation and Phi Beta Kappa and equally impressive honors from historical societies and from the state she inhabited for almost a century. The respect she gained from the Five Tribes, the Alaskan Inuits, the Arizona Havasupais, the Pimas, and the Apaches could not be measured by awards or portraits. Her work is a continuing value to tribal members who seek to discover their past, and who seek an opportunity to improve their lives. The respect other historians have for her work cannot be diminished by suggested myth-making. The sheer number of books, articles, reviews, and lectures qualify her as one of Oklahoma's most important historians.

The approach this film took was problematic. Television does not lend itself to a broad expansion of ideas and complicated explanations of factual data. The portrayal of a criminal conspiracy dominating the eastern part of the state injected melodramatic dialogue that clouded the understanding of the featured historian. In referring to her work And Still the Waters Run Debo emphasized her indignation by using such language. It reflected her written statements. Without adequate background her indignation was lost on the television audience. The film should have focused on Debo's life, her strengths, weaknesses, the volume of work, her activism, and her sense of responsibility as a writer and historian.

One of the enduring legacies of the filming of the Debo documentary was a number of interviews. Valencia-Weber and Matthews conducted numerous interviews with noted historians, local acquaintances, participants in the history Debo wrote about, and residents of Marshall. The interviews were conducted in the 1980s. The historians and the institutions they were associated with may have changed over time, but their remarks should be shared.

Arrell Gibson knew Debo well. He spoke of her dynamism before an audience. She spoke without the aid of notes and added a historical perspective to important contemporary issues. Gibson saw her as "an advocate for improvement." He called the book, And Still the Waters Run, "one of the most courageous books written." Debo held strong convictions, and this gave her a sense of independence. She wrote without an editor; she did not have contemporaries read her drafts, and she published without peer criticism.[25] Peer criticism would have provided Debo with the kind of feedback others in

the field received and might have required her to re-examine her work thereby improving it.

David Baird, Pepperdine University, called Arrell Gibson, "the dean of Oklahoma historians," and respected his high opinion of Debo. Baird reiterated that there is no other work like And Still the Waters Run but declared the book outdated. Baird stated that he was unaware of a recent revision of And Still the Waters Run. He viewed this as a commentary on the thoroughness of Debo's research in spite of the dated interpretation.[26] Baird described her tribal histories and Geronimo biography in different terms. Baird said that Indians are viewed outside the context of their relationship with the federal policy providing a more comprehensive perspective of their culture.[27] In other words she broadened the histories and biography beyond the narrow relationship each had with the federal government. By introducing Indian documents into her material, Debo broke out of the pattern of writing Indian history from government documents primarily as most historians had done previously.[28]

Terry Wilson, the Director of Indian Studies at Berkeley, is of Pottawatomie heritage and grew up in Oklahoma. He read Debo as a youngster and as a student at Oklahoma State University. He worked with Arrell Gibson. Wilson claimed Debo wrote history for her generation as all historians do. He praised her book, A History of the Indians of the United States, as one of a very few general Indian histories of great value. In his opinion, Geronimo was her greatest accomplishment; it destroyed the myths associated with the man. Wilson labeled it one of the best biographies written; she constructed "the soul and spirit of her subject." Debo documented the captivity that most historians neglected. Wilson placed her work on the captivity in the realm of New Indian

History, viewing the story from a different perspective. Wilson thought Debo's earlier books employing elements from the Indian perspective were laced with romanticism but dismissed that aspect because it did not cause an undue amount of distortion. He witnessed Debo moderating her writing as new techniques appeared. He explained what drove Debo's advocacy; with so much knowledge accumulated over a lifetime, she made it her civic duty to act on what she had learned from her research.[29]

Father Paul Prucha, Marquette University, was Debo's biggest detractor. He thought she had two faults. She wrote as an Indian advocate and failed to treat the federal government equally. She did not fully develop the problems the government faced. Prucha claimed Debo's work was filled with moral indignation. Prucha did not think Debo was a good historian because of this fault. He believed the work of historians should lead to understanding. Prucha thought Debo pointed out what was wrong and described how terrible it was. Secondly, Prucha disliked the fact that Debo concentrated on Oklahoma Indians. He suggested she dedicated much of the book to the Five Tribes in A History of the Indians of the United States. Prucha found her a forceful speaker yet she failed to substantiate much of what she said. He thought Oklahomans dared not question Debo's work because she was so revered within the historical community. He criticized Debo for not adequately describing the divisions within the tribes. Prucha viewed the film as a piece of "boosterism." He agreed with Hicks in thinking the filmmakers bought into Debo's myth about herself. They presented the story of a woman who received many accolades throughout her life and who believed her greatness stemmed from her portrayal of accurate history. In his opinion the film did not present a critical view of Debo. Prucha

knew Debo was strong enough to endure constructive criticism. He thought the film should have focused on Debo the historian and not on Native American history.[30]

Clyde Milner, Utah State, called Debo one of the founders of twentieth century Native American history because previous historians viewed Indian history as the story of an exploited people. Milner saw Debo's work as "dynamic, sophisticated, and impassioned." He saw her as the spokesperson for local history when the writing of regional history was emerging among historians. Milner believed Debo possessed a keen sense of place and setting.[31] Debo's use of place within her work gave it importance as regional history.

Debo understood the importance of physical setting because of its impact on the development of the human condition. Debo described the physical setting in defining the inhabitants of her studies, whether it was the Choctaws or the white settlers of Oklahoma. She drew the lines between person and place. Her comments about oil in Oklahoma Foot-loose and Fancy-free exemplify this point. "Oil itself may not have affected the character of Oklahoma as much as chances of oil."[32] Debo, through her regional approach, dealt with a process of expressing what she called microcosmic truths. In Prairie City Debo wrote a fictional frontier history that reflected succeeding historic patterns. Reviewers did not take this book seriously because it could not be used as an objective social examination. Debo focused on the aspects of progress both positive and negative. She integrated political events into the lives of common people such as the effect of xenophobia after World War I in Marshall.[33] The author she preferred to read for an added dimension on setting was John Joseph Mathews. He understood the physical features of Oklahoma yet made a mystical connection with them.

In her writing Debo emphasized characteristics about place. Her work fit into a regional context. For Debo the writing of history allowed a writer to find out what was distinctive about events in a particular place. Debo spent a lifetime studying the events that presented a unique history for the state of Oklahoma. Although fiction, Prairie City traced the development of a frontier town illustrating the similarity with previous American settlers. In the book Tulsa, it became apparent that similar forces at work in an old Creek Indian town were the same ones experienced in the development of the nation as a whole. Using oral interviews to validate the facts with those who lived through historical events added a critical dimension to her work. An effective writer had to understand the uniqueness of one's history. Debo used her most important work, And Still the Waters Run, to illustrate her point. People will accept truth in writing even if it is unfavorable.[34]

Carl Degler, professor of history at Stanford, saw Debo's impact as important. Her "history established the foundation for critical thinking" about Native American history. He rationalized her advocacy as part of pioneer history. Tanya Barnes, University of Tulsa Law School, reminded critics of Debo's work that it is still used to argue Indian sovereignty cases in the courts in relation to state governance. Danney Goble, University of Oklahoma, claimed Debo's work established the basic narrative story for Oklahoma history. Goble did not think Debo's nonacademic career hurt her. She had little patience in dealing with "fools, students, and professors included." Debo's friendship with Danny Goble began when he asked her to read his doctoral dissertation, later published as Progressive Oklahoma. Debo encouraged Goble and provided her perspective of his work. Their friendship continued over the years.[35]

Fred Hoxie, former Director of the D'Arcy McNickle Center for the History of American Indians, Newbury Library, Chicago, had a different view of Debo's most important book. He said it conveyed "a powerful message that Oklahomans have not come to grips with yet." Debo's strength lies in the fact that no other historian has revisited the subject or done it any better. Hoxie placed Debo's passionate yet scholarly approach akin to "a muckracking expose not a judicious statement." Scott Momaday, University of Arizona, acknowledged Debo's contribution. But he did not think of her as a scholar because her work was concentrated on subjects familiar to her. He welcomed the depth of her understanding and knowledge of Oklahoma Indian affairs.[36]

Robert Berkhofer, Stanford Humanities Center, stated that Debo's books are dated because of new interpretations. He added that until World War II Debo was the historian for Indian history. He faulted her stereotypical tribal descriptions and wondered why she did not emphasize their internal problems to indicate how much that hurt the tribes.[37] Debo conducted the research for her tribal histories and the liquidation of the estates of the Five Tribes in the 1930s and 1940s. Geronimo, though written in the 1970s, used interviews she conducted in the 1950s. From today's perspective Berkhofer's comments are valid. Prior to the emergence of ethnohistory, historians were concerned mainly with the obvious in trying to reconstruct the intricacies of a tribal history. They had no training that enabled them to delve beneath the surface to determine complex tribal behavior. Today methodology provides historians much greater latitude in uncovering material to bring a fuller understanding to the field of Indian history.

Howard Lamar, Yale University, saw Debo as "opinionated and eloquent." He claimed her significance emerged from the first sympathetic rendering by a historian of the

plight of the Indians. He stated her pioneer history was the only work done about Oklahoma for a long time. Her method of communicating was accomplished "by casting a spell."[38]

Savoie Lottinville, retired head of the University of Oklahoma Press, praised Debo as a great historian. "She was no muckraker, she dealt in facts." Her Creek history is a valuable asset to Indian history.[39]

Boyce Timmons, head of the Indian Adult Education Program for Oklahoma, worked with Debo on the Oklahoma Indian Newsletter trying to improve communications between Indian communities. Timmons believed Debo contributed to an expanded Indian history, and she had a positive impact on the Indians of the state.[40]

B. B. Chapman, retired lawyer and professor at Oklahoma State University, was a specialist on federal land management in Oklahoma. Debo taught for Chapman in 1957 when he took a leave of absence. In the 1950s Chapman worked with Debo researching the first Civil War battle fought in Oklahoma near Stillwater. He credited Debo with the improvement of the lives of Indians in Oklahoma because of her role as an activist.[41]

James Ralph Scales, former President of Wake Forest, credited Debo with accomplishing the basic scholarship needed by anthropologists and historians to address Indian history. Scales added Debo was, "the mainstay of the Progressive Democratic Party in a Republican Marshall. Although a political activist, she became everybody's favorite aunt in Marshall."[42] It should be mentioned that the Democrats did not receive preferential treatment from Debo in And Still the Waters Run. Neither party escaped her scathing comments regarding the perpetuation of the spoils system in Oklahoma. The efforts of Progressive officials to accomplish the goals of an assimilated Indian population

failed to materialize. Debo did not ignore their failings. Even though men of integrity and ability directed the Indian office during this time, they were unwilling to assess the disastrous impact their programs had on the Indians they served.[43] Progressive principles were employed to free Indians of government control so they could become productive citizens. Indians were released from guardianship before they were capable of supporting themselves; the land was made productive by the majority white population at the expense of Indian ownership; the needs of this group who were dependent on government protection were neither understood nor valued.[44]

C. D. Blue Clark, a historian whose father worked with Debo on the Indian Pioneer History Project, recalled how Debo wrote reports to the IRA that led to investigations of corruption within the Bureau of Indian Affairs.[45] Sunshine King, a Creek Indian who worked in the tribal office said Debo was an immense help to the tribes by sharing the data she found concerning where the tribes had been located. Tribes could go into court and win cases based on information Debo had written about. The tribal offices used her books extensively.[46]

Debo has been called meticulous by many. When Kenny Brown did his research on a biography of Robert L. Owen, he realized Debo had investigated every document concerning Owen. Rennard Strickland, part Cherokee and part Osage, knew Debo as a writer. He first heard of Debo when he was a youngster in Muskogee. He would visit Grant Foreman's house and knew about their mutual interest in Oklahoma history. Strickland was fond of Debo because someone of her stature encouraged him as a young historian. He stated that a woman of less mettle might have chosen a different approach in her writing. Strickland saw Debo as a woman historian who began a career when women

historians were marginalized. She wrote about Indian history when there was little interest in Indian history. Strickland saw advantages and disadvantages to her position outside the academic world. Because she wrote extensively, her influence was broad. Due to her activism, she was a role model for those who knew her. Due to her reviews of hundreds of books, as a reviewer for The New York Times Book Review, her students, although not in traditional classrooms, were widespread. Her critical analysis of history books was accessible to many students. The biggest disadvantage for Debo was not having access to students as a professor. Debo had "heirs of the mind and spirit, if not in a physical way." Strickland learned important lessons from Debo. She displayed her method of dealing with history. For example Debo saw the history of Oklahoma played out as a microcosm of the entire American experience. Debo taught him to respect the integrity and spirit of the people historians wrote about. Debo displayed, in her own activism, the broader obligations facing citizens of a democracy. Strickland's view of the work of an historian offers a different perspective. He believed historians become ". . . scholars using scholarship in the service of ideas and ideals."[47]

Strickland commended Debo on the range of subjects she covered in her numerous works. Even though a specialized story occupied the pages of And Still the Waters Run, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, The Road to Disappearance, Tulsa, and Geronimo, were broad histories. Debo was able to produce other works such as a pioneer story in Prairie City and an interpretation of the Oklahoma spirit in Oklahoma Foot-loose and Fancy-free. Strickland evaluated Prairie City as poetic and similar to a novel, a recounting of all pioneer experiences.[48]

In his view, Debo added to the historiography of Native American writing. She was interested in the people, and their reaction, and relationship to what was happening to them. She understood rural life because she had lived it. Strickland attributed her roots as a pioneer and a product of a small town with teaching her what was fundamentally important in life. She was not afraid to go out into the hills to find and interview the full-bloods. Debo understood the character of the people she wrote about. Strickland evaluated Debo's technique. She constructed the character of a people by familiarizing herself with the individual aspects of the group then would evaluate, "how particular people, particular events and places came together to create a larger pattern that was history."[49]

Lastly Strickland pointed to the legacy left by Debo. He compared the importance of contemporary Indian issues in 1987 to those in 1887. The courts have used Debo's works to determine some of these important questions. In 1976 in the United States District Court, District of Columbia, the case of Allen Harjo v Thomas Kleppe cited And Still the Waters Run and The Road to Disappearance to verify the history of the Creek tribal council.[50] Recently in the 1980s when the United States District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma reached a decision in the Creek bingo case, Debo's work, The Road to Disappearance, was cited to help the court determine the rights of Creek sovereignty. To Strickland Debo was not someone who wanted to create a myth. He might conclude she possessed unique characteristics to have accomplished what she did as a historian.[51]

Debo left researchers clear directions on the motivations behind her writing. Her self discipline provided the necessary diligence to pursue the research trail to its

conclusion. The guiding principle for her research was searching for a comprehensive explanation from documents studied that provided an insightful interpretation. From the interviews, diaries, and various related letters and correspondence, a clear picture of Angie Debo emerges. It is fair to say she commands a national reputation among historians and is genuinely respected. Obviously some of her peers found weaknesses in Debo's work and continue to do so.

Debo spoke of historians she admired and those who influenced her career. She admired Walter Prescott Webb as a writer and historian. When asked if she and Webb wrote in a similar fashion, she denied any similarity. She said they shared life experiences. She admired historians Bruce Catton and William E. Dodd and had limited contact with them in her life. E. E. Dale and Grant Foreman influenced her life to a greater extent than anyone else. They were both lifelong friends and helped her in various aspects of her professional career. She did not think either Dale or Foreman could write well, but she knew they made significant contributions to Oklahoma history. Dale and Foreman did not fit Debo's style of confrontational writing; she would not have valued the writing ability of those who ignored important aspects of history. Still Debo admired them as historians and found them men of great integrity. Debo complimented Arrell Gibson's work on the Kickapoos. She stated that Gibson established an important legacy among the students he had mentored.[52]

One of Gibson's students, David Baird, gained Debo's highest accolade because of his work on Peter Pitchland, a man he depicted as unprincipled in his dealings with congressional appropriations to the Choctaws. Debo found fault with Father Prucha; she found his perceptions naïve. She did not think Prucha understood how government policy

actually impacted Native Americans. She claimed Prucha did not engage in field work, a flaw Debo thought many historians shared. Debo chose Michael Green as the historian who understood the history of the Native American better than any other historian at present. This is not surprising because Green's research concentrated on the Five Tribes. Green asked Debo to read his doctoral dissertation as a young graduate student. Debo acknowledged he had not written extensively because he had spent so much time developing a broad background in government policy, Indian history, and the relation between the two. Debo thought Green had the potential to become one of the field's finest historians. Debo credited Rennard Strickland with a keen understanding of the historiography of Oklahoma history. To Debo, Strickland demonstrated the ability to become involved in the reality of the history he was writing and therefore commanded a greater understanding of it.[53]

Debo analyzed her writing over time. She recalled an English literature course she took at the University of Oklahoma under Walter Campbell, a journalism professor. He had studied at Oxford in England as a Rhodes Scholar. He spent the whole hour lecturing on architecture. Debo failed to see the connection between architecture and English literature at the time. As she began to write, Debo could see the architectural principles at work. Design, the creative component in architecture, must be in sync with engineering, the technical aspect. Debo compared accuracy in writing as the engineering part of writing. Facts establish the foundation of any historical work. On this foundation the history is constructed.[54]

From Campbell's lecture Debo realized a historical writer must venture beyond the facts to complete his work. An author must add a creative component. Historians use

interpretation, a critical analysis, to identify meaning in the facts. This part must come from the imaginative ability of the writer. Debo said that some people have that ability, and some do not. The purpose of an interpretation is found in its usefulness to humanity. To Debo accuracy served the greater public. Debo defined truth as the "accumulated findings of investigation and the meanings derived from these findings." [55]

Debo incorporated some of Campbell's principles of writing. She called on him to review some of her manuscripts. He read Oklahoma Foot-loose and Fancy free and gave it a positive review. She sought advice about writing a book about the Creeks. Campbell won a Guggenheim fellowship that provided money to conduct research about Sitting Bull. He used oral history skillfully in his writing. He wrote under the name of Stanley Vestal. He wrote Kit Carson: The Happy Warrior of the Old West published in 1928. In 1934 the biography of Chief White Bull, Warpath: The True Story of the Fighting Sioux was published.[56] She asked him to write a recommendation when she applied for a Guggenheim fellowship. She read Campbell's Professional Writing and took his advice to write emotionally.[57]

The question arises about Debo's position in the profession and how she fits into the historiography of American history. Debo's early years coincided with major changes in historiography. The early twentieth century saw the rise of technical scholarship, the establishment of the AHA, and the move to graduate education where research became the norm. These three events led to a unique way of writing historical accounts. Researchers began to use primary source materials; the "New History" stressed accuracy and objectivity in research and writing. The professionalization of the field required historical writing to move away from moralizing accounts so prevalent in the nineteenth

century. In this time period the historian pointed out the good guys and those who wronged others. The AHA also criticized the patriotic renditions of historians of the early twentieth century. History written from an author's emotional viewpoint, a bias, or as propaganda, where the author associated judgements with his conclusions, gave way to careful and thoroughly-researched works. The "New History" peaked in the 1920s. Historians relished in "debunking" myths as data they studied differed from perceptions. An emphasis on realism in writing history emerged.[58]

The 1930s witnessed the emergence of several trends in American historiography related to changes beginning in the 1920s. Influenced by the impact of the Great Depression and New Deal on American society, historians employed a new social awareness in their research. They looked more critically at American institutions. A second trend reflected the integration of related fields with history giving rise to an expanded scope as well as a synthesis of subject matter. In addition local and regional history experienced a renaissance as trained practitioners focused on government-sponsored bibliographies and checklists of archives established at local sites. Also, historians tackled contemporary issues in their research. Interest in current topics reflected the increased government attention to historical problems within the American society. Generally in the 1930s historians focused on politics, public policy, and ideas. Problems existed in society, and historians offered their expertise in specific areas through historical research and applied their techniques to solutions.[59] Debo initially concentrated on the problems of the nation's Indian population.

Historians were directed into regional studies. The Works Progress Administration funded the state writers project that Debo headed in Oklahoma. These writers emphasized

local history. Debo participated in another important aspect of local history in the collection and preservation of Indian records under the direction of Grant Foreman. Among the early historians whose work distinguished them from others, Grant Foreman, Annie Abel, and Angie Debo made extensive use of archival sources.[60]

Social history developed within the historical field that had been dominated by constitutional, political, and diplomatic history. Social historians took a body of information that had been previously neglected by researchers, organized the data, and found it did not fit into traditional historical topics. They developed new sub-fields dedicated to the study of society itself. The key ingredient in this study became human interaction thereby clarifying common patterns and distinct differences among various groups. The ongoing debate over Indian policy emerged as one of the topical interests of social historians.[61] The subject of "New Indian History" is covered in the final chapter.

The atmosphere of social reform influenced the development of social history. Both urban and agrarian movements laid the foundation for reform in the 1920s. As these movements intensified in the 1930s, the interest in social history followed suit. Reform movements influenced the perspective of historians by framing their discussion within a problem-policy context. Modernization created forces that demanded reform while other forces conservatively resisted change. Reform created the need for state and federal governments to legislate changes in the form of new laws. Laws called for the establishment of a bureaucracy to provide solutions within a changing society. The failure or success of the government agencies in dealing with the problems became evident over time.[62]

Debo's choice of subjects and the methods she used in the early 1930s placed her within the "New History" that emerged at this time. She wrote histories of "lost" groups of Americans in her tribal histories by interviewing their survivors, by using information about their culture and traditions, and by delving into their documents to find a new perspective.[63] A social consciousness regarding intercultural interaction is an important component of Debo's work. Gradually her research investigated the impact of federal policy concerning the liquidation of the estates of the Five Tribes in And Still the Waters Run. As a contemporary activist, Debo related her analysis of Indian history to the social problem Indians presented to the Euroamerican population. Throughout her research of the allotment policy and the impact it had the Five Tribes of Oklahoma, Debo followed the government actions legislated to create the bureaucracy needed to implement the changes required. Her analysis documented the failure of federal Indian policy and continued efforts at reform. Debo was writing against a historical mind set in the late 1930s and 1940s. The idea of Manifest Destiny was entrenched in American thinking concerning the settlement of the nation. The Euroamericans brought civilization and progress to the West and subjugated the Native American population. To those bringing modernization to the West, the Indians were doomed to extinction because Native American culture represented the past. [64]

Liberal ideas and progressive thinking have influenced American historians over time. Ethnocultural differences were explained as the product of the domination of economic power by the majority population. Differences among groups were not considered a fundamental factor but rather the end result of an inferior economic role. "Status" historians furthered the ideas of economic determinism. Sociologists enlightened

the thinking of historians by emphasizing ethnocultural data concerning the difficult problem of accurately describing social structure. Historians began to look at ethnic, religious, and racial conflicts as fundamentally inherent differences between groups that allowed social structure of one group to vary substantially from another.[65]

Debo's personal political beliefs framed her writing yet evolved as her research continued to broaden her knowledge throughout a lifetime. As a Progressive Democrat, she approached her topics from a thorough understanding of the solutions Progressives proposed regarding the Indian problem. Evidence of the failure of the assimilationist policy was overwhelming. In the tribal histories she presented these findings in the enlarged context of including a response from the individual tribes to the attack on their traditions and lands. Her work on the Five Tribes continued to build on the inclusive foundation she had incorporated in her study of the Choctaws.

In summary the field of historical research changed in the early twentieth century just as Debo began her writing career. She participated in the new direction historians took in portraying the past. By using primary source materials and thorough objective research skills in her dissertation, Debo established herself among those writing "New History." The work with the Indian Pioneer History Project impressed on her the importance of oral history. She experienced firsthand the emphasis on regional history that emerged during the 1930s working on the WPA Writers' Project. She incorporated local and regional history throughout her writing career from that point on. With the exception of Geronimo and A History of the Indians of the United States, her earlier books about Indians were written long before the reorientation of American history in the 1960s and 1970s when historians turned away from the Consensus School of

historiography. Because Consensus historians emphasized continuity rather than conflict, they ignored the experiences of Native Americans. Not all scholars followed this interpretation of continuity. Debo's association with the University of Oklahoma Press, particularly with Brandt's "Civilization of the American Indian Series," put her in the company of authors who took a different direction in writing Indian history.[66] Calling it her most important work Debo brought conflict to the forefront in And Still The Waters Run by challenging the idea of continuity. According to Indian sources, the impact of white settlement in Oklahoma had a devastating effect on their people. As Indian historians raised the level of consciousness of their countrymen, this book and her other Indian histories established a solid audience among scholars. She successfully completed her last book at a time when Indian history was experiencing a transformation.

NOTES

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[4] Ibid.

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[6] Oklahoma Press Clipping Bureau, April 1985, OHS.

[7] PBS presentation, Indians, Outlaws and Angie Debo, The American Experience # 103 Institute for Research in History, New York and Station WGBH-Boston, 1988.

[8] Anne Morgan File, 96-097, Box 1, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[9] David MacKenzie, "Documentary Records Career of Angie Debo," Sunday Tulsa World, 1 April, 1984, Debo file, OHS. Jean Devlin, "Miss Angie," Oklahoma Today, September/October 1988, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

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[12] Anne Morgan File, 96-097, Box 1, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[13] Abrash, "A Study in Inspiration," 4.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Devlin, "Miss Angie." "Miss Angie in the Movies," The Sunday Oklahoma, April 8, 1984. Debo file, OHS.

[16] Richard White, "Movie Reviews: Indians, Outlaws and Angie Debo, The Journal of American History, 76 (December, 1989): 1010.

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[18]Jimmie Hicks, "E.E. Dale: A Biography and a Bibliography." The Chronicle of Oklahoma (Autumn, 1967): 290.

[19] Jimmie Hicks, "A Critique of the PBS Television Program, Indians, Outlaws and Angie Debo, The American Experience, #103," Jimmie Hicks Collection, Box H-44, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 3,10.

[22] Ibid., 9.

[23] Ibid., 11.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] E-mail correspondence, David Baird to author, May 1, 2000.

[27] Oral History, Gibson Interview, Box 29, folder 45, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[28] Oral History, Gibson Interview, Box 29, folder 45, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[29] Ibid., Terry Wilson Interview.

[30] Ibid., Prucha Interview.

[31] Ibid., Milner Interview.

[32] Debo, Oklahoma, Foot-Loose and Fancy free, 32.

[33] Taylor, "An Artery to Our Past," 6.

[34] Ibid., 72 ibid., 73.

[35] Ibid., Degler, Goble Interview.

[36] Ibid., Hoxie, Momaday Interview.

[37] Ibid., Berkhofer Interview.

[38] Ibid., Lamar Interview.

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[54] Debo, "Realizing Oklahoma's Literary Potential," 68.

[55] Ibid., 7.

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[59]Matthew A. Fitzsimons and Alfred G. Pundt, ed. The Development of Historiography, (Harrisburg: The Stackpole Company, 1954):424.

[60] McIntosh, "Geronimo's Friend," 173.

[61]Samuel P. Hays, "A Systematic Social History," in George A. Billias and Gerald Grob, ed. American History Retrospect and Prospect (New York: The Free Press, 1971):318.

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CHAPTER VII

WRITING INDIAN HISTORY

A biography of Angie Debo is a work of conjecture, analysis, and interpretation. Debo left a lifetime of records from early diaries written as a young girl, to her scholarly works, and recent personal interviews. A very clear picture of the woman emerges as one looks through the records. A biography of Angie Debo would not be complete without a lively discussion of Debo's style in writing Indian history. An article by James Axtell reveals the differing viewpoints of historians concerning moral criticism and emotion in writing. Finally one must separate the personality of Angie Debo from her professional work in order to extract from the image her true character.

Historians specializing in Native American history have been debating the issues concerning Indian-white relations and how these issues are handled in print for a long time. The debate continues as historians seek to validate an inclusive and vibrant history for indigenous peoples. Angie Debo employed elements that introduced a broadened perspective, one that included as principle characters, the Indians themselves. She wanted to educate her audience about the Five Tribes and about Geronimo by delving into their documents, by interviewing their storytellers, and by altering the idea of victimization.

In And Still the Waters Run Debo took a serious and impassioned stance at what she found to be widespread abuse on the part of the Euroamericans against the Indians and

their cultures. It is this stance that should be addressed. Debo's impact on historical writing may be determined by her peers who either accept or reject this style. The style is composed of passion amid persistent condemning discourse. The passion arose from personal outrage and from the intensity of Debo's desire to bring the heretofore ignored facts to light. For some historians this style has no place in the work of historians. This style portrayed the strength behind the woman. If she had not expressed the findings of her historical investigation passionately, her work may not have had the impact it did nor would it have been widely acclaimed by her peers. The publication of <u>And Still the Waters Run</u> is fifty years old; it has been reprinted several times in the last couple of decades and has been used in courts of law to validate Indian rights. Without Debo's passionate rhetoric, <u>And Still the Waters Run</u> would have been just another history book. Unfortunately historians equate passion with bias. Passion can be defined as a strong feeling, an excitement. The data Debo uncovered initiated an ardor that she chose not to suppress.

The article, "A Moral History of Indian White Relations Revisited" by James Axtell has a number of interesting points related to this discussion. This issue is critical to the question of the kind of legacy her peers will assign Debo. Axtell's article discussed the problems inherent in writing the history of Indian-white relations. The question Axtell addressed dealt with the ability to evaluate historical events where two cultures collided when historians judge each society on its own standards. Historian Wilcomb Washburn expressed the argument in a 1957 article published in <u>Ethnohistory</u>, "A Moral History of Indian-White Relations: Needs and Opportunities for Study." Washburn exhorted those who wrote about Indian-White relations to address the moral aspect of

such a conflict. He claimed historians had been one-sided in their approach; their moral evaluations stemmed from their particular cultural value system solely. Washburn wanted historians to address the conflicting values of the two peoples. He wanted the data to direct the moral assumptions rather than the values held by the authors. Historians could not write empathetically about Indian-White relations without a thorough understanding of the conflicting values at stake. Washburn focused on a history of morals and values and did not write what Axtell called a moral history encompassing the historians own moral judgments.[1]

Bernard Sheehan in 1969 wrote an article, "Indian-White Relations in Early America: A Review Essay," in The William and Mary Quarterly and took the opposite point of view. From his perspective historians often placed guilt for the demise of Indians on the white man exclusively. Sheehan, Paul Prucha, and Alden Vaughan placed blame on the tribes for their own destruction because they were the victims of a process. Sheehan said ". . . the Indian disintegrated . . . he was not annihilated but he faded culturally into another entity." Sheehan claimed Indians, by their own policies, dismantled their cohesion as a culture. He acknowledged the crushing impact of the aggressive European incursion into Indian lands. Sheehan thought historians should include moral judgments but only in an unobtrusive way. Rather than the limited view of oppressor and oppressed, Sheehan suggested a thorough understanding of the process of conflicting cultures. The only way Sheehan was comfortable making moral judgments was to assume there was a standard moral code he could follow. Sheehan did not think standardized judgments could be made, so he did not make moral judgments in his writing of history. Axtell thought Sheehan confused moral criticism with moralizing or

providing moral lessons. Axtell accepted a broader definition of moral criticism; one in which ". . . moral statements can express indignation, . . . appraise actions, not in terms of good and bad but rather success and failure, the compatibility of means and ends, intentions and results." The point of the article is clear. Axtell purported historians can and should make their moral beliefs clear in their writing.[2]

Regarding the book, And Still the Waters Run, Debo expressed indignation at the abuses she found, and she used documents to establish her moral position. Her position posited the failure of the white federal policy adopted to deal with the Indians. She did not have any preconceived ideas when she began her research, but when she finished it she had developed a strong passionate critical understanding of what had transpired. She appraised the actions of government officials in terms of intentions and results. Debo made moral statements by her choice of words such as "grafter" and in the tone and style of her writing.

Axtell used the example of Bruce Trigger's The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660 to illustrate well-written ethnohistory. Trigger tried to write from a perspective that would keep a reader from empathizing with one side or another but rather view the total picture from a removed yet critical position. Axtell maintained Trigger, by the very choice of words, expressed judgments throughout his work; he was able to capture the reality he was researching. To clarify the misunderstanding among historians about the role of value judgments, Axtell proposed the following questions: why historians judge the past, what is actually being judged and how the judgments are made? He suggested historians judge the past to assess events. Axtell expressed what he considered a difference between judgment and interpretation. He concluded that

historians have dual purposes; they must evaluate the data and must render an assessment of what the historical documents illustrate. Axtell inferred those who study history will make judgments as the end products of understanding. Secondly he concluded historians judge the past to provide it a fair accounting, ". . . to set the record straight for future appeals to precedent." A fair accounting can be accomplished by modifying the standard recitation of a particular historical event or person to shed a different light on the subject.[3]

Debo's work on Geronimo as well as her books on the Choctaws, and Creeks, and the subject of liquidation of the Five Tribes altered the interpretation of historical record. The people involved in these events, the Indians themselves, appreciated the altered view because their story, previously ignored, had been told accurately for the first time. They knew their story from oral as well as documented accounts, but the white man's account neglected Native American experiences. Stories surrounding Geronimo consisted of wild myths based on white condemnation. Debo was able to detail the existence of a man who saw what limited options he had and made decisions based on his cultural instincts. Debo altered Geronimo's reputation and conveyed the proud spirit of a man who saw his way of life extinguished but lived on and adapted to the white man's control.

Axtell concluded historians judge the past to gain knowledge from such an investigation. Since historians write for their own generation, the knowledge acquired through historical research, the lessons learned from history, can be shared with readers of the present and future exclusively. To Axtell the ultimate motive of historical research lies in preventing a recurrence of the missteps of man throughout history. The past provides historians with the opportunity to reflect on the choices, on the implementation, and consequences of man's actions.[4]

Axtell suggested what historians judge. It is ". . . the moral character of whole societies, institutions and . . . individuals." Historians look at past actions and assume individuals made choices because of various motives, either obvious for all to know or hidden from view. They try to assess the character of an individual in the case of hidden intentions and then examine the consequences of his actions. By delving into the records, historians find negative consequences resulting from the best of intentions and likewise positive results from highly suspect motives.[5] Particularly with Indian-white relations and federal Indian policy, historians, like Debo, pointed out the well-intentioned efforts of philanthropists, Indian service officials, reformers, and those who had the best interests of the Indian at heart go astray due to unintended consequences.

Axtell stated historians generally agreed on how to judge the past. The only way historians can evaluate the past is to accept the standards of the time and measure the events and participants according to those values. This assessment is difficult for historians because it requires an objective determination indicating the moral community involved and how inclusive it is in regards to the individuals in the society.[6]

Debo conscientiously used the setting or time frame to place her historical evaluations in context. In writing about the Choctaw and Creek tribes, Debo located their place of origin and explained their origin myths; she described what tribes surrounded their locations, their relations with European powers at different times, and with the emerging American government. In presenting the setting for And Still the Waters Run Debo started with Indian Territory, what tribes were there, why they were there, what was promised to get them there, what changes white incursion brought about, and how the tribes altered their cultural traditions to accommodate the changes. Within

this setting the values of the Euroamerican society and institutions emerged amidst those of the previously settled tribes. Critics accused Debo of not dedicating enough time to the plight of the non-Indians in the territory or to the choices of a government struggling to appease land-hungry settlers. It must be remembered Debo's work was a limited study of the liquidation of the Five Tribes, not a general history of the settlement of Oklahoma. Axtell suggested the best way for historians to deal with all sides equally is to allow them to judge each other. Historians can accomplish this by speaking through contemporary documents that provide a voice to all sides. The historian is able to illustrate divergent views without having to make his own moral evaluations. A problem arises when the documentation is one-sided. Debo maintained the documents heavily favored the Indians in their struggle against federal policy and condemned the white man's policy. It was difficult to make an even evaluation. In this case Axtell suggested using a healthy dose of imagination and empathy to discern possible judgments from the documentation that is available.[7]

Axtell conceded that historians decide for themselves how to deal with the subject of moral judgment in historical writing. He referred the readers to Francis Jennings who wrote The Invasion of America, a good case study in moral history. The book asserted two tenets; actions and behavior accepted from past history will be repeated. Secondly, men control their behavior by the choices they make revealing the significance of their association to the moral standards of the time. These two assumptions concern historians. Jennings found those who claimed the moral high ground often did so to divert attention from the abandonment of their own moral standards. Jennings found fault with the work of Prucha, Vaughan, and Sheehan who readily accepted ". . . the savage/civilized dichotomy

which lay at the heart of the cant of conquest." Using a vocabulary of condemnation Jennings left no doubt about where he stood. He used this vivid wording in a mighty attempt to extinguish the long-established and widely-accepted rendition of seventeenth century Puritan history. His work indicated a vast understanding of the conflict and left the reader with a defined moral judgment based on historical documents. Jennings got mixed reviews. Some criticized his judgment while others found his evaluation stunning. Those who criticized Jennings, some of whom were his peers whose interpretation he altered, said that his objective analysis had been compromised. The most valid criticism reflected a dismissal of his work by some because of the manner in which he portrayed the subject. The work did not appear empathetic but contained a moralizing tone.[8]

Debo drew moral judgments without moralizing. She was not criticized for the style she used. Debo accomplished in 1936 what Jennings did in 1975. Her account of Indian-white relations in And Still the Waters Run is laced throughout with the use of passionate and often offensive language. She accomplished an alternative to previous historical writing that called for redefinition. Debo's passion should not be construed as Indian advocacy but rather as genuine human emotion that can be used as a powerful tool in conveying moral criticism.

Axtell divulged his true sentiments near the end of the article jeopardizing his position among his peers. He acknowledged the belief that those who carry the legacy of European conquest have a great ". . . responsibility of moral initiative." It was the European who invaded the continent, who tried to assimilate the Indian culture, and who reaped the greatest benefit from their successful policy. The Europeans accomplished their goals by embellishing them with a glorified moral standard. As students of history,

we can certainly respect their decisions, but Axtell called on future historians to find documentary evidence of Indian culture to balance the historic evaluation.

In conclusion Sheehan and Trigger reviewed Axtell's article to clarify several important points. They both agreed that historians have one primary purpose, that of explanation. Moral evaluation should not play a part in the real work of historians. Axtell's reply stressed his belief that one cannot divide explanation and evaluation neatly. Axtell claimed language is laced with a writer's feelings and is defined by his/her bias; therefore, the actual writing of history or any piece of literature is a personal act. Writers make moral judgments at every turn, so Axtell conceded his purpose in writing the article was to stress responsible and subtle evaluation. Sheehan believed moral judgment must be based on universal standards, but Trigger and Axtell agreed that moral judgments contain cultural boundaries and need not be based on universal ideals. Trigger and Axtell questioned how historians could write history based on universal standards when they write for their generation only. Lastly they differed on the purpose or goal of moral history. Sheehan expressed his belief there was no purpose to moral history. Trigger purported moral judgments can be used to find a better more inclusive social order. Axtell agreed but added his confidence in individual responsibility to change social order either through institutions or through leadership. Axtell found hope in his suggestion that the past actions of individuals and small groups, not institutions can bring about moral improvement. If the historian includes moral judgment in his interpretation, future generations will be more tolerant toward individuals, and social order will benefit.[9]

One may not agree with Axtell's remarks about moral history, but Debo will be judged by her ability to record accurate history and the interpretation she developed from

the research. There is no myth behind Debo's ability to accomplish an accurate historical rendering. The only remaining question will be answered individually, not by any group of historians. Did the style Debo used lessen or strengthen the impact of her writing? The style, the use of language, or the repeated indignation is not a distraction. Her presentation is laced with emotion that framed the relationship between federal officials, Euroamerican settlers, and Indians. She was dealing with a subject that evoked strong emotions. This feeling gave her work vibrancy and life. When one reads about Geronimo's life, one is struck by the fact that he lost several wives and children at the hands of the white man's army. Debo does not use melodrama to depict these losses; she presents the facts as she found them, but the manner in which she portrayed them is compelling evidence of the man's cultural persistence.

Debo's method of writing Indian History differed from what had transpired previously. The majority of historians used federal and state records to substantiate their work. The books were written from the white perspective. Often the historian's focus stressed disease, liquor, trade, missionaries, and war in the white-Indian relationship. Debo's research took her to the documents of the Five Tribes; she used tribal records to interpret the position of the Indians regarding their relationship within a society undergoing changes. Instead of beginning her history with white contact, Debo began with the background of the tribe, their creation stories, and traditions then moved to a discussion of how they managed white infringement on their lands. By using primary source materials including Indian records, missionary reports, and unpublished personal travel journals, Debo's presentation and analysis examined "the moral dimension of America's intercultural relations." She utilized the anthropological works of James

Mooney and John Reed Swanton. These sources provided a broader perspective for historians. Debo was able to glean new themes to interpret her research. Her work reflects such themes such as racism, injustice, land rights, and sovereignty issues as paramount. The story Debo portrayed placed Indians in a position of reacting to white policy as active participants in their social and cultural evolution, not as victims. Indians formulated an important aspect of American history, and Debo included their efforts from an active standpoint, albeit an unsuccessful one.[10] In writing about Indians Debo exhibited important insight by including Indian documents and anthropological material about past traditions and culture.

Attempting to reconstruct the Indian point of view or recovering the Indian voice requires using their documents, including Indian oral history. Oral history differs from an oral tradition. Tribes with an oral tradition integrate the tradition into every aspect of their lives. It explains the worldview of the tribe, the known and the unknown. It presents the tribal view of reality. Researchers following an ethnohistorical approach become familiar with the language so they can communicate with tribal members. Speaking with the elders of the tribe allows researchers to gain insight into the oral tradition from within tribal communities.[11] Yet writing Indian history is problematic. Non-Indian historians are trying to comprehend the mind set of a group of people whose culture is alien to their own. They are trying to imagine how a certain tribe viewed reality and their place in that reality. James Axtell finds that those who study Indian documents have difficulty because they allow their Eurocentric biases to unconsciously interpret reality for Indians. Learning the language of a tribe guards against this problem. Ethnohistorians, even with interdisciplinary capabilities, cannot reconstruct the ancient world. By using language,

customs, and oral traditions as windows into the past, they gain a better understanding of the subject of their research.[12]

Ethnohistorian David Edmunds develops a cultural background in his interpretation of Indian behavior. This technique helps explain how Native Americans may have responded to white contact. To employ such a technique, Edmunds studies the cultural development of the native community to see how its members functioned.[13]

Although Debo would have been limited in the methodology she employed in writing her tribal histories, she made an effort to provide a cultural background and landscape based on anthropological data. She tried to include an Indian voice by using their documents, and by speaking with members of the tribe through oral history interviews. These examples validate the claim that she advanced the idea of a more Indian-centered history long before it became popular among the majority of historians.

What is considered "New Indian History" emerged out of the discussions held in the early 1950s in an effort to rethink the methodology used in writing Indian history. A heightened interest in the field developed when the Indian Claims Commission was formed in 1946 requiring expert testimony. The Newberry Library in Chicago held an important conference in 1952 that attracted anthropologists and Indian historians. A year later in Columbus, Ohio, the Ohio Valley Historical Indian Conference met. The meeting resulted in the launching of a new journal Ethnohistory (the title changed to American Society for Ethnohistory in 1966). Historians although outnumbered by anthropologists attempted to define the new sub-field. There was a good reason for the disparity in the numbers. Anthropologists had studied Native Americans longer than historians. In 1950 no American university offered an Indian history course as a major field for graduate work.

Among the early historians trying to develop a workable definition for ethnohistory were Wilcomb E. Washburn (Harvard), James Olsen (University of Nebraska), and Stanley Pargellis of the Newberry Library. Ethnohistorians listed maps, pictures, and artifacts found in museums and ethnology, folklore, language, and site exploration as part of the field studies as well as written documents to define their methodology. The goal of those writing Indian history was to achieve an Indian-centered history. One of the first works to be recognized as ethnohistory was Allen W. Trelease's Indian Affairs in Colonial New York published in 1960. This was quickly followed by Robert Berkhofer's Salvation and the Savage in 1965. The D'Arcy McNickle Center for the History of the American Indian at the Newberry Library opened in 1972 and has been instrumental in providing research fellowships to further the proliferation of ethnohistorical work. Some of the historians associated with the center are Francis Jennings, James Axtell, David Edmunds, Peter Iverson, Frederick E. Hoxie, and Richard White. White's The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos published in 1983 is an excellent example of the interdisciplinary approach called for when the ideas of ethnohistory were discussed fifty years ago.[14]

Richard White offered advice in writing about Indians and their history. He said that the best technique to use in reconstructing Indian culture pays close attention to traditional historical methods. Historians must give all written documents a careful reading and evaluation. They must be aware of misreading the meaning of documents due to cultural biases.[15]

Historians have been reluctant to address contemporary Indian problems and issues. Recent literature indicates that tribal studies flourish although many deal with the period prior to allotment. William McLoughlin's After the Trail of Tears: The Cherokee Struggle for Sovereignty 1839-1880 is a thorough investigation for the period. Cherokee Americans: The Eastern Band of Cherokees in the Twentieth Century by John R. Finger is a study of the Cherokees who escaped removal. He used extensive interviewing to include an Indian perspective. He concluded that the Eastern Cherokees were able to maintain their traditions more successfully than those who were removed. Dianna Everett in The Texas Cherokees: A People Between Two Fires 1819-1840 removed her research from a political history of Texas by using an ethnohistorical approach. Her reliance on the documents left by American and Mexican settlers and officials limited her ability to assess the ability of the tribe to maintain its cultural patterns.[16]

A review of recent literature concerning the period of allotment is useful. Janet A. McDonnell's The Dispossession of the American Indian 1887-1934 concentrates on the impact of the allotment policy. Her conclusions mirror Debo's research. Encompassing all American Indians, McDonnell's research was not limited to the Five Tribes in Oklahoma. Changes made to the Dawes Act over time removed the educational stipulation calling for the instruction of Indians in agricultural know-how and replaced it with the administrative supervision of the land. Equally involved in the failed federal policy of allotment was the implicit rejection and resistance to the idea of Indian assimilation by some members of the tribes. McDonnell found many Indians landless in 1934. Four things explain this condition: surplus land had been transferred to others, surplus lands had been sold to settlers, fee patent land had been lost, and original and

heirship allotments had been sold.[17] McDonnell upheld Debo's contention that federal policy negatively impacted the Indians socially and economically. Tribal life had been disrupted as some accepted the changes while others refused the new way of life; allotments actually divided families because land was given to each individual of age within the family. Economically the changes were untenable. Many tribal members did not want to be farmers because women traditionally filled that role within the society. Eight years after allotment, only 15-18% of the adult males of the tribes farmed. Those who did farm did not want to change from subsistence to commercial practices.[18]

Government personnel shared in the blame for problems associated with implementation of the Dawes Act. Federal bureaucracy established to enable Indians to become independent, had the opposite outcome. Federal policymakers, like Lane Burke, became more interested in making the land productive than in developing a self-sufficient Indian population. There was little understanding of the Indian culture or the differences between the tribes involved. Euroamerican middle class values dominated and overwhelmed traditional communal Indian values.[19]

Choctaws at the Crossroads The Political Economy of Class and Culture in the Oklahoma Timber Region (1997) by Sandra Faiman-Silva is an interesting account of fifty Choctaw families. Her research began in the 1980s and concluded in 1997 and can be described as anthropological fieldwork. The focus of her study included cultural process, ethnicity, and class conflict, particularly related to the new tribal role for the Choctaws in a post-industrial society. The author traced the transformation of the Choctaws from nation to tribe to ethnic minority. Faiman-Silva's work is framed within a dependency, Neo-Marxist, and world-systems perspective. The dependency world-

systems theories were developed in the 1950s and 1960s to explain Latin America's underdevelopment. Faiman-Silva compared Native American communities to the underdeveloped countries of the world. Both possessed valuable natural resources and cheap labor. Allotment placed the Choctaws in timber-rich southeastern Oklahoma where they were surrounded by resources that did not benefit them. Indians were marginalized as one sector exploited another economically.

Faiman-Silva used the core-periphery model to explain the economic position of the Choctaws in this study. The core contained the economic power, wealth, and technological know-how of a region whereas the periphery, rich in raw materials was structured to provide cheap labor to exploit the resources. In southeastern Oklahoma the power-broker was a multi-national timber company such as Weyerhaeuser Corporation that employed the non union unskilled labor of the Indians of the region. Tyson Foods represented another corporate giant employing low wage Choctaws. The study of the fifty families demonstrated the changing structure of the Choctaw culture. An increasing class stratification occurred. Some resisted change while others developed strategies to accommodate a new social order; some of the traditions were kept intact. Some Choctaws became more marginalized while others moved into the middle class. Faiman-Silva maintained the intermarried whites and mixed-blood Choctaws were the entrepreneurs who created change from within. The Choctaw Bingo Palace in Durant, Okahoma, was the cornerstone of the Choctaw entrepreneurial efforts.[20]

Faiman-Silva confirmed Debo's contention that the Choctaws divided into racially stratified groups–the mixed-bloods on one hand and the full-bloods on the other as contact influenced the tribe. Chapter 6 specifically discussed the results of the

allotment process on the tribe and can be compared with Debo's work. Faiman-Silva quoted Debo concerning allotment, "an orgy of plunder and exploitation probably unparalleled in American history."[21] Her analysis differed in expression but reached the same conclusions as Debo. She claimed the tribe was separated from its land and then the tribe was incorporated into the U.S. welfare state and global world political economy. Her analysis is consistent with a Neo-Marxist economic perspective. She cited individual and corporate entities in the decision-making process emanating from the core of American economic and political power, specifically the Interior Department, the Commission to the Five Tribes, and the railroads among others, that put into motion the process that transformed the Choctaw culture. The subheadings within this chapter mirror those in And Still The Waters Run including the following: Government "Wheeling and Dealing," the Dialectics of Resource Expropriation, Timber Country Land-Grabbing, From Inheritance to Alienation, Grabbing Unallotted Tribal Land, and County Court Land Frauds. Chapter 6 introduced no obvious departures from the facts Debo presented in And Still The Waters Run.

Faiman-Silva's interpretation viewed from a Neo-Marxist perspective introduced a different context to consider the factual material. She interpreted the conflict between indigenous peoples and Euroamericans as economically motivated. It placed precapitalist or communal societies in conflict with capitalistic modes of production. It was not the cultural, religious, or ethnic differences of the Euroamericans that initiated conflict but rather their economic proclivity to capitalism that mattered.[22]

Most of Faiman-Silva's contemporary sources including the documents from the Indian Archives are similar to those used by Debo. The most recent sources include

material on world economic systems as well as up-to-date work on allotment. She referred to a 1954 article in the Chronicles of Oklahoma by James D. Morrison, "Problems in the Industrial Progress and Development of the Choctaw Nation, 1865-1907," documenting the chronology of development in the region.

A 1975 article in Indian Historian, "The Subversion of the Indian Land Allotment System, 1887-1934," by David Holford confirmed the vulnerable status of the heirs of allotted Indians. Holford's sources consisted of government documents, contemporary books, and articles solely. Holford enumerated the failures of the General Allotment Act of 1887, particularly relating to heirship. The provisions under the act were based on a declining Indian population. The fact that the Indian population began to increase in the 1880s exposed the flaw in federal policy. Future Indians would be left landless. Indian lands would be divided so many times among heirs that only small parcels would be left to heirs. Holford indicated other failures that Debo mentioned in her book. He was able to make the motives behind government action clear, not always the case with Debo. A reader, thoroughly familiar with the history of the period, could follow the difficult passages in Debo's book regarding the passage of legislation, how it impacted the Indians, and the complicated referrals back to arbitrary changes made in supplemental agreements with the Indians. Holford claimed congress did not want to see small allotments of deceased Indians lay idle so they passed legislation in 1902 allowing the sale of inherited land. Other motives included a rationale that the sale of inherited land could help finance improvements on allotments. Others thought if Indians accumulated large landholdings, it would promote laziness among the heirs. Pressure from land-hungry settlers was always a dominant factor in congress. Debo stated that government

officials agreed that the allotment policy was a failure; Holford elaborated on the reasons for failure. He found that the intent behind the legislation–to convert Indians into farmers was altered. By allowing Indians to lease their allotment through congressional legislation in 1891, they were able to lease inherited land they did not want to farm. Originally only the sick and elderly who could not farm were allowed to lease land, but the Indian office made it possible for others to do so. The Indian office attempted to protect their wards by requiring appraisal, advertisement, and sale through sealed bids of inherited land. The plan backfired: the land was reappraised at a lower value when there were no bids on the land. Indians could not afford to compete in the competitive market so they were unable to increase the size of their holdings. Holford explained the motives behind the actions as well as the results–the loss of thousands of acres of land.

Holford's analysis of the problems within the probate courts did not differ from the conclusions that Debo reached. He explained the significant legislation in 1910 that established a basic framework for heirship policies. Again Holford was able to simplify the problems. He grasped the underlying pitfalls better than Debo and conveyed it with clarity. He explained the weaknesses inherent in giving the secretary of the Interior the power to approve Indian wills; he described the complicated process of filing a will. By 1934 the Indian Reorganization Act prohibited the sale of allotments or inherited land.[23] Holford did not present information inconsistent with Debo's findings but he was able to communicate his points more clearly that she. In fairness to Debo it must be said that her research through the maze of government documents to untangle the story for the first time without the benefit of having other historians clarify it for her must have been a monumental task.

Richard Phillips wrote a Master's thesis in 1982 titled "The Ouachita Timberlands of Southeastern Oklahoma: Unextinguished Choctaw-Chickasaw Indian Title and Unconditional Corporate Real Estate Holdings," that is based on the decisions concerning land titles.

John Thompson's Closing the Frontier: Radical Response in Oklahoma, 1889-1923 published in 1986 analyzed several theories of the American frontier experience and considered the development within Oklahoma of political radicalism as a result.[24] Thompson found that populism was consistent with the political ideology of the population of the state from 1889 to 1907; socialism, a more comprehensive ideology, dominated from 1907 to 1910, and neopopulism became popular after World War I. Thompson followed the factors influencing the development of political radicalism at various times in the state's history. Undercapitalization and overpopulation presented difficult circumstances for settlers who were also beset by harsh geographic conditions of a semi-arid region. He maintained that the poverty accompanying the settlement of the last frontier in addition to the cultural conflicts created between Indians and non- Indians caused an intense dislike of capitalism. He identified "an established core" that grew wealthy from early development but reiterated that the vast majority of the population living off the land was poor.[25] He also showed who made up the radical populist elements and how they gained control of the political process. Thompson described the division of the state into two distinct entities prior to World War I. He illustrated how the northern and western portion outgrew its frontier status while the southern and eastern hill country did not modernize or establish adequate economic institutions. In both sections workers and farmers were dissatisfied with their economic gains so they turned

to socialism. Thompson claimed that most of the state joined the national market system after World War I leaving southeastern Oklahoma underdeveloped. With the election of John Calloway Walton, Thompson argued that the last vestiges of radicalism held sway among Oklahoma voters briefly.[26]

Although Thompson wrote a political history, he treated similar topics as Debo by identifying the conditions leading to the lawlessness of land speculators regarding Indian lands. He disputed the concept of frontier lawlessness, evident in newly-settled areas where traditional government institutions had not been established. Supposedly frontier justice allowed frontiersmen to construct their own institutions rather than adopt established ones and was shared by many of its citizens. Thompson claimed the only people able to aggrandize themselves in a lawless society were the entrepreneurs. He stated that lawlessness encouraged land speculation and corruption. He further argued that lawlessness encouraged democracy by providing the environment for corruption and fraud thereby promoting populist and socialist movements. Law-abiding citizens created political avenues to counter "grafters." Thompson made an important distinction. In Oklahoma Territory, lawlessness was not protected as it was in the South where there were well-established institutions of enforcement such as a police force and the courts. Thompson maintained this explained the rapid rise and decline of radicalism in Oklahoma. During the territorial period when legal institutions were newly-established, radicals were not repressed by the government. After statehood, when government institutions matured, sophistication brought repression and election fraud that destroyed radicalism.[27] Thompson's sources included Debo's work on the Choctaws and referred to her information about early settlers from 1982 interviews in the early chapters. He did not

contradict Debo's facts but rather verified drought conditions through her personal experiences.

A final comment about recent work on Angie Debo. Patti Loughin's doctoral dissertation, "Assuming Indian Voices: Western Women Writers, Alice Marriott, Muriel Wright, and Angie Debo," (2000) compares the careers and works of an ethnologist, an editor, and a historian. All three women developed writing careers that interpreted the experiences of Oklahoma's Native Americans. Loughin's thesis contends these three women did not engage in traditional pursuits but worked on the periphery of academe. They served as precursors to ethnohistorical approaches employed in writing Indian history after the 1960s. Loughin claims they assumed Indian voices in their interpretations, educated the general public about Native Americans, and were instrumental in preserving Indian history. She also defines the relationship that existed between gender and regional landscape and the works of these three women.[28]

This biographical analysis presents a favorable account of Angie Debo; some will say it is not critical of her shortcomings. Information has been included about her personality that did not always reflect positively on Debo. In some cases the reader can determine what the information means. Judgments are based on the researcher's understanding of the subject. Analysis of Debo's stature remains positive. One has to separate the personality of Debo from her professional writings. She may have been a difficult person to work with; she may have disliked the criticism she received from Dale and Lottinville about her writing. She may have created circumstances that made her appear less than gracious, but when it came to writing as a professional historian, she left no doubt about her thoroughness and work ethic as a researcher.

In 1988 after Debo's death, a team from the Oklahoma State University library removed seventy archival boxes filled with books, letters, manuscript drafts, and citations of honors from Debo's home in Marshall. Debo had willed her papers to the Edmon Low Library, but many items were in fragile condition. She wrote on newsprint and used pencil or ink that time would destroy. A grant from Mrs. Edith Gaylord Harper of Oklahoma City enabled the library to preserve Debo's papers by putting the collection on microfilm. The collection has been made available to those who wish to study Debo's life. Her diaries are in their original form. The Western History Collection at the University of Oklahoma contains a file on Debo and there is corresponding information in the University of Oklahoma Press archives, in Bizzell's, Wardell's, and Dale's collections.

A small pamphlet, Memories of Miss Angie, by Gerry Schaefer, a friend of Debo for almost half a century sheds unique biographical information. The pamphlet provides a vivid picture of the personality that her friends and neighbors knew as Angie Debo. Today Schaefer travels to schools in Oklahoma to introduce school-age children to a woman named Angie Debo. Schaefer shares stories that emphasize Debo's human side apart from her significance as a writer that few except her closest friends would know.

Debo used to cut through Schaefer's pasture as a youngster when she walked to school in Marshall. She knew where the red bud trees and the plum trees grew and where the buffalo wallows were located. When she was much older she lamented the disappearance of the buffalo wallows. One day Schaefer and Debo embarked on an excursion through the same fields to find two buffalo wallows that could still be

discerned in the ground. Debo was thrilled to see them because they were evidence of another time, a time when another way of life existed.

Debo spoke at the dedication of an historical marker where Washington Irving camped with the army group he was traveling with. En route to the dedication, Debo pointed out to the driver the roads to take to follow Irving's path. As they drove, Debo read from Irving's book, A Tour on the Prairies published in 1835 describing the landscape. When Debo and her friends saw the same walnut grove Irving described, the instance made a lasting impression on a young rider in the car. She made history come to life for him.[29]

Debo made a tradition of presenting Marshall's graduating seniors with a bunch of her peonies in the Sunday service before the end of the school year. She encouraged them to further their education.

Although never ordained, she served the Methodist Church of Marshall as lay minister during World War II when there were no men to take the pulpit. She had been a Methodist all her life but eventually changed to the United Church of Christ during her activist days; they were more liberal in their thinking. She enlisted members of her Sunday school class in the letter-writing campaign to help the Indians.

In the mid-1970s Schaefer and her husband, Bob, drove Debo to the Mescalero Reservation near Gallup, New Mexico; they were taking a trip, and agreed to drop Debo off so she could continue the research for her book Geronimo. Debo was in her eighties. She spent the summer interviewing relatives and those who knew Geronimo. Debo lived in a hovel for housing with no air conditioning or running water. She was afraid she would not finish her work on the book before she died. By the end of the summer Debo

was exhausted but knew she could complete her writing about Geronimo. She even knew the order of his wives, a fact other historians had mixed up.

On the way to Marshall a portion of Highway 74 had been named after Angie Debo. State Representative Sean Voskunl helped with the project of naming the highway.[30] Debo would have been pleased because it gives one a sense of history, someone lived in this small corner of the world who made important contributions to the place she left behind. We are all wiser because of the scholarly efforts of this woman. She viewed life as a great privilege, and thought everyone should be given the opportunity to succeed. She thought wasted potential was a huge loss to society. It has been said Angie Debo showed us the wildflowers in a world of injustice and intolerance.[31] Perhaps she saw a similarity between the wildflowers and the Native Americans she studied. The wildflowers were overrun by economic development over time but are now being replanted to encourage their resurgence. Angie despaired over the decision of the state legislature to adopt the Indian Blanket as Oklahoma's official wildflower. She did not think it grew in a wide enough area. When she found she was mistaken about the Indian Blanket, she apologized about the comments she made about Oklahoma's ignorant legislators.

In conclusion Debo's life spanned ninety-eight years from 1890 to 1988. She experienced a political evolution throughout her life that mirrored the changes occurring within the American society. This evolution can be traced through her writing beginning when her first book was published in 1924 and ending with the publication of her last book in 1976. A quick recap of this time period is important in a discussion of Debo's political evolution. By 1890 the industrialization of the American society had begun a transformation that would alter the society permanently. During the first two decades of

the twentieth century, the Progressive reform movement had emerged to address the impact of industrialization on society. 1890 marked a change in foreign policy bringing the United States the status of an expansionist power. By 1910 demographic changes reflected the rural to urban population shift. The difficult economic times experienced during the Depression left a lasting imprint on the generation that lived at that time. World War II is considered a defining event in the twentieth century. The 1960s, a tumultuous decade, witnessed protest and confrontation on several levels. The protest was leveled against an unpopular war, unpopular leaders, racial discrimination, and against the complacency characteristic of the previous decade.

In the early 1920s Angie Debo began her writing career by tackling the subject of American isolationism at a time when Woodrow Wilson was trying to rally the country for membership in the League of Nations. Debo wrote about the origins of America's earliest expressions of isolationism as the debate about the nation's post-World War I involvement in world affairs was being hotly contested in the political arena. At the same time the field of historical research and writing had undergone changes making it more professional and the "new social history" had emerged among historians. When Debo published her dissertation in 1934, she had chosen a subject of little interest to most historians but one that fit into the new social awareness of the period. She wrote about the human interaction between the Choctaw Indians and the Euroamericans who were infringing on Choctaw lands and culture. During the late 1930s and 1940s when Debo wrote many of her books, most historians wrote within the tradition of the Progressive school.

Progressivism was a reform movement based on the belief that problems of American modernization could be addressed successfully through the expansion of the

federal government and of social justice. [32] The Progressive tradition prevalent from the first two decades of the twentieth century through the 1960s instilled the idea of state as parent in the minds of those who supported the reformers. Progressive reformers were more concerned with the needs of the disadvantaged groups than with their rights. This stance allowed Progressives to expand government intervention. The state found it unnecessary to limit its powers. The government made disadvantaged people objects of its care. As guardians there was no need for these people to be protected against a government acting as a well-meaning parent. The paternalism exhibited during the Progressive movement created a belief that all members of society could be educated, cared for, and uplifted.

The Progressive tradition came under attack from the children of Progressives who were members of the dependent groups or advocates for them. Angie Debo fit into the designation of Indian advocate. Progressive detractors, like Debo, challenged the benefits derived from the paternalistic attitude of the government as they researched various areas of history. They criticized Progressivism because it failed to accomplish its stated goals. Lionel Trilling in his novel The Middle of the Journey defined moral realism as the realization that acting against social injustice did not solve moral problems but created new ones that were more difficult to resolve than the initial ones. Critics of Progressivism claimed it lacked moral realism. They criticized reformers who failed to recognize the coercive aspect of paternalism, who failed to ask the dependents if they wanted government help. Debo adopted this analysis in And Still the Waters Run as she interpreted the impact of such coercion on the government wards. The state as parent was willing to force reluctant dependents to accept its help. A good example is the allotment

policy imposed on the Five Tribes. The government adopted an attitude that benevolent motives coupled with the recognition of a lower class of social order would guarantee the improvement of those needing guardianship. For Progressives the government had to correct the inequities within the society. Progressives planned to use the apparatus of the state to liberate the unfortunate from their misfortunes. Economically the government could promise social mobility to those who deserved it. Through education all groups could be brought into "the melting pot." With such lofty goals Progressive reformers were unable to understand the realities of implementing federal policies. [33] Debo bought into the Progressive ideology politically but evolved into one of its staunchest detractors as she began to conduct research on the Five Tribes and the dispossession of their land.

The diversity of the Progressive movement gave rise to a healthy debate among historians. They questioned the origins of support among Progressives as well as the meaning of the reform movement itself. The majority of historians agreed that Progressivism was an urban-based phenomenon. This agreement reflected changes within the population. Until 1910 most Americans therefore most historians were raised in rural settings where agrarian values were celebrated as the foundation upon which the republic was established. By mid-century, a shift had taken place; rural residents moved to the cities. Historians writing at this time had been shaped by the impersonal setting of the city and were much more concerned with urban problems. In thinking about Debo's pioneer experiences and her rural background, one can better understand why she wanted to give expression to the values of her small rural hometown of Marshall in Prairie City. One can appreciate the challenge she faced trying to interpret accurately the character of the people

of the state in Oklahoma, Foot-loose and Fancy-free. It must have stimulated her sense of place and time requiring that she reflect on her broad range of knowledge of local history.

Debo evolved into a historian who had been influenced by those writing "New Social History" in the early decades of the 1920s. When she wrote And Still the Waters Run, Debo expressed the indignation of a Progressive detractor, but one must address her view of the New Deal. It would appear she did not see it in revolutionary terms. She placed it in line with other reform movements starting with Populism and continuing through Progressivism to the policies of the New Deal. It was conservative in nature because the reforms maintained the American system of government and economic structure. She was optimistic that the New Deal would be beneficial because it brought about needed reform. Debo saw the reformed Indian administration under John Collier specifically, The Indian Welfare Act of 1934, as a catalyst to solve the problems accompanying implementation of federal Indian policies. One of the goals of reform was to reinstate self-government among the tribal councils. This democratic goal was only partially realized. She did not find the New Deal programs controversial; she did not appear concerned that relief efforts would undermine the values of the individuals involved. She thought government intervention was necessary to reform the system established to protect its wards.

Having worked on two public projects, Debo was in a position to assess the value of such programs. She was also in a position to witness the forces of localism that acted as a check on New Deal efforts. Many New Deal programs were administered at the local level by local officials who deferred to the sentiment of the community instead of to the directives of the federal officials. One needs only to think about the difficulties she

encountered with the state guide while working on the Oklahoma Writers' Project. She witnessed the conservative sentiment of Oklahomans who tried to end New Deal efforts in the state. She took on the federal bureaucrats when they tried to reject the chapter E.E. Dale submitted for inclusion in the guide. In the end Debo thought that someone outside the state, perhaps federal officials, removed the chapter she wrote and included another. Immediately following these jobs, Debo returned to writing social history. The subject moved to another of the Five Tribes, the Creeks.

Beginning after World War II and continuing into the 1950s and 1960s, American historians recognized the increasing homogeneity of the society. They questioned the groupings assembled by Progressive historians who suggested that conflict due to sectional, class, and ethnic differences had been a major determinant in American history. To historians writing after World War II, Progressive historians had been simplistic in their estimation of the capabilities of mankind to solve its problems. Neo-conservatives stressed continuity of American history rather than conflict. Others known as organizational historians interpreted the Progressive era differently. "The New Left" historians added a different approach to historical interpretations of Progressivism.[34]

For Debo the 1950s ushered in a new federal Indian policy that she deemed as destructive as previous ones. She addressed the results of the termination policy in <u>The Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma; Report on Social and Economic Conditions</u> as a follow-up to her previous research. The 1950s did not represent consensus or continuity to Debo but rather complacency. She expected the government to intervene to provide services the Indians needed economically, medically, educationally, and socially. Politically she called herself a Progressive Democrat but as a historian, Debo continued

her written assault on the limitations of federal policy. By including new information in the 1972 reprint of And Still the Waters Run, she carried out a conscious effort to assess and reassess the progress of the group she expressed the greatest concern for- the full-blood community. An optimistic attitude led Debo to assume that the full-bloods would be helped by the more enlightened attitudes in the 1960s starting with the Kennedy administration and carrying over into the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations. Such optimism must have had a profound impact on Debo's decision to become an activist. Having completed research for the book A History of the Indians of the United States, she realized the important opportunity available for the federal government to alter its past pattern of relations with the Indians. By actively lobbying for the right of the Alaskan Inuits to negotiate with the government through legislation, Debo played an instrumental role in providing support for the tribe. Due to Debo's lobbying efforts, the tribe was able to negotiate from a position of strength to assure its own survival and was successful in its endeavors.

Perhaps the most telling political expression occurred in the 1960s when Debo joined and became an active member of the ACLU. This action must be considered unusual in lieu of the conservative attitudes of many Oklahomans. Debo took a strong stand on the rights of Americans to speak freely about the actions of their government. As a woman, as an elderly spokesperson, she defied traditional liberal-thinking stereotypes by overtly supporting the organization in its efforts. The Progressive Democrat, as an activist, put her beliefs into actions. She demonstrated a strong a belief in encouraging Americans to question, protest, and demand attention from a government that had become unresponsive to its people. She believed with equal passion that government intervention

was needed to correct social inequity. She expected government intervention to help include Native Americans in the process of achieving successful acculturation into the society. She may have agreed with the policy of assimilation as the goal of federal policy concerning the Indians when she began her career as a historian but her views evolved as she researched the unintended results of federal actions. During that process Debo began to realize that acculturation, a blending of cultures, rather than assimilation, the absorption of one entity by another, should be the desired end point of federal-Indian policy. A liberal thinking individual, a well-educated and discerning person, Debo was open to the influences surrounding her. She adapted herself to the changes in her profession as a young historian; in the case of writing Indian history, when she wrote about the Choctaws and Creeks, she adopted innovations that allowed her to predate the ethnohistorical work of the 1960s. She followed current political changes and developed personal positions reflecting the changing times that influenced her writing of history. She took advantage of opportunities previously not available to women and succeeded in leaving her mark in the field in spite of limitations that the status of an academic position might have provided. She was uncompromising in defending her research. In the end she had acquired a lifetime's worth of knowledge about Indians and this motivated her to abandon the typewriter temporarily in order to take up the activist cause. She recognized a civic responsibility to put her knowledge to work in a different way. Confident, strong-willed, aggressive, thorough, principled, and pioneering are but a few of the characteristics one could use to describe the woman known as Angie Debo. Her tombstone is unobtrusive, but its inscription portrays Debo completely. The headstone reads, Angie Debo 1890-1988 "Discover the truth then write about it."

NOTES

[1] James Axtell, "A Moral History of Indian White Relations Revisited," The History Teacher, 16 (February, 1983): 169.

[2] Alasdair MacIntyre, "What Morality is Not," Against the Self-Images of the Age (New York, 1971): 172.

[3] Ibid., 177.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., 179.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 181.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., 184.

[10] McIntosh, 174.

[11] Angela C. Wilson, "Power of the Spoken Word:Native Oral Traditions in American Indian History." In Rethinking American Indian History by Donald Fixico, ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1997):101.

[12] James Axtell, "The Ethnohistory of Native America." In Fixico's Rethinking American Indian History, 11.

[13] Donald Fixico, "Methodologies in Reconstructing Native American History," in Fixico's Rethinking, 117.

[14] William T. Hagan, "The New Indian History," in Fixico's Rethinking, 29.

[15] Richard White, "Indian Peoples and the Natural World," in Fixico's Rethinking, 92.

[16] Donald Fixico, Rethinking American Indian History,36. For a discussion of the attacks on Indian culture by the Indian Bureau, see Francis Paul Prucha's The Great Father (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1984):803.

[17] McDonnell's The Dispossession, 121.

[18] Ibid, 123.

[19] Ibid., 124.

[20]Sandra Faiman-Silva, Choctaws at the Crossroads The Political Economy of Class and Culture in the Oklahoma Timber Region, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1997): xx

[21]Ibid., 76.

[22]Ibid., 219.

[23]David Holford, "The Subversion of the Indian Land Allotment System, 1887-1934." (Indian Historian, 1975): 12.

[24]Ibid., 253.

[25]John Thompson, Closing the Frontier Radical Response in Oklahoma, 1889-1923, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986): 10.

[26]Ibid., 11.

[27]Ibid., 14.

[28]Patti Loughin, "Assuming Indian Voices: Western Women Writers, Alice Marriott, Muriel Wright, and Angie Debo." E-mail correspondence between author and Loughin, April 9, 2000.

[29] Gerry Schaefer, "Memories of Angie Debo."

[30] Gerry Schaefer of Marshall, Oklahoma, Interview by Trina Medley, June 8, 1999.

[31] Speech given by Connie Cronley in the absence of Debo, Women in Communications Newsmaker Awards Dinner, April 20, 1979, Tulsa. Box 1 folder 5, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[32]David Rothman, "The State as Parent," in Conflict and Consensus in Modern American History by Allen F. Davis and Harold D. Woodman, ed. (Lexington: D. C. Heath and Company, 1992): 270.

[33.] Ibid., 271.

[34]Grob, Interpretations of American History Patterns and Perspectives, 218.

ADDENDUM

PART 1

THE HISTORY OF GRAFT AND GREED: CHAPTER FOUR

OF <u>AND STILL THE WATERS RUN</u>

Debo considered And Still the Waters Run her most important book. The significance of the book stems from its inclusion of information neglected or suppressed by earlier historians. Chapter Four, the most important chapter, contained incriminating information about corruption and fraud perpetrated against Oklahoma's Native Americans. This chapter explains how the Indians lost the land allotted them by the Dawes Commission through illegal land schemes, fraud, and corruption. "The Grafter's Share"in the unpublished manuscript was 62 pages long. In the copy-edited version, it was reduced to 34 pages. A substantial amount of research had to be left out of the finished manuscript. The saga of getting the book published has been previously chronicled in Chapter II. Editor Joseph Brandt removed names of minor characters and allegedly libelous statements allowing Princeton Press to publish the book without fear of litigation. In many cases Brandt had to persuade Debo of the wisdom of editing out the local names while keeping intact the overwhelming evidence she compiled. The eastern lawyer who went through the manuscript looking for libelous statements helped Brandt and Debo realize they were too close to the situation to be objective. He used the example of the storekeepers to indicate the important principle that Debo could keep intact even though she eliminated the names of the storekeepers. Storekeepers occupied positions of trust in rural settings; what was important was not who they were but the principle of trust that had been broken when they cheated Indians with phony deeds.[1] In the final analysis, Brandt had to excise the potentially libelous instances in the book to get Princeton Press to publish And Still the Waters Run. More importantly the issue of censorship must be considered. Debo was not censored because the information protecting named and unnamed perpetrators was available in the footnotes for readers wishing to find out specifics. If she had been censored, the

manuscript would not have been accepted for publication. Debo was allowed to publish what she found in her research without significant alteration of the material.

Many Oklahomans did not read the book for various reasons. Many had not heard of the book. Some feared what the book contained—the names of prominent Oklahomans involved in the illegal activities.[2] The book created little reaction from Oklahomans because of the bias of whites against Indians. Most believed white settlers had a right to land that Indians did not use productively. Indians were generally considered unworthy or at least indifferent guardians of the land. A universal insensitivity about Indian issues existed.[3] The Oklahoma Historical Society did not announce the publication of And Still the Waters Run or review it in the Chronicles.[4] Its director, Robert L. Williams (1938 to 1948), was named among the grafters' associates. Williams, first Justice of the Oklahoma Supreme Court and Oklahoma's third Governor from 1914 to 1918, was one of Oklahoma's strongest chief executives. He concentrated government power into a single State Board of Affairs that he administered.[5]

The details of Williams involvement are found in subsequent chapters. Nothing in the published work could be considered damaging to Williams personally.[6] Knowing what the book contained, perhaps he feared guilt by association. He had a number of lawyer friends who were involved in the criminal conspiracy. Williams intended to protect their good names.

Williams was a native born Oklahoman, from Durant. He owned 6,000 acres of land and also owned stock in the First National Bank in Muskogee. If the bank was a party in a case before his court, Judge Williams would disqualify himself because he was a fair man. Questions arose about how he acquired his land, but nothing came to light under Debo's meticulous research.[7] James Gibson's father knew Williams and was on the Governor's commission to build the state capital building under the Williams administration. The

commission agreed to spend about $2.5 million on the building project. The project was completed without accusations of graft or corruption. Williams appointed Gibson Sergeant-at-arms to the Democratic National Convention in 1916 in St. Louis.[8]

Debo used the word "grafter" to describe those involved in illegally buying and selling Indian lands. The difference between a real estate agent, a speculator, and a grafter blurred as illegal practices broadened. She stated the term was accepted by those involved in such land transactions at the time. In a letter to Joseph Brandt, Debo explained her reasoning for wanting to retain the term, "grafter." She checked the chapter carefully and determined honest real estate agents could not object to its usage.[9]

Debo introduced the subject of grafters by establishing the climate existing in the state between the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth century. The white population increased five fold between the 1890 census and statehood in 1907, while the Indian population remained constant. The ignorance if not outright racism on the part of the white settlers concerning Indian cultures led to disrespect of their customs. Throughout the history of Indian relations the attitudes of whites reflected a Eurocentric bias. Debo maintained that Oklahoma experienced such rapid development that a mentality of greed soon developed alongside a genuine desire to establish a great state. Discovery of oil and potential wealth only compounded the greed of the newcomers and resulted in widespread fraud and corruption.[10]

As land was opened to white settlers there was an increasing conflict with tribal laws. Prior to territorial status, the white population could not buy or sell land or levy taxes for schools and government services because there were no laws governing them. Frontier justice ruled. Individuals used coercion and vendettas to extract justice from those who wronged them.[11] Debo described the government's attempts to treat with the Five Tribes through

congressional legislation. In 1887 the General Allotment Act established the means for legal, social and economic integration of the country's Native Americans. It was the cornerstone of federal Indian policy and remained in place until 1934 when the Indian Reorganization Act replaced it. A senate report in 1892 describing the conflict between Indian Tribal laws and the absence of laws for the incoming white population created the Dawes Commission. The land appropriation bill of 1893 appointed three commissioners, Henry L. Dawes, Meredith Kidd, and Archibald McKennon, to negotiate with the tribes initially exempted by the allottment act–the Five Tribes.[12]

The Dawes Commission could not convince the Five Tribes to liquidate their landholdings. They offered to reserve town sites and the Choctaw coal and Chickasaw asphalt deposits and divide the rest among the individual tribal members. The commission pledged to preserve the homestead of individual allottees by making their land inalienable for twenty-five years. Given their previous experiences, the Indians showed no interest in the government proposals. In 1895 congress passed legislation authorizing the commission to conduct a survey of the land. The following year congress directed the Dawes Commission to document all tribal members. The Indians realized their reluctance to treat with the U. S. government did not protect them from actions aimed at liquidating their land holdings.[13]

All of the Five Tribes except the Cherokees agreed to enter into compacts with the Dawes Commission. The Seminole tribe ratified its compact, the Seminole Agreement, in 1898. The government did not believe the other tribes would ratify their agreements, so congress passed the Curtis Act of 1898 ending tribal sovereignty. The act abolished tribal courts and placed all inhabitants in Indian Territory under federal law. It also provided for a survey and incorporation of communities in Indian Territory. The Curtis Act included the

agreements of the Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Creeks in an amended form. The Choctaws and Chickasaws owned land jointly and voted to accept the Atoka Agreement with the government in 1897. Under the Atoka Agreement, Choctaw-Chickasaw coal and asphalt would be reserved; the secretary of the Interior would collect royalties that would be used for tribal schools. The Creeks rejected their compact in a special election. Pleasant Porter, chief of the Creeks, used blunt terms to bring his people into compliance: they could fight and risk annihilation; they could leave Oklahoma and be landless; they could resist passively and realize they had little clout to bring about change. After the Curtis Act was passed, the Creeks were more favorably inclined to deal with the government.[14]

If the tribes signed within a certain period of time, more reasonable provisions would replace those in the Curtis Act. The Creeks ratified in 1901. The Cherokees held out for provisions protecting their members. They wanted the land to be free of taxes for 35 years; they also wanted their freedmen, enrolled former slaves, limited to 40 acre allotments. Freedmen were not allowed to share in the distribution of tribal funds. Finally they wanted the "full-bloods" to take allotments that would be held communally. The U. S. government realized the Cherokees asked for much more than any of the other tribes and included only the provision about freedmen in the final agreement. Even though the tribe approved the final provisions, congress did not ratify it. After debating the issue for more favorable conditions for the white settlers, an agreement was finally signed in 1902.[15]

Debo illustrated how the sentiment of the Indians changed between 1896 and 1902, when all tribes had finalized their agreements with the government. The Curtis Act allowed the tribes to retain their mineral rights. The Creeks and Cherokees rejected this in their agreements and had the rights dispensed with the allotments. The Atoka Agreement stipulated the royalties

from coal and asphalt would be collected by the Interior Department and used for tribal schools. The Supplemental Agreement changed the provisions in the Atoka Agreement concerning mineral rights. The land containing coal and asphalt would be sold and the royalties divided among the members of the tribe. Debo interpreted these changes in light of the Indians' desire to liquidate all tribal assets thereby bringing the process to its natural conclusion. The Indians were not satisfied with the way the federal government handled their affairs and wished to end the relationship.[16]

After Debo established the conditions in Indian Territory during the period of land allotment, she continued her discourse by explaining the roles of the Indians in the process. Debo reported that Indians initially accepted the ways of the grafters. The Indians were honest and cooperated as long as the grafter provided the promised small payments. The grafter would pay a small amount of money to Indians who would agree to keep the illegal contracts that the grafters could not enforce but remained in place due to the basic honesty of the Indian. As a consequence of their deception, Indians suffered morally as well as economically. Their honesty led to the realization they had been duped. Some Indians aided the work of the grafters by providing them with names and signatures of their own tribal members.[17]

Debo, in Chapter 4, recited numerous examples of how grafters worked to gain land from the Native Americans; but she cut out names of local citizens and some information that added substance to her claims in the published manuscript. Debo maintained grafters recognized the allotment as a prime opportunity for them. Her research indicated the Choctaws suffered at the hands of the grafters to a greater extent than other tribes. Full-blood Choctaws lived in the southeastern hills of Oklahoma almost a hundred miles from the land office at Atoka. They lived even farther from the Chickasaw land office at Tishomingo. The

white population consisting of those who had married into the tribe or others who held leases controlled the rich farm land of the Washita Valley in the Chickasaw district. After the whites relinquished their control during allotment, the Choctaws sold title to these lands to real estate speculators. In some cases real estate agents took the land and held it without title.[18]

Debo explained the "full-bloods" did not want to cultivate any more land than a limited portion of their allotment called "homesteads." Cherokees, Creeks and Seminoles received about 40 acres for a homestead; Choctaws and Chickasaws received 160 acres. Homesteads were protected from alienation. The rest of the allotment was called "surplus" land, and Indians could freely sell it. Many did not want this excess land and often sold it to the first buyer. Familiar with a communal tradition, the Indians did not appreciate the concept of individual ownership, particularly when given larger tracts of land than they needed. Under the communal system, the land benefitted the whole tribe. This attitude played into the motives of the whites who thought the surplus lands would quickly pass from Indian to white ownership thereby satisfying the need for land. It would also disperse the Indian population among that of the whites. Many full-bloods of the Five Tribes refused to appear before the Dawes Commission. The commission went ahead and allotted land without their participation. The commission sent persons of mixed heritage out to the hills to gather the names of full-bloods. As late as 1912 there were 2,000 Cherokee full-bloods who had not taken possession of their allotments. According to Debo these full-bloods lived in the hills in the northeastern region in dire poverty. The full-bloods refused allotment because they did not agree with the principles of the new order, individual ownership of land.[19]

A Cherokee attorney explained to the Dawes Commission how grafters organized their efforts. Grafters sent people called "runners" to the full-blood settlements to "rope in allottees"

and transport them to Tahlequah. The runner took the allottees to a certain place, "corralling them . . . until he could herd" them to the land office. The land office assigned land to each allottee. Then the runner took them to the grafters who had the allottees sign leases and illegal contracts agreeing to sell their land as soon as congressional restrictions were lifted. The grafter paid the Indian a small amount such as five dollars for their cooperation. The Dawes Commission simply drove the grafters underground when they passed rules preventing land dealers and non-citizens from interfering with allottees while filing their claims (unpublished manuscript, 173).

Prior to the Dawes Commission ruling many grafters advised the allottee to choose the best surplus land because the grafter had a personal interest in it. The grafter claimed a "possessory" title to that land. In the Chickasaw land office, the land agents took five dollar bribes from grafters to allot certain Indians ahead of others. Some real agents purchased allottees for as little as ten dollars then suggested they ask for surplus land to which the agents held possessory titles. This problem was brought to the attention of Tams Bixby, the head of the commission. In a subsequent investigation, two employees were fired and one real estate agent lost his license to practice law. Before the commission ruled, if an Indian was not represented by a real estate agent, it was more difficult to complete the transaction of allotment. It would appear that both the government and real estate agents required such representation knowing the Indian would not make a decision that would be beneficial to his cause.[20]

The Choctaw tribal government made valiant efforts to improve the allotment system. The council suggested the formation of a commission to assess town sites and instruct their people in the selection of the best land. Acting Indian Inspector, J. W. Zevely, recommended

that President Theodore Roosevelt veto the council suggestion. The Dawes Commission, he maintained, did not need any help in allotment. Debo implied the Dawes Commission fueled the grafters' practices by making sure the full-bloods had some prime land in their surplus. Grafters focused on gaining the surplus lands. Choctaw Chief, Green McCurtain, made the commission aware of the practices of the grafters; the Commissioners never acted on his information. The Choctaws tried to implement portions of the Atoka Agreement by making money from town site sales available to those individuals who were unable to finance the expenses of allotment. They were the first to succumb to the practices of the grafters. These suggestions fell on deaf ears. Debo called the refusal of the federal officials to look into the issue of poverty among the tribes a costly by-product of the allotment system[21] (unpublished manuscript, 177).

Debo recorded the practices grafters used to secure the oil-rich land of the Creeks. Grafters would find freedmen who had not been given allotments to contest oil-rich land allotted to Indians. The grafter paid the Indians and made sure they did not appear at the hearing. By default the freedman who did appear at the hearing would gain the allotment and pass the deed for the land to the grafter. When the value of the oil lands increased substantially, Commissioner Bixby suspended judgement in instances when an Indian defaulted in an attempt to curb this activity (unpublished manuscript, 179).

Freedmen presented problems to the commission as well as to the tribes. In the Treaty of 1866 the Five Tribes except the Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes adopted their freedmen. Twenty years later the Choctaws and Chickasaws granted limited citizenship to their freedmen. Under the provisions of the Atoka Agreement, the freedmen were granted only forty acres. Enrolled members of the tribe received 160 acres. Freedmen did not benefit from the per

capita distribution of funds from town site money. Creek freedmen were given equal status as Indians for the purpose of allotment. The Five Tribes Act of 1906, concluding tribal business, excluded from the Indian rolls those freedmen who had not enrolled during the specified period. The rolls closed in 1907. The commission routinely enrolled anyone with "Negro blood" as a freedmen. If freedmen had Indian ancestors, according to tribal law they could not be classified as Indian because a valid marriage could not have taken place between the Indian and non-Indian parents. The laws were hostile to African Americans.[22] The history of the freedmen in Indian Territory illustrates their problematic status.

Slaves settled in the Muskogee vicinity with their masters and remained on the rich agricultural lands when their owners fled in the face of Union armies.[23] J. Coody Johnson's name was left out of the published manuscript. He was the educated Creek freedman who was known as a grafter. He related situations in which buyers gained surplus land from Creek freedman before the law allowing the sale of Creek surplus land went into effect in 1907. Debo reported that most of the best farm land around the city of Muskogee was acquired this way. Johnson described how the grafter operated. He possessed a monopoly on the purchase of land through his relationship with the allottee and through his ability to gain illegal contracts and leases of sales. The grafter paid approximately $100 to $300 for 120 acres of land and turned around and sold it immediately for a substantial profit (unpublished manuscript, 210).

Land speculators befriended the freedman when they had land; but white settlers hated their presence whether they owned land or leased their land. White settlers never agreed with the premise that Indian land should be shared with the freedman; but the government gave the Indians no choice about sharing their land. The government favored the freedmen with special consideration and protection beginning with the peace treaties of 1866. By the time of

allotment, the government changed its allegiance to land-hungry settlers, so it quickly ended its protection of the freedmen. The government discontinued its supervision of this class of people, and the land passed out of the hands of the freedmen quickly.[24]

Another trick of the land speculators involved showing allottees certain attractive tracts of land then changing the description and numerical delineation of the land to a tract potentially rich in oil. The allottee did not understand such figures and descriptions and did not recognize the change. With the removal of restrictions, the oil lands could be sold for a large profit (unpublished manuscript, 174). Those who speculated in timber helped the Choctaws choose their allotments. The speculator simply bought the timber land from the allottee for a meager amount. This was completely legal because there were no restrictions on the sale of timber land. The Choctaws had not succeeded in gaining federal supervision of timber sales (unpublished manuscript, 176).

Corruption was not limited to individuals. Institutions such as banks were involved in fraud as well. Debo claimed the bank of Wewoka had a stranglehold on the Seminoles. After A. S. McKennon retired from the Dawes Commission, he was appointed to the position of tribal attorney. He found instances where banks encouraged Indians to borrow money on short term loans. The bank would mortgage livestock they knew the Indians did not own. The bank required that the Indians pay back the note several times because of the fraudulent mortgages (unpublished manuscript, 184).

Even when laws governed the transfer of land in a legal manner, fraud was rampant. H. C. Casey was responsible for appraising Creek land under the sealed bid system. Mr. Casey's hometown was not mentioned. In 1903 Casey found the sale of a vast majority of leased land occurred after it was advertised publicly. Casey believed this practice limited the sale of land to

the people holding the lease. Farmers would not buy the land because they could not gain possession for five years. Debo claimed grafters gained a new five-year lease every year to discourage others from purchasing the land (unpublished manuscript, 186).

In 1903 Charles J. Bonaparte, a member of the Bureau of Indian Commissioners, conducted an investigation into the problems encountered during allotment. Bonaparte and his colleagues suggested that allotment should have been conducted in the field at the same time that enrollment of tribal members and improvements on the land were acknowledged. Allotment of land should not have been moved to another district until all the work was completed. They further suggested land should have been allotted in a single tract close to the allottee's home. The Dawes Commission defended its actions pointing out the great difficulties in documentation. Moving masses of records from district to district would have proved daunting.[25]

The Bonaparte investigators recommended all leasing should come under federal supervision. In 1905 the Justice Department gained authority to investigate the cases of fraudulent leases. After the passage of the Five Tribes Act of 1906, the department oversaw the leasing of full-bloods lands. After a short time the provision stipulating federal supervision was repealed (unpublished manuscript, 185). Debo summarized her view of the commission claiming they conducted their business with meticulous effort when it came to the mechanics of the process, enrollment, and allotment. She faulted them with an inability to recognize the impact of the process on the Native American and white populations alike.[26]

Even though the Bonaparte investigation concentrated on alleged collusion between government officials and land speculators, the question of removal of restrictions arose. The commission thought the economic development in the eastern half of Oklahoma would be

retarded as long as restrictions were maintained.[27] Members of congress wondered what would happen to the Indians if restrictions were removed. The obvious consensus among the non-Indian population favored opening all the land to white settlement through sale of Indian lands. A real estate agent from Ardmore, Guy P. Cobb, whose name was edited from the published version, told the senate committee debating the removal of restrictions that the Indians would rise to their own level within the American society just as the whites had done. The issue was Indian status, and Indians would be treated as American citizens just like everyone else. Cobb thought it would be easier to force the issue of assimilation now than in fifty years.[28] Among Indians who were asked to express an opinion, David Hodge, an educated mixed-breed Creek, believed the whites would take the land from him one way or another (unpublished manuscript, 170).

Bonaparte also investigated the Dawes Commission and the Interior Department. Three examiners from the Department of Justice investigated the courts and court examiners. Debo claimed none of the examiners completed an in-depth investigation. Bonaparte did not visit Indian Territory. His assistant, Clinton Rogers Woodruff, took depositions from federal employees in Muskogee. The Department of Justice investigator, Major Leigh Chalmers, failed to complete a report before his death. Chalmers found many instances for correction. He questioned why there were so many trust companies established in Indian Territory. He found a disparity between the amount of capital and the amount paid in within these institutions indicating they operated with a minimal amount of capital. The trust companies implied in their charters much of their work would be in Indian lands. They acquired leases from Indians then sublet them to farmers. Chalmers believed the Indians had been purposely misled and confused by white property laws (unpublished manuscript, 220).

Debo's research showed that every member of the Dawes Commission, and many officials in the Interior Department held stock in these trust companies. In some cases the investigation occurred soon after some companies organized. The trust companies denied dealing in Indian land exclusively. Some government officials excused the practice by saying they did not know they owned stock in certain companies (unpublished manuscript, 221). The Bonaparte investigators recommended the prohibition of federal officials from making investments in land companies. Members of the Dawes Commission were prohibited from mixing private business transactions with their official duties (unpublished manuscript, 223).

Debo believed Commissioner Bixby was involved in speculation of Indian lands. He was a leading figure in one of the land companies. Debo preferred, in her published manuscript, to expose the town lot speculation surrounding Bixby rather than focus on his land company. In this instance Brandt had a strong argument justifying his vigorous editing. He told Debo the book should not try to replace the courts by hurling accusations that may not ever be proven but rather tell the story of the failure of the government to uphold its treaties with the Indians.[29]

Bixby bought possessory rights prior to the scheduling of the lots, sometimes before the town sites were fixed (unpublished manuscript, 221). Bixby denied any wrongdoing. His arguments stated the town sites did not belong to the tribes any longer. He did not think his investments influenced his decisions concerning the administration of tribal lands. Debo found his rationale indefensible because one of the main duties of the Dawes Commission involved setting the agreed limitations of private town sites in which he owned lots. Bixby settled out of court after agreeing to make a monetary compensation to the Creeks.[30] Charges of graft and corruption continued to follow Bixby.[31] In 1907 The New Star Tribune, a Muskogee

newspaper, contained a story about Tams Bixby dividing an empire into farms. Charles Haskell edited the strongly Democratic newspaper. The paper rivaled the Republican leanings of Tams Bixby's paper, The Muskogee Phoenix. After his retirement from the Dawes Commission, Bixby obtained a controlling interest in the newspaper. In 1909 Haskell moved his paper to Oklahoma City. The very people who were carrying out the schemes to take land from the Indians controlled what the citizens of Oklahoma read about such practices. They used the papers as propaganda machines.[32]

Debo had not included material in the book about how she thought Bixby influenced his official decisions by his own business dealings. She could not prove all the facts but she had information that indicated he organized the Canadian Valley Trust Company. Buying the freedman's land was the main business of the company. Bixby favored the removal of restrictions and advocated such about the time his company was organizing.

When Debo and Brandt edited the manuscript to remove libelous statements, Brandt insisted on removing the name of Cass Bradley, a self-proclaimed "grafter." Debo charged Bradley with wrongdoing that no court had substantiated; these statements, the editor thought, constituted libel.[33] One can understand Debo's desire to keep the evidence in the book. Bradley's name was affixed to various business activities (unpublished manuscript, 170). She comforted herself knowing that readers could find out the names in the footnotes.

Bradley started his own business, Bradley Real Estate Company, in 1901 with as little as $150 and a couple of associates. Their aim was to figure out ways to obtain deeds to Indian allotments. Bradley leased individual Creek allotments. He leased the land to others for a profit. According to the statements made to the Bonaparte committee, within two years of starting his business Bradley held 80,000 acres of Creek land under lease. Residents of

Muskogee knew Bradley's wealth stemmed from land deals. Bradley's real estate company gained huge tracts of Creek land once under the control of cattlemen. The restrictions on half a million acres of surplus Creek land stipulated by the Supplemental Agreement expired in the summer of 1907. The Creek Supplemental agreement was changed by the congressional act of 1904 that removed restrictions. Bradley took advantage of the situation by accumulating large amounts of land from the full-bloods. The allottee sometimes sold his entire allotment (160 acres) for a single dollar. Then the real estate company made improvements, cultivated it and put it up for sale (unpublished manuscript, 181).

There was confusion concerning the implementation of the Creek Supplemental Agreement. The five-year restriction on leases expired June 30; it was not approved by the President until July 26. The Creeks did not ratify it until August 8. The issue was settled by the courts who determined the last date was the correct one. Some purchasers of land had deeds that dated from all three dates. They paid a small amount each time they gained a deed. Debo indicated that the grafters took advantage of congressional removal of restrictions from surplus lands to further enrich themselves[34] (unpublished manuscript, 212). The Creek Supplemental Agreement was supposed to protect the Creeks by requiring the Interior Department to supervise leases, but the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce convinced congress to amend the agreement nullifying federal supervision.[35]

Debo wrote to Brandt that she had edited the information about Bradley that he would probably deny and she could not prove. Debo thought she was safe in using his name because he blatantly exposed his own grafting.[36] Cass Bradley's name also emerged in the context of the status of minors. He made a statement quoted in the local newspaper admitting he bought thousands of acres of Creek land from married freedmen who were considered minors

(unpublished manuscript, 275). An Oklahoma law gave majority status to minors upon marriage. According to reports from the larger urban areas, marriage in land offices occurred daily. Governor Haskell reported the abuse of this law, especially among minors who held Indian allotments, to the legislature but no action was taken to change the law. Courts were also used to confer majority. In 1910 the Oklahoma Supreme Court declared these practices illegal. The United States Supreme Court upheld the ruling in 1915. The Act of 1908 specified the age of majority at twenty-one for males and eighteen for females. An Oklahoma law could not override this provision. These court decisions put an end to this practice.[37]

Debo uncovered information of collusion between city officials in two cities, Muskogee and Huntsville, Missouri. Officials in Huntsville would provide accommodations in local hotels for African-American boys and girls from Muskogee nearing the age of majority. They were kept against their will. If they tried to leave they were arrested for immoral conduct. As soon as they reached their majority, they were encouraged to sign deeds or else face criminal charges for their immoral behavior in Huntsville. Once they were returned to Muskogee, younger members of the group were threatened with return to Huntsville to stand trial if they did not sign deeds to turn over land when they reached majority. This scheme was conducted on a large scale, but the facts did not come out in any investigation (unpublished manuscript, 355). Debo suggested this was another example of Cass Bradley's schemes.[38] Later the probate attorneys addressed the issue. The minor who approached his majority was declared incompetent, and the court placed him under continued guardianship into adulthood to prevent the practices of kidnaping.[39]

Sometimes allottees tried to practice the same methods as the grafter. Freedmen leased their land to more than one party–an illegal practice. Bradley claimed to have complete

control over freedmen if they violated the law and could send a number of them to jail if he so desired. When the allottee sold his lands, Bradley knew he would be the one to buy it, and there would be nothing an allottee could do.[40] Bradley is the unnamed person in the book who revealed his methods to a senate committee. He held 500 oral contracts with Indians. He gave them small amounts of money and encouraged them to keep their accounts straight by entering them in the book he provided. The Indians trusted Bradley and recommended him to their friends. Well-respected lawyers assured Bradley of the unconstitutionality of the McCumber Amendment to the Five Tribes Act of 1906 that extended the inalienability of full-blood allotments for 25 years until 1931. It further stipulated only congress could remove the restrictions. Its constitutionality was eventually upheld by the Supreme Court in 1911.[41] Acting on this premise, Bradley held the deeds while the case was decided in the courts [42] (unpublished manuscript, 190).

Attorneys in Indian Territory dismissed the idea of the inalienability of land from the start because senators questioned the constitutionality of the McCumber Amendment. Many believed it could not pass the test in the courts successfully. The people involved in illegal transactions acted as though the courts had already ruled against the McCumber Amendment. A special senate committee visited Oklahoma Territory in 1906. Senator Henry M. Teller and other members of the committee confirmed the grafters belief in the unconstitutionality of the amendment by calling it invalid (unpublished manuscript, 190). In 1907 Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Frances E. Leupp, informed the full-bloods about the McCumber Amendment. He distributed 25,000 pamphlets printed in both English and the appropriate Indian language. The pamphlet instructed the full-bloods not to believe what real estate agents said about contracts or agreements. If they needed help, the full-bloods should contact an agent of the

government they could trust. He claimed that those who had taken advantage of the Indians through illegal means would justifiably lose their money (unpublished manuscript, 191).

In a 1903 Judge C. W. Raymond of the Western District of Indian Territory ruled against the grafters declaring sales of restricted land invalid. The grafters claimed the restrictions limited the freedom of contracts between American citizens. Judge Raymond disavowed their claim and invalidated the sale of Indian land. The grafters interpreted a decision in the 1905 Supreme Court case involving Albert Huff in their favor even though it spoke of the restrictions on Indian land. In this case the court decided a saloon owner could not be prosecuted for selling alcohol to a Kickapoo Indian who had been allotted land. The grafters believed the case supported the Indians' rights to enter into contracts even though restrictions limited the land in question. In defiance of Raymond's ruling, grafters began to buy Cherokee restricted lands (unpublished manuscript, 189).

There were as many illegal practices as there were grafters. Brandt removed the names of Eli P. Elmer and Charles H. Williams of McPherson, Kansas from the edited manuscript. Debo explained the reason she wanted their names included even though her explanation did not alter Brandt's editing. She wanted to show the scope of the corruption beyond the state lines of Oklahoma. Debo documented the way these two men gained title to Indian lands through the power of attorney. The courts later canceled their powers of attorney.[43] Records indicate allottees would sign with a mark, but the published contract had no signature nor did it state the amount or description of the land. That information was filled in later. In reality the allottee relinquished his land totally to those with power of attorney. Many of the allottees had no concept of the use of the power of attorney involving tracts of land (unpublished manuscript, 188).

Debo found hundreds of examples in Indian Inspector Wright's file confirming individual accounts of surplus land removed from Indian owners by special congressional acts. This method was used to secure oil property as well as town sites. The legislation took the form of "riders" to Indian Appropriations Acts. Full-bloods suffered the greatest losses when restrictions were removed from the homestead and from their surplus. Debo omitted the names of the men who carried off one of the most lucrative deals involving oil wealth. Guy L. Reed of Tahlequah put allottees on a train and drove them around until the Indian Appropriations Act removing restrictions became law then made a valid deed for the land (unpublished manuscript, 216).

Debo documented numerous examples of other schemes. Charles Ellis of Dragger could not speak English but sold 140 acres near Claremore to W. A. Graham for $640. Inspector Wright's field investigator evaluated the worth of the land at $2,100. When Ellis was asked, he told investigators he sold 40 acres of his surplus and was paid $200 cash, $100 in trade from both Graham's and Whitaker's stores. He paid Whitaker $50 for the removal of his restrictions even though he had never asked to have them removed. He was unaware of the sale of his other 100 acres until the investigator informed him of Graham's deed. He was left with ten acres of surplus land. W. T. Whitaker was the founder of Indian Orphans' Home and had been involved in providing credit to Indians through his store. Records indicated he contracted illegal land documents with Cherokee full-bloods as early as 1904 (unpublished manuscript, 217). Whitaker and Graham planned their business activities in Pryor Creek. Whitaker gained powers of attorney for the full-bloods involved and submitted their names so they would appear on the appropriations bill. He gave the deeds through the powers of attorney to one of

his co-conspirators, usually Graham. The full-bloods were paid in cash and credit in his store (unpublished manuscript, 216).

Carrie Downing of Locust Grove, unable to speak English, sold 70 acres worth $1050 for $620. Debo found in the records in Pryor that Downing's attorney, W. T. Whitaker, presented a deed to W. A. Graham. Downing gave a second deed to Graham two days later. When Downing was interviewed by the inspector, she thought she sold the land for $495, $300 cash, the rest in trade from his store. She paid $50 for the removal of her restrictions. She was left with 30 acres of rough timber land worth $175 (unpublished manuscript, 217).

Betsy Galcatcher of Oaks was half Cherokee and married to a full-blood and was somewhat fluent in English. She sold 130 acres to Guy L. Reed for $2,350 who deeded the land to W. L. Mays for one dollar. There were 28 producing oil wells on the land. If the allottee had kept the land her royalties would have amounted to $14,245. She never received any royalty from the oil wealth. She claimed a man took her to Pryor and wanted to buy the land for $1,000. Other real estate agents pursued her as well. She trusted her cousin, Will Foreman, who thought he could keep her land intact. She tried to read the document presented her, but it was too difficult for her to decipher. Betsy wanted to keep her homestead above all. Foreman and Reed assured Betsy her land contained no oil wealth. She could not afford to visit the land; but after the sale she discovered for herself that it was covered with oil wells (unpublished manuscript, 217).

Sam Spade was a minor and a full-blood Cherokee. He owned 80 acres near Ramona. His guardian, Samuel Manus, sold the land to A. D. Morton for $1,330. The Prairie Oil and Gas Company bought it for a tank farm. The investigator estimated the value of the land at $2,000. So far no oil had been discovered on the land although there were wells north and

south of it. John Spade did not know the restrictions had been removed from his son's land. When he realized the reality of the situation, Spade called on the state courts to restore his son's land. In 1911 the Oklahoma Supreme Court, acting under the Arkansas statutes, stated the court had the right to validate a private sale. Morton had talked to the oil company while the land was restricted. Once he determined the price of the land, he went to Washington and had the restrictions removed. Manus had not entered into any contract with Morton until after the restrictions were removed. The court found no collusion between Morton and Manus. The sale stood (unpublished manuscript, 218).

The Indian office recommended legal action in all of these cases to reestablish correct title. Secretary of the Interior, Ethan Allen Hitchcock, referred the cases to the Attorney General of the United States; no action was ever taken. Debo wondered how the federal government could have protected the Indians from the many laws passed by congress removing restrictions (unpublished manuscript, 218).

Real estate speculation was not limited to locals; federal officials themselves were unable to resist speculating in Indian land. In 1903 S. M. Brosius, an agent with the Indian Rights Association, accused federal officials of illegal activities, and the news spread throughout the nation. Brosius acted as a watchdog over government activities involving Indian lands. Brosius had been instrumental in protesting the Jerome Agreement involving the Kiowa and Comanche lands in 1900. The tribes had rejected what they considered a fraudulent land cession but congress approved it in 1900. Lone Wolf, chief of the Kiowas, filed suit in federal court to stop the opening of the land. The case, Lone Wolf vs. Hitchcock, determined that congress could ignore the provisions of the Treaty of Medicine Lodge requiring the

approval of the tribe before land cessions could be finalized. The federal court approved the decision unanimously.[44]

Debo claimed the townsite frauds were notorious in early Oklahoma. When it came to editing, Debo explained to Brandt that she had been as gentle as she could in naming individual grafters. The federal administrators in charge of townsites advised the grafters and were themselves implicated.[45] After Brosius made his allegations, people began to come forth with evidence of fraud in the sale of town lots. Citizens alerted investigators to look into the town lots in the Creek Nation. Certain persons gained more land than the four acres set out in the law. Some town site commissioners doled out their lots to people throughout the country to hold until questions of title subsided (unpublished manuscript, 224).

Debo reported Muskogee citizens did what they thought necessary to protect their land. The Curtis Act dictated the conditions for the platting of the town site of Muskogee. The Dawes Commission was holding talks with the Creeks at this time. Creek Chief Pleasant Porter negotiated an agreement. Many of its clauses were unclear, but the intent seemed to indicate those with occupancy titles could buy four acres at half the appraised valued or one-fourth of the lots of the entire tract at two-thirds the appraisal. The commission responsible for overseeing the sale of the town lots was made up of federal appointees, Dwight Tuttle and H. C. Linn, and Chief Porter's appointee, George A. Alexander. Debo thought Tuttle was a crook.[46] These commissioners made a low appraisal of $238,835 for 2,383 acres. Even though Indian Inspector Wright questioned it, he nevertheless approved the assessment because all of the commissioners agreed on the figure. The first tax assessment was made six months later and valued the land at $1,063,366 without improvements. A year later the figure reflected a period of rapid growth coming in at $1,584,788. This figure reflects a normal

increase in value unlike the drastic difference between the early appraisal and assessment figures of the commission (unpublished manuscript, 229).

Debo concluded that the low initial appraisement allowed those holding possessory titles to extend the amount of acreage well beyond the four acre limit. They filed their excess acres under the names of people in Muskogee or friends in other parts of the country. The commissioners continued the procedure by assigning the names of the "dummies" to the lots. Many of the people whose names were used had no idea about the scheme. The original owners took care of the business transactions and eventually gained the deeds involved. Debo found the practice rampant among those who previously held land within the town site, like Pleasant Porter and Captain F. B. Severs, as well as among recent speculators.[47]

No investigations occurred at Fort Gibson in the Cherokee Nation even though evidence of widespread fraud was reported. This fraud concerned the construction of temporary improvements. In 1903 the Bonaparte investigation received reports of federal officials illegally scheduling town sites. The officials admitted the wrongdoing, but the report did not reflect their findings (unpublished manuscript, 219). Debo doubted if the Choctaw and Chickasaw towns escaped this problem. Cherokee attorney, M. L. Mott, would not accept the cover up and continued to plague legislators until a federal investigation was begun in 1906 under William Dudley Foulke. Foulke conducted a limited investigation. He made Muskogee the focus of the investigation, and his questions concerned only one practice-the differences in the appraised and assessed value of the town site. Because A. Z. English held 632 notices of appraisement, Foulke instructed the "dummies" to appear in court. Twenty-four witnesses from Muskogee testified about the practice. English testified as well. They maintained this practice was carried on everywhere in the territory; everyone knew about it, and there was

nothing to hide. Foulke found other instances of false scheduling but did not have time to investigate the practice. His recommendation included government prosecution of suits in the Creek Nation. Other town sites were never investigated. Debo emphasized the investigations of the town sites of Tulsa and Muskogee created a scandal involving a man who later became a governor of Oklahoma.[48] More information on this subject will be found in a subsequent part of the addendum. Debo's work exposed widespread exploitation of the Indians. The Bonaparte report expressed concern for the possibility of ruination of the Indian people and a genuine embarrassment for the federal government.[49]

In the draft manuscript Brandt eliminated the name of the land company involving U. S. Senator Robert L. Owen because Debo charged him with illegal activities. A Virginian by birth, Owen's mother was a mixed-blood Cherokee. He moved to Indian Territory in 1879, was accepted as a Cherokee citizen, and served as a leader in the Cherokee Nation as an attorney, educator, businessman, and editor. In 1885 President Grover Cleveland appointed Owen to the position of head of the Union Agency for the Five Civilized Tribes in Muskogee. Owen worked toward the economic development of the territory realizing white settlement was unavoidable. Owen had a lucrative law practice often receiving $50,000 to over $150,000 in fees per case. When Debo used the term "greed," she did so with full knowledge that the people involved in the scandals had gained and lost several fortunes. Newspapers in Muskogee carried stories about Robert L. Owen and his lucrative law practice. He was paid $375,000 for one Indian case and had already been paid $7 million in legal fees in previous undertakings.[50] Many of the cases involved settlement of Indian claims such as the Choctaw Net Proceeds Claim, the Choctaw Leased District Case, and the Eastern Cherokee Case. Owen understood the legalities governing Indian Territory, and he positioned himself to take advantage of the

situation. "In 1893 he controlled the entire process of allotment for sixty Cherokees when the Cherokee Outlet opened."[51] Owen favored separate statehood for Indian Territory and was instrumental in preparing the Sequoyah Constitution. As Oklahoma's first U. S. Senator, Owen favored pro-business legislation which included the removal of restrictions. Owen pursued removal because he asserted restrictions would not protect Indians from grafters and would merely retard economic development.[52]

Brandt convinced Debo to remove the name of the land company from her manuscript. He explained to her that if the publisher was sued for libel, Debo would have to prove Owen's intentions were illegal, an impossible task at the time of the book's publishing. Brandt was concerned about mentioning the methods the company used to gain Indian land and about Owen's influence over officials in the Agency and members of the United States Court of the Eastern District of Indian Territory. Debo had used Owen's own statement to condemn him. He often stated that he had been instrumental in achieving legislation to confer citizenship on the Indians. The motive behind this legislation was to invalidate the restrictions.[53]

Debo presented information that suggested Owen's Indian Land and Trust Company acted in collusion with others. Debo did not want the name deleted but after four years of trying to find a publisher, she allowed Brandt to edit the name of the company even though she thought Owen played a central role in the graft that occurred. Brandt claimed he was one of many people who were equally guilty. Debo left herself open to a legal suit. Owen could claim malice because he was singled out as the instigator of corrupt practices.[54] Debo considered herself a onetime admirer of Robert L. Owen. She thought he was such an intelligent and capable man. After writing the book, she concluded he was responsible for many of the

problems the Indians encountered; he was in a position of power and he was akin to the people being defrauded. Prior to the election of 1912 he commanded a great deal of influence in Oklahoma. After 1912 he controlled the patronage which empowered him further. In spite of civil service regulations, those who wished to partake in the available appointments were afraid to oppose Owen. Debo had pointed out Owen's control of the United States Court Eastern District and she wanted to make certain the reader had enough facts to make his own judgements.[55]

The Bonaparte committee investigated Owen. In 1901 the Indian Land and Trust Company gained seven-year leases to large tracts of land between the Arkansas and Verdigris Rivers. The company paid twenty-five cents an acre annual rent. Eight thousand acres were improved and offered to settlers. The government ruled the leases invalid because the Indians had not been allotted their land at this time. The Creek Supplemental Agreement reduced the number of years from seven to five for leases that had not been approved. Other land companies got involved in bidding against Owen so he raised the annual rental fee to forty cents per acre in order to hold them (unpublished manuscript, 182).

Often contracts were made with allottees stipulating sale of the land as soon as it became alienable. Debo found evidence of this practice in the Office of the Register of Deeds in Muskogee County. A Creek allottee named Flora Hill signed a contract with the president of the Indian Land Trust Company, Robert L. Owen. The woman made a mark on the document stating the eighty acres she leased to Owen would be relinquished to him when the land became available (unpublished manuscript, 186).

York Sango signed an agreement with Owen's company for a 99-year lease on an eighty-acre tract of land. It had an annual rental fee of thirty dollars. When the deed was

executed Sango received $320. If the land had been considered superior because of location or fertility, "black prairie," he would receive $440. The company had the right to drill and mine for minerals. The allottee would receive five cents for royalties. Owen's company could make agricultural improvements on the land that would revert back to the allottee in the year A.D. 2000. Of the 700 leases held by the company, the majority came from the ranks of the Creeks and Cherokee allottees (unpublished manuscript, 186).

Debo expressed her disgust at the information indicating many victims of illegal activity were minors, some orphans. In 1902 Owen's company gained access to the land of a Creek minor by negotiating a contract with his parents. The parents requested that agent Shoenfelt of the Indian agency invalidate the contract and allot the land back to them. Owen's company took the case to court. In 1903 Judge C. W. Raymond of the Western District ruled natural guardians could not lease a minor's land without a court order. The courts would hold the natural guardians accountable, and the lease of the Indian Land and Trust Company was invalid. Raymond's decision was upheld in the Court of Appeals for Indian Territory in 1904. The courts inherited the problem of guardianships from government officials and were asked to sort them out. Owen pointed out that Judge Raymond was already overwhelmed by the number of criminal and civil cases he heard and could not be expected to rule on hundreds of minor cases as well. After Raymond's decision, the government required agents of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to appoint a legal guardian for minors before allowing parents to lease the minor's allotments without court authority. Guardians were appointed for many inexperienced allottees. This requirement forced grafters to find new ways to gain access to land. The unscrupulous derived a new method to circumvent court appointed guardians. They could be appointed as professional guardians of minors[56] (unpublished manuscript, 194).

Debo suggested the federal government did not do enough to protect minors influenced by a culture of corruption and manipulation of the weak, ignorant, or vulnerable that existed in Oklahoma. The status of minors in the territory was unique. The Dawes Commission allotted land to every Indian minor. Some inherited great wealth from land that contained unexplored oil. Others simply gained a 160-acre farm, but all possessed land of some value. In 1903 Dawes Commissioner W. E. Stanley expressed the need for effective probate supervision in Indian Territory. The Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles fell under the probate jurisdiction of the federal courts starting in 1898. In 1904 Choctaws and Chickasaws were included. The probate laws of Arkansas were followed in cases held in the territory. Once allotment began probate issues took on more importance than previously. The court dockets were so overcrowded that probate cases were left unresolved (unpublished manuscript, 194).

The Indians responded to efforts of government protection in different ways. In 1904 Chief Rogers told his Cherokee Council about the activities of oil companies and real estate agents who gained guardianship of minors. They had established illegal leases with Indian allottees. He wanted Indian parents to know they could take their grievances to the courts. The Cherokees trusted the courts to rectify the problems. Chief Rogers took a personal interest in those who requested his help. In 1905 W. W. Hastings, a Cherokee delegate in Washington, recommended money given to newborns should be protected by making the parents legal guardians. The guardianship system was much too expensive and complicated for many Cherokees to qualify for legal guardianship (unpublished manuscript, 204).

The Creeks protected themselves with the Creek Supplemental Agreement. The agreement stated that they would be guardians for their children unless another was appointed

by the courts. Judge Raymond's decision changed the intent of the law. The Creeks did everything they could to rid themselves of the professional guardianships. They amended the Creek Agreement to stipulate court supervision if the Creek citizen requested help. They tried to get congress to pass a law making parents guardians without bond and have the Indian agency supervise the leases of minors. Chief Porter informed congress of the inadequate efforts the government made to protect minors. He called for an investigation of fraud but was unsuccessful in gaining help. Both congress and the executive departments rejected all of the Creek recommendations (unpublished manuscript, 206).

The Choctaws tried to protect their children as well. When the probate jurisdiction of the tribal courts ended, Chief Green McCurtain appointed the legal firm of D. C. McCurtain, son of Green McCurtain, and E. P. Hill to represent the tribe. McCurtain and Hill informed the tribal council in 1905 there were too many cases (7,500) for them to assess the situation accurately. They told the tribe more strenuous efforts to identify legal guardianship was required. The Choctaws adopted a memorial to be given to President Theodore Roosevelt in person. The information in the memorial included the facts behind court requirements. The courts established a group of professional guardians who robbed the children of their land. The council wanted Roosevelt to read the memorial to congress in his State of the Union Address. It was not read (unpublished manuscript, 207).

The Seminoles fared better than other tribes because their agreement stipulated all leases had to be approved by the tribal attorney, A. S. McKennon.[57] The Chickasaws, under the leadership of Governor Johnston, supported the end of restrictions. Because of the widespread corruption surrounding the transfer of land from Indians to whites, Johnston

believed the titles had been clouded and values depreciated. He called for allottees to be able to sell their land on the open market to honest people for a reasonable price.[58]

The Bonaparte investigators saw the need for a special agent to supervise agricultural leases and probate cases. Congress failed to take action, and the courts assumed responsibility for the problems of the land given to minors. In 1905 Inspector Wright assessed the ability of the courts to handle the matter concerning guardians. He recommended the establishment of special probate courts to relieve the overburdened judicial system in the territory. Wright continued to expose instances such as court-appointed guardians that were inappropriate and court costs and guardian fees that absorbed the income of the allottees' estates. In 1907 when the courts asked the Indian agency to investigate agriculture leases and timber sales, Debo's data suggested the minors who had legal title to the land profited by as much as $40,000 to 50,000 in recovered lands (unpublished manuscript, 203).

Several factors help characterize the preceding stories of plunder and corruption. The white attitudes toward the sanctity of private ownership must be considered an important factor. This view drove white settlers to disregard Native American cultures especially their ideas about land ownership. That attitude was reflected in the editorial pages from local newspapers in Seminole County. ". . . If they don't learn the value of property and how to adjust themselves to surroundings, they will be 'grafted' out it . . ."[59]

It was an attitude consistent with other instances in American history where indigenous peoples were found encumbering the soil. They were sacrificed on the altar of continental empire building. A brief synopsis of late nineteenth century federal Indian policy is helpful in understanding the problems regarding the dispossession of the Indians. The assimilation policy established under Grant's "Peace Policy" isolated Indians on reservations

where federal agents, farmers, educators, and clergymen could help them change their customs and livelihood. Reformers were unable to break down Indian traditions and loyalty to communal life. Senator Henry L. Dawes devised what he saw as a logical extension of the assimilation policy. The Dawes Allotment Act of 1887 attempted to encourage acceptance of the majority population's economic and social structure tied to private property.[60] All tribal members were given land–160 acres (quarter section) to heads of households, single members over the age of 18 years and orphans received an eighth section, those under 18 years received a sixteenth section.[61] The government would hold the title to the allotment in trust for twenty-five years. The trust patent prohibited the sale of the allotted land. At the end of the trust period, the Indians would be in a position to gain unrestricted ownership of their land. The government would issue a fee patent to Indians capable of managing their own affairs.

The intent of the Dawes Act to accomplish the rapid assimilation of Indians addressed only a portion of the problem. In addition federal policymakers tried to accommodate the needs of land-hungry settlers. After allotment, surplus lands could be sold to potential permanent residents. Once the Indians gained unrestricted title to their land, they were free to sell or lease it. Government justification of the legalized dispossession of Indians emerged from the belief that Euroamericans used their land more productively than Indians. Also a larger number of Euroamericans could live in a prescribed area than could Indians.[62]

The Dawes Act initially exempted Oklahoma's Five Tribes from the allotment policy. The government and the Five Tribes had a special relationship established over time based on the level of their tribal organization. Tribal constitutions and governmental institutions closely resembled American institutions on the state and federal level. In 1893 congress voted to implement the Dawes Act in Indian Territory including the Five Tribes. A special commission,

the Dawes Commission was established to carry out the negotiations with the Five Tribes.[63] The Jerome Commission (also called Cherokee) implemented the allotment process for the tribes west of the Five Tribes in Indian Territory.[64] Angie Debo was the first historian to record the full impact of white policy on Oklahoma's Native Americans.

NOTES

[1]Brandt to Debo, October 21, 1939, Box 24f56, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[2]Debo Interview 81-11-20 by Matthews and Valencia-Weber, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[3]Oral History, folder 45, Box 29, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[4]Goble, The Story of Oklahoma,: 431.

[5]Gibson, Oklahoma A History of Five Centuries, 209.

[6]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 256, 349.

[7]Oral History, Video, "Indians, Outlaws and Angie Debo." Oral History, Box 29, Interview with James Gibson, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[8]Oral History, James Gibson, Muskogee attorney, folder 41, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[9]Debo to Brandt, November 15, 1939, Debo Collection, Box D34, WHC, Norman Oklahoma.

[10]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 92.

[11]Wiesendanger, Grant and Carolyn Foreman, 5.

[12] Ibid., 6.

[13]Debo, And Still the Waters, 33.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 35.

[17] Debo, And Still the Waters, 94.

[18] Ibid., 95.

[19] Ibid., 36, 94.

[20]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 96.

[21]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 97.

[22] Ibid. 42-3.

[23] Ibid., 98.

[24] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 126, 135.

[25]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 99.

[26] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 99.

[27] Ibid., 136.

[28] Ibid., 93.

[29]Brandt to Debo, November 21, 1939, Debo Collection, Box 24f55, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[30]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 204.

[31]Oral history, Box 29, Manuscripts, 11/87 shoot, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[32]Oral History, Box 29 Interview with Dub West, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[33]Brandt to Debo, November 21, 1939, Debo Collection, Box 24f55, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[34]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 114.

[35]Ibid., 101.

[36] Debo to Brandt, November 15, 1939, Debo Collection, Box D34, Princeton University Press file, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[37] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 197.

[38] Brandt to Debo, November 15, 1939, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[39] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 305.

[40] Ibid., 184.

[41] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 91, 208.

[42] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 101.

[43] Debo to Brandt, November 15, 1939, Debo Collection, Box D34, folder, Princeton Press, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[44] Fred Hoxie, A Final Promise The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984): 154.

[45]Debo to Brandt, November 15, 1939, Debo Collection, Box D34, folder Princeton Press, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[46] Ibid.

[47]Debo, And Still The Waters Run, 123.

[48]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 125.

[49] Ibid.

[50]Oral History, Box 29, Interview Dub West, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[51]Kenny Brown, "A Progressive from Oklahoma, Senate Robert Latham Owen, Jr." The Chronicles of Oklahoma 62 (Summer 1984):234.

[52]Ibid., 238.

[53]Debo to Brandt, November 15, 1939, Debo Collection, Box D 34, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[54]Brandt to Debo, January 19, 1940, UOPC, WHC, Norman, Oklahoma.

[55]Ibid.

[56]Debo, And Still The Waters Run, 104.

[57]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 100.

[58]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 103.

[59]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 219.

[60] William T. Hagan, "Justifying the Dispossession of the Indians: Land Utilization Argument," in American Indian Environments: Ecological Issues in Native American History, Christopher Vecsey and Robert W. Venables, ed. (Syracuse University Press, 1980): 65-80 as found in Janet A. McDonnell's The Dispossession of the American Indian 1887-1934 (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991): 5.

[61]David M. Holford, "The Subversion of the Indian Allotment System, 1887-1934," Indian Historian 8 (Spring 1975): 12.

[62]Hagan, 3.

[63]Goble, The Story of Oklahoma, 311.

[64]Gibson, Oklahoma: A History of Five Centuries, 179.

PART 2

THE CONTINUING SAGA

An investigation of the previous part of the addendum revealed additional information edited from Debo's original draft. Debo included so much information in her manuscript that editor Brandt asked her to cut it down for publication purposes. In the published version Debo addressed the subject of removal of restrictions from Indian lands. She explained who supported and who opposed removal. She established the extent of local influence into congressional consideration of the issue. Debo included examples of unscrupulous attempts to pressure Indians into supporting removal. Later she removed numerous instances that proved her case to shorten the manuscript. Reaction to removal by the tribes illustrated their positions and attempts at protection from grafters. She presented Department of Interior initiatives that addressed the changing landscape. To confuse the matter further, congress passed legislation establishing contradictory policies. Debo detailed the total opposition of the full-blood community and their isolation from the process. Another contentious issue was the question of statehood. In addition to political and economic pressures, decisions had to be made regarding single or dual statehood. Once the statehood question was resolved, Debo concentrated on the ramifications of the removal of restrictions on the Indian population. Removal brought the local probate courts into the picture; it opened up an additional avenue of corruption. Debo illustrated the widespread corruption apparent in her findings. Finally Debo focused on federal investigations into allegations of wrongdoing, results from the investigations, and public reaction to the litigation.

To understand fully how these details fit the text one must refer to the published document. Another important chapter in <u>And Still the Waters Run</u> is "The Voice of the Indian Territory." In this chapter Debo documented the events transpiring in Indian Territory with an emphasis on the interaction of divergent forces. Debo's research confirmed a two-tier

division among tribal members. The Native Americans who adopted the mainstream American culture often prospered and were considered the wealthy ones within the tribes. Those who did not want to assimilate were ill-equipped to deal with the changing aspects of their lives. After allotment, Debo believed all levels of Native American society declined. Many wealthy members lost the surplus land that had created wealth for them. Those Indians who had never been prosperous were now homeless in some cases. They lost everything.

Debo reached certain conclusions about the Indian communities based on what she discovered in her research. Whether full-blood or mixed-blood, those who held land prior to allotment had developed a knack for commercial ventures; this group gained expertise in business dealings with the white man and was able to adapt to the new conditions after allotment. Debo's second group contained an ultra-conservative element that further separated them from other tribal members. The full-bloods did not agree with the decision to divide their land. Some did not take their allotment even when it was forced on them. They were the ones who had not owned land previously in the territory and had few dealings with whites. They were satisfied living in the hills off the land. When Debo made her assessment in the late 1930s, she described them as fearful, displaced, and spiritually defeated. By 1934 the land base of the Indians had decreased by millions of acres. Economically the Indians had been deprived of a suitable way to survive on the land. Two-thirds of them were either landless or owned so little land that survival was difficult. Often the land was marginal because of erosion, overgrazing, and lack of irrigation. Small holdings and complex land titles further impoverished the people that the government had initially set out to free from federal supervision.[1] From her investigation of full-blood communities, Debo found an attitude difficult for the white man to fully comprehend. Full-bloods did not care about the allotments

assigned them; they placed no significance on the small acreage in comparison to what they once possessed. Suddenly the white man had set limits on their world, and they reacted as a frightened wild animal might with similar boundaries. Debo compared the loss of their domain to that of "a man without a country." Debo defined the full-bloods as the group who suffered the most at the hands of the exploiters and who were left in ruins.[2] Recent literature, particularly since the emergence and recognition of the field of ethnohistory, indicates that Indian cultures survived contact with many traditions intact.

When Debo wrote in the 1930s and 1940s there was little interest in the outcome of white-Indian interaction. Americans and Oklahomans, in particular, agreed that the interaction had severely damaged Indian culture. Youngsters growing up in Oklahoma in the 1940s and 1950s heard about the impoverished state of Oklahoma Indians. They did not have meaningful explanations substantiating the causes of economic deprivation. As recently as the 1960s Indian activists raised the country's awareness about their culture and its persistence. Not only had Indian culture survived the white onslaught but eventually it gained enough strength to secure important traditions for future generations. Debo held a similar view at the time when she wrote about the Five Tribes; her analysis of the data confirmed her conclusions. Today ethnohistorians write of Indians, not as victims but as active participants in the process of cultural contact. Debo sought to evaluate the impact of policies, their success or failure on Indian cultures. Debo's writing in And Still the Waters Run reflected the ethnocentric bias of historians at the time in so far as placing Euroamericans at the center. For example, historians focused on the intention of the white majority to settle areas bringing civilization to Native peoples regardless of the results of these intentions. When Debo described full-bloods as spiritually defeated, it was not meant to imply they were victimized but rather their efforts had

failed to alter implemented policies. She should not be condemned by today's historians because of what is now considered outdated. Debo's contribution to Indian history was her use of Indian documents establishing a point of reference from their perspective for the first time, particularly in her Choctaw and Creek histories.

Before a discussion on the clamor for removal of restrictions from Indian lands, one must be aware of subtle changes occurring concerning the policy of assimilation in the early twentieth century. The policy had evolved over time. During the nineteenth century Americans thought of themselves as a homogeneous society; citizenship was available to the white population. People of color were excluded. After industrialization, officials assumed elements of the population not fit for full membership could be incorporated in the society with few political and social benefits. The first two decades of the twentieth century established this criteria in the form of racial segregation of African Americans, and exclusion of Japanese, southern, and eastern European immigrants. Government officials moved away from the idea of total assimilation of the Indians; apathy, racism, and sentimentalism toward the Indians made total incorporation difficult. Indians did not want to participate in the assimilation process rendering the policy impossible to implement effectively. By the 1920s government policy had adopted a significantly modified program. Government officials lowered their expectations. Education and christianization could not easily transform the native population into acceptable citizens. To accomplish inclusion of such backward peoples "would have required more of the nation's institutions, social values, and cultural life than the citizenry was willing to grant."[3] Instead of assimilation, Native Americans were relegated to a peripheral position in the American society leading to dependence and vulnerability.

Regarding removal of restrictions, the railroads were the first to point out the need for unrestricted status of land to keep in line with surrounding states. In the 1880s railroad interests characterized Indian Territory as a barrier to progress. It prevented the railroad companies from connecting ports on the Gulf of Mexico to western cities; railroads making the transcontinental trek skirted the territory by heading north to Kansas City and Chicago instead of taking a southern route to New Orleans. In 1882 congress approved a right of way through the middle of Indian Territory altering fifty years of tradition and abrogating treaties made with the Indian inhabitants.[4]

An outpouring of public sentiment demanded congress lift restrictions from allotted lands. Many stated that the Indians were as capable of taking care of themselves as any other American citizen. Many argued that white settlers were as confused by the allotment system and subsequent legislation related to it as those who participated in it (unpublished manuscript, 243).

The grafter protested the loudest when it came to removal; restrictions hindered the potential of his business. He stood to lose the most. Secretary of Interior, E. A. Hitchcock, received much of the abuse regarding what Oklahomans considered the government's unwise policy. He was reviled by newspapers, scorned by fellow citizens, and condemned by civil leaders who sought to advance the development of the new state.[5]

Debo's data suggested that restrictions were opposed as soon as allotment was first proposed and undertaken. The Muskogee Chamber of Commerce sent a representative, Thomas P. Smith, to lobby congress in 1902 when the Creek Supplemental Agreement came up for discussion.[6] The provisions of the Creek Agreement called for close federal supervision of agricultural leases. Congress amended the agreement after the group from Muskogee

pressured the committee.[7] This congressional action followed a historic pattern in which non-Indian interests prevailed over those of the Indians.

The Muskogee Chamber of Commerce again sent a special committee to Washington to lobby for removal of restrictions from surplus lands in 1904. The chairman of the committee was Charles Haskell, who came to the territory to build railroads and was elected Oklahoma's first governor in 1907. Oklahoma's senator and former leader in the Cherokee Nation, Robert L. Owen, was a member of the committee. Tams Bixby, then Commissioner to the Five Tribes, Oklahoma Territory's last Territorial Governor, Frank Frantz, and ex-Governor of Oklahoma Territory, Cassius M. Barnes were all committee members (unpublished manuscript, 253).

Owen was considered a progressive who fought for the economic development of Indian Territory, believing white infringement inevitable. Owen championed the removal of restrictions from the sale of Indian allotments.[8] Later he addressed the Senate Indian Affairs Committee in relation to the McCumber Amendment. Owen argued full-bloods should be considered as capable as any white man. He was able to persuade the committee; they opposed the McCumber Amendment and authored a bill asking for removal of further restrictions.[9]

Proponents of removal found other ways to bring attention to their cause. The Bonaparte investigation, through its efforts to clean up illegal federal involvement in the allotment process, provided a forum for witnesses to petition for removal of restrictions. The 1904 the Lake Mohonk Conference supported unrestricted lands and local control of Indian administration. Under the supplemental agreements, only a portion of the land in the Creek Nation could be sold legally. Congress amended the agreement. In 1904 an act of congress

removed restrictions from all surplus land except from the homesteads of adult white and African-American allottees leaving the freedmen vulnerable to speculators. The secretary could remove restrictions from the surplus land of adult Indians if he deemed it appropriate. A million and a half acres were opened for sale. Debo's research indicated this was the beginning of the process of total removal.[10]

The Five Tribes Act passed in 1906 disappointed the supporters of removal. This bill not only did not remove restrictions, but the McCumber Amendment extending restrictions for full-bloods was attached to it.[11] The Five Tribes Act extended the tribal governments in a token form with the president appointing executives and attorneys. Tribal chiefs and attorneys became part of the spoils system. It also extended federal law over Indian citizens and began federal control over Indian schools.[12]

Several tribes took action regarding the lifting of restrictions during the winter of 1905-1906 as the end of tribal government approached. The Chickasaw Council supported Governor Johnston's dictates to remove all restrictions from the surplus lands of adults. The Choctaw Council supported removal from all surplus land to eliminate the ability of speculators to gain a monopoly in the land market. The Creeks asked for continued supervision of sales and removal of restrictions from inherited land. The Cherokees, claiming to be as competent at business as the whites, petitioned congress to remove restrictions from all lands.[13]

Debo found evidence that "white boosters" convinced allottees to sign documents asking for the removal of restrictions. The mark one Indian made was construed to represent the consent of the tribe as a whole. Samuel J. Haynes, a Creek full-blood, showed the committee a letter from a company called the International Land Company whose president was Cass Bradley. This is an example where Debo followed the lawyer's advice. He advised

her to eliminate local names because they were not important to the scope of her findings. She eliminated Bradley's name from her manuscript. In the letter the Muskogee Commercial Club convinced a Creek to act as the spokesman for his tribe. He was asked to invite a group of Creeks to meet with the senate committee visiting Muskogee and other cities in eastern Oklahoma. The Creeks were recruited to encourage the senators to remove restrictions from their land. They were promised cigars and accommodations for their cooperation. One of the Creeks turned the letter over to Haynes, and not one fell victim to the ploy (unpublished manuscript, 258).

L. S. Fawcett expressed an opposing argument to the question of removal. He thought it was time the government helped the white man. In the past the government concentrated on taking care of the Indian and freedmen. Fawcett used the term incompetency broadly. If an Indian was found incompetent and could not sell his land, he was also incompetent to hold his land. Fawcett voiced a popular belief in stating the removal of restrictions should be decided to benefit the majority of the people (unpublished manuscript, 257).

From the standpoint of Alice Robertson, an Indian sympathizer, the problem of removal stymied proponents as well as opponents of restrictions. Robertson's family had been intricately involved with the Indian population for three generations. Dr. Samuel Austin Worcester, Robertson's grandfather, was a great Cherokee missionary and educator. He spent time in a Georgia jail rather than support state control over the Cherokees. Robertson's father was a missionary to the Creeks and Pleasant Porter's teacher. Her mother's contribution to the Native American culture emerged from her work translating the New Testament into the Creek language. Robertson grew up in Indian Territory and had an adopted daughter of Indian

descent. Alice Robertson was the first woman elected to congress from Oklahoma. In theory Robertson understood the arguments of the American settlers, but she could not reconcile that idea with the reality of the policy and how it impacted the Creeks. In Robertson's opinion only a special court should remove restrictions from both full-bloods and mixed bloods. She stipulated the special court should not be influenced by outside forces (unpublished manuscript, 262).

Indian Inspector Wright encouraged the development of the territory but not at the expense of its Indian inhabitants. He suggested a government policy that secured the purchase and leasing of land through legal means. He purposed all restrictions be removed, but the Department of the Interior would individually handle the removal cases of full-bloods. Wright declared the incompetent full-bloods special cases. Their allotments should be sold only at the request of the allottees. The government would manage the income of the full-bloods and provide monthly stipends in the case of the sale of surplus land (unpublished manuscript, 266).

Debo presented the often-forgotten or ignored feelings of those who felt the greatest impact from this policy, the Indians themselves. Many educated mixed-bloods demonstrated great pride in their American citizenship but experienced equal embarrassment at the status conferred by the restrictions on their lands. David Hodge expressed the sentiments of Chitto Harjo and many Creek full-bloods who found restrictions humiliating. Harjo experienced conflicting sentiments. He recognized the full-bloods had always relied on the government to protect them. To remove restrictions from their holdings would put the Creeks in an extremely vulnerable position. Mrs. Lila D. Lindsey expressed similar sentiments. She worried her inexperienced people would lose everything they possessed to gain the needed experience to transact business in a white man's world (unpublished manuscript, 268).

The tribes handled the issue differently. The Choctaw and Chickasaw Council established a representative delegation to appear before the U. S. Senate. Green McCurtain stated the intentions of the tribe clearly. The force of his statements was evident. The tribes were not asking for anything that did not rightfully belong to them. The Atoka Agreement addressed removal of restrictions assuming it would be completed before statehood. Because of the confusion over enrollment the process had taken longer than expected; therefore, restrictions remained in place. They wanted restrictions on the surplus removed; but, more importantly they held the government accountable to clear the titles and supervise the land sale. They wanted to see a quick resolution to the land problem. McCurtain reminded the committee that the grafters looked to congress and awaited its actions to justify their illegal actions (unpublished manuscript, 269).

From the time of the passage of the Curtis Act in 1898 to the Removal of Restrictions Act of 1908, congress passed so many conflicting laws that the status of Indian land was indeterminate at best. Those who perpetrated illegal means to gain land further clouded the situation. The grafters believed the restrictions were unconstitutional and planned to lobby congress to pass legislation to validate their activities. The Choctaws opposed any congressional alteration of agreements made with the government, so they objected to the McCumber Amendment and did not support removal of restrictions from homesteads. They supported the sale of their surplus lands and the closure of their estates. The Cherokees lacked an official position, but consensus among full-bloods called for continued protection except in individual cases.[14] The Creeks devised the most consistent policy. They interpreted the McCumber Amendment as the embodiment of the government's promise of protection when the Creeks agreed to allotment in the first place. They thought the mixed-bloods should be

protected as well. They agreed inherited land could be sold and the profits divided among the heirs. Essentially the Creeks asked congress to comply with the agreements made to the tribe, to divide tribal land among citizens, so they could live productively on their land. The Creeks condemned the act of 1904 ending restrictions on the surplus of adult freedmen.[15]

Debo ended the chapter, "The Voice of Indian Territory," with a series of statements to the senate committee from full-bloods who presented the extreme view of noncompliance. Chitto Harjo presented an eloquent and emotional speech and caught the committee men off guard. His opening statement read as follows: "I am telling you now about what was done since 1492."[16]

Debo left few details out of the published manuscript about the progression from territorial government to statehood. Any textbook could provide information about this period. Debo concluded that statehood held crucial benefits. Statehood meant local control of Indian affairs and the removal of restrictions and implementation of taxes to enhance development. The problem caused by the unfinished business of liquidation of tribal lands resulted in further wrangling between federal and state governments.[17] In the minds of Oklahomans, continued federal protection was the excuse used to provide jobs for government employees![18] The Curtis Act called for the termination of tribal government by 1906. When the white population realized the liquidation of estates would not occur on that date, they did not want to delay statehood. The attitude among whites reflected the inconveniences they suffered. The Indian population represented a mere five percent of prospective Oklahomans. The Five Tribes adopted resolutions calling for a separate state reminding fellow white citizens of guarantees made in the removal treaties that no territorial or state government would be placed over the tribes without their approval. The story of the 1905 constitutional convention

in Muskogee proposing a separate state named Sequoyah is documented in this chapter of Debo's book. Congress did not consider the proposal.[19]

The Five Tribes Act and the Enabling Act providing the union of Oklahoma and Indian Territory into a new state came to fruition in the same session of congress in 1906. For those considering statehood through the unification of Indian and Oklahoma Territories, the prospect of being represented in congress heightened the desire for the removal of restrictions.[20] Once duly elected, the Oklahoma delegation to congress declared its intentions to remove jurisdiction of Indian lands from the Department of the Interior and place it in the hands of the new state government. The state of Oklahoma was determined to protect its Indian population in the courts. Individual citizens held different views. This quote by J. W. Orr more accurately reflects the attitude of some Oklahomans. "As to that, I will say that when they come into statehood they will give the boys their land."[21]

Economics certainly played an important role in considering the timing of statehood. The problem was the inability to tax lands held in severalty. Both state and federal officials thought statehood would act as a mandate to remove restrictions. The more moderate members of the Indian community understood the need for removal of restrictions and taxation.[22] The Creeks in a special session of the council, reaffirmed its support of the McCumber Amendment.[23]

Once statehood was accomplished, the limits of full-blood participation in civic affairs became obvious. Few full-bloods voted for statehood. Pleasant Porter explained the outcome. He understood the true Indian, the full-blood, would not be elected to any offices or serve on any juries. A number of Indians did get elected to new state posts, but Debo's

sympathy remained with the full-bloods who were not assimilated and were left to a life of poverty as a disadvantaged people.[24]

Congressional legislation in 1908 removed more restrictions. The law divided the allottees into three classes: restrictions were removed for all mixed bloods of less than one-half Indian blood, freedmen and whites; mixed bloods between one-half and three-fourths Indian blood could sell their surplus land but not their homesteads. Restrictions remained in place on full-bloods, Indians of three-fourths or more Indian blood. These restrictions were effective for twenty years. Restricted allottees could grant agricultural leases on surplus land for five years, and probate courts in Oklahoma had jurisdiction over minors and their property. The result of the law freed twelve million acres of land for sale; it attempted to correct problems in the leasing system, and the probate courts gained local control of Indian administration.[25]

Debo claimed the leasing system did not work well because the land had already passed into long term private leases. Once federal supervision was removed, the abuses continued instead of being corrected. Real estate agents paid small allowances to allottees and gained high rents from the farmers. Abuse included overlapping leases on a tract of land that kept it from being sold and collaboration between professional guardians and speculators leasing the land. All abuse left the allottee degraded (unpublished manuscript, 320). The Creeks continued to request protection from federal or tribal officials to offset the fraud that accompanied the leasing of lands.[26]

In Debo's chapter, "Protection by the State," research confirmed the immediate impact of the passage of the act of 1908. The courts entered into the exploitation of the allottees on a scale unimaginable. The land speculators targeted the African-American and mixed-blood adults. Speculators devised a method to secure deeds from the unrestricted land. They would

bring groups of allottees to the county seat, feed them and show them a good time then convince them to sign away their land before some other speculator could accomplish the same goal. Allottees were herded into camps located in the woods and kept there into the night; many left the site before the transfer of land could be accomplished. Some were whisked out of state to keep them safe from other speculators. Some of the deeds held by speculators were postdated. The deeds were later taken to the recorder's office when the act went into effect.[27] Speculators asked the register of deeds to accept their business at midnight anticipating a huge volume of customers. The register did not comply with the request; only about 175 deeds were registered in Muskogee County on Monday, July 27, when the restrictions were officially removed. The turnout was light by all standards and expectations (unpublished manuscript, 322).

Debo's research of the probate courts of Oklahoma exposed widespread corruption concerning minors. The act of 1908 removed restrictions placing minors at the mercy of guardians and parents who sold off the land for personal profit. Under the Oklahoma Constitution, county courts had jurisdiction over probate issues. The Enabling Act removed jurisdiction from federal courts and gave it to state courts with the exception of cases pending in the federal courts for Indian Territory. At the time of statehood there were about forty county judges. They were asked to handle approximately sixty thousand minors involving land worth $130,000,000 plus $25,000,000 valued in oil royalties. Some counties had 3500 minors while others contained two to three thousand court-assigned guardians supervising underage Indian children. These guardians were accountable to no one except the county court. The judicial system was completely overwhelmed, but no other agency attempted to protect the minors. Debo argued the courts themselves took advantage of vulnerable minors. Fees

charged for guardians and attorneys were astronomically high. County judges used the guardian system to reward their supporters.[28]

Debo credited Kate Barnard with courageous efforts to defend the minors against unscrupulous practices. She held the position of Oklahoma Commissioner of Charities and Corrections. Barnard rallied women's groups to lobby Oklahoma's Constitutional Convention to provide this important government agency. The first legislature gave her power to defend the orphans considered minors, dependents, and delinquents. Barnard, like many Oklahomans in former Oklahoma Territory, was unaware of what was transpiring in the eastern half of the territory. After she became commissioner, she learned of three children living out of an old tree, drinking water from a nearby stream, and finding food from farms in the vicinity. The children's parents were deceased, but their guardian collected royalties from oil land. Money from the royalties was allocated to pay for the education and support of the children, but the guardian provided neither. Fifty other minors fell under the supervision of this guardian. Barnard released her findings in 1909 and asked to defend minors in the probate courts. The state had provided no institutions for the purpose of dealing with this issue. In 1910 when an assistant, Inspector Dr. J. H. Stolper, was added to her office, Barnard complained that the legislative mandate limited her work to a few orphans in state institutions; she wanted to defend all Indians considered minors.[29]

Debo claimed Barnard realized that none of the orphans in the Oklahoma State home were supported by their estates. The board of control could not become guardians of these minors because it had no funds. Stolper took such cases to court where the guardianships were ended. Private institutions such as the Odd Fellows' Home at Checotah asked for Barnard's help. Her department won every case; the court made 134 children wards of the

state; it forced professional guardians to forfeit half a million dollars worth of land. Barnard claimed there were large numbers of orphans around the state who were controlled by guardians who had taken advantage of their status as a minor (unpublished manuscript, 332).

Even though Governor Cruce vetoed the bill allowing Barnard to provide legal protection for Indian minors, she managed to insure her office enough money through an appropriation bill to pay court costs. Stolper initially handled over two hundred cases in twenty-five counties. He won all of these cases and recovered over $187,000 for those minors who fell prey to the rampant corruption. In most cases Stolper found guardians sold everything the minor had while the rest went to court costs. According to Debo, Stolper was successful in his legal battles, but his attitude damaged the work of the department. He envisioned himself a great reformer who ultimately would be rewarded politically for his efforts. He treated those who asked for help with arrogance and indifference. Stolper was unwilling to prosecute a case if the judge in the case was uncooperative or if the minor or informant did not provide complete details of the wrongdoing. There were far too many cases for Stolper to address, but he ignored so many instances as to make his claim of a great reformer insincere. Debo exposed Stolper's hypocrisy by including his testimony before congress. He claimed that the state of Oklahoma was doing a wonderful job protecting its Indian population. At the same time he lamented to Governor Cruce about the pathetic state of the orphan. He claimed Oklahoma was emerging in a good light from the turbulent times of federal territorial control.

Barnard's health deteriorated as she fought to fund and carry on her legal battles until she had to relinquish the routine work to subordinates. Barnard's strength was her ability to address the many pleas for help in a compassionate way, giving hope to those who sought it.

Even though Stolper was hampered by his shortcomings, he waged successful court battles in 1912 as he had done in previous years. He intervened in 1,361 cases and recovered almost a million dollars worth of land. He saved minors attorney's fees (10 percent) that the courts allowed in cases of this nature. The state paid him $10,000 annually.[30]

Barnard spoke at the 1914 Mohonk Conference about her work. Barnard implored those she spoke with to spread the information about legalized fraud because her work was being attacked by the state legislature. She condemned the press for its silence, accusing journalists of compliance. John M. Oskison, a Cherokee journalist who had connections with Collier's Weekly informed concerned Oklahomans that national publications were no longer interested in stories of public corruption because they no longer sold magazines. He had a different take on the silence of the Oklahoma media. If the newspapers had reported Barnard's story in its entirety, many Oklahomans would have been shocked to read the names of prominent people involved in these scandals. Barnard and Oskison heightened awareness of these issues. The Mohonk Conference and the Board of Indian Commissioners took on a project to secure greater federal protection of the Five Tribes (unpublished manuscript, 336).

The Oklahoma legislature successfully curtailed the activities of Barnard's agency by cutting her funding. Debo concluded the legislature felt threatened by Stolper. She thought the main reason for the attack originated from the hostility of guardians who had been prosecuted. They held more influence over members of the legislature than those who wanted to clean up the corruption of the probate system. The House Investigating Committee threatened to level charges against Stolper. Stolper, in his official capacity as inspector of the department, received a fee for representing John and Pete Silva of Krebs who spent time in the penitentiary but were pardoned later. They also accused Stolper of making too many trips to

Washington, D.C., to attend national meetings. The House Committee on Efficiency censured Barnard and Stolper for attending a meeting in Boston and recommended replacing the department with current county authorities. Stolper resigned his position in 1913 (unpublished manuscript, 443).

The house committee regretted its inability to dispose of a government agency established by the constitution. The legislature offered Barnard a deal. If she would appoint Frank L. Montgomery of Muskogee to Stolper's job, they would not touch the funding for the agency. Barnard thought she could appoint Montgomery then remove him once the legislature adjourned. Montgomery wanted a contract to guarantee the security of the job over time. Barnard gained signatures from Montgomery's supporters and took it to the county attorney of Oklahoma County. She claimed they were trying to trade their vote on an appropriations bill for her appointment of Montgomery. Rather than bringing these men to justice as she hoped to do, Barnard learned local businessmen stopped the entire process. They feared that such bad publicity endangered Oklahoma City's chances of retaining the state capital. Barnard would not appoint Montgomery, so the legislature ended funding for the Department of Charities and Corrections.[31]

The documents Debo studied revealed horrendous criminal activities including murder, kidnaping, and forgery. A young Creek African-American woman held deeds in the Morris oil field. The night she reached the age of majority four men, two whites and two African-Americans, tried to get her husband drunk. When they failed in this attempt they had the man arrested for vagrancy. They kidnaped the woman and tried to get her to sign over the deed to her land. After several hours they took her to jail where they continued their harassment. The police finally ended the ordeal for the man and his wife, but the four men escaped.[32]

The murder case of the African-American children of Herbert and Stella Sells garnered tremendous publicity. The father of the children, Hardy Sells, drowned in a river in 1901, but law-enforcement officials never recovered his body. Frank L. Martin, Muskogee real estate agent, held the deed to land allotted to the Sells family. He planned to execute the deed in Mexico City in 1902. Land had been allotted to Stella and Birdie, two of the Sells children. The allotted land was in the Glenn Pool oil fields. When Birdie died, her brother, Herbert, inherited her land. Overnight these two children became rich from oil royalties. Their guardian, T. H. Martin, was Frank's brother and a former mayor of Muskogee. Eight years later Muskogee resident, William M. Irwin, claimed he found Hardy Sells alive in Mexico City. He took D. R. Allen, an African-American from Muskogee, with him to identify Sells. They identified Sells to the satisfaction of the American consul. The signature of Sells was identical to the signature on the deed given to Frank L. Martin in 1902. Irwin drew up deeds to Herbert and Stella Sells in 1909 and again in 1910 and they were placed in Mexico City. No one claimed the land at this time. Herbert, fourteen years of age, his sister, Stella, age ten, his mother, and their step-father lived in Taft, a town near Muskogee with a predominately African-American population. On March 22, while the family slept, their house was destroyed by a dynamite explosion. The two children were killed. Irwin made a trip to Mexico City three days after the explosion to obtain the deeds of these children.

The case caught the eye of federal officials because the children were African-American allottees and because of its international scope. Irwin was jailed in Muskogee. The deeds drawn up in 1902,1909, and 1910 gave title of the land to Irwin, Frank L. Martin, and John Coombs, an oil businessman from Bartlesville. They were charged with complicity in the murder of the Sells children. Irwin was sentenced to life in prison. D. R. Allen admitted to

impersonating Sells, forging his signature, and setting off the dynamite. He received a life sentence. Martin claimed he was fooled into thinking Allen was actually Sells. He denied knowing his brother was the guardian of the children. Martin was acquitted, and all charges against Coombs were dropped for lack of evidence. The mother of the Sells children inherited the deeds to their land (unpublished manuscript, 364-366).

Mrs. Josephine Hill, a white real estate agent, forged deeds to Creek freedman and got away with it. She assumed the identity of a federal official when she visited an African-American settlement near Grayson and convinced them she could clear up the problems with their land titles. Federal courts tried her three times. In Muskogee this innocent-looking white woman was acquitted the first time by an all-white jury who heard testimony from African-American witnesses, exclusively, and the second and third trials resulted in a hung juries. In her last trial a hand-writing expert convinced the judge the signatures had been copied, and he sentenced her to seven years in the penitentiary. Governor Cruce pardoned Hill soon after her sentence began (unpublished manuscript, 360). Unfortunately those allottees who lost land through forgery had a very difficult time recovering it.[33]

Debo found evidence of unscrupulous practices on the part of attorneys. In cases involving allottees trying to recover losses, unprincipled attorneys would seek out clients they could manipulate. A deal was made between the two lawyers in the case. They agreed to either have the case dismissed or ruled invalid by default. The judge, who was overwhelmed with work, agreed to their request. The allottee paid the lawyers the high fees that became prevalent in Indian cases, and the case was closed (unpublished manuscript, 361).

Some of the stories Debo edited out of the manuscript test the limits of credibility. A half-breed Creek father from Broken Arrow sold his "dead" children's land to the men who

watched his demonstration of agony at the cemetery. When the children turned up later, the mother who was unaware of the transaction, tried to recover their allotments. The process took three years of expensive litigation, but the title finally reverted back to the woman's children (unpublished manuscript, 362).

The records Debo used supplied numerous examples of allottees who died mysteriously after willing their land to others. In McCurtain and Choctaw Counties, the number of unsolved cases was staggering. 1909 Simon Waukiah from Idabel was found dead in the debris of his burned out home. Someone filed a bill of sale for his cattle after his death, and a will was filed for probate. The whites who inherited the property aroused the suspicions of the district agent and the true heirs. They objected to the will, and three people were later arrested for forgery and murder. They were not convicted, but the will was disavowed. The rightful owners took possession of the man's property (unpublished manuscript, 367).

Restrictions protected those making out wills against alienation of their land. Federal rulings and a state law of 1909 stipulated restricted Indians could not give their property away in a will. Once restrictions were lifted, a new form of fraud came into existence. Allottees were encouraged to make wills under the Act of 1908 with certain limitations: homesteads of allottees with half or more Indian blood would be held for twenty years, and full-bloods had to submit wills to a federal or county court in the case of disinheritance. Many cases were dismissed because of obvious fraud, but it was difficult to curb the practice. Wills do not become known until they are submitted for probate making prosecution difficult (unpublished manuscript, 368).

From her research, Debo believed adult allottees needed protection as well as minors. The discovery of oil improved the economic status of Indian adults inviting exploitation.

Debo noticed a disproportionate correlation between Indians and freedmen holding oil lands and those men the courts declared mentally defective. Once declared incompetent, the guardian could manipulate the oil-rich land as he chose. Those who saw this as an opportunity to become wealthy perverted a true need for government protection to their own advantage (unpublished manuscript, 305).

Once Debo presented the evidence of corruption and fraud she was compelled to continue the saga. In Chapter 8, "A Tangle of Litigation," Debo continued to unravel the facts by presenting the results of investigations on the federal and state level. The federal authorities had the responsibility of clearing questionable titles to land in Indian Territory prior to statehood. Cases included township fraud and clarification of title in allotment lands that were illegally sold. These cases were heard in federal courts. Questionable business dealings of county judges under the law of 1908 were heard in state courts.

In 1907 Creek attorney, M. L. Mott, brought suit against several large property owners in Muskogee and the Frisco Oil and Gas Company of Tulsa. The suits were not heard until after statehood when judicial changes occurred. Two prominent men, Pleasant Porter, Chief of the Creek Nation, and Charles Haskell, Governor of Oklahoma, were named as defendants. Debo did not want Haskell's name edited out of the manuscript because she had found evidence that he participated in illegal speculation of town sites. She won her point and Brandt deciding against editing Haskell's name; a court decision had been rendered in the case, leaving Debo free to present her information. He was indicted for conspiracy to defraud the Creek Nation in 1907. The defendants in the case laid the blame of false scheduling at the feet of the federal officials. Specifically he accused those in the Interior Department, who made a practice of conducting business in this unusual manner.[34]

Sixty of Muskogee's most successful business men showed their support by circulating documents endorsing the honesty and trustworthiness of the defendants (unpublished manuscript, 372). Debo exposed the techniques Haskell used in the township fraud cases. He took names from the Lansing, Michigan, telephone book and made them owners of lots he purchased. He made himself the trustee for all the lots then he would sell them to white settlers.[35] Senators Robert Owen and Thomas Gore and several Oklahoma representatives carried out a concerted effort to convince President William Taft to stop prosecution of the case and to have the charges dismissed. Senator Gore succeeded in getting a senate resolution passed questioning Mott's methods of investigation and indictment, but the action ended there. Haskell employed a man named Jake Harmon, a well-known Republican from Ardmore, to try to derail the trial (unpublished manuscript, 373).

The trial was held in the fall of 1910 in McAlester. The trial ended suddenly when the presiding judge, John A. Marshall of Utah, declared the statute of limitations began in 1901 when the government relinquished its title. Under that ruling the case was effectively derailed. It is unclear who, if anyone else, was responsible for the outcome of this case. There was jubilation in Muskogee. The attorneys who were persecuting the good people of Muskogee were silenced, and the development of their thriving community could go forward now without further embarrassment to the state (unpublished manuscript, 374). Public opinion in Muskogee strongly favored the white businessmen accused of irregularities against the Creek Indians. Haskell suffered political consequences when presidential candidate Theodore Roosevelt used the indictment against Haskell to force him to resign his post as treasurer of the Democratic National Committee during the 1908 election to spare the Democratic Party embarrassment.

None of the defendants claimed their innocence, but Mott's motives were called into question and his reputation was accosted.[36]

Perhaps Debo did not mind editing some of the outcomes of Mott's investigations because court decisions would be publicized in the newspapers for the public to read. Mott did not give up and continued to prosecute the civil cases. In 1909 several defendants settled out of court. By 1911, the courts had rendered settlements totaling $86,500 and recovered close to one hundred lots (unpublished manuscript, 374). Debo reported the Creeks received $40,000 and 110 lots in the settlement with Severs and English. Bixby and Porter settled for a smaller amount. Haskell lost twenty-two lots in Muskogee. Haskell's lots sold slowly but by 1939, $100,000 was paid to the Creeks in addition to gaining title to fifty-five lots (unpublished manuscript, 375). Eventually Haskell sold his remaining holdings for a million and a half dollars. Some saw him as a con man.[37] The suits cost the Creeks $100,995 to prosecute. The Creeks sued to recover the costs of litigation on the basis of the Creek Agreement; it placed the financial burden of surveying, platting, and selling town lots on the U. S. government. The Five Tribes stipulated the expenses of the case would be borne by the tribe. In 1933 the court of claims nullified the Creek Agreement because of the intervention of the Five Tribes (unpublished manuscript, 375).

Debo stressed that the government did not investigate any other town lot fraud except those in Tulsa and Muskogee.[38] The defendants in the Tulsa cases admitted the chairman of the townsite committee told them to schedule "dummies." The court recovered about $5,500 from Tulsa defendants. In 1913 Judge Ralph E. Campbell cancelled the twenty-seven deeds of the Frisco Oil and Gas Company in Tulsa (unpublished manuscript, 374).

The 1908 Act provided $50,000 to the secretary of the Interior to offset expenses for litigation. Officials in the U. S. Department of Justice expressed concern for expediency. Once the 1908 Act went into effect, restricted land gained through illegal means would be validated unless litigation had begun prior to the law. The Justice Department and officers of the Dawes office spent approximately two months examining county records. The examination of the records produced litigation called Thirty Thousand Land Suits. In this litigation, 301 cases involving 30,000 transfers of title, 12,500 individual tracts of land (more than three million acres) and 16,000 defendants brought claims to federal courts for vindication (unpublished manuscript, 376).

Senator Owen tried to circumvent these trials by taking the stand that purchasers of restricted land should be reimbursed for improvements and expenditures on contracts. Owen was no longer part of the Indian Land and Trust Company, but he had a vested interest in this litigation. He owned vast holdings near Bartlesville. He secured deeds to the land from restricted Cherokees, and he fought to have such dealings recognized as valid. Before the act of 1908 became law, Owen met with Interior Secretary Garfield. He admitted his holdings rested on the unconstitutionality of the McCumber Amendment.[39]

After the law of 1908 passed, Owen took a different approach. The only suits brought to the courts should be the ones requested by the allottees, and they should be brought to the attention of state courts, not federal ones. He tried to get his contracts validated through the department of the Interior. As Owen pursued his case, he found the process mired in bureaucratic tape. He tried to get the restrictions removed immediately from the Cherokee woman whose allotment included Owen's Caney Valley farm. He described the woman, a three-fourths Cherokee, as fair-skinned and red headed. The process to review her application

would take months to complete. The woman's application was eventually approved but C. F. Larrabee, Acting Commissioner of Indian affairs, would not recommend his approval in the case. He claimed the woman sold her surplus to improve her homestead, but she was asking for the restrictions on her homestead to be removed. Larrabee concluded Owen had made an illegal contract with the woman. Secretary Garfield admonished federal officials not to approve removal cases while cases were pending in the courts to clarify titles. Owen introduced an amendment to the Indian appropriation bill calling for the dismissal of the suits where there was no obvious illegality. The senate adopted it, but the amendment failed in the house.[40]

Once the Justice Department filed the suits, many defendants settled out of court. In 1908, 3,067 cases were dismissed; more than half (1,756) came via quitclaim deeds from allottees, 1,161 were from errors, and 159 through adjustment. In 1909-1910 another 1,543 cases were dismissed; in 1910, 11,822 were dismissed; and in 1911, 12,783 were dismissed.[41]

The U.S. Supreme Court decision finalized the disputed elements in the Thirty Thousand Land Suits. In 1911 the Supreme Court reversed a 1908 Oklahoma Supreme Court decision. The case entailed an interpretation concerning the sale of inherited land in which a full-blood Creek, Marchie Tiger, sold the surplus of an inherited allotment. With the help of Mott, Tiger took the company to court claiming he had been deceived. The Five Tribes Act of 1906 established that land could be sold if the allottee died. In the case of full-blood heirs, sales had to have departmental approval.[42]

Land speculators interpreted the law to mean the secretary of the Interior did not have to give his approval once restrictions expired in 1907. In 1908 the Oklahoma Supreme Court upheld the speculators. Mott appealed the case to the U. S. Supreme Court. In the meantime

the land company involved in the sale submitted a new deed for approval. Mott hid Tiger in his home to keep the land company at bay. The company promised Tiger's wife a cut in the deal if she could persuade him to sign away his land. The Supreme Court decision upheld the constitutionality of the McCumber Amendment in 1911. The higher court ruling invalidated the sale of such land by upholding the right of congress to protect the best interests of Indians in land dealings. The Supreme Court ruling settled the questions in the Thirty Thousand Land Suits. After the decision in the Marchie Tiger case, the court ruled on the Heckman and Owen case. The Heckman and Owen case was the test case for 46 other suits. These suits involved 3,715 instances where restricted land passed out of the hands of full-blood Cherokees and into the hands of white owners. Owen lost his investment in the Heckman-Owen case as well as title to some of the land involved. He held 154 deeds; the district court canceled 25, and the others were considered valid.[43]

Owen played an instrumental role in congress when the Interior Department began to negotiate with the State of Oklahoma over the 24,000 cases affected by the Supreme Court ruling. The department needed additional legislation to protect the Indians, but congress had been unwilling to grant additional federal control of Indian affairs. In fact congress cut appropriations on existing laws. Congress and those involved in the pending cases wanted a quick end to the litigation. The department was willing to offer several options to circumvent the prosecution of these cases. Senator Owen waged a concerted effort to keep these suits from litigation. He introduced a bill addressing the department's concessions, but it failed to pass.[44]

The Supreme Court ruling provided an example of the augmentation of federal guardianship in property cases; it governed decisions relating to federal oversight in these types

of cases.[45] In June of 1913 over 18,000 cases remained on the dockets. About 1,200 were resolved in the next year involving 180,000 acres of land. Half of these were dismissed because of quit claim deeds and another 150 cases were canceled to comply with the ruling of 1911 (unpublished manuscript, 393).

In Chapter 4, "The Grafter's Share," Debo accused Senator Robert L. Owen of misrepresentation of Cherokee allotments that made him a millionaire and of defrauding Creek orphans of their land. Debo made no effort to hide her feelings when discussing the allegations against Owen. She referred to him as a wicked man who became wealthy at the expense of others.[46]

Prior to allotment Owen held 10,000 acres in the Little Caney Valley in the Cherokee Nation. Landowners, like Owen, were able to retain their large holdings during the allotment process by hiring their own real estate agents. Owen defended himself when later questioned about this practice claiming he bought the land in 1887 and improved it with investments. The Curtis Act divided the Cherokee land threatening to remove some of the land from his possession. He told his real estate agent to allot the land within his initial holdings to the full-blood Cherokees living in the distant hills. The rental contracts Owen made with the allottees deeded the land to Owen at the time restrictions were lifted. Owen lost a number of court cases concerning misrepresentation of Cherokee land allotments.[47] His position within the Wilson administration caused concern among the Easterners sympathetic to the plight of the Native Americans. They were afraid Owen would not face judicial rebuke because of his support within the administration. The friends of Indians constantly reminded investigators of Owen's close alliance with land speculators[48] (unpublished manuscript, 396).

During Owen's second campaign for the senate, his opponent, J. H. Godfrey, fought the idea of removing these cases from the jurisdiction of the courts and allowing the Interior Department to settle the land issues involved. Godfrey, a member of the Chickasaws, began a letter writing campaign informing President Wilson, Secretary of the Interior, Franklin Lane, and every member of the senate and house Indian affairs committees of Owen's land acquisitions. He pointed out the possibilities of oil on Owen's Caney ranch. Godfrey suggested Owen would influence those in power to appoint his friend, J. Haden Linebaugh, to the Interior Department. This would give Linebaugh an opportunity to alter land deals at will. The information in the letters did not stop the process. Owen introduced a bill giving the department of Interior the right to settle the remaining suits. The bill failed, and the cases remained under the auspices of the Justice department.

In 1913 Owen secured the appointment of J. H. Linebaugh to the position of U. S. Attorney for the Eastern District. Linebaugh did not believe the government should prosecute cases involving unrestricted adult allottees. Since the law of 1908 declared them competent, that meant they could sell their land or sue in the courts for redress. The decision not to pursue these cases accounted for over 6,000 individual suits. In a meeting in 1914 with tribal attorneys, leaders, and Indian Agent, Dana Kelsey, agreement was reached to drop these cases.[49]

Owen and other members of the Oklahoma congressional delegation of Native American descent influenced the attitudes of legislators concerning laws involving their people. Members of Oklahoma's delegation served on the Indian affairs committee throughout their terms. They introduced bills to change the policy of restrictions on Indian lands, and they were

particularly active during the congressional investigations as the evidence of illegal activities surfaced.[50]

At the Trans-Mississippi commercial congress in 1907, Chief of the Creeks, Moty Tiger, who succeeded Pleasant Porter after his death, addressed the assembled group. He pledged the support of his people in the endeavor of assimilation and statehood. He asked that the question of removal of restrictions be left to the Indians and the government. He described Robert L. Owen

> . . . to be a polished and educated man with Indian blood in his veins who advocates the removal of restrictions . . . is only reaching for gold to ease his itching palms, and our posterity will remember him only for his avarice and his treachery.[51]

To further illustrate the extent of fraud and corruption, Debo documented important findings in Seminole County. In this instance she framed her explanation of litigation within the demographics of the area. In 1907 the make-up of Seminole County comprised a small predominately full-blood group, freedmen whose numbers doubled that of the full-bloods, and whites whose population was ten times larger than the Indian population. Racial hatred, crime, and personal and business vendettas filled the newspapers. Widespread land speculation in 1906 and 1907 resulted in numerous irregularities. With the exception of the townsite of Wewoka, the federal government invalidated most of the land sales in the region.

In July 1908 the federal courts issued writs on all land purchases from Seminole allottees. To defend themselves the speculators established the Seminole County Protective Association and secured counsel. The local newspapers, The Seminole Capital in Wewoka and Seminole County in Seminole favored the speculators who owned the publications. The Wewoka Democrat stood alone in its condemnation of land practices. The editor of the paper,

Dan Lawhead, was forced out of the newspaper business; he owed approximately one thousand dollars to one of the speculators. When the speculator called in the note, Lawhead could not secure the funds for payment. He was also convicted of criminal libel, but was not sentenced. He was replaced as editor of the paper.[52]

Early in 1908 a group of citizens from Seminole petitioned federal and state officials to investigate probate matters in the county. Several county officials were accused of dealings in the probate sales. At the same time Kate Barnard was battling with the state legislature for legislation to protect Indian minors, The Daily Oklahoman tried to pressure the legislature by running articles about conditions in the probate courts. The paper used briefs Attorney General West presented to the Supreme Court when he investigated the matter at the request of Seminole citizens. Judge T. S. Cobb from Seminole sued the paper for libel because the paper named him as one of the problems in the probate system. Cobb lost his libel suit against the paper, and appealed to the Oklahoma Supreme Court. That court upheld the decision of the lower court. Later the higher court invalidated one of Cobb's deeds involving the purchase of freedman's land. The judge condemned Cobb and the Creek African-American who helped him.[53]

Cobb's name also appeared in relation to cases settling the question of tax exemptions on inherited land. Court decisions determined that Cobb, who had purchased townsites in Wewoka, owed taxes because the Creek exemption did not extend to the purchaser. The removal of restrictions permitted the sale of the land with the idea the land would become taxable (unpublished manuscript, 570). Brandt convinced Debo to remove Cobb's name from the final draft of the manuscript because the accusations she made about Cobb were never

successfully prosecuted in a court. The edited pages were useful in understanding the methods used by those who defrauded the Indians while adding substance to Debo's findings.[54]

In 1909 grand juries were convened in the Seminole cases; the first one was dismissed when charges of bribery surfaced. The second returned indictments that were summarily dismissed for various reasons. A special county judge claimed he lacked jurisdiction in the cases. A special district judge threw out a forgery case because the prosecution was unprepared.[55] The failure to complete prosecution in these cases led to the appointment of James E. Gresham as tribal attorney in 1909. The sale of minors' land through the courts had not been slowed by the prosecution of cases. Congress appropriated Seminole funds to pay Gresham's salary. Gresham was sent to Wewoka, but his ability to protect his clients was limited. Congressional money to prosecute the Thirty Thousand Land Suits held narrow conditions. The suits had to be heard in federal courts and could only invalidate sales prior to 1908. The suits he brought were paid by the allottee because they were heard in state courts. Gresham discovered numerous cases of forgery, but the Indians could not afford court costs and would not testify in a white mans' court. By the end of 1914 Gresham had convicted over a dozen prominent Seminole citizens and freedmen who assisted them. He won convictions for using the mails to defraud in cases where speculators advertised land under a forged title. Some people who held illegal titles decided to quit claim their deeds. Most of the cases involved inherited land or unrestricted allotments of freedmen and mixed-bloods. The Thirty Thousand Land Suits canceled deeds secured illegally in 1906 and 1907 to restricted land.[56]

Debo reached a conclusion about the final impact of the Thirty Thousand Land Suits. The courts upheld the right of the government to restrict land and to its claim of guardianship of the Indians. Quit claims and cancellations of illegal deeds restored millions of dollars worth

of restricted land to allottees. Debo could not determine with any degree of accuracy how much a land speculator profited when the land involved inheritance sales or agency settlements because the cases were dismissed. Likewise in cases where restrictions were removed after 1908, Debo found there was no way to determine the percentage the courts declared valid.[57]

Debo used the data she uncovered about Seminole County to further her study of corruption. In McCurtain County, where full-blood Choctaws held land, district agents found problems with guardianships. There was a generous amount of timberland and inherited land sold. The Choctaw-Chickasaw Supplement Agreement stipulated that upon the death of an allotted Indian, restrictions could be removed from the homestead but left the status of surplus land unchanged. Later the courts ruled the entire allotment was alienable. Citizens in this county accused the federal district agents of interference in local affairs, so Kelsey tried to go about his work as inconspicuously as possible. Kelsey allowed Barnard's department to handle the situation. She sent Stolper to Idabel hoping Oklahomans would take pride in protecting the innocent Indian minors if a state agency could triumph over the evils of the guardians. County attorney, G. M. Barrett, explained it would be impossible to convict any local people of wrongdoing. Stolper determined he would seek compensation instead of court convictions. Stolper and Barrett met with Barnes, a county judge, and offered him immunity if he would settle the claim. During the month of Stopler's work defendants sought out the office of district agent, Gratton McVay, to quit claim their deeds. The office recovered over four million acres of land and about $30,000 in cash for minors. Three purchasers of vast amounts of timberland agreed to have their titles reviewed by an arbitration board (unpublished manuscript, 419).

Barrett decided to prosecute regardless of Stolper's agreements with the clients. Barrett indicted about one hundred McCurtain County residents, including Barnes. A district judge dismissed the cases on technicalities. Charges were brought against notary publics who verified blank documents, but criminal prosecution never occurred (unpublished manuscript, 421).

An arbitration board made up of Kelsey, Stopler, and Thomas C. Humphrey, a former federal district judge, met to make decisions on seventy titles. Debo edited the details of the transactions, but they provide an interesting commentary. Whitehead was an agent of the Southwestern Surety Company of Dennison, Texas. Whitehead gained title to land through Judge Barnes' court. Guardians of full-bloods purchased bonds at Southwestern Surety. They deposited the money from land sales with Whitehead who put it in his own account in the First State Bank of Idabel. Barnes founded the bank in Idabel and held a sizeable interest during the time he was on the bench. Whitehead used this account to fund his land transactions. Whitehead provided the trust company with a bond. Agency officials visited Dennison and audited the accounts of minors where Southwestern Surety furnished bonds. The investigators found over $30,000 deposited in the Idabel bank; the amount had been credited to the guardians. Whitehead did not deny the findings, in fact he explained he could account for the money in each instance; he had protected the minors by his bond to the company. He did object to the investigators use of the word, "recovered" in reference to the deposit (unpublished manuscript, 422). In the final analysis the arbitration board did not publish anything about its findings. Debo decided the creation of this board was seen as a triumph for Indian minors, but it must have failed in its duty to recover losses. Local newspapers indicated the arbitration board approved all titles.[58]

Debo concluded the McCurtain County investigation failed to produce the expected results, but it had a collateral effect. In Adair County the local community cleared up a similar situation. Several citizens of Adair County, its county treasurer, (McCloud), Linus Williams and F. A. Blanck,(Stilwell attorneys) and Judge Corley were accused of fraud. Their case involved over $6,000 in oil royalties held by the agency and released to illiterate full-blood heirs on the death of Sallie Mink. W. W. Hastings, Cherokee tribal attorney, charged McCloud, (appointed by Corley as administrator of Mink's estate), Williams, Blanck, and Corley with conspiracy to defraud the Mink heirs of $6,233.62 in royalties. The county commissioners called for the removal of Judge Corley. A grand jury indicted all of the men for conspiracy; they indicted Blanck for forgery, Williams for bribery and perjury, and Corley for accepting a bribe. A special county judge, Joe M. Lynch, tried to derail the trial by disallowing McLoud's report. County court Judge John A. Goodall heard the case and all were convicted. Conspiracy was a misdemeanor under Oklahoma law; they were fined $50! Before the removal case progressed, settlements were made and the forgery, perjury, and bribery charges were dropped. Corley resigned and the charges against him were dismissed (unpublished manuscript, 425). The money lost in the Mink's case was recovered from the guardians. Goodall finished Corley's term and revolutionized judicial practices in the probate courts. Changes in the system included the following: bonding companies given the power to sue defaulting guardians and a requirement that guardians file full reports. Goodall ruled that guardians could be held accountable for the loss of money through mismanagement. This attracted much attention in the eastern part of the state.[59] Speculators like Williams, McCloud, and Blanck faced criminal charges. McCloud's conviction for embezzlement of county funds

and for handling fraudulent tax receipts resulted in his incarceration (unpublished manuscript, 427).

Debo found the public's reactions to these investigations troubling. Initially the public supported government prosecution of the suits launched against illegal practices, particularly the Thirty Thousand Land Suits. Oklahomans condemned those who created problems with clear title to land. Many saw these problems as a real hindrance to development and favored the resolution of the legal suits. The Muskogee Phoenix called for stringent punishment of the wrongdoers claiming grafters' practices were as illegal as robbing the Indians at gunpoint. Some segments of society expressed cynicism. They believed the Indian population would never be able to recover these lands. The McAlester Daily News compared the situation to the Dutch purchases of Manhattan Island for far less money than it was worth (unpublished manuscript, 377). A large segment of the public eventually placed blame on government interference. They did not consider speculators as grafters or the practices they perfected illegal or fraudulent. The newspapers carried stories with triumphant headlines of Senator Owen's successful attempt at cutting off congressional appropriations to the Department of Justice, rendering them incapable of conducting investigations (unpublished manuscript, 382). In Adair County there was no widespread support for the defendants. The citizens did not accept the practice of fraud involving Indian guardians. The counties Debo chose to highlight did bring about a slowing of abuse in the wake of the law of 1908. These counties were examples of stringent efforts to hold guardians accountable and to put an end to the losses inflicted on the Indians at the hands of the unscrupulous.[60]

There was an ongoing battle between federal officials acting as guardians over the Indians and those who wanted the release of land held by the Indians so it could be sold and

taxed. This struggle manifested itself in many ways that added difficulties to a federal Indian policy already plagued with problems.

NOTES

[1]McDonnell, The Dispossession of the American Indian 1887-1934,123.

[2]Debo, And Still The Waters Run, 126.

[3]Hoxie, The Final Promise, x.

[4]Hoxie, The Final Promise, 48.

[5]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 133.

[6] Ibid., 137.

[7] Ibid., 101.

[8]Brown, "A Progressive from Oklahoma," 237.

[9]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 175.

[10]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 137.

[11] Ibid., 141.

[12] Ibid., 65.

[13] Ibid., 137.

[14]Debo, And Still the Waters Run,148.

[15] Ibid., 150.

[16] Ibid., 154.

[17] Ibid., 159.

[18] Ibid., 175.

[19] Ibid., 159.

[20] Ibid., 164.

[21] Ibid., 173.

[22] Ibid., 167.

[23] Ibid., 170.

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[24] Ibid., 167.

[25] Ibid., 179.

[26] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 101.

[27] Ibid., 181.

[28] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 182; Goble, The Story of Oklahoma, 428.

[29] Ibid., 184.

[30] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 187.

[31] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 238. To find out how Barnard continued once the funds were cut off, see page 255.

[32] Ibid., 357.

[33] Debo, And Still the Waters Runs, 199.

[34] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 203.

[35] Oral history, James Gibson, Muskogee attorney, folder 41, Box 29, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[36] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 203.

[37]Oral history, Box 29, Interview with James Gibson, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[38]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 205.

[39]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 206.

[40]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 207.

[41] Ibid., 208.

[42] Ibid., 208.

[43] Ibid., 210.

[44]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 213.

[45]Hoxie, The Final Promise, 216.

[46]Video, Indians, Outlaws and Angie Debo, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[47]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 98.

[48] Ibid., 210, 215, 216.

[49]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 214.

[50] Ibid., 315.

[51]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 172. Muskogee Phoenix, November 20, 22, 1907, Newspaper Archives, OHS.

[52] Ibid., 219.

[53] Ibid., 222.

[54]Letter Brandt to Debo, December 27, 1939, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., 224.

[57] Ibid., 216.

[58]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 227.

[59]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 229.

[60]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 229.

PART 3

POLITICS WITHIN THE STATE

Debo documented what she called a vicious battle between those who wanted to eliminate all protection of Indians in Oklahoma and those who were entrusted to continue federal oversight in chapter 9 "Despoilers and Defenders." A battle raged between the federal and state government, and Indian and white communities alike felt the effects of the ongoing struggle. In this chapter Debo presented the changes brought about by the elimination of federal district agents. She focused on the work of tribal attorneys who investigated probate courts, particularly Mott's findings regarding the guardianship records relating to Indian minors. Debo discussed government decisions concerning the sale of the unallotted land and the sale of the Choctaw-Chickasaw timber lands. She explained government changes regarding mineral rights. In order to indicate the scope of the problem of federal oversight, Debo included information about federal decisions concerning competency, the territorial school system, and mismanagement within the Indian office.

The act of 1908, removing restrictions, provided local representatives who could investigate the conduct of guardians, report problems to the probate court, and prosecute criminal or civil cases to protect minors.[1] The local representatives, federal district agents, were seen as outsiders–interlopers who interfered in local matters. In the 1911-1912 congressional session, Oklahoma's Democratic representatives persuaded enough congressional members to eliminate the district agents by cutting their appropriations. The rationale behind this action included a widespread belief that the state's local courts and the Department of Charities and Corrections could provide protection for minors. The work of district agents was taken over by "field clerks" within the Indian office, but they did not handle probate cases. The Interior Department continued probate work

through tribal attorneys established by the Five Tribes Act. W. M. F. Semple and Thomas Latham represented the Choctaws. James E. Gresham served the Seminoles; M. L. Mott defended the Creek interests in probate matters by an additional contract; W. W. Hastings had a similar arrangement with the Cherokees. Tribal funds paid the salaries of these attorneys. They defended restricted and unrestricted allottees in the county courts.[2]

Debo reported on many probate cases. Muskogee County, with a large number of wealthy Creek inhabitants, had the highest number of cases of all the counties. In 1915 the probate court administrated estates valuing $100 to $150 million. In 1918 the judge supervised the administration of 1,500 guardians over 9,000 wards (unpublished manuscript, 583).

As defender of Creek interests in probate matters, Mott approached his challenge with vigor. He sent fifteen men into eight counties of the old Creek Nation to investigate guardianship records. He examined almost 7,000 cases of which about 2,300 contained complete records. Mott's findings revealed a significant disparity between the cost of administration by professional guardians, and the cost by natural and white guardians. Professional guardians of Indian children absorbed 19 percent of the total amount of money expended; whereas natural and white guardianship took 3 percent and 2 percent respectively. Mott investigated thirty other states and found such costs averaged about 3 percent. Mott's report contained limitations; it did not have the data available from the disposition of land because guardians did not have to account for it. Only the receipts and expenditures found in the documents could be used to calculate expenditures. Mott did not hesitate to publish the widespread federal neglect he encountered. In Wagoner County records indicated county administration had not protected minor allottees at all.

Of all counties investigated, the administrative costs were highest in Wagoner County. This report became the cornerstone for those attempting to protect the minor allottee.[3]

The Democrats in congress refused to accept the findings of Mott's 1912 report and claimed it was a Republican ploy to preserve appointees in the face of an incoming Democratic Administration under President Woodrow Wilson. The Oklahoma congressional delegation made their intentions known to the Oklahoma legislature. They would be reluctant to pass legislation promoting development of the state with this kind of adverse publicity. Senator Robert L. Owen spoke of continuing congressional mandates if reform was not enacted. At the same time, the Oklahoma legislature was embroiled with Kate Barnard and the Department of Charities and Corrections and would eventually cut her funding. This would effectively eliminate the only state agency directed to protect minors.[4]

Oklahoma Governor Lee Cruce implored the legislature to enact legislation to address the probate issues. To no avail, the legislature did not accept the responsibility of reforming the system. Mott and E. P. Hill, chairman of the House Judicial Committee, drafted legislation correcting the practices of guardianship and inherited property by full-bloods. The bill was passed in the house, but J. T. McIntosh of Durant and his Committee on Probate Procedure killed the bill in the senate.[5]

The prevalent attitude among members of the Oklahoma legislature was resistance to legislative change. They refused to accept responsibility for protection of the Indians. Mott issued an unofficial report to the commissioner of Indian Affairs reflecting his pessimism. Since the full-bloods remained politically insignificant, legislators focused on the large, politically active white population. Even with recent convictions against illegal

practices, little sentiment emerged to protect Indians. Not one sector of society condemned the illegal practices publicly; members of the Oklahoma congressional delegation, newspaper editors, leaders of civic organizations, and church leaders remained silent. Public opinion accepted the rationale of the speculators, guardians, and others involved in fraudulent land practices (unpublished manuscript, 447).

Mott believed he could use probate supervision as a catalyst for reform. He thought the legislature would address the issue of reform. He investigated and reported on areas of probate abuse that had not been covered by his first report. He took up the question of approval of full-blood sales of inherited land. W. W. Hastings testified before the state senate committee. Testimony revealed twelve Cherokee counties experienced problems with inherited land to a greater extent than Mott reported. When the legislature took no action, Mott made a suggestion to the secretary of the Interior that congress needed to enact a federal law to deal with these cases. The cases were within federal jurisdiction because the act of 1908 gave probate courts the power to approve conveyances of full-blood heirs. Congressional legislation could determine the rules for probate procedures (unpublished manuscript, 454).

Mott's strength became apparent in his work in the old Creek Nation. Debo credited him with the ability to analyze the legal problems and attempt to correct them through legislation. Mott hoped the Oklahoma legislature would address the problems, but when they failed to act, he took his case to congress. A special session called after Wilson's inauguration passed the Indian Appropriations Act granting funds for the employment of probate attorneys.[6] Mott's attorneys took on the responsibility of

checking the expenditures of guardians. They could object to certain expenditures and could take the instances before a judge to disallow them (unpublished manuscript, 457).

Judges who did not want to cooperate with Mott's recommendations began to retire in 1913. Many probate judges followed the new procedures. County judges implemented the rules of procedure from Mott's drafted bill that the Oklahoma legislature failed to pass and pledged cooperation.[7] The rules obliged guardians to file annual and semi-annual reports of finances, the condition of the minor, his home, and schooling. If guardians did not file the reports, they could be removed. The court announced set days for the guardians' reports to be presented to the court as well as establishing set days for the sale of land. Oil and gas leases were sold to the highest bidder in an open court of law. Safeguards were incorporated into investing practices. If the will of a restricted full-blood concerning land was to be admitted into the probate court, either the tribal attorney or the department of the Interior had to be notified previously. The judges' compliance to these rules was a voluntary gesture initially, but later the Oklahoma State Supreme Court adopted the rules for all probate courts to use to determine procedure in the courts.[8]

The Oklahoma legislature continued to wrangle over probate issues and failed in the 1915 session to provide adequate laws. The house defeated a senate bill providing attorneys for Barnard's department. Only one portion of the probate procedure concerning full-blood sale of inherited lands was enacted into law. This law was anything but progressive because it ended the safeguards set up by Mott's rules for probate cases. With this legislative backtracking, the Indian office decided to appeal the Kight case to the Oklahoma Supreme Court. H. Tom Kight defeated County Judge Walter W. Shaw and immediately ended the practice of following Mott's probate rules. He prohibited the

probate attorneys from appearing in his court to represent the 1,500 cases of the Cherokees still pending. The probate attorney, Owen Owen, appealed the case to the Oklahoma Supreme Court. The court decided it had the right to determine rules for the probate courts, and the probate attorneys had the right to defend the Cherokees as wards of the federal government. The 1915 ruling in the Kight case adopted the validity of the probate rules and made them binding.[9]

The Board of Indian Commissioners lost hope in reform on the state level and called for congress to reestablish its jurisdiction over the Indians in Oklahoma. This call brought about final congressional action. Congressional appropriations for the probate attorneys and the work begun by Mott and completed under Secretary Sells ended federal involvement into probate matters.[10] The federal government continued its administration of tribal affairs within the State of Oklahoma as it closed out the estates of the Indians. As more land was released from restrictions, fewer individuals fell under federal administration. The Indian Appropriations Act of 1908 permitted the government to sell the public buildings belonging to the tribes. State and county governments purchased many of the buildings.[11] The city of Okmulgee bought the Creek capital building in 1919 for $100,000 (unpublished manuscript, 492).

In 1913 Indian Agent, Dana Kelsey, planned to ask for specific congressional appropriations of $50,000 to fund probate cases. Kelsey had not been interested in probate matters until now. Cato Sells, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, raised the estimated amount to $75,000. The Oklahoma State Bar Association adopted a resolution at a convention in Oklahoma City calling for reform in probate matters. It was the first announcement from a group with such political clout.[12]

Kelsey appointed H. T. Crittenden to check the guardians' reports. Their report reviewed a month's worth of work; they checked 950 cases, 713 guardians had not turned in their reports. In many cases reports had not been filed since statehood. The reports revealed extensive irregularities. Minors lost their allotments when their guardians sold their land and spent the money. Often the guardian was a white or mixed-blood father, not a professional guardian. Often a relative would get a deed from the guardian, mortgage the land for as high a figure as possible, then give the money to the guardian by a previous agreement. The money was lost to the minor. In cases such as this, a quitclaim deed could be secured from the buyer, but the land was still mortgaged. Officials working the probate cases found additional attorneys were needed. Additional attorneys were appointed as guardians in these cases, but it was difficult to find local attorneys to fill the role because they could make more money defending the original guardian. Federal attorneys were requested (unpublished manuscript, 465).

In 1914 and 1915 congress appropriated funds to employ additional probate attorneys. Eight were funded in 1914, and twenty were appointed in 1915, six for Cherokee counties, six for the Creeks and Seminoles, five for the Choctaws and three for the Chickasaws. Tribal contracts with attorneys expired in June of 1914, so probate cases were funded by federal appropriations thereafter. The accomplishments of these attorneys suggested an enormous effort. There were 52,000 cases pending in the courts. Of these, 213 civil actions involving $1.5 million dollars and 37 criminal actions resulted in the removal of over 600 guardians. The courts filed over 700 new bonds covering over $600,000 and saved minors close to a half million dollars.[13]

The Indian office wanted the probate judges to serve as examples of good character. Debo presented an interesting example of the selection process for the judicial positions. In the fall of 1913 W. B. Mitchell, former Garvin County Judge, applied for the job of probate judge. Mitchell was an intermarried Choctaw who had lived in the Chickasaw Nation for the last twenty-three years. Mitchell and several others were accused of altering court records. The charges claimed the defendants planned to defraud an insurance company in a guardianship case. It is unclear if charges were substantiated or if any action was taken against Mitchell, but the character of those seeking probate positions was questionable (unpublished manuscript, 466).

In 1912 Mitchell won a seat in the Oklahoma legislature and fought against funding Kate Barnard's department. Mitchell made himself known to congress the year before when he wrote a letter criticizing the federal district agents and questioning their moral integrity. When Mitchell was elected to the state legislature in 1912, W. R. Wallace assumed his position as county judge. Wallace began to cooperate with the federal officials. Garvin County was located in the old Chickasaw Nation and was rich agriculturally. The Chickasaw probate attorney found a large number of children's allotments had been sold by their white or mixed-blood fathers. When professional guardians were involved, they had numerous children as their wards and received thousands of dollars when the children's allotments were sold. Many of these guardians were charged in Wallace's court with mismanaging the ward's money.

During the time of this investigation and subsequent criminal proceedings, Mitchell was being considered for the position of probate judge. He had gathered a number of recommendations from people in high places all of whom spoke of him as a loyal member

of the Democratic Party. Robert L. Williams, then Justice of the Oklahoma Supreme Court, was among his supporters. Kate Barnard and W. R. Wallace were the sole opponents to Mitchell's appointment. She pointed out he was under indictment for irregularities involving a guardianship case. Wallace referred to the ongoing investigations in Garvin County and Mitchell's letter to congress in 1912 trying to discredit district agents. County Attorney Stanley, the editor of The Pauls Valley Free Lance, and some of the citizens of Pauls Valley sent a note to Sells warning him to beware of the powerful endorsements that could cloud his judgement in this instance. Local opposition brought cries of federal interference; but The Pauls Valley Free Lance condemned the guardian frauds and published the facts.[14]

W. H. Murray, a member of the Oklahoma delegation in congress, expressed concern because he was unfamiliar with Mitchell's record as county judge. He wanted the record thoroughly investigated before Mitchell was considered. Mitchell did not receive the appointment as probate judge (unpublished manuscript, 468).

Debo concluded reform was difficult to accomplish for economic reasons primarily. Her data disclosed figures validating her assumptions. In 1912, out of 1,691 probate cases, fourteen minors owned estates worth more than $100,000 each. Two hundred minors held property valued at $25,000 each. Oil discoveries enriched the estates of many minors in this area. Guardians and their attorneys enriched themselves, but the wealth eventually filtered down into the local businesses influencing all aspects of the community. To reform the system meant a redirection of economic gain through legal means.[15] The Sapulpa Herald published figures of far greater wealth. It reported 1,614 estates valued at 10 to 15 million and 60 estates averaged $225,000. The paper alleged

the wealthy guardianships were commonly used as a form of political payback (unpublished manuscript, 458). County judges used the wealthy guardianships to construct political machines; they provided supporters with guardians while opposing sides fought for a similar position to gain from the system.[16]

Debo credited Mott's 1912 report with stimulating the implementation for reform, but Mott was sacrificed in return. Because of the elimination of practices that had enriched so many locals, because of the national embarrassment he caused Oklahoma, because he was responsible for the prosecution of Governor Haskell and Tams Bixby in Creek townsite schemes, Mott was a despised man. He was in the middle of the Wagoner County investigation when he was terminated. The report he filed of Wagoner County's investigation fit the model for many similar situations. A district judge condemned fraudulent guardians. The defendants were outstanding individuals within the community, and were supported in their defense by the local bar association, and were characterized as victims by the local media. The defendants were acquitted of all charges when funds evaporated, and juries could not be called. Mott's term expired at this point in the Wagoner County cases. He was considered an outcast in the community. Locals did not think he belonged in Oklahoma; he did not own one bit of property in the state.[17]

Debo commented on this statement and must have found it implausible in lieu of the many federal officials who had taken advantage of the situation in the former Indian Territory to gain land at the expense of others.[18] Charles D. Carter protested to Secretary Lane against Mott's reappointment. With Carter, the rub was Mott's loyalty to the Republican Party; he was sure a Democrat of good quality could be found to replace Mott. Many charged that Mott was so disliked by the judges that cooperation was no

longer possible. Debo concluded Secretary Lane feared probate reform would falter unless Mott was replaced.[19] Mott noted in a letter to Sells that the threat to reform did not emanate from him but rather from the unpopularity of the plan itself (unpublished manuscript, 473).

The person who replaced Mott was Judge R. C. Allen who had worked on the Wagoner County cases and who was personally recommended by Mott. Prior to assuming the new position, Allen had extensive land dealings through the Coweta Realty Company. His purchases occurred after the expiration of Creek restrictions in 1907 based on the unconstitutionality of the McCumber Amendment.[20] Debo claimed part of Allen's acquisitions derived from inherited land of full-bloods that had not been approved by the secretary, a violation of the Five Tribes Act. Debo's research revealed Allen had been a defendant in 73 cases of the Thirty Thousand Land Suits, at least half of which were awaiting decisions when he was appointed. Furthermore, she found information that constituted a conflict of interest. J. Haden Linebaugh, United States Attorney for the Eastern District, consulted Judge Allen in his official capacity when he was deciding whether to drop prosecution concerning unrestricted allottees (unpublished manuscript, 477).

Moty Tiger and other Creek leaders initially approved of Allen's appointment, but they suspected a conflict of interest as time passed and details emerged. The federal government was in the process of prosecuting Allen who was the probate attorney for the Creeks. S. M. Brosius, an official of the Indian Rights Association, agreed with the Creek assessment of Allen and added his concern about Allen's association with John S. Bilby, a former associate of Senator Owen in the Indian Land and Trust Company. This company

purchased land in Wagoner County whose title was under court review. In 1916 and 1917 Oklahoma House Representative, J. C. Davenport, tried to get congress to end appropriations in an effort to force Allen from the position. Davenport exposed a 1910 loan of $10,000 made by Bilby to Allen when he was campaigning for district judge. Following the loan Bilby made an additional $5000 campaign contribution to Allen. At the time Bilby was implicated in thirty-nine suits pending in the same district court. Davenport provided more documents against Allen that Debo elaborated on in the unpublished manuscript. In 1909 Allen arranged the marriage of an underage Black girl, then gained title to her land. Later Oklahoma courts ruled marriage did not confer majority, so the transaction was illegal. The document stated Allen, as district judge, purchased the remaining portion of the girl's land two years later when her guardian sold it to him. Allen was able to gain the remaining portion by showing the county judge in Wagoner County his first bill of sale (unpublished manuscript, 478). Debo reported Allen served the Creeks well in probate matters, but the cloud over his land transactions damaged his reputation.[21]

National attention to the problems in Oklahoma influenced the 1914 Annual Lake Mohonk conference. It decided to support the findings of Warren K. Moorehead, member of the Board of Indian Commissioners, who made a personal visit to Oklahoma in 1913. The board did not want to make Moorehead's report public for fear of antagonizing the Oklahomans he had visited. Moorehead finally published the report at his own expense. Moorehead condemned those who plundered but also exposed the impact of corruption on Oklahoma's citizenry. Kate Barnard gave a speech at the 1914 conference calling for continuing exposure of the problems.[22]

To further demonstrate how federal oversight worked, Debo included information about the sale of land. The government had to arrange for the sale of the unallotted land. The sale of this land lasted three years from 1910-1913. The Five Tribes Act allowed the Choctaw-Chickasaw freedmen to purchase about twenty-one thousand acres. The remainder of land was sold at auction.[23] The department sold off the land in small tracts. In 1910 the department paid the Choctaw-Chickasaws about $40,000, the Cherokees $20; the Creeks, $1054; and the Seminoles about $100 (unpublished manuscript, 490).

By 1912 the government was ready to complete the distribution of tribal funds. The law suits causing the delay in the allotment had been settled, and unallotted land was in the process of being sold. Debo elaborated on each tribe, the difficulty each had with the distribution, and how much each tribe was given.[24] One of the interesting stories Debo edited from the finished manuscript was the experience of the Seminole Tribe. In 1913 the government began to make the payments. The Seminoles did not have a great deal of land or a large population. When the government distributed the trust funds, each Seminole received a fairly large amount of money, over $700 each over a period of nine years. By 1920 the estate was closed but when oil was discovered in 1934, an additional $35 was distributed. Debo's comment reflected the pattern of many tribal members. She wondered why the Seminoles who had so much money credited to their account could not afford to pay court costs in 1910 when probate attorney Gresham was prosecuting forgery cases. They lost their land because they could not afford to have the cases finalized. Debo placed the blame directly with the federal government for the slow process of distribution.[25]

The total distribution of tribal funds to the Seminole members amounted to half a million dollars. The inhabitants of Seminole County became rich overnight. Seminole Chief, John Brown, and his brother, Jackson Brown, the national treasurer, owned and managed the Wewoka Trading Company. The chief's sons bought a store from their father and called it "Brown Brothers Trading Company." Congress began to receive letters from merchants in Wewoka and Seminole complaining that the Brown family was monopolizing the Indian business. Field Clerk, Fred S. Cook, and Arthur T. Bagley from the department of Justice, conducted an investigation. The investigation uncovered an interesting scenario. When congress passed the appropriations bill for the distribution of funds, Chief Brown called his sons and gave them the word to proceed with a new scheme. The Brown stores sold credit coupons that consumers could use as cash. The credit coupons could be redeemed when the government distributed their funds. The goods in the Brown's stores were expensive, but the merchandise was discounted by about 20 percent. Jackson Brown readily acknowledged his involvement. He issued the coupons while waiting for the government payment but had issued too many because he thought he might get more money. Brown used the tribal light horsemen (an auxiliary police force) to collect money, and he threatened those who did not pay him. Many Indians returned to the Browns' store to redeem their coupons, so extortion was kept to a minimum. Once these facts were made public, the federal government began to protect the issuance of federal payments (unpublished manuscript, 509).

The majority of the Choctaw-Chickasaw timber lands were sold between 1914 and 1916.[26] When the government sold the land, it was divided into 24 tracts of between 15,000 and 124,000 acres. They were sold under sealed bids but only one bid came in for

each tract. The government considered the bids suspicious because they were so close in each case, just above the appraised value. The government did not accept the bids (unpublished manuscript, 494). Initially the department had segregated the timber lands with the idea of keeping them as a forest reserve. The Choctaws rejected the proposal because the full-bloods settled in this area when they were removed and desired to choose allotments near their homes. The state expected to have the land available for exploitation and did not find the prospect of a vast expanse of tax exempt land acceptable (unpublished manuscript, 493). Those who planned to exploit the forest complained about the government plan. Congress would not go along with Interior Secretary Hitchcock's idea of a reserve, so the matter was dropped. Eventually about 1.3 million acres was withdrawn from allotment.[27]

During the time this land was under federal control, lumber companies took millions of feet of timber illegally. The Interior Department had no way to police the timber land. In fact the federal government had no legal authority over the land. If individuals were caught with the timber, it was difficult to prove where the cut timber came from. Inspector Wright sent surveyors to investigate the stories he heard about the thefts. The surveyors found several sawmills on government land and about sixty indictments were brought against timber thieves. Debo hinted the indictments produced few prosecutions in the matter (unpublished manuscript, 493).

In addition to timber lands, mineral rights had to be settled. The Curtis Act allowed the tribes to retain mineral rights from their lands. Creeks and Cherokees in their supplemental agreements repealed this provision and had the minerals allotted with the land. The Choctaws and Chickasaws had little patience about the delay in selling their

mineral lands. The Atoka Agreement reserved the coal and asphalt rights, and the royalties collected were used for tribal schools. The Supplemental Agreement changed that provision to the sale of the coal and asphalt land with profits divided among the tribal members.[28] Congress repealed the Supplemental Agreement with the Five Tribes Act that stipulated the minerals would not be sold until the thirty-year leases expired (unpublished manuscript, 494).

The Indians thought the State of Oklahoma would buy the land in the interest of schools, charitable institutions, and in the production of cheap fuel. The legislature did not act on the purchase of the land. The Indians could not sell to private individuals, yet the federal government showed no interest in buying the land and the state failed to complete the transaction. Debo suggested the lack of interest on the part of federal and state governments showed a definite preference to those who leased the land.[29] Squatters on the mineral lands joined together to resist paying rent or to vacate the land. In 1908 attorneys McCurtain and Hill took them to court for trespassing, and the tribes won the case in the federal district court. Over time, Inspector Wright collected about $126,000 in rent for the years 1911 and 1912 (unpublished manuscript, 495).

The Five Tribes Act called for an investigation of the value of the minerals, and the appraisal was concluded in 1909. The estimated value was about $12 million in coal plus the surface valued at $6 million. The Indian office did not want to sell in spite of the appraisal. Indian Commissioner, R. G. Valentine, and the Interior Secretary, J. G. Wright, decided to sell the surface and hold the coal for royalty. The Indians did not like this piecemeal approach. In 1912 congress passed legislation to sell the surface. It took three years (from 1914 to 1917) to complete the sale. By 1919 the sale of unallotted timber and

mineral land brought in $19 million for the Choctaws and Chickasaws[30] (unpublished manuscript, 497).

Debo concluded the basis for the Indians' unhappiness over the sale of their unallotted lands evolved from their distrust of federal administration of their finances. In 1908 Senator Owen brought attention to the expenditures of the Five Tribes. At his request, congress passed a resolution for the secretary of the Interior to provide an accounting of tribal money over the previous decade beginning with the Curtis Act in 1898.[31] The report confirmed the worst fears of the Indians. The federal government was mismanaging their money. Owen exposed the mismanagement but was unable to influence congress to correct the problems (unpublished manuscript, 504).

The federal government used the tribal funds to pay for the various agencies developed to handle the transfer of land and for the costs of the process. The Indians did not want to transfer their land to individual allotments; they agreed to it through agreements that specified the federal government would bear the costs of the land transfer. When the government took control of tribal finances and when the immense wealth of the mineral lands began to compensate tribal funds, the government began to use the funds even though unauthorized. Later, congress appropriated tribal funds for various uses. The department of Interior published extensive annual reports detailing the expenditures and receipts of agencies working in Indian Territory.[32] These annual reports, prepared under the direction of Kelsey and Wright, were not helpful in assessing the mismanagement problem because they did not distinguish between tribal income and federal gratuities (unpublished manuscript, 504).

During the federal period, the mining industry began to fill the federal coffers with large royalties from the mineral lands of the tribes. From 1898-1899 the U.S. Treasury realized $110 million dollar profit; the peak year was 1903-1904 with $277 million dollars, and in 1907-1908, the royalties were $273 million dollars. The money was credited to the tribes. At the same time of the vast income generated from mineral lands, the tribes were expending huge sums of money in the courts, defending their rolls and property. The Oklahoma congressional delegation worked hard to secure legislation requiring the expenditure of tribal funds through specific appropriations. The secretary was required to present to the U.S. House of Representatives a full accounting of each tribe annually. With this legislation congress had set aside the tribal agreements made with the Dawes Commission concerning the federal government's offer to pay for the division of tribal estates (unpublished manuscript, 506).

On various occasions, agencies attempted to assess the conditions within the Indian office. In 1915 the Bureau of Municipal Research investigated the Indian office at the request of congress. This bureau called the accounting methods chaotic leaving to guesswork the amount of money collected, the origin of the money, and how it was spent. In 1927 the Institute of Government Research studied the Indian office. The report indicated there was no way to differentiate between tribal income and gratuity appropriations by the government. In 1928 the General Accounting Office investigated the tribal funds over the previous five years. Tribal funds were used to buy everything from office equipment to cars for field officers (unpublished manuscript, 508).

Debo documented the establishment of the Territorial School system under the Five Tribes Act of 1906. The secretary of the Interior ruled that he controlled Choctaw-

Chickasaw royalties and Cherokee and Creek revenues thereby investing him with the authority to manage the schools. In reality the secretary took control of the schools to benefit the white children and those of the freedman. Debo found the Indians had borne the entire costs of developing the school system and carried an unfair share of the maintenance of the facilities.[33]

The number of tribal schools decreased as revenues diminished and as the last of tribal property was sold. Federal support was required to maintain the schools. In 1910 the school system was reorganized. The federal government began to send children of the Five Tribes to the non-reservation boarding schools of Chilocco and Haskell. Chilocco was located in the west while Haskell was in Kansas. Denominational schools allowed Indians, particularly Choctaws, to attend upon payment of tuition. Full-bloods in the rural areas sent their children to very poorly maintained schools. Compulsory attendance was not enforced even though an Oklahoma law required it. The Cherokee tribal school system ended in 1913 when the federal government bought the last building. The government planned to turn it into a school for restricted orphans of the Five Tribes. The Creeks continued to educate their own children until 1928. Seminole schools ended in 1930, and in 1932 the federal government assumed control of the Choctaw and Chickasaw schools.

In the 1910 census, fully one-third of the Indian children were not enrolled in school. By then the Interior Department had maintained the schools for a decade. Many of these students in the federally-controlled schools began their education in tribal schools. The 1910 census takers conducted a decade-long statistical survey investigating the educational environment among Indians. It was the only survey taken concerning

education. The survey pointed to high illiteracy among the Choctaws by 1920. Part of the illiteracy could be explained because of the immigration of Mississippi Choctaws. Among full-bloods the illiteracy rate ran between 25 and 37%. Results of the survey confirmed Debo's conclusion. The full-bloods had not benefitted from the federal education policy to any measurable extent.[34]

Debo found evidence of an ineffective policy in the area of agriculture where programs to educate Indians about farming methods failed. She discovered a similar record in health-related issues such as treatment of tuberculosis and trachoma and areas including medicine and social work. Officials of the Indian office and Interior Department concluded the system of agricultural leasing established under the Act of 1908 explained the failure of Indians to farm. Some full-bloods did not know where their allotments were located; some refused to take them at all. An allottee could lease his surplus for five years and his homestead for a year without supervision. The means to gain this land included illegal contracts, forgery, or no lease at all. Unrestricted allottees lost close to a million dollars annually because of fraud, but few were convinced of the need to lease the land on a long term basis under the control of the department. In health-related issues the field workers were untrained in specific fields and often ended up in Indian offices filling out reports instead of helping those who needed care.[35]

Debo found that competency assumed enormous implications in the process of federal administration of the Indians. The government declared Indians competent on the basis of their ability to manage their own business. In determining competency the officials forgot the importance of the agreements between the government and the tribal members promising protection through restrictions and tax exemption. Robert G.

Valentine, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, began conducting competency commissions in 1910. As early as 1908 the district agents encouraged those Indians declared competent to apply for the removal of restrictions. Valentine's motive behind the commissions stemmed from a belief that this policy would relieve the land hunger of white settlers by making land available. After Valentine, Indian Commissioner Sells and Interior Secretary Lane aggressively pursued the competency policy. During the Wilson Administration, the department ended more restrictions than any other administration previously. In 1917-1918 competency commissions and the superintendent removed over 800 restrictions. In 1919 commissioner Sells lifted over 1,300 restrictions on adult half-bloods in a blanket ruling. The Act of 1908 placed only the homestead for the adult half-bloods under restriction . Many Indians did not ask to be declared competent because they feared their ability to compete with other Americans. Officials admitted forcing Indians to accept competency and removal of restrictions. The federal officers tried to rid themselves of the reputation of keeping Indians under their control to assure jobs for its agency. To assure the independence of the competent Indians, office employees dropped the cases of those Indians declared competent and did not follow up on their progress. Many of these Indians ended up in dire poverty, landless, and unemployable.[36]

The Indian office removed restrictions under certain conditions for two decades after the Act of 1908 diminishing the size of individual holdings. It advertised, sold the land, and invested the money in improvements of the homestead. The intent sounded wise but did not work well in reality. It tried to exchange large holdings for smaller ones that Indians could use. The idea of state development and a sizeable increase in the amount of taxable land motivated the Indian office to take these steps. It spent approximately half a

million dollars annually during this time, selling land, building houses and barns, buying cattle, and providing farm equipment. This expenditure did not make successful farmers of Indians. The Indians put tenants into their homes, ate or sold their livestock, mortgaged or lost their farm equipment, and lived in poverty.[37] Debo found the Indians did not acquire enough business insight to understand the need for accounting. If they asked about their finances, they were given a balance with no itemized statement to explain the mechanics of banking.[38]

From the data collected, Debo found few if any areas where federal policy successfully aided Indian assimilation into white society. Debo ended the chapter on federal administration within Oklahoma with a discussion on the handling of the oil resources. Most of the land where oil was discovered had passed into the hands of the white population. The Indian office held only a small proportion of land whose value had been enhanced by the discovery of oil. Yet the royalties were substantial, and the field workers concentrated on the 2 percent of Indians holding the oil-rich land instead of the other 98 percent. Debo admitted the Indian office acquired an over-all positive assessment on handling oil property fairly and efficiently.[39]

The struggle continued between those who reaped benefits from Indian lands, either through guardianship, leasing, or speculation, and those who attempted to protect them through government administration. A political change from Wilson's Democratic Administration to numerous Republican ones led to further struggle.

NOTES

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[1] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 180.

[2] Ibid., 231.

[3] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 234.

[4] Ibid., 236.

[5] Ibid., 237.

[6] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 241.

[7] Ibid., 244.

[8] Ibid., 245.

[9] Ibid., 250.

[10] Ibid., 257.

[11] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 260.

[12] Ibid., 243.

[13] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 249.

[14] Debo, And Still the Waters Run 248.

[15] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 243.

[16] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 306.

[17] Ibid., 250.

[18] Ibid., 252.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 253.

[9] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 239.

[23] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 260.

[24] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 266.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 260.

[27] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 78.

[28] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 35, 261.

[29] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 261.

[30] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 262.

[31] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 84.

[32] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 82.

[33] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 73.

[34] Ibid., 276.

[35] Ibid., 278.

[36] Ibid., 281.

[37] Ibid., 285.

[38] Ibid., 289.

[39] Ibid., 286.

PART 4

THE FIGHT FOR SPOILS

Up to this point Angie Debo had portrayed early Oklahoma history as the clash between land-hungry white settlers and a native population whose land was held under special restrictions. Her story revealed the greed of speculators, the unscrupulous practices of government officials, and the deceit of guardians. In chapter 11 of And Still The Waters Run, Debo devoted a portion of her discussion to the Indians' contribution to Oklahoma history. "The Indian's Place in Oklahoma" chronicles the amalgamation of two principal ethnic groups into a single state. At the time Debo wrote And Still the Waters Run, she concluded that the cultural union was one of the more successful aspects of twentieth century Oklahoma history. Debo declared a cultural acculturation had occurred between the two races; the white population incorporated some of the Indian traditions to underlay their own institutions. To some degree the Indian population adopted the dress, the religion, and the language of the majority.[1] Debo referred to a spiritual blending as well. A Choctaw expression for "Red People" was used to name the state. The Great Seal of the state depicted a star with an idealized symbol for Oklahoma Territory, a frontiersman standing in front of an industrial scene and an Indian with a hunting scene in the background and a figure of justice holding her scales in the center. The individual seal of the Five Civilized Tribes marked each of the star points.[2] As an assimilationist emblem, this symbol was a celebration of Euroamerican values. Debo herself did not question any of the principle tenets of assimilationist doctrine. In other words, she was a product of her time. Although she used elements of ethnohistory, her cultural bias was more evident in And Still the Waters Run than in her Choctaw and Creek histories.

The members of the Five Tribes shared many of the same values as did their white contemporaries. The Five Tribes valued and encouraged the education of their young

through a national school system. The Indian police force on the western reservations served as models for law enforcement. Citing honesty and hard work, the agent for the Kiowas, Comanches, and Wichitas suggested better pay for the Indian police officers. The Cheyenne-Arapaho agent reported few crimes. The courts of the Plains tribes had competent leaders such as Quanah Parker who conducted a fair and impartial judicial system. The tribal legal system controlled membership closely and valued citizenship highly. The Sequoyah Convention inspired the directives of the state constitution because members of the Five Tribes played an instrumental role in both conventions. Many provisions of the Oklahoma Constitution emerged directly from the experiences tied to the transfer of Indian land. Alien ownership of land was prohibited and corporate dealings in real estate were limited.[3]

Aside from the contributory nature of the native population to the development of the state, the overriding emphasis of the period focused on the vulnerability of this group when faced with white settlement and domination. Over time, as federal policies were implemented, a subtle change occurred. An earlier assessment that the Indian was capable of being transformed into a productive citizen through education and Christianization had proved fragile in an era marked by the emergence of scientific racism.[4] The majority population viewed the capacity for change with pessimism. In And Still the Waters Run Debo concentrated on the unfortunate aspects of a federal policy that failed in many areas. In her view the biggest deficiency of that policy was the unwillingness to evaluate the outcome. She claimed the federal policies were not reevaluated and altered until the 1930s.[5]

Debo described the efforts Indians made to recover their economic losses. They called on the federal government to uphold its agreements. When congress removed restrictions, the land became subject to taxation, a direct violation of the Choctaw-Chickasaw agreements. The Treaty Rights Association under the direction of D. H. Johnston fought for judicial clarification in the courts. In 1912 the U.S. Supreme Court decided that tax exemption was a vested right. Congress had violated the Fifth Amendment when it tried to alter that particular stipulation of Indian agreements. The Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole homesteads and the entire allotments of Choctaw and Chickasaw members were tax exempt if held by the original allottee. Under the agreements the allotment remained tax-exempt regardless of the congressional removal of restrictions. Congress further complicated the situation concerning taxation when the McCumber Amendment extended restrictions twenty-five years to 1931. Prior to passage of the McCumber Amendment, surplus land would have become alienable and taxable at the time of statehood. As Indians began to sue for reimbursement of past taxes, some Oklahoma counties amassed huge debts trying to meet their obligations. The Oklahoma congressional delegation tried but failed to pass appropriations to offset the state's losses.[6]

The Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled in 1920 on tax exempt status. Income from the allotted land was also tax exempt. Oklahoma lost approximately $100,000 annually from its inability to collect state income taxes from the allottees of the Five Tribes. The Indian office did pay federal income taxes from tribal funds until 1921 when the U.S. Attorney General ruled that the collection of federal income taxes was illegal. The U.S. government repaid the money with interest.[7]

The congressional partition law of 1918 decided the problems of inheritance. It authorized county courts to determine who were legitimate heirs of deceased allottees that held restricted lands. According to state statutes, district courts partitioned the estates inherited by full-bloods. In 1919 the U.S. Supreme Court in the Eastman Richards case decided in the event of the death of an allottee, the removal of restrictions occurred only for the purpose of sale. As long as the land remained unsold, it remained under restrictions. This gave the Department of Interior control over oil leasing inherited by full-bloods and supervision in the dispersal of royalties.[8]

Debo distinguished between the crimes of forgery and embezzlement, "grosser and slightly more dangerous forms of swindling," from those involving bad investments, guardians' misuse of funds, or the lawyers' high fees that she found more common and acceptable among the white population. The courts were congested beyond relief. Criminal convictions were rare. If the prosecution was successful it had been the result of a long, costly legal battle. In many cases settlements were made out of court. Because of the proliferation of illegality in the justice system, Debo found few lawyers had been disbarred for unprofessional conduct. In the final analysis she believed the Indian office protected the property of restricted allottees much better than did the administration through probate courts for restricted minors. The Oklahoma congressional delegation worked diligently to secure legislation placing final authority in the Indian office. In 1918 all but oil and gas leasing matters fell under its supervision.[9]

Even as the Indians recouped some of their economic losses, the political atmosphere changed in Oklahoma bringing in a whole new set of difficulties. The 1920 election placed Oklahoma in the Republican camp for the first time in its young history.

Although Republicans controlled Oklahoma Territory prior to statehood, the Democrats dominated the election of 1907. Democrats succeeded in winning most of the state races. They picked up a large majority in both houses of the state legislature and gained all but one member of the congressional delegation. Soon after, Democrats began to fight among themselves; the diverse mix of reformers that united to achieve victory could not deliver on campaign promises. After statehood in 1907, a national economic depression plunged farmers and labor into circumstances that no one could alter. The Socialist Party took hold in the state. Between 1907 and 1914 the Socialist vote doubled in Oklahoma. Branded as disloyal for its stand against World War I, state officials closed Socialist newspapers and imprisoned their leaders. The Socialist Party collapsed leaving its followers dissatisfied; they chose to vote Republican in the 1920 election to avenge the demise of their party. The 1920s political scene was wrought with turmoil.[10]

Better farm prices and wages resulting from the war did not last long when peacetime returned. A postwar recession led to an economic depression in Oklahoma due to its dependence on agriculture and oil. The 1920 election brought revolutionary changes to Oklahoma. Disillusioned with President Wilson's idealistic efforts to deal with world war and unity among nations, Oklahomans who suffered deplorable economic conditions voted against the Democrats and gave the minority party an opportunity to govern for the first time since statehood.[11] Debo's chapter 12, "The Battle for Spoils," documents the political changes in Oklahoma and the direction of federal policy (in the 1920s).

The 1920 election altered who would control political patronage in the state. Republican Jon Harreld replaced Senator Gore; Republicans won five of the eight house seats. On the state level, Republicans gained a majority in the house in the state

legislature. In explaining the minority victory, Debo conceded the occurrence of a national Republican landslide but believed other factors influenced the vote in Oklahoma. Jake Hamon of Ardmore held a national office in the Republican Party; he became a close acquaintance of Harry M. Daugherty who worked on Warren G. Harding's successful presidential campaign. Daugherty recruited Hamon to join the campaign. Hamon was an oil man, and the two men used their political talents and sizeable resources to rally Republican voters in Oklahoma. During Harding's Presidency, Daughtery served as Attorney-General and as "chief patronage dispenser." Hamon was influential in bestowing patronage throughout the state even after an untimely death. His mistress killed him; before he died he gave instructions about who should be appointed to various jobs. Republicans held no monopoly on dispensing patronage. When Democrats were in a position of power brokers, they bestowed the spoils of political victory with little restraint as Debo pointed out in this next section.

The 1920 election replaced Democrats with Republicans who then fought among themselves for the jobs governed by political patronage. "Appointments at the lower levels of the Indian office were almost entirely controlled by local congressmen and senators."[12] Congress passed the first national civil service act in 1883. The law identified some of the of jobs to be covered under the Pendleton Act. Few federal positions fell under the law initially. By the mid-twentieth century most of the federal jobs were governed by civil service examinations.[13] Despite legislation aimed at ending the spoils system, patronage continued to dominate political business in Oklahoma even though the civil service had been introduced into the Indian service by 1902. Debo claimed appointment by merit a mockery. In Oklahoma Republican employees gained their

positions from Northern politicians. Executive orders granted civil service status. Local Democrats appointed probate attorneys. The tenure of probate attorneys rested on the preference of political parties in power. The business of probate attorneys was hopelessly intertwined with those seeking guardianships. Local pressure for appointments as guardians was immense. The Indian Appropriation Act of 1924 tried to correct this problem. It required that attorneys take a civil service examination. Often the attorneys were appointed before the results were posted. Many kept their positions even if they failed the examination.[14]

Underlying political partisanship, numerous oil companies vying for available leases on oil-rich allotments competed with each other. The Indian office supervised oil leasing and held discretionary power over guardians of restricted Indians, so control of the office was important to the oil companies. The Indian office was only one agency from which the spoils emanated. The Oklahoma delegation wanted to secure the appointment of a local man as commissioner of Indian Affairs, but infighting eliminated that possibility. After Wilson's victory in 1912, the Oklahoma congressional delegation worked to consolidate offices in the Indian service. In 1914 congress abolished the position of commissioner of the Five Tribes and the Union Agent and created, in their place, a superintendent for the Five Tribes. The job of the Five Tribes Superintendency was an important one and became a political appointee. Job applicants besieged a newly-appointed superintendent even though many of the jobs were under civil service. New appointments were made to tribal offices; due to economic measures or dismissals, there were always new positions to be filled. Politicians considered appointments to the Justice Department, and those of probate attorneys, influential positions.[15]

In the state legislature, business ground to a halt as the newly elected Republicans joined disaffected Democrats in launching political investigations of Democratic party leaders. Little was accomplished in the way of meaningful legislation during this period.[16] Within two years Democrats had recaptured the house in the state legislature and the old pattern at statehood of a Democratic state in conflict with a national Republican administration eventually reemerged.[17]

Newspapers during this time period contained lurid accounts of the battles between attorneys and guardians of rival claimants, of charges of mismanagement, and of the recovery of large sums of money for successful plaintiffs. Oil often played an integral part in the plots. Woosey Deere was declared competent then incompetent as her court cases moved from one court to another. Katie Fixico held an allotment in Cushing. The revenues from it filled the pockets of the guardians and attorneys who attempted to represent her in the courts. Ledcie Stechi was an eight-year old Choctaw girl who spent her whole life in poverty while her guardian controlled her estate worth over $125,000 dollars. Leonard D. Ingram, a young freedman, spent his life fighting to get his estate out of the courts. His guardian and attorney through excessively high fees and salaries, used up most of the money in the estate (unpublished manuscript, 625). These are some of the true stories Debo eliminated due to publishing concerns over length. Debo used much of the information in the unpublished manuscript to substantiate her findings. She removed stories and examples that supported her data when length became an obstacle to publishing. She was comfortable editing out over 200 pages because she knew it would not alter the outcome of her presentation. The significance of the edited material rests in the sheer volume of material researched and by the numerous examples available for each

instance of misrepresentation. Even though sixty years has passed since And Still the Waters Run was published, the edited material deserves no less attention than the material she included. The material she edited is part of the written record. The information reflects what occurred in counties throughout Oklahoma. The court proceedings filled the pages of local newspapers. The fraudulent practices were as varied as those who were the perpetrators. Readers may find this additional documentation interesting. They may be enticed to investigate the history of Oklahoma more thoroughly.

The situation with Bacone College illustrated the power of oil-rich Indians. The American Baptist Home Mission Society supported Bacone College in Muskogee. A number of Indians attended classes at Bacone. The administration of the college approached wealthy Indians about a possible trust fund to endow the school. The trust funds would serve several purposes to benefit both parties. The funds could be used as income for the Indians throughout their lives. Upon their deaths the funds would revert back to the college providing badly needed revenue. Officials of the Indian office, Superintendent Gabe E. Parker, and Commissioner Charles S. Burke, supported the effort wholeheartedly. Parker had been educated at a tribal school and wished to provide good schooling for Indian people. Burke supported the trusts as a preferable way to protect Indian wealth from grafters and guardians. Starting in 1920 large sums of money were donated to Bacone College.[18]

Eastman Richards donated $50,000 as a memorial to a deceased son who had attended Bacone. Richards' daughter, Jeanetta Barnett, matched the father's donation to construct a boys' dormitory. Many smaller donations were made as administrators launched a ten million dollar building program (unpublished manuscript, 626). Debo saw

an unscrupulous aspect to this scenario. She believed the Indians were not sophisticated enough to evaluate the true needs or intent of an organization so heavily steeped in religion. Perhaps Debo questioned how Indians, whose traditional religious beliefs were related to the spiritual world and Mother Earth, could understand the tie Anglos constructed between money and institutions. Debo's assessment of the situation implied that Indians had difficulty turning down requests for money from religious groups. She did not trust the church executives to keep their Christian principles intact in the midst of large amounts of potential funding. The entire idea of a religious group soliciting funds from Native Americans with the approval of the Indian Commissioner led Debo to suspect the motives of those involved as well as the efficiency of the Indian office.[19]

She questioned President B. D. Weeks involvement in the solicitation of funds. A rivalry had developed between the Northern and Southern Baptists who vigorously sought these funds. Bacone was under the direction of the Northern Baptist Convention, and Nuyaka School at Okmulgee was under the direction of the Southern Baptist Convention.[20] Weeks wrote a letter to a Baptist official about the great potential in the trust funds. He explained how pleased he was with Commissioner Burke's approval. He also made reference to a heated rivalry developing between the Northern and Southern Baptist denominations who were after the same Indian wealth. Debo interpreted Week's letter negatively. She accused Weeks of boasting about the donations received from Indians and expected to benefit even more (unpublished manuscript, 626).

The local newspaper in Muskogee carried the story shedding light on the concerns Debo addressed. The Justice Department found evidence that Weeks promised an Okmulgee attorney, Layfayette Walker, undisclosed dividends for securing a donation

from a wealthy Creek Indian woman named Minnie Tiger Bond. Weeks informed Walker of solicitation efforts from Southern Baptist Convention members, the Wiley brothers from Muskogee, for Nuyaka School. Weeks could not understand why Bond would support Nuyaka instead of Bacone and indicated his displeasure at the prospect of such a donation. In the last paragraph of the letter Weeks instructed Walker to do what he could to gain substantial donations from Bond and others they had discussed, and he would be rewarded for his efforts.[21]

Commissioner Burke was accused of establishing an alliance between the Indian office and the Baptists. In 1923 Burke decided to set the record straight in his Annual Report. The Board of Managers of the American Baptist Home Mission Society published a resolution backing Commissioner Burke completely. This resolution did not quiet criticism. Many thought this resolution was meant to conceal undesirable motives on the part of the Indian service and those soliciting donations (unpublished manuscript, 625).

During the decade of the 1920s, the Indian service defended itself against a barrage of criticism leveled against its assimilationist policies and the officials trying to implement them. Because of the concerted criticism, much of the work of its officials occurred in an environment of hostility and tension. Commissioner Burke empathized with Oklahoma's Indians. He used the 1912 Mott report to strengthen his belief that the control of Indians had to be removed from the probate court system. His own background with Holm Bursum and Albert Fall in New Mexico made him a commissioner often hostile to Indians.[22] He launched a similar investigation as a follow-up to Mott's 1912 report. Burke investigated full-blood inheritance sales from the decade between 1912-1922

through the records in the county courts. He was trying to assess the sale price of Indian land. He reached his conclusions by looking at loans secured by the land after it had been sold. The statistics from these loans spoke volumes. In many cases the amount of the loan surpassed the purchaser's price by as much as three times.[23]

Burke investigated the cost of guardianship in the following six counties: Creek, Okmulgee, Okfuskee and Muskogee, all containing oil-rich land; McCurtain with many full-blood allottees who held oil land in Carter County, and Stephens County with its rich agricultural land. In the six counties, approximately 14,000 guardianship cases were investigated. Of these almost 10,000 had insufficient or no records. Burke was left with 3,000 cases dealing with Five Tribes allottees. The total income amounted to over $14 million and the cost for administration was over $2 million. Administration averaged 13 percent of the income. The most important findings led Burke to realize many of these entries were recent and could not be dated to conditions before statehood or prior to the 1914 reforms.

Burke found guardians charging their wards for expensive items.[24] Leonard D. Ingram was seventeen years old when oil was discovered on his allotment. The records beginning two years after oil revenue was included indicated his guardians spent over $18,000 on six cars for the ward. Ingram had two guardians whose salary amounted to $900 each per month. Their job entailed investing the profits realized from the oil wealth and cashing the royalty checks for their ward (unpublished manuscript, 632).

Burke did not arouse much interest in his report but a pamphlet, Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians, did. Matthew K. Sniffen (agent of the Indian Rights Association), Gertrude Bonnin (research agent of the Indian Welfare Committee of the General Federation of

Women's Clubs), and Charles H. Fabens (attorney for the American Indian Defense Association) wrote the pamphlet documenting their findings from the investigation. The information contained in this publication gave a brief history starting with the act of 1908 removing restrictions, the wholesale plunder that followed, the Oklahoma congressional delegation's destruction of district agents, the reforms begun by Mott and continued by Sells, and legislative and judicial reversal of these reforms. The report included examples of plunder through inheritance sales, guardianships, and assault on the property of minors. The conditions in many counties pitted Indians against the coordinated efforts of county judges, guardians, and attorneys. Indian children were neglected to the point of death, in some cases, while their guardians lived like kings. The Interior Department and probate attorneys had little ability to fight these abuses in the absence of legal authority. The recommendation from this group strongly urged legislation removing control of Indian affairs from Oklahoma courts and placing these people under the auspices of the Interior Department (unpublished manuscript, 634). It should be remembered that Burke authored the Burke Act that altered the allotment law. It gave the Interior secretary the ability to issue fee-simple titles to competent Indians. Fee-simple titles removed all restrictions from Indian lands in these cases. The Burke Act passed in congress in 1906.[25]

The Oklahoma congressional delegation handled this report differently than the Mott investigations of 1912. Initially they had tried to ignore the Mott report. Next they denied the allegations. Finally they called it a political ploy. Once the information was validated, they took a strong stand and tried to influence the legislature to reform. This time the Oklahomans called for a congressional investigation. They contacted Burke asking him to provide them with specific allegations, so the U.S. Attorney General could

prosecute the county judges involved in corruption. The Oklahoma delegation pushed their agenda on the floor of congress against opposition. Many in congress called an additional investigation wasteful because the abuses were well-documented. The longstanding Indian problems in Oklahoma constituted removal of control from the state. The bill to consider an investigation failed, but a house resolution allowed a subcommittee to investigate (unpublished manuscript, 635).

The Oklahoma delegation opposed Burke's bill to remove control from Oklahoma and place it under the Indian office. They accused the Sniffen pamphlet of exaggerating the facts. Burke found their opposition surprising because they had supported him in similar legislation for the Osages. The Oklahoma delegation rationalized the problems with Osage guardianships. The corruption was confined to one county and did not sustain statewide political implications (unpublished manuscript, 636).

One outcome of Burke's investigation was the state legislature's passage of the Frye bill. The bill limited the salary a guardian could receive to fifty dollars a month, a substantial amount in the 1920s. This was later altered. The annual salary of guardians was capped at $4,000. Attorney's fees were limited. Guardians who were involved with the judge in financial matters were dismissed. Guardians could not donate money to a judge's campaign. The issues of investment of a minor's money and declaring an Indian incompetent were addressed.[26]

Many thought this bill could eliminate the abuses of guardianship. Debo could not find evidence to support improvements. She ran across many instances of continuing problems. Minors and African-Americans close to reaching their majority hid themselves

to avoid incompetency hearings; guardians fought each other in the courts. The Indian estates continued to diminish in lieu of high court costs (unpublished manuscript, 640).

The two guardians of Lucinda Pitman received $30 and $16 daily. County Judge W. W. Cotton of Muskogee County reduced their fees by $2,000 and reduced the attorney's fees by $500. However later developments indicated the pattern that followed. After attorneys succeeded in removing Pitman's guardians, they charged her $56,000 for their services. The judge tried to reduce the fee to $5,000. E. M. Frye, a Republican senator from Sallisaw and the author of the Frye bill, was Chief of the Cherokees and ran for the position of superintendent of the Five Tribes each time a vacancy occurred. He was one of the attorneys asking for $10,000 in fees in the Pitman case. He claimed he spent ten days working on the case and settled for $2,500. When asked, he defended himself saying the Frye bill did not apply in this case. Two guardians of Luther Tucker asked for $2,500 each monthly, well above the $4,000 limit. Tucker's attorney, W. W. Cotton, was asking for $800 in fees for a few days work. Cotton had retired from the office of county judge prior to taking on this case (unpublished manuscript, 640). The county court interpreted the Frye bill broadly, but it did not prevent the court from setting compensation for guardians. Only the $4,000 limitation on salaries had any validity.[27]

The investigation accomplished a review of the work of probate attorneys. Some county judges continued to notify probate attorneys voluntarily when approving the transfer of land by full-bloods. Many judges did not. Many ignored the rules of procedure. Attorneys had more than one county under supervision and often missed hearings because they could only be present in one court room at a time. The probate attorney approved the payment of royalties from the Indian office to the guardians. The

authority of the probate attorney had steadily diminished after 1914. Probate attorneys had to stay on the good sides of the judges to carry out their duties. If not, the judge would not recognize them in full-blood cases or would keep them from attending guardianship hearings by scheduling them at conflicting times (unpublished manuscript, 648). The Oklahoma legislature replaced the rules of procedure by a law in 1915, but eventually the Oklahoma State Supreme Court declared the law unconstitutional. The decision rested on the interpretation that the county courts were acting as federal, not state agencies, in carrying out the Congressional Act of 1908. The state had no right to pass legislation in these matters.[28]

In the 1924 congressional session, the house committee was conducting its own investigation. The Oklahoma members of the committee were adamant about keeping the Burke report (also called the Wallen report) out of the congressional record. The congressional investigation whitewashed the evidence, exonerated any county judge who had been elected claiming if citizens freely elected him, he had their confidence, and did not refer to the specific instances in the Burke report. Congress was ultimately responsible for creating the problems but refused to evaluate the system it initiated. They blamed state law or lack thereof, but exhibited no responsibility toward the Indians.[29]

When the report of the committee investigation was released, everyone associated with the Interior Department and those involved in the probate system were absolved of any misconduct. Sniffen was criticized for spreading vicious untruths. The report condemned the system on the whole. Approval of the transfer of full-blood land offered no protection in reality; unrestricted agricultural leasing was vulnerable to forgery and fraud, and professional guardians carried out questionable practices where oil-rich land

was involved. In an attempt to bring about constructive legislation, W. W. Hastings of the Oklahoma delegation introduced a bill in the 1924-25 session. The Hastings bill attempted to protect the transfer of full-blood land by reverting back to the 1914 rules, but the department opposed passage of the bill. It backed a bill restoring control of restricted Indians to the secretary of the Interior.[30]

M. L. Mott, a friend of Burke, was called upon to compile a historical pamphlet detailing the Mott and Burke reports in favor of the legislation supported by the Indian office–returning jurisdiction to the secretary of the Interior. The Oklahoma congressional delegation and the Indian office deadlocked over this issue, ignoring what was in the best interests of the Indians. Congress did not pass the Hastings bill or the one favored by the department. Several factors ignited the battle between the Oklahoma congressmen and the Indian office. Political patronage caused hostility for both parties; the Indian office was under terrific pressure from conflicting interests and had been accused of gross mismanagement. The congressional investigating committee launched a concerted attack on the Indian service. In the midst of this fight, the case of Jackson Barnett took place in the courts. Debo used this case to illustrate how the various interest groups manipulated the system in an attempt to get their hands on the oil-rich land of this one Indian. As this case and that of Maud Lee Mudd and Exie Fife dominated the attention of the Indian office, the impact of the Wallen report and the Sniffen pamphlet was blunted and a chance for reform was lost.[31]

The Barnett case took place in Okmulgee County where relations between the Indian office and the court and guardians were less than favorable. Barnett was an illiterate Creek orphan without any relatives. He was a member of the Snake faction, and

the Dawes Commission forced an allotment on him. In 1912 a field clerk helped Barnett lease the land to an oil company, but another oil company had the Oklmulgee court declare him incompetent. The oil company gained the lease from his guardian, Carl J. O'Hornett. Both leases were submitted to Indian agent Kelsey for approval. Kelsey ruled that incompetency referred only to his illiterate status. The field clerk appealed his case to the district court, and the incompetency ruling was overturned. In 1926 the Oklahoma Supreme Court invalidated the guardianship of O'Hornett, but he continued as the guardian. The two oil companies agreed to a compromise.[32]

Barnett's allotment rested on some of the most spectacular oil discoveries of the Cushing field. The royalties from the wells were invested in liberty bonds. Some of the royalties were sent to guardian O'Hornett to provide for Barnett who lived on the outskirts of Henryetta in a small rural abode. In 1919 Barnett gained approval of the department, the county court, and his guardian to donate $25,000 to a Baptist Church in Henryetta. Commissioner Sells took note of this donation and investigated the intentions of Barnett. After talking with him, Sells was convinced Barnett was capable of making decisions about his money. Before long Barnett was besieged by hundreds of letters requesting handouts. The department proposed that half of Barnett's wealth of $1.5 million should be consigned to charity.[33]

The next month Barnett disappeared. An attempt by a woman to kidnap Barnett and marry him was foiled when county clerks in Holdenville and Okemah refused to issue marriage licenses. Barnett returned home safely. The effort was repeated three weeks later and the marriage was accomplished in Coffeyville, Kansas. Sells and O'Hornett attempted to have the marriage annulled, but Barnett had fallen for his new bride. The

Indian office let the marriage stand. Mrs. Barnett and her sixteen-year-old daughter upgraded Barnett's living conditions and were interested in increasing their allowance from the Indian office. Prior to their request for an increase they received $650, one-third of which paid O'Hornett's salary. Later Barnett's allowance was raised to $1,000. County Judge Hugh L. Murphy of Okmulgee refused to approve the expenditures if the Indian moved out of his jurisdiction to Muskogee as he planned; but Five Tribes Superintendent Victor Locke approved the raise. Soon after it was raised to $2,500 a month. O'Hornett appealed to the Oklmulgee County Court for funds to protect the estate. Due to friction between the department and Judge Murphy over litigation in another case, the Indian office began to give Barnett his allowance directly instead of going through O'Hornett.[34]

The idea to disperse some of Barnett's wealth to charity died with his unexpected marriage. When the idea was revisited, Mrs. Barnett was attempting to establish her rights to a portion of the estate. The Interior Department held $1.1 million dollars in liberty bonds. It created a trust of half a million dollars to benefit the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Bacone College launched a program to build 39 new buildings. The trust would pay Barnett a yearly income of $20,000. A second trust of $200,000 provided Barnett with $7,500 annually and Mrs. Barnett $350,000 in cash. Much of this money was paid in legal fees. At this point O'Hornett tried to stop the direct payment to Barnett with a court order from the Okmulgee County Court. Interesting things began to happen in 1923. Relatives appeared with their lawyers, the Barnetts left Oklahoma for California, and O'Hornett was replaced by Elmer Bailey. The department of Interior began to send Barnett's allowance to his California guardian. Burke wanted to file a suit concerning the

Barnett matter to call into question the entire matter of guardianships for restricted Indians.[35]

Burke's actions had been leading up to this point; he needed to test a case in the courts. His early investigation leading to the Wallen Report, his attempt to get congress to rid the probate courts of control over Indian matters, and his method of paying the allottee directly are examples of Burke's determination to deal effectively with the avaricious.[36] The part Burke played in handling Barnett's estate added more fuel to the barrage of criticism about the Indian service.

The Barnett affair generated twenty-one law suits in the courts. Bailey brought suit in the U. S. District Court in New York to invalidate the Baptist donation and to become guardian of the property. A trust company in New York was involved in the donation. Before the case was heard, the Justice Department invalidated the donation. It took the action it did by declaring Barnett incompetent. They decided Commissioner Burke did not have the right to allow Barnett to determine how to spend his money. Mrs. Barnett's trust was also revoked. Suits to recover the cash were held in California against Mrs. Barnett and in Oklahoma and Kansas against her lawyers. The Oklahoma Supreme Court declared the guardianships of O'Hornett and Bailey invalid. The federal courts returned recovered property to the department of the Interior. The senate held a full investigation in 1928-29. In 1934 the federal court of California annulled the marriage. Mrs. Barnett continued to receive living expenses. Jackson Barnett died that year and immediately relatives appeared to claim their portion of the estate. The number of people claiming to be heirs rose to one thousand before the case was settled. The decision was rendered in the federal district court at Muskogee in 1939 by Judge Robert L. Williams.

The decision upheld the Dawes rolls and granted recognition to thirty-four claimants descended from Siah Barnett, father of Jackson Barnett. The litigation was continuing in the case with appeals from other claimants when Debo was writing And Still the Waters Run and it was published. Several witnesses in the case had been indicted for perjury and forgery of tribal court records. Debo thought the extent of litigation would exhaust the entire funds of the estate.[37]

The Muskogee Times Democrat created a stir when it published a report stating hundreds of wealthy Indians lived outside of Oklahoma because they were afraid of the guardianship system. The campaign to encourage Indians to return to Oklahoma, specifically to Muskogee, continued, and a year later the paper ran a story purporting the loss of ten million dollars because its wealthy citizens lived elsewhere. This story generated a great deal of local interest because the litigation involving the wealth of the "exiles" had been carried by local newspapers. The paper ran the names of the exiles and their estimated personal wealth. Jackson Barnett of Los Angeles was worth two million dollars. Sara Rector who lived in Kansas City and Luther Manuel of Boston were worth a million dollars each. Eddie Lewis of Omaha, the Clayton children, and Leonard Ingram of Washington were worth half a million dollars. Harris Tucker of Chicago was worth $200,000. Stella Manual of Washington and the Hickman family of Chicago were worth a quarter of a million dollars. Lucinda Pitman and young son of Wichita were worth $400,000. Luther Tucker of Texas was worth $200,000 (unpublished manuscript, 642).

The Maud Lee Mudd case had elements of a different type from the Barnett case. Mudd was a Seneca minor under the Quapaw Agency placed under the protection of the Five Tribes probate attorneys. William Simms, a probate attorney, gained his position

through the patronage of Republican Congressman T. A. Chandler. The county judge in Delaware County appointed Simms as Mudd's guardian. The Interior Department did not object to this arrangement, but there were obvious conflicts of interests involved. Simms returned Chandler's favor by hiring him as his attorney when Chandler retired from congress. Chandler was paid $17,500 fee for his services. The Quapaw superintendent objected to the fee and invalidated Simm's expenses. The Quapaw superintendent was removed from office, and he blamed the decisions in the Chandler case for his demise. To show their support of the superintendent, the parents of children in the Seneca boarding school kept their children home; some faculty members resigned their positions. Simms lost the post of probate attorney for a short while but was later reinstated. Simms had to fight off other potential guardians (unpublished manuscript, 663). The Barnett and Mudd cases cast a good deal of criticism on the Indian service.

A final case cast more criticism on the way federal policy was administered. T. A. Chandler was involved in the Exie Fife divorce case. Fife was a full-blood Creek who lived with her parents and siblings in McIntosh County. Fife attended school in a Creek boarding school and at the government school at Chilocco. In 1922 oil was discovered on Fife's land. She was inundated with mail extending marriage proposals, but Fife married her neighborhood boyfriend. They divorced a year later. The divorce arrangement gave $15,000 to her former husband. Fife did not have a guardian but as a restricted allottee she needed to secure Superintendent Wallen's approval for the divorce settlement.[38] Fife's lawyer was T. A. Chandler. The settlement was raised to $50,000, and Wallen approved the change. In the end, the former husband received only $15,000 and the rest was given to the attorneys. When Fife told the story to the newspapers, questions arose

about Wallen's knowledge of the prior agreement between the lawyers. In fact Wallen owed his appointment to Chandler who had political power in Republican circles. This case aroused further hostility toward the Indian service.[39]

In this part Debo departed briefly from her commentary of corruption to enlighten her readers of important contributions the Indians made to the state of Oklahoma. The remainder of the chapter revisited the issue of those dispossessed of their land and their efforts to recover losses. Indians resorted to the courts to gain access to justice concerning their grievances. The courts ruled on issues of taxation of Indian lands and on questions of inheritance. Debo described the political climate in Oklahoma that produced unusual circumstances concerning patronage. She illustrated the influence of oil in land dealings, setting up guardianships, and trust funds for wealthy Indians. Debo's findings indicated the Indian service had difficulty protecting wealthy Indians just as it did in protecting the vulnerable, an indictment of the over-all impact of federal policies on the Indian population. Friction between the Oklahoma congressional delegation and the Indian service further complicated the policies governing Oklahoma's Indian population in the 1920s. The development of the state was hindered because of the uncertainty of land titles and an uneven tax code. The courts were clogged with litigation. Debo's research provided insight into the investigation by Commissioner Burke of the probate court system and its impact. She ended the chapter with examples of the most notorious cases to come before the courts. Debo indicated important and needed changes were on the way. This period opened the way for reform of federal policies regarding the Indian, the first changes since the inception of assimilation in the late nineteenth century.

NOTES

[1] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 317.

[2] Ibid., 291.

[3]Rennard Strickland, The Indians in Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1980), 44, 50.

[4]Hoxie, prefae xii, 104, 115.

[5]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 316-7.

[6] Ibid., 297.

[7] Ibid., 300.

[8] Ibid., 303, For a clarification of laws governing partition see page 211.

[9] Ibid., 312.

[10] Danney Goble and David Beard, The Story of Oklahoma, 341.

[11] Gibson, Oklahoma A History of Five Generations: 211.

[12] Hoxie, 112.

[13]Alan Brinkley, The Unfinished Nation A Concise History of the American People (New York: McGraw- Hill Inc.,1993): 516.

[14] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 335.

[15] ibid., 254, 319.

[16] Goble, Story of Oklahoma, 349.

[17] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 323.

[18]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 325.

[19] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 326.

[20]Ibid.

[21] Muskogee Times Democrat, January 12, 1929, page 1. OHS.

[22] For background information on the land rights questions involving the Pueblo Indians in New Mexico including Bursum and Fall, see Prucha's The Great Father, 797.

[23] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 327.

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[24] Ibid., 328.

[25] Hoxie, The Final Promise, 165.

[26] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 332.

[27] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 332.

[28] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 311.

[29] Ibid., 336.

[30] Ibid., 330.

[31] Ibid., 335.

[32] Ibid., 338.

[33] Ibid., 339.

[34] Ibid., 338.

[35] Ibid., 341.

[36] Ibid., 344.

[37] Ibid. 349.

[38] See page 322-3 in And Still the Waters Run for an explanation of Locke's removal from the position as Superintendent and Wallen's appointment.

[39] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 343.

PART 5

SCRUTINY OF THE SYSTEM

The change Debo referred to in the last part was a comprehensive attempt to change assimilationist Indian policy. In chapter 13 Debo discussed changes that included removing Indian administration from a political system mired in political patronage. She followed John Collier's implementation of a scientific approach in the assessment of the conditions of the Indians. Legislation passed in 1928 caused Debo to revisit the issues of restrictions and taxation of land. She addressed government efforts to provide protection for the assets of oil-rich Indians with the creation of trusts. Debo provided information on important reforms encompassed in the Reorganization Act of 1934. She added a summary of conditions of the Indians in the 1930s and the subsequent revisions she made to And Still the Waters Run.

Change came in 1928. The house committee, in its hearings on the Interior Department's Appropriations bill, discussed the possibility of ending the spoils system. Debo described the impact of the spoils system on the administration of the Five Tribes as degrading because it limited the ability of the Indian office to make independent decisions concerning the welfare of its wards. The superintendent was a federal appointee and was the only one in the service whose tenure was political. Because his tenure could be ended as easily as political parties in power, his ability to initiate reforms or carry out a consistent policy was limited at best. Senator W. B. Pine, a millionaire oil man from Okmulgee whose hostility to the Indian office was well-documented, resisted the change, but in 1928 congress passed legislation removing political consideration in the appointment of the Five Tribes Superintendent.

After Herbert Hoover became President, he disregarded political loyalties and appointed Charles Rhoads and Joseph H. Scattergood to the positions of Commissioner

and Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs respectively. They were Quakers who had worked with him after World War I in France. Rhoads was an active leader in the Indian Rights Association. They did not bring about dramatic changes but did appoint qualified people and expressed an understanding of the Indian idea of collective ownership. They responded to recommendations coming out of the Meriam Report. Scattergood concentrated on educational reforms.[1] Commissioner Rhoads supported the idea of collective tribal management of minerals, oil, timber, and grazing lands (unpublished manuscript, 678).

Adrian Landman who worked in the Indian service for twelve years, became the superintendent in 1931 and began work on agricultural and social issues. He was unmoved by internal political pressures. Several attempts to restore the political patronage occurred after the 1932 elections. Senator Thomas Gore replaced Pine in 1931 in the senate and tried to reinstate patronage in the appointment of the superintendent. He was not successful. He managed to eliminate the civil service requirement for the probate attorneys; but Debo reported few changes occurred. He did not force a removal of republican appointees; but vacancies after 1933 were filled by political appointment.[2]

The question concerning political patronage and its continuing impact on the Indian service in the early decades of the twentieth century is problematic. The civil service reformers of the 1870s and 1880s were members of the eastern Protestant elite who wanted to reestablish the kind of control of Indian affairs reminiscent of the eighteenth century when men of status ruled. A similar motivation drove some of the members of the Board of Indian Commissioners and churchmen who had lost influence over Indian policies after the Grant administration. In addition to these considerations, the

implementation of civil service reforms strengthened the powers of government administrators. Between 1865 and 1900 initial changes took place. Government officials made fewer appointments of religious personnel and the establishment of an inspection service diminished the strength of reformers. In an attempt to regain influence within the Indian office, reformers attacked the policies of Commissioner J. D. C. Atkins who held office in the late 1880s. He used specific job descriptions and required an examination of an applicant's qualifications for positions in the Indian service. Reformers claimed these policies obscured attempts to continue the political patronage system.[3]

By the 1880s and 1890s efforts at institutionalization succeeded in shifting the power of leadership away from the secretary of the Interior to the superintendent and eventually to the commissioner of Indian Affairs. At the same time as institutional changes were occurring the over-all goal of the Indian service remained fixed. The idea that Indians could be assimilated through education, allotment of land, and U. S. citizenship remained a priority into the 1920s even though the success of the program had been questioned in the early decades of the twentieth century. The Meriam Report described the Indian office as a centralized organization that was unable to meet the needs of its Indians clients. The problems of administration had not been solved by civil service reform and subsequent institutionalization at the turn of the century. Political interference continued; corruption and fraud plagued the Indian service. Several government officials from the president to the secretary of the Interior and the commissioner of Indian Affairs made decisions concerning Indian policies. Confusion existed among officials regarding responsibilities to Indian clients. A reform effort in the 1930s, the New Deal for Indians, proved unable to break through the commitment to assimilation in the Indian service and

among some of its clients. Institutionalization seemed to have solidified the idea of assimilation to the extent that the organization became inflexible.[4]

Debo documented the changes within the agency responsible for destroying the communal land holdings of the Five Tribes in the first place. Upon review of the Dawes Severalty Act, the Board of Indian Commissioners called it a failure. Much of the communal land was lost as soon as it was allotted to individual Indians. After the election of Franklin Roosevelt, the leadership of John Collier as Commissioner of Indian Affairs solidified a change in policy. Collier brought to the position his previous experience as executive secretary of the American Indian Defense Association. More important, Collier approached the Indian problem from a scientific and sociological point of view. Collier viewed past Indian policy as an economic and spiritual disaster. President Roosevelt and Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes, supported Collier's views.[5] In reality, however, Collier was unable to bring about lasting change.[6]

The manifestation of the scientific approach started with an accurate assessment of the conditions of Indians. In the past, the Indian office used the enrollment totals of the Dawes Commission to compile statistics for the annual report. According to Debo these numbers were inaccurate because the information contained duplications and included those who should not have qualified as Indians. The Indian office used the same figures for twenty years. These rolls were not intended to be used for census figures, but it failed to recognize their limitations (unpublished manuscript, 680). The rolls did not specify total population numbers but rather indicated totals by adding the numbers living on certain dates. Collier had to rely on the last census taken during the house investigation in 1924. The numbers of restricted Indians had come under scrutiny at the time, and a

census was completed in 1926. It found 9,100 full-bloods and 2,286 restricted mixed-bloods who were on the rolls and were still living. In 1930 Agricultural and Extension Agent, William C. Smith, stated he was serving over 100,000 Indians. The discrepancy in numbers occurred because the Indian office was unable to determine the accurate number of Indians born since the rolls closed. It had been unable to determine the number of Indians whose names were not on the rolls. The rolls officially closed in 1907. Two groups took surveys. The department of Interior compiled statistics of restricted Indians including information about property, occupations, living conditions, and education in 1927. The Institute for Government Research completed a survey of all Indians in the United States in 1927.[7]

Lewis Meriam, a permanent member of the institute, took a staff of nine specialists in the areas of economics, health, education, agriculture, law, and family life to work on the project. The field work consisting of visits to numerous reservations, Indian agencies, hospitals, and schools took seven months to complete. The object of the study was not to assess blame for a failure of policies but to point out avenues of improvement.[8]

The Meriam Report was published in 1928, and congress used it extensively to pass needed legislation for an increase in boarding school funding and in the fields of public health and social work. For the first time, the senate attempted to base legislation on the findings of the two scientifically-conducted surveys. The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs conducted its own investigation into the conditions of the Indians. The investigation lasted a couple of years. The committee held open hearings in Durant, Idabel, Muskogee, Okmulgee, and Wewoka gathering information from all classes of Indians. The committee traveled to the boarding schools and into the Cherokee hills to

interview full-bloods. It sent questionnaires to probate attorneys asking about the cooperation they received from county judges. They found the same problems in the probate system that had existed throughout the years. Out of these personal visits, the committee decided to dedicate future efforts to improving the lives of Indians through congressional legislation.[9]

By the second decade of the twentieth century the amount of Indian property had diminished to such a degree that the attorneys and guardians interested in exploitation were found primarily in the oil-rich regions of the state. Real estate agents in the old Choctaw-Chickasaw Nation exploited agricultural leasing and inheritance sales. As the opportunity for profit decreased in Oklahoma, congress fell into two camps over the Indian problem. Historically the old camp expected to have a free hand with Indian land, and the new camp used the surveys to push for further federal supervision. The Interior Department hoped the McCumber Amendment extending restrictions until 1931 would allow time for all Indians to become competent in managing their own affairs. That process was not advancing as expected, and in 1922 the Board of Indian Commissioners made a recommendation for a further extension of restrictions.[10]

Four years later the board issued specific recommendations. It believed a small percentage of Indians, those with an income of over $5,000, dominated the attention of the Indian office to the exclusion of everyone else. The board suggested the approximately 100 Indians (94 Creeks, 11 Choctaws, 3 Seminoles and 1 Chickasaw) with an annual income between $5,000 and $180,000 should be placed in a special class. Their estates should be disposed of quickly through removal of restrictions or creation of trusts. The board conducted an impartial survey of living conditions because it considered the

previous department survey politically motivated. The survey conducted by the Interior Department was to convince congress to extend restrictions. The board thought the Meriam Report emphasized the possibility of further fraud when the federal government withdrew its supervision (unpublished manuscript, 690). The law to extend restrictions passed on May 10, 1928. The restrictions on all land owned by the original allottee of one half or more "Indian blood" was extended for twenty-five more years to 1956. This law did not protect those born too late to be enrolled; it repealed the right of these children to inherit the homestead of ancestors. The law addressed tax exemption on restricted land by limiting the amount to 160 acres. It allowed taxation on minerals to begin in 1931. Seminole and Cherokee homesteads were exempt from the last provision.[11]

The department paid little attention to Indians who had not been enrolled. The department's input into the restrictions bill included a provision ending the special rights of heirs so that partition and a final settlement could be accomplished. In 1929 land speculators went into the full-blood settlements and bought the inherited land of those born prior to 1906. The purpose was to control deeds that would take effect as soon as the special rights of the younger heirs were extinguished. This practice forced the sale of the land through partition. It worked especially well against the Choctaw full-bloods in the agricultural counties such as McCurtain, Choctaw, LeFlore, and Pushmataha. Due to the Depression, prices for land were extremely low, so the speculators paid a low price for any land purchased (unpublished manuscript, 694). Later congress passed a bill stating restricted land sold under condemnation proceedings would remain under restrictions and would be tax exempt just as original allotments. This law acted to end a practice that left many Indians without land (unpublished manuscript, 697).

Legislation passed in 1933 protected the funds of Indians, enrolled or not. These funds would be held by the secretary of the Interior until 1956. The law kept guardians who were trying to collect vast royalties from gaining access to the funds. The courts ruled the funds, under the secretary's control when the law was passed, were subject to the extended restrictions. Trusts were established to alleviate the problem concerning the excessive amount of time the Indian office spent protecting a few wealthy Indians.[12] In a 1933 report, the department was responsible for approximately $26.5 million for individual members of the Five Tribes. Ten million dollars was deposited in Oklahoma banks and the U. S. treasury and $16.5 million in government bonds (unpublished manuscript, 700).

The Jackson and Jeanetta Barnett trust cases and the Eastman Richards case exemplified the problems associated with trusts. No legislation regulating trusts on restricted funds existed to date. After dealing with these cases the department decided to remove restrictions, declare the Indians competent, and allow them to assume the trust agreement. Senator Elmer Thomas secured a provision in the 1933 bill making it difficult to break the trust. If the trust was canceled by the courts the money was placed under the control of the department. The law allowed a member of the Five Tribes to create a trust from his restricted land for his heirs. All other agreements prior to this law became invalid unless the secretary had approved them. Trusts were limited in time to twenty-one years after the death of the last surviving beneficiary.[13]

When the senate was investigating the conditions in Oklahoma in 1930, Acting Superintendent McMillan asserted that at least sixty Indians were under his supervision. These Indians possessed more than $100,000 in cash available for investment.

Approximately 25-30 percent of this wealth was tied up in the courts over marital or property litigation (unpublished manuscript, 703).

Even with the law of 1933, trust funds could not keep some Indians out of financial difficulty. Eastman Richards presents an interesting case. Debo edited this aspect of his case from the published book. Perhaps she decided it was more important to include the Supreme Court decision in the Eastman Richards' case dealing with full-blood inheritance than to take up space elaborating on Richards' financial difficulties. In 1912 Richard's first royalty amounted to $1,272. It increased to $57,000 the next year and to $127,000 in 1914. In 1925 it reached the highest point at $170,756. Richards, a full-blood member of the Snake faction, was declared competent and not placed under guardianship. He managed his own financial business even though every business venture he attempted failed. His marital alliances and romantic relationships cost him thousands of dollars. The Indian office transferred $1.5 million to Richards between 1912 and 1925, and his expenditures amounted to about the same amount. Richards' creditors were about to repossess his store when a man named House made a deal with the department to pay off Richards' debts. House transferred Richards' remaining $200,000 in liberty bonds into a trust agreement. Richards prospered under the new arrangement; he managed a successful farm, opened his home to Indians who needed a place to eat, paid for the burials of many friends, and donated to Baptist Churches in many Creek settlements. Until romance interfered, costing him $20,000, he lived within his means. Some in the senate claimed this arrangement was akin to a guardianship. When they interviewed Richards, they found he knew nothing of the length of time covering the trust or how much the trust held. But Senator Thomas continued to push for a bill that provided a foolproof way to

keep Indian money safe. The changed policy involving the extension of restrictions and the regulation of trust agreements brought about the end of individual removal of restrictions. The sale of land via the Indian office came to an end as well (unpublished manuscript, 704).

When Ickes and Collier assumed their positions within the Indian administration, the only Indian land sold occurred when land in excess of the 160 acres limit was about to be lost through tax sale.[14] They instructed all the superintendents in the service not to sell any more land and not to forward any more applications for certificates of competency (unpublished manuscript, 708). In 1934 congress considered and passed a bill repealing the partition act of 1918. The secretary would assume responsibility for heirs and partition of the restricted land. The bill required the secretary's approval for the validation of wills; agricultural leases of restricted land required departmental approval as well. The ability of local courts to appoint guardians was abolished except in cases pending before the courts. These provisions ended abuses evident from the beginning of Indian administration such as unsupervised agricultural leasing. Debo purported more land was lost through partition than through the county courts giving approval for sale of full-blood land (unpublished manuscript, 709). The extension of restrictions, the regulation of trusts, and rules governing county courts represented a reaction to the long-held idea of "turning the Indians loose."[15]

The Indian office and the department joined forces to pass the Wheeler-Howard Act later known as the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. President Roosevelt supported the bill. The bill in its original form addressed the basic land tenure issues and issues of tribal sovereignty the federal government had altered over time. Before passage, the bill

was modified. Additional allotment of land under tribal tenure was prohibited. The trust period of restricted allotments was extended until congress addressed the issue. The bill appropriated two million dollars to purchase land for Indians who owned none. A ten million dollar revolving fund was available as a system of credit for the Indians. Tribal governments could be organized and control their own funds. The press in Oklahoma spread its hostility toward the bill in the pages of its newspapers. Missionary groups opposed the bill because they thought Collier favored native religion over Christianity. Indians split over the bill. The Indians who succeeded within the white society had decided the unfortunate members of their tribes had to achieve a position of respect as they had through assimilation. They claimed the bill established a segregated society for those not assimilated. Others thought the bill protected from total annihilation those who had not assimilated. The Oklahoma congressional delegation amended the bill to exclude Oklahoma Indians from many of its provisions but allowed collective land holdings and the formation of tribal organization. Oklahoma Indians did benefit from student loans, forest conservation, and appointments in the Indian service. Unfortunately congress did not fund all of these provisions[16] (unpublished manuscript, 709).

An attempt was made to find out the true sentiment of the Indians. Collier visited Oklahoma to promote the Indian Reorganization Act. He traveled with Senator Elmer Thomas who spoke against the measure. From the meetings they held with Indian spokesmen, a persistent opinion surfaced; the Indians did not desire to have the legislation apply to Oklahoma. Thomas gained the chairmanship of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee during the next session and introduced a bill based on his visit to Oklahoma. Ickes and Collier supported the bill. The bill addressed the peculiar situation with

Oklahoma Indians. It eliminated the possibility of exploitation of Indian lands and helped the full-bloods regain tribal organization. The Indians in Oklahoma supported the bill despite a hostile reception from the state legislature. Oklahoma legislators feared what they perceived as an extension of restrictions, removal of probate jurisdiction from state courts, and land that remained tax exempt.[17] A compromise bill was eventually passed as the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of 1936. The compromise removed the important aspects of the bill except to allow Indians on tribal land to incorporate within the laws of the state so they could do business and to form cooperatives for marketing and land management and to gain federal loans. One section eliminated guardianships for restricted Indians and determination of heirs. As a special exemption, Osage County was excluded from the provisions covered in this bill (unpublished manuscript, 718).

Although the bill did not address the problems of probate jurisdiction or restrictions, the state of Oklahoma relinquished an important part of Indian management. The bill gave supervision over agricultural leasing of restricted land to the department. The state had guarded the right to handle this issue since 1908.[18]

The government made a concerted effort to place the Indians in a position of strength (economically, physically, and emotionally) and to reverse the trend of reducing them to public wards. In the past there had been a propensity to ask for gratuity appropriations to be used for health, education, and social work. After the Meriam report was published, congress increased its appropriations.[19] Congressional appropriations maintained only two hospitals. Field clerks successfully persuaded Indians to seek medical care. Both hospitals were used extensively. When the Senate Indian Affairs Committee visited Oklahoma in 1930, public health services consisted of a nurse in a Choctaw

boarding school. Trachoma and tuberculosis were found throughout full-blood settlements. In 1936 the Indian office coordinated health initiatives with the Children's Bureau, the United States Public Health Service, and the State Department of Health to use money from the Social Security Act to build a health clinic in the Cherokee hills. A million dollars from the WPA was used to build annexes to the hospitals in Talihina, Tahlequah, and Claremore (unpublished manuscript, 722).

In 1938 a comprehensive public health program addressed the medical problems among the Indians. The field service began to employ trained workers. Trained workers were employed in other fields as well. Specialists from agricultural colleges worked with the Indians to improve gardening techniques, ranching, and farming. Farm clubs were organized for both adults and school-age youths. In addition to improved health care and training in agriculture, the Indians began to retrieve a measure of self-government. They reestablished their tribal governments. Even though the Creeks were widely dispersed, the old town organization did not disappear. Creeks sent representatives to the old capital in Okmulgee for a monthly meeting to deliberate tribal business. In 1934 forty-four towns met to elect Roley Canard as chief. The Seminoles gained federal recognition of their tribal organization that had never disbanded. In 1935 they elected George Jones as principal chief. The Choctaws held conventions for tribal unity in decision-making, and Collier recognized their efforts as significant. Tribal funds refurbished the old capitol. The Chickasaws appointed a governor after the death of their leader without tribal approval. The Cherokees did not revive their tribal organization at this point.[20] The revival of the tribal organization and recognition by the Indian office ushered in a new

federal policy based on administrators who tried to implement changes Indians desperately needed.

Debo's final chapter in And Still the Waters Run concluded her study of the Five Tribes with a synopsis of the conditions in the 1930s. She used the 1930 census to compare numbers with previous reports. The statistics from the 1930 census accounted for 72,643 members of the Five Tribes. Adair County, with the largest concentration of Indians registered-4,931, contained fully one third of the population of the county. There were 20,000 Indians of other tribes included in Oklahoma's total population that numbered 2.3 million at this time. The census provided the Indian office with a current accounting of Indians with their children who had not been enrolled under its jurisdiction. There were 7,211 families comprising 27,924 individuals. These numbers did not include allottees of half or more "Indian blood" whose restrictions had been removed or descendants of unrestricted Indians therefore rendering the accuracy of the numbers questionable at best. Indians owned approximately 1.6 million acres of restricted land of which 92,895 acres were subject to taxation as surplus land.[21] David Holford stated that it was not until 1935 that some degree of accuracy was reflected in the numbers presented by field officials of the Indian office regarding the annual enumerations of the total American Indian population.[22]

Income figures distorted the actual conditions of the Five Tribes because of the few wealthy ones. In 1931 Superintendent Landman released figures that clarified the distortion. The Indian office held $28 million representing 28,000 Indians still under restrictions. Of these 171 averaged $137,000 each; 10,234 averaged $440 and the remaining 18,000 had no cash balances.[23]

Indians won an important battle in the courts in 1924 when the Court of Claims began to hear cases involving treaty violations and cases brought against the federal administration of their property. About fifty-nine cases were filed initially with millions of dollars at stake.[24] The department of Justice was responsible for delaying settlement in these cases because it was not ready to present the government's side in a timely fashion. The General Accounting Office was responsible for solving the time-consuming problem of unraveling the complex records compiled for use in the litigation (unpublished manuscript, 742). At the time And Still the Waters Run was published, many of these suits had not been settled. The estates of three tribes were closed by now, and coal mines no longer produced profits for the other two. Tribal revenue was miniscule.[25]

Tribes no longer funded education. Education was another problematic area undertaken by federal overseers. In 1909 Inspector E. B. Linnen visited Indian boarding schools in eastern Oklahoma and found appalling conditions. Superintendent J. D. Bennett was blamed for the situation promoting the reorganization of the administration of schools under Indian service personnel. A decade later, the Meriam Report claimed that conditions in the schools were still substandard. The right to attend school had not made a significant impact on the full-blood community. The rate of federal tuition was fixed to compensate the state or local community penalized by the nontaxation of Indian lands. The area of the Five Tribes received the lowest rate. In some areas a mere dime was paid per student.[26]

In 1937 the Choctaws received their final appropriations for education. The 1938-39 school year was the first time officials made a distinction concerning the degree of Indian blood required to qualify for assistance. Without this distinction it was difficult

to provide help to those in the greatest need-the full-bloods. Prior to 1938, public schools received money for children of dubious Indian heritage whose parents lived on land no longer considered tax exempt. The Indian office employed nine field agents and five social workers to handle funding and identify those children in need of relief. Because the government concentrated on the welfare of the Indian instead of providing assistance to school districts, funds were appropriated for those at least one-fourth Indian, and half of the money had to be spent on vocational training. Money was used to establish special Indian day schools in the full-blood communities. These school buildings duplicated as community centers. By 1930 fifteen schools employed highly trained teachers. In the 1934-35 school year, enrollment included 167 full-bloods, 92 mixed bloods, and 91 whites. The grade level attained by most of the Indian children in the school showed appalling retardation. Attendance had improved and was better than in the usual Indian community. The average daily attendance for the 1934-1935 year was 172 Indians and 42 whites (unpublished manuscript, 751). By 1938-1939 enrollment had increased to 409 Indians, 267 Cherokees, 48 Choctaws, 48 Chickasaws, and 46 Creeks. Attendance was better in these special schools for full-bloods than in other schools. Teachers in these schools sought to raise the academic standards of their students.[27] In 1938-1939 the government spent $286,000 in tuition to public schools for 9,946 Indian children, about twenty-two cents for every day the Indian child attended. Some of the money bought clothes, books, and school lunches.[28]

At the same time, enrollment at boarding schools decreased after 1932. Congress appropriated $371,850 to maintain six boarding schools during the 1934-5 school year. These figures did not include the children of Five Tribes who attended Haskell and

Chilocco. Records indicate about 800 Cherokee, 550 Choctaw, 180 Chickasaw, 360 Creek, and 28 Seminole children attended the Indian boarding schools. Those who graduated from the boarding schools returned home and wanted to help with the program, so others could benefit from the schooling (unpublished manuscript, 756).

Debo estimated the government spent close to one million dollars in expenditures for education, field service, and health during the year 1934-1935. Out of the million dollar appropriation, a large amount went to the public schools for tuition (unpublished manuscript, 760). Debo thought the amount of money spent on tuition was comparable to Oklahoma's lost revenue from tax exempt land holdings of the Five Tribes. After 1933, when probate attorneys were placed under the Interior Department, the government paid their salaries from the same congressional appropriations. In 1935 there were about 4,800 probate cases pending. About 150 civil suits were settled for $832,000 and another $102,000 was recovered for minors. Due to the increased revenue, Debo concluded her book on a positive note. The Indian office had changed its method of administration to benefit the full-bloods who had suffered the most during the early twentieth century.[29]

Debo revised And Still the Waters Run throughout the years. Corrected mistakes and additions could be found in the preface. In fact Debo finished the manuscript in 1936 at the same time the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act was passed. Since publication was delayed some four years Debo added new material concerning the changed Indian policy. Even though she could not assess the outcome of the policy, she assumed that readers would appreciate the updated statistical information.[30]

When the book was reissued in 1972 Debo took the opportunity to clarify a term she used extensively but was misunderstood. The term was "restricted Indian." It

referred to the owner of restricted land. Debo clarified her intent because there was no such thing as a restricted Indian. Restriction referred to the land he held through allotment.[31] More important Debo wished to answer the question she posed initially, "Could the full-bloods of the Five Tribes be saved?" Debo explained in her preface the question had been more fully answered by information in her 1949 survey, The Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma: Report on Social and Economic Conditions and from her 1956 survey, A History of the Indians of the United States. These two works have been discussed at length in the earlier chapters. In the updated information Debo claimed Indians held a little less than a million acres in 1949. Heirs held 326,000 acres of inherited land. With the exception of the land of the Creeks, Debo found most of this land worthless. Since the rolls closed in 1906 many of the younger allottees were forty years old in 1949. Those younger in age simply had no land unless some inherited land remained in the family. The law of 1933 extending restrictions on inherited land was repealed through an Oklahoma initiative in 1947.[32] David Holford indicated that the loss of surplus lands plus the sale of inherited estates left third generation Indians landless.[33]

In the update Debo included financial figures from loans secured through the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act. Agricultural agents called farm management supervisors drew up plans, and credit institutions used the recommendation of these agents to grant loans. In 1948 Indians borrowed close to a million dollars with more than half repaid at the time of Debo's revision. Most borrowed money for the purpose of farming. Debo found evidence to support her premise the Creeks were the most successful farmers. They held better land and did not experience the poverty of the Cherokee Hills full-bloods. Five Tribe members who did not have land benefited from 36,000 acres purchased under the

Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act. Workers from Indian Relief and Rehabilitation, a similar program to the WPA, built small houses on this land. Debo believed the agricultural program suffered from the shortage of farm management supervisors. There were fifteen for the Five Tribes area.[34] Her continuing research provided an opportunity to suggest answers to the question about the status of the full-bloods.

Debo discussed the policy of termination implemented in 1950. Dillon Myer, Indian Commissioner, introduced the policy. Debo did not mince any words in describing what she thought of this policy. She explained it meant breaking up Indian communities and sending their inhabitants to cities located throughout the country. The purpose was to acclimate Indians to an urban setting.[35] In 1956 Debo under the direction of the Association on American Indian Affairs used a Field Foundation grant to assess the relocation policy. In 1955 Debo found the following statistics: 440 persons relocated, 58 people returned to Oklahoma.[36] Of the 440 persons, 144 "units" or wage-earners came from the Muskogee area and relocated in Los Angeles. In 1972 when Debo updated her material, she found about 200 units who had relocated in the city of Dallas, Texas, from the Muskogee area. In 1956 the grants amounted to $90 for single individuals and $120 for a family. In 1972 the amounts increased to $360 for an individual and $800 for a family.[37] Debo found the employees of the Indian service dedicated in their efforts to prepare those relocating for jobs and new challenges. The Indians thought the policy provided opportunities, but in reality there were few chances for betterment for Indians. The administration structured the relocation far from Oklahoma to make it difficult to return home. In 1972 some Indians returned to relatives who relocated in other parts of the country.[38]

The government began to sever its ties to its agricultural assistance program at the same time. In 1934 the Johnson-O'Malley Act allowed the Indian office to contract through state or local agencies to continue the work of the federal agency. In 1956 the Oklahoma contract gave farm management supervisors the option of transferring to state agencies, but only one complied. Supervisors observed how difficult it would be to help those who needed it the most without available credit from the Indian service. Later the availability of credit ended entirely. Debo spent four years trying to find out what happened to the revolving fund. Albert Huber, chief of the credit branch of the Indian office, provided Debo with the information she sought. In 1960 the Oklahoma balance was $1.2 million. This money was sitting in the U.S. Treasury of no use to Indians who needed it.[39]

As the 1956 deadline approached for the end of restrictions, Congressman Ed Edmondson introduced a bill extending them for a lifetime. The bill passed in 1955 protecting the remaining restricted 750,000 acres. The year 1960 ushered in a change of attitude toward the termination policy. Starting with President John Kennedy and lasting through the administrations of Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, a more positive policy persisted. The revolving fund was revived. Credit was available, but Indians borrowed money for small business ventures instead of for agriculture. By 1971 land under Indian title continued to shrink, allottees were aging, and mechanization had changed the way land was farmed. The University of Oklahoma developed a program to unite Euroamerican leaders with those of Indian heritage to improve the over-all relationship between the two groups of people. La Donna Harris, a Comanche Indian and wife of Senator Fred Harris, headed the statewide program called Oklahomans for Indian

Opportunity. In 1966 the Office of Economic Opportunity granted the program $240,000 to employ Indian field workers and a full-time Indian director. Work included community projects staffed by Indians and non Indians, job training, and activities for youths. The annual Indian Achievement Conferences and Indian Youth Conferences were held at the University of Oklahoma. In 1968 another grant from the OEO of $470,000 was used to devise a three-year rural development program in the full-blood communities in the Cherokee and Choctaw hill regions. Several small businesses were funded through this project such as the Lost City Cooperative Marketing Association to raise feeder hogs. The Cherokee Forest Industries developed in Delaware County.[40] Debo answered her initial question about the full-bloods at this point. She thought they could be saved through the progressive Indian policy of the decade from 1960 to 1970.

Reform within the agencies dealing with federal Indian policy did not occur until 1928. It began with removing political consideration from the appointment of the Five Tribes Superintendent and continued under the leadership of John Collier who implemented a scientific approach in his policies culminating in the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. Debo followed the recommendations of the Board of Indian Commissioners regarding the extension of restrictions and changes concerning inherited land, agricultural leasing, and the establishment of trust funds. All of these changes protected Indians more effectively than had previous policies. Debo established the link between changes in policies and the reestablishment of self government among the Five Tribes, establishment of special day schools for full-bloods, and redress in the courts for violation of treaties and mismanagement of funds. By including information in a revised edition Debo followed up on the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act and the termination policy of the 1950s. She

concluded on a hopeful note with an assessment of what she considered a reversal of attitude beginning in the 1960s and continuing through the next decade.

During the 1960s and 1970s, new federal laws, court decisions, and administrative policy changes provided opportunities for Indians not available for decades. Tribal leaders gained experience dealing with federal bureaucrats and became adept administrators. Indians developed pride in their culture and rediscovered their identity by reviving native languages and customs. By the 1980s the majority of Indians lived in large urban centers, far from the reservations of their forefathers. The result of these demographic changes meant that Indians, as urban dwellers, acted independently of the tribe and did not benefit from the positive changes taking place.[41]

NOTES

[1] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 351, Oral History, Debo Interview, 7-31-85, Box 29 ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[2]Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 351, Oral History, Debo Interview, 7-31-85, Box 29 ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[3]Ari Hoogenboom, " An Analysis of Civil Service Reformers," The Historian, XXIII (November, 1960), 78.

[4] Paul Stuart, The Indian Office Growth and Development of An American Institution, 1865-1900 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1978), 157.

[5] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 353.

[6] Stuart, The Indian Office, 159.

[7] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 354.

[8]Prucha, The Great Father, 808.

[9] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 355.

[10] Ibid., 358.

[11] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 360.

[12] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 364.

[13] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 365.

[14] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 367.

[15]Ibid.

[16] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 368.

[17] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 370.

[18] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 374.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 377.

[21] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 378.

[22]Holford, "The Subversion of the Indian Land Allotment System, 1887-1934," 13.

[23] Ibid., 382.

[24] Ibid., 386.

[25] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 386.

[26]Prucha, The Great Father, 911.

[27] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 392.

[28] Ibid., 390.

[29] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 393.

[30] Debo, And Still the Waters Run, preface, xiii.

[31] Debo, And Still The Waters Run, preface, xii.

[32] Ibid, xiii.

[33]Holford, "The Subversion of the Indian Land Allotment System, 14.

[34] Ibid., xxi.

[35]During the Eisenhower administration, congress repealed the Wheeler-Howard Act. In 1954 congress passed termination acts that broke up reservations and sold Indian lands and resources. Income from the sale was divided among former reservation dwellers. Congress had to deal with each tribe individually. The experiences of the Menominee and Klamath tribes (Wisconsin and Oregon respectively) proved to be the catalyst needed to halt the termination policy. Members of these tribes were reduced to poverty having lost their homes, the ability to gain employment, and to care for their health needs. Howard R. Lamar, "American Indian Policy: 1865-1987," in Main Problems in American History by Howard H. Quint, Milton Cantor, and Dean Albertson, ed. (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1988): 129.

[36] Ibid., xxiii.

[37] Virgil Harrington, Area Director, Bureau of the Interior, Muskogee, Oklahoma, to Debo, July 2, 1972, ADC, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

[38] Ibid., xxiv.

[39] Ibid, xv.

[40] Ibid., xxx.

[41]Roger L. Nichols, ed. The American Indian Past and Present. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992): 290.

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