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HOLM, THOMAS MARK
INDIANS AND PROGRESSIVES: FROM VANISHING
POLICY TO THE INDIAN NEW DEAL.

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA, PH.D., 1978

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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

INDIANS AND PROGRESSIVES: FROM VANISHING
POLICY TO THE INDIAN NEW DEAL

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by
TOM HOLM
Chelsea, Oklahoma
1978

INDIANS AND PROGRESSIVES: FROM VANISHING
POLICY TO THE INDIAN NEW DEAL

A DISSERTATION

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY:

Amel

Jonathan W. Hougerson

Norman Gockett

Thompson

PREFACE

In the 1880's and 1890's the United States launched an all-out effort to solve the "Indian problem." Under the rhetorical ideal of assimilation the government provided for the allotment of tribal lands in severalty, banned Native American ceremonies, urged Indians to cast off tribal dress in favor of "conventional" clothing, and took children from the reservations to boarding schools in order to remove them from "savage influences." By the 1930's, however, the government had reversed most of these policies. Day schools on the reservations had been established, allotment had ceased, and Native Americans were urged to maintain tribal dress, customs and ceremonies. If this "Indian New Deal" did nothing else, it at least allowed Indians to be "Indian."

Indian policy in the 1930's reflected changes in white attitudes toward Native Americans. Many whites, in the late nineteenth century, firmly believed that all aspects of tribal cultures must be destroyed so that Indians would "progress" toward civilization. But by the time of the New Deal a number of white Americans justly believed that many features of Indian life "never stood in the path of progress." Some whites, including the principle policy-maker of the Indian New Deal, John

Collier, even thought that non-Indians could learn and thus benefit from Native American lifestyles.

These new attitudes did not spring up overnight. In fact they were born in turmoil and in the reassessment of mainstream American social thought. During the first twenty years of the new century, Native Americans survived the almost overwhelming push to force them to vanish as culturally viable peoples. Not only that, but some whites began to take notice of this survival and appreciate the aesthetic and practical values of Indian artistic and intellectual achievement. This appreciation sparked a good deal of conflict between those persons who had worked toward the goal of complete assimilation of Indians and the people who wished to preserve Indian cultures. The turmoil created ambivalence and with it the breakdown of the "vanishing policy." The Progressive Era in Indian-white relations was not a clear watershed in the history of American Indian policy. It was, however, a period of conflict which cleared the way for the changes of the late 1920's and the 1930's.

This study is an interpretation of how American attitudes toward Native Americans slowly changed and brought about the move from a vanishing policy to the Indian New Deal. It is a history of an era of reassessment and of people going through the process of change. It is also, hopefully, a tribute to the survival and cultural integrity of our Indian people.

Since undertaking this project I have received aid and advice from some of the finest scholars in the United States. I would like to thank, in particular, the members of my graduate

committee; Professors Arrell M. Gibson, H. Wayne Morgan, Norman Crockett and Jon Spurgeon for their valuable assistance. Their ideas and time spent in helping me prepare this manuscript are greatly appreciated. I would like to express my gratitude to my friend and colleague at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Professor Reginald Horsman, for the encouragement, insight and support he gave me during the writing phase of this project. A special thanks goes to Professor Francis Paul Prucha, S. J. of Marquette University, who lent his time and numerous skills toward the completion of this effort. I am very thankful for the advice received from Professor Hazel W. Hertzberg of Columbia University and Professor Donald J. Berthrong of Purdue, and I would also like to express my appreciation to Professor Frederick E. Hoxie for sending me a copy of his pioneering interpretation of this crucial period in the history of American Indian policy.

I would like to thank those people who aided me during the research phase of this study. I am indebted to the staffs of the National Anthropological Archives at the Smithsonian Institute, the Library of Congress, the Oklahoma Historical Society, and the University of Wisconsin Rare Book Collection. I am especially grateful for the friendship and the help of H. Glenn Jordan, now of the Oklahoma State Library system, who found many important items of interest for me during his tenure at the Western History Collections at the University of Oklahoma. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Ford

Foundation which financed my graduate education under its Doctoral Fellowship program for American Indian students.

Moral support in the undertaking of a project like this is as welcome as financial aid. For this I would like to thank several members of the Indian communities in both Oklahoma and Wisconsin. I wish to express my gratitude to John Boatman, Irene and Wallace Pyawasit and Lee Thundercloud of Wisconsin and to Jerry C. Bread, Jack I. Miles and Ron Lewis of Oklahoma. Their ideas and encouragement are greatly appreciated. Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Ina, without whom nothing would have been accomplished.

IN MEMORY OF MY MOTHER

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CHAPTER I

THE ASSAULT ON NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE: INDIAN POLICY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By 1900 most whites in the United States believed that American Indians, as a distinct social group, were in the process of vanishing from the face of the earth. Despite the results of the census of 1890, which enumerated more Indians than ever before, and an interesting but little-known article published in the Arena magazine, written in 1896 to dispel this idea, the myth persisted, grew and eventually became gospel to the vast majority of white Americans.¹ On the whole, the myth was easy for them to accept. They thought that Indian culture and life styles were both "primitive" and incapable of adapting to a fast-growing, industrial and urban society. Many believed that Native Americans were racially inferior and doomed genetically through intermarriage with other races or from disease. In addition, their government had been pursuing a "vanishing" policy for over a century.

¹J. Worden Pope, "The North American Indian--The Disappearance of the Race a Popular Fallacy," Arena 16 (November 1896), 945-959. Despite Pope's assertions the myth remained and was a popular idea well into the twentieth century, see Frederick E. Hoxie, "Beyond Savagery: The Campaign to Assimilate the American Indians, 1880-1920" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1977), 274-364.

The process of making Indian people disappear meant different things to different people. Undoubtedly the white frontiersman wanted the native population moved off or buried on the land he coveted. But government officials, in the hope of retaining national honor through upholding basic humanitarian principles, adopted a rhetorical ideal of assimilating American Indians into American society. As early as 1790 George Washington and his Secretary of War, Henry Knox, urged Congress to pass the first Trade and Intercourse Act, in part to "civilize" American Indians. In a series of such laws the United States government sought to encourage missionaries to go into Indian country, introduce domesticated animals into the tribal economies and provide for agricultural training. American Indians were urged to "give up the hunt," work individual farms and accept Christianity.²

Getting American Indians to accept the idea of private property was basic to the concept of assimilation. In 1808, President Thomas Jefferson urged a contingent of southern Indian leaders to advise their people to secure individual family farms out of tribal lands and work the plots in the manner of their white neighbors. Jefferson no doubt believed that, if his advice was followed, the tribal members soon would become Indian versions of the Jeffersonian yeoman farmer, individualized and acculturated, Christian and loyal to the United States. Jefferson's

²See Francis Paul Prucha, American Indian Policy in the Formative Years (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).

advice amounted to an early attempt to promote the allotment of tribal lands in severalty. As time went on idealists concerned with Indian policy would equate allotment in severalty of tribal property with the assimilation process.³

Humanitarian rhetoric cloaked even the most blatant transgressions against American Indian societies and landholdings. Indians were sent missionaries, domestic animals and the services of blacksmiths in exchange for vast cessions of tribal lands.⁴ Andrew Jackson urged Congress to provide for the removal of American Indians from the eastern portion of the United States to west of the Mississippi in order to insure their "ultimate security and improvement."⁵ The establishment of the Indian Territory and the reservation system, although an overt attempt at segregation, was instituted according to the rhetoric and idealism of the period to prepare American Indians for

³See Francis Paul Prucha's introduction to D. S. Otis, The Dawes Act and the Allotment of Indian Lands. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), ix-x.

⁴A compilation of Indian treaties with the United States is located in Charles J. Kappler, ed., Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties, 2. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904). There are several excellent studies of the early years of American Indian policy. Among them are: Prucha, Indian Policy in the Formative Years; Reginald Horsman, Expansion and American Indian Policy, 1783-1812 (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967); and Bernard W. Sheehan, Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973).

⁵Quoted in Francis Paul Prucha, "Andrew Jackson's Indian Policy: A Reassessment," Journal of American History 56 (December 1969), 527-539.

entrance into white society.⁶ Whites fully believed, throughout the nineteenth century, that American "civilization" would win out and that American Indian cultures or, depending on the perspective, American Indians themselves, were doomed to extinction through the "natural" processes of human progress. "Civilization or death" for American Indians was the white view of the Indian situation; there was no other alternative.⁷

The movement for Indian reform after the Civil War, which reached its zenith with the liquidation of the Indian Territory under the Curtis Act of 1898, was based essentially on the same views that prompted the Territory's establishment. In an earlier period, many whites looked upon the reservations as vast schools to teach agricultural methods. Indian people would become Christian and tribalism would be abolished. But the reservation system never attained its desired goals--these "halfway houses" turned out to be little more than internment camps. The outbreaks of warfare between whites and Indians in the 1860's only showed that Indian/white relations had reached the nadir of a hundred year decline. The massacre of the Cheyenne and Arapaho camp at Sand Creek in Colorado on November 29, 1864, finally

⁶This theme is presented in Robert A. Trennert, Jr., Alternative to Extinction: Federal Indian Policy and the Beginnings of the Reservation System (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1975).

⁷Roy Harvey Pearce, The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1953), 240.

stirred a government, still occupied with a civil war, into limited action.⁸

On January 9, 1865, Senator James R. Doolittle of Wisconsin introduced a joint resolution calling for a special committee to be formed in order to investigate the condition of Indian affairs. The committee was approved in March and set at its task shortly thereafter. A survey was taken from various sources, for not only did the Doolittle Commission conduct interviews and take testimony but it sent out questionnaires to Indian agents, missionaries, Army officers, and other persons involved with Indian affairs. The results of the inquiry were shocking to some, but predictable to others. According to the committee's report, alcoholism had become rampant on the reservations and health problems were enormous. Not surprisingly, the American Indian population seemed to be in a rapid decline.

The responses to the Doolittle questionnaire typically emphasized the moral side of the Indian question. Those questioned recommended that American Indians continue in agricultural training, receive Christian educations, and be protected from immoral white influences.⁹ The Grant administration's "Peace Policy" of appointing missionaries as Indian agents was a direct outcome of the findings of the Doolittle Commission.

⁸Francis Paul Prucha, American Indian Policy in Crisis, Christian Reformers and the Indian, 1865-1900 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 14.

⁹See Donald Chaput, "Generals, Indian Agents, Politicians: The Doolittle Survey of 1865," Western History Quarterly 3 (July 1972), 269-282.

The Grant administration's Indian policy was a stopgap attempt to quell the stirrings of the more radical wing of the President's party. In addition to appointing missionaries to fill agency positions, Grant set up the Board of Indian Commissioners, an unpaid group of liberal reformers to advise on Indian policy. He also picked an American Indian to serve as the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The new Commissioner, Ely S. Parker, was an old friend of Grant's, a Seneca from New York and a former member of the General Staff of the Army of the Potomac.¹⁰

But the years of the "Peace Policy" were hardly peaceful. The widespread corruption among members of the President's cabinet directly effected American Indians. Rations sent to the reservations were of poor quality and high priced. It was later discovered that the Secretary of the Interior was accepting kickbacks from the rations contractors.¹¹ Although Parker was not involved in the scandals, he was forced from office in 1871. In addition to the graft, and in part because of it, whites and American Indians became engaged in a series of armed clashes ranging from Texas to Montana to California.¹² Two incidents

¹⁰For a history of the "Peace Policy" see Henry E. Fritz, The Movement for Indian Assimilation, 1860-1890 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1963). Concerning Parker see Prucha, Indian Policy in Crisis, 37, 44, 48, 66-67; and Arthur C. Parker, The Life of General Ely S. Parker (Buffalo, N.Y.: Buffalo Historical Society, 1919).

¹¹Prucha, Indian Policy in Crisis, 58-59.

¹²Much has been written about the wars between Indians and whites in the years following the Civil War. See Ralph K. Andrist, The Long Death: The Last Days of the Plains Indians (New York: Macmillan Company, 1964); and Dee Brown, Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971).

during Grant's presidency disturbed Americans even more than had the Sand Creek Massacre, for they proved the ineffectiveness of his policy of gradual assimilation. In 1873 the Modocs of northern California, although small in number, held off an entire army and killed its commanding general, E. R. S. Canby. A shocked nation deplored Canby's killing and eventually took revenge on the Modocs, but many whites began to question the causes of the war and its meaning within the context of American Indian policy. The Modocs had been a small, peaceful, relatively acculturated people having no apparent potential for making trouble.¹³ Their sudden outbreak vexed many white Americans and created a stir in reform circles.¹⁴ The death of George Armstrong Custer and a portion of his regiment at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in June, 1876, coming as it did during the celebration of America's centennial, stoked the fire of reform even more.

Outbreaks continued. In 1877 the Nez Perces under the leadership of Chief Joseph and Ollicut fled their Willowaw reservation in a desperate attempt to reach Canada. Shortly thereafter the Bannocks followed suit and less than a year later Dull Knife and Little Wolf led a number of Northern Cheyennes out of their assigned reservation in Indian Territory to their homeland in the north. These attempts to flee reservation life were

¹³See Keith A. Murray, The Modocs and Their War (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959) for the most detailed account of the Modoc War.

¹⁴For the reformers' reactions to the Modoc War see Prucha, Indian Policy in Crisis, 87-88.

met with military force to be sure, but they also raised questions as to the reasons behind the outbreaks. Also investigations revealed the appalling living conditions on the agencies which bred the trouble in the first place.¹⁵

No outbreak disturbed whites more than did the "Ponca Affair" in 1879. Standing Bear, a Ponca headman, in an attempt to return the body of his dead son to the Ponca homeland, departed the reservation in Indian Territory bound for Nebraska. He was arrested there and brought to Omaha and held in jail awaiting transportation to Indian Territory. Several reform-minded Omaha citizens, including the assistant editor of the Omaha Herald, Thomas Henry Tibbles, took up Standing Bear's cause with great fervor. They prompted a few of the city's more prominent attorneys to file a writ of habeas corpus in an effort to set the chief free. The decision which United States District Court Judge Elmer S. Dundy rendered set an important precedent in American Indian law. The judge granted the writ thereby admitting that Standing Bear was a "person" under the law and was guaranteed constitutional protection. Before Dundy's decision, American Indians, because of their ambiguous position

¹⁵For the Nez Perce War see Mark H. Brown, The Flight of the Nez Perce (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1967); and Merrill D. Beal, "I Will Fight No More Forever": Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce War (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963). For the Bannock Outbreak see George F. Brimlow, The Bannock Indian War of 1878 (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1938). For the details of the Cheyenne escape from Indian Territory see Peter M. Wright, "The Pursuit of Dull Knife from Fort Reno in 1878-1879," Chronicles of Oklahoma 46 (Summer 1968), 141-154.

as alien wards, had no clear status under United States law.¹⁶

The after effects of the case were far-reaching. Standing Bear, Tibbles and a member of the Omaha tribe, Suzette LaFlesche, toured the eastern United States speaking out against government policy. They appeared before many receptive audiences and created concern among whites about the government's policy concerning American Indians.¹⁷ Within weeks of the speaking tour citizens' groups sprang up in Boston, Philadelphia and other Eastern cities to work for Indian policy reform.

Their appearances and revelations of ill-treatment of tribesmen produced public criticism of Indian policy. Massachusetts Senator Henry Laurens Dawes, who was to become a prime mover of Indian reform in Congress, openly criticized Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz, himself a reformer of some repute. During 1879 in Philadelphia, Mary L. Bonney organized a group of women to collect signatures in a campaign to end the reservation system. The following year she presented to Congress a petition of more than 13,000 signatures urging adoption of Indian reform legislation. By 1883 Bonney's organization assumed the title of the Women's National Indian Association.¹⁸ In 1881, Helen Hunt Jackson published her

¹⁶Prucha, Indian Policy in Crisis, 114.

¹⁷Ibid., 115-116.

¹⁸Fritz, Indian Assimilation, 202.

scathing attack on government Indian policy.¹⁹ The book, titled A Century of Dishonor, created even greater interest in American Indian problems and confirmed the legitimacy of the reformer's cause.²⁰

From 1879 to 1883 the number of people and groups interested in Indian reform burgeoned. In addition to several women's organizations and reform coalitions, Quaker reformers from Philadelphia in 1882 founded the Indian Rights Association to deal with Indian legal problems. To coordinate the various groups and to provide a sounding board for them, the Lake Mohonk Conference of the Friends of the Indian began annual meetings in 1883.²¹

The Lake Mohonk Conference was the creation of Albert K. Smiley, a member of the Board of Indian Commissioners. He and his brother, Alfred, owned a hotel situated on Lake Mohonk in upstate New York. Because he had found that the differing groups had much the same goals, Smiley proposed annual fall meetings be held at his resort to coordinate their activities. The meetings were relaxed and, at first, not well attended. But

¹⁹Helen Hunt Jackson, A Century of Dishonor: A Sketch of the United States Government's Dealings with Some of the Indian Tribes (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1881).

²⁰Jackson's impact is dealt with in Prucha, Indian Policy in Crisis, 161-165.

²¹Fritz, Indian Assimilation, 202.

shortly thereafter attendance swelled and the conference began to exert growing political power.²²

From the outset the conferees accepted the idea of assimilating the American Indian population. They believed that all Indian people should immediately become Americanized and Christianized. Indians should be forced into the individualized, competitive model that was the American way of life. Education would make Native Americans more able to compete with their white neighbors. Most important, the conferees agreed that the reservations should be broken up into individually held allotments in order to provide Indians with homesteads to serve as their economic base. Allotment would do away with tribalism and become the method of "Indian Emancipation."²³

The allotment of Indian lands in severalty was not a new idea nor was it completely the product of post-Civil War reform thought. Thomas Jefferson suggested it regarding American Indians as early as 1808. The Chickasaws, Choctaws and Creeks were offered the option of taking allotments during the removal of the southern Indians to what became Indian Territory

²²Otis, The Dawes Act, 36-37 and Prucha, Indian Policy in Crisis, 143-147.

²³Several scholarly studies have reached the conclusion that much of the agitation in favor of allotment severalty and Indian education was an effort to change American Indian life styles. See Prucha, Indian Policy in Crisis; Otis, The Dawes Act; Fritz, Indian Assimilation; Robert Winston Mardock, The Reformers and the American Indian (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1971); and Loring Benson Priest, Uncle Sam's Stepchildren: The Reformation of United States Indian Policy 1865-1887 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1942).

as early as the 1830's.²⁴ All of the Oklahoma territorial bills introduced during the 1870's contained provisions to allot tribal lands in severalty and open the surplus to non-Indian settlement.²⁵

Most of these attempted measures were seen for what they were--overt attempts to open Indian lands. The railway companies and intruders in Indian Territory backed the bills and lobbied for their adoption. To the reformers, attempts to allot lands in particular areas or among certain tribes smacked of land speculation. Only a general allotment act, encompassing all Indian people and administered for their benefit, would suffice. Regardless of intent the Indian reform movement played into the hands of the railway companies and land speculators.

The year 1879 saw several attempts to press a general allotment law through Congress. In January two such bills were introduced before the House and Senate. Although the Committee on Indian Affairs issued a favorable report on the House measure, it never progressed to a vote. The Senate bill was also eventually tabled.²⁶ Later, on April 21, Alfred M. Scales (D. North Carolina) introduced an allotment measure into the

²⁴Angie Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934), 55, 69, 73.

²⁵For a detailed study of the Oklahoma territorial bills see Roy Gittinger, The Formation of the State of Oklahoma (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1917).

²⁶45 Congress, 3 session, House Journal serial 1841, 332, 685; 45 Congress, 3 session, Senate Journal serial 1827, 227.

House.²⁷ The Scales bill was referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and eventually met the same fate as the two prior allotment bills.

The next year the allotment onslaught became even more intense. On January 12, 1880, the Alvin Saunders (R. Nebraska) allotment bill was introduced into the Senate. This measure was an exact copy of the Scales bill submitted the previous year.²⁸ During the same month the House Committee on Indian Affairs issued a favorable report on a somewhat revised version of the Scales legislation. Neither bill, however, reached a vote.²⁹ On May 19, Richard Coke (D. Texas) placed before the Senate still another general allotment bill.³⁰ It was read and referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and after a favorable report, the bill reached the floor of the Senate. It was debated in January and February of 1881.³¹

The Coke bill was ill-fated and brought forth an intense opposition to allotment measures. Although the Five Civilized

²⁷46 Congress, 1 session, A Bill . . . Allotment in Severalty (H.R. 354) April 21, 1879, Cherokee-Federal Relations File 1879, Oklahoma Historical Society Indian Archives.

²⁸46 Congress, 2 session, A Bill . . . Allotment in Severalty (S. 989) January 12, 1880, Cherokee-Federal Relations File 1880, Oklahoma Historical Society Indian Archives.

²⁹46 Congress, 2 session, House Journal serial 1901, 725, 1228; 46 Congress, 2 session, House Report 1576, serial 1938.

³⁰46 Congress, 3 session, Senate Journal, serial 1940, 139.

³¹46 Congress, 3 session, Congressional Record, Vol. XI, Part 1.

Tribes of Indian Territory were exempted from the provisions of the bill, their attitudes toward it became a central theme during the debates. One of the first questions concerning the bill arose because of the very fact that the Five Tribes were specifically exempted. As an answer, Coke reminded the Senators that one of the provisions of the bill required tribal consent to allotment and that the "civilized tribes were known to the committee not to desire it." The fact that Section Seven of the bill excluded not only the Five Tribes but the whole of Indian Territory particularly irritated the reformers. George Vest (D. Missouri) requested that the bill be amended in order for tribes other than the Cherokees, Creek, Choctaws, Chickasaws and Seminoles to accept allotment legislation. Not surprisingly, Coke intended for the bill to pass as it was written and led the voting which rejected Vest's proposed amendment.³²

During the debates Henry M. Teller (R. Colorado) led the opposition to the proposed bill. Teller was apparently in close contact with the delegations from the Five Civilized Tribes. The Senator even requested that he read their protest into the record. When questioned as to what possible relevancy the memorial of the Five Tribes could have since they were exempted from the bill, Teller explained that if the acculturated Indians were against the measure, the unacculturated would naturally contest it as well. His position was convincing enough and the protest was read into the debate.³³

³²Ibid., 970.

³³Ibid., 781.

Teller's tactics worked well. Under pressure the Coke bill was greatly revised and amended. During the spring of 1882 the Senate passed the measure and sent it to the House. Despite a favorable report, the Coke allotment bill never reached the House floor.³⁴

In the face of these setbacks to their measures, the reformers stepped up the agitation in favor of allotment in severalty. In 1883, the Indian Rights Association published S. C. Armstrong's pamphlet concerning the Indians of the Southwestern United States. The monograph was, in effect, a scathing attack on the governments and social structures of the Five Civilized Tribes. Armstrong urged unconditional allotment legislation which he claimed would end the iniquities in wealth among the tribes of the Southwest and Indian Territory.³⁵ To counteract these charges the governments of the Five Civilized Tribes extended an invitation to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to visit the Indian Territory.³⁶

In 1885 the Senate Committee, with Henry Laurens Dawes (R. Massachusetts) as its chairman, came to the Indian Territory. Dawes, already fully committed to allotment legislation since

³⁴48 Congress, 1 session, Senate Journal, serial 2161, 469; 48 Congress, 2 session, House Report 2247, serial 2328.

³⁵S. C. Armstrong, Report of a Trip Made in Behalf of the Indian Rights Association to Some Indian Reservations of the Southwest (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1884).

³⁶Joint resolution of the Cherokee National Council . . . inviting Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to Tahlequah, November 10, 1884, Cherokee-Federal Relations File 1884, Oklahoma Historical Society Indian Archives.

1879, was hardly the open-minded congressional chairman the Five Civilized Tribes had hoped for. When he returned from the Indian Territory, Dawes went before the Lake Mohonk Conference and berated the Indian system of holding lands in common. He specifically chose the Five Civilized Tribes as his target, saying in effect that although the tribal land tenure system precluded abject poverty, it was nevertheless non-progressive. The Senator then concluded that holding lands in common prevented "selfishness" and therefore prevented self-improvement.³⁷ Dawes returned to the Senate and quickly set out to push a general allotment act through Congress.

Although Dawes introduced his bill on December 8, 1885, the Senate did not pass it until February of the following year. In the House the bill was set aside for some time and eventually put off until the autumn of 1886. It was finally debated and amended, not passing out of the House until December 15 of that year.³⁸

On February 8, 1887, President Grover Cleveland signed the Dawes General Allotment Act into law. The act provided for the surveying and parcelling out of American Indian landholdings to individual tribal members. Along with the acceptance of an

³⁷Dawes' address is in the "Third Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference," Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1885 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1886), 86-91.

³⁸49 Congress, 1 session, House Report 1835, serial 2440; 49 Congress, 2 session, House Journal, serial 2459, 99, 105, 130, 217, 222, 684.

allotment the individual tribesman was to become a citizen of the United States. The new law also placed a trust period on allotments, thus guaranteeing that the land would be inalienable for a period of twenty-five years.³⁹

For a number of reasons, most whites considered the new law a triumph in every way. To several corporate interests, in particular the railroads, it provided a means to deal with American Indians individually and without an exceptional amount of interference from the government. The surplus Indian land, it was thought, could easily be obtained. The law was also hailed as a triumph of nineteenth century liberalism for it stressed individualism and the supremacy of private property. According to the reformers of American Indian policy, the individual ownership of property would force American Indians to abandon their cultural heritage and eventually enter mainstream American society. To others of a more pessimistic bent, the Dawes Act was a generous offering to a doomed people.

Some tribes were specifically exempted from the provisions of the Dawes Act. The Five Civilized Tribes and the Osages of Indian Territory surprisingly were left alone.⁴⁰ This was not the fault of the reformers--there was nothing more hoped for than the liquidation of the Indian Territory. They were stymied in their attempts to include the tribes under the Dawes Act because of the simple legal fact that these tribes each held a

³⁹United States Statutes at Large, 24: 388-391.

⁴⁰Ibid., 391.

fee simple title to their lands. These titles, however, did not weaken their conviction that allotment in severalty was the panacea for all Indian ills. In fact, the reformers and the whites who coveted land in the Indian Territory kept up the pressure on Congress and fought to include these and other overlooked tribes under the provisions of the General Allotment Act.

In less than six years Congress would succumb to the pressure from reformers, non-Indian intruders in the Indian Territory and railroad lobbyists. Under the provisions of the 1893 Indian Appropriation Act, Congress established a commission to seek agreements with the Five Tribes which would extinguish the fee simple titles and allot their lands in severalty. The new commission, named for its chairman, Henry Laurens Dawes, set out almost immediately on its mission to the Indian Territory.⁴¹

For nearly five years the Dawes Commission and the leaders of the Five Civilized Tribes struggled with the allotment question. At first the tribal leaders refused to discuss the subject, leaving the Commission with little to report during its first year of operation. In fact, the Five Tribes picked up a good deal of backing for their contentions concerning the violation of treaty rights. Ever mindful of American Indian legal problems, the Indian Rights Association sent Charles F. Meserve, president of Shaw College in Raleigh, North Carolina, to investigate the situation in Indian Territory. Meserve's report, entitled The Dawes Commission and the Five Civilized Tribes of Indian Territory,

⁴¹Ibid., 27: 645-646.

was totally in favor of the Commission's work and equally committed to attacking the governments of the Five Tribes. He accused the tribal leaders of committing high crimes against their people, of being monopolists and of condoning corruption in government.⁴²

Time was running short for the Five Tribes. In 1895 Congress established two new United States courts in the Indian Territory in an effort to undermine and destroy the already established tribal courts and to erode the power of the tribal governments.⁴³ The next year Congress authorized the Dawes Commission to prepare tribal rolls for the implementation of allotment in severalty.⁴⁴ Finally, on June 28, 1898, President McKinley signed the Curtis Act which not only destroyed tribal jurisdictions but directed the Dawes Commission to proceed with the allotment of tribal lands.⁴⁵ The Choctaws, Chickasaws and Seminoles had already reached an agreement with the Dawes Commission prior to the signing of the new law. The Creeks and Cherokees held out until after the act became law, but all recognized the futility of further argument.

To the reformers the Curtis Act was a giant step toward achieving their ultimate goals for American Indians. Indeed,

⁴²Charles F. Meserve, The Dawes Commission and the Five Civilized Tribes of Indian Territory (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1896).

⁴³U.S. Stats., 27: 693-698.

⁴⁴Ibid., 29: 339-340.

⁴⁵Ibid., 30: 495-519.

the destruction of a separate territory for American Indians was the capstone of the reform movement. To them the Curtis Act brought justice to a corrupt area. One writer commented that the individual allotment was "a marvelous expansion for the ignorant full-blood, who has hitherto controlled only his little sweet potato patch in the woods." But most important to the reformers, allotment in severalty was "a pretty severe contraction for the shrewd mixed-blood, whose audacious fences have been enclosing thousands of acres of tribal lands." According to the members of organizations such as the Lake Mohonk Conference and the Indian Rights Association the Curtis Act would bring equality to a place where it "was not even a theory in the bygone days, when the tribe held all things in common."⁴⁶

The Curtis Act was also a final step toward the end of the "Indian problem." Already Indian children were being sent off the reservations to be educated, missionaries were well situated at most agencies, and a commission had been implemented in order to give American Indians new, Anglicized names. The reformers believed that the complete Americanization and Christianization of American Indians was within sight. Charles Moreau Harger wrote in the Outlook that Native Americans had been given the chance to be "uplifted" and that it was now the time for the individual to prove himself; if he could not, "the world owes

⁴⁶"Exuent the Five Civilized Tribes," Independent 54 (October 9, 1902), 2432.

him nothing."⁴⁷ Given time, according to this line of thought, Indian problems would end simply because the Indian would cease to exist.

Reformers held great faith in measures such as the Dawes and Curtis Acts. Their optimism was abundant. The policy of assimilation or "shrinkage" as they called it because they believed that the Indian population would melt into the dominant society and cease to be visible was well within the ideals of the period's social thinking. The key word was competition. Through the schools, allotment in severalty, and with that the abandonment of Indian culture, American Indians could compete. The ultimate goal was to force them to be independent in and of themselves and to be cut free from both tribal bonds and management by the United States government. Those who survived in white society would no longer be "Indian" and "they will be a contingent worth saving."⁴⁸

Indian policy reformers were not necessarily egalitarian in outlook nor did they wish to restructure American society. The purpose of Indian reform was to reorient Indian societies and ideals. They thought that the United States was progressing towards the zenith of civilization. They did not recognize that civilization was a relative term and that cultures were neither higher nor lower but merely different. Richard Henry Pratt, the

⁴⁷Charles Moreau Harger, "The Indian's Last Stand," Outlook 70 (January 25, 1902), 222.

⁴⁸"The New Indian" Nation 79 (July 2, 1904), 48.

prominent Indian educator of the period, said that Indian culture should not be "even dignified with the term."⁴⁹ Attitudes such as Pratt's were not ordinary ethnocentrism. They reflected the fact that the United States was a growing technological behemoth, seemingly invincible and, in that sense, thoroughly modern.

White Americans, satisfied with these world views, were convinced that their ancestors had gone through a primitive stage and had since progressed to new heights in technology and culture. Christianity was not just a different religion, but the only true belief of free, modern men. Civilization was equated with being modern and with linear, progressive development. White reformers believed that Indian cultures were remnants of a bygone age instead of having simply developed along different lines.

The policy of assimilation attracted numerous advocates, among them, according to the delegates of the Cherokee Nation in Washington, "thousands of the best men and women in the United States."⁵⁰ The Cherokees were not necessarily referring to those persons only of intense morality or kindness, although "the best men and women" certainly believed they possessed those qualities. Rather, the delegates singled out those persons who

⁴⁹Elaine Goodale Eastman, Pratt, The Red Man's Moses (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1935), 188-189.

⁵⁰Report of the Cherokee delegation to Washington, 1885, unclassified Cherokee Nation papers, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma.

were then considered part of America's intellectual elite, the liberal reformers of the Gilded Age.

"Reformer" was something of a misnomer for these individuals. They believed in economic orthodoxy, limited government in the Jeffersonian mold and laissez faire individualism. They were steeped in the evangelical side of Protestant Christianity and held an all-consuming optimism concerning the future of mankind. Individual competition in America's economy and in its social life was a "natural law" and should not be tampered with. Technology was a sign of progress and modernity. The industrialization of America was not only accepted but welcomed as proof of United States superiority and progress.

Carl Schurz, Edwin L. Godkin, Lyman Abbott, Henry L. Dawes, Samuel Bowles, Henry Ward Beecher, Henry Adams and others led the reformer group and provided much of its theoretical base. Although many of them differed in opinion on some matters in the life of the nation, they were basically uniform in their attitudes concerning America's progress, its moral fiber and its conformation of individual liberty. They interested themselves in all the predominant questions of the age including reconstruction, civil service reform, the gold standard, and Indian affairs.⁵¹

⁵¹ Social Darwinism's impact is discussed in Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955). Most of the information concerning the liberal reformers of the Gilded Age can be found in John G. Sproat, "The Best Men" Liberal Reformers in the Gilded Age (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); and Mardock, Reformers and the American Indian.

Their attitudes toward competition and individualism were confirmed in the classical economics of Malthus, Ricardo and Say and in the most advanced scientific thought of the day. The ever-growing interest and research in the social sciences tended to reaffirm their already held beliefs.

William Graham Sumner put an academic stamp on Social Darwinism during his long career at Yale University. When the "father of American Anthropology," Lewis Henry Morgan, expounded his theory, based on his study of American Indians, that mankind's cultural evolution went through stages of savagery, barbarism and finally civilization, his words were readily accepted for they exactly fit white America's preconceived ideas about the "natural" superiority of western civilization.⁵²

Within the confines of their ideals most of the reformers sought to bring Indians "up" from what they commonly referred to as savagery to their definition of civilization. The word "civilization" was never questioned--it meant "progressive," "modern" white American society. To make American Indians "vanish" into mainstream American society was, to the average reformer, the ultimate in philanthropy. Even Samuel Bowles, editor of the Springfield, Massachusetts Republican, who believed that American Indians were doomed anyway, advocated a policy that would smooth the path to extinction and at the same time treat them as

⁵²For a discussion of Morgan and "scientific" theory concerning the assimilation of American Indians see Hoxie, "Beyond Savagery," 44-63.

humanely as possible.⁵³ E. L. Godkin, editor of the influential periodical The Nation, looked upon American Indian policy as an open field for his brand of humanitarian, liberal reform.⁵⁴

Much of the "humanitarian" rhetoric centered on Indian culture. Customs, or the "savage habits" should be destroyed, for they prevented entrance into modern society. The question concerning culture was basic to the assimilationist mentality. Indian education in the period was dedicated to the ultimate reorientation of Indian life styles. Allotment in severalty was intended to break up the traditional Indian pattern of holding land in common and destroy tribal bonds. "Civilization" to the reformers required that American Indians forsake their cultural heritage. Even language was to be given up. An advocate of Indian assimilation, William Strong, who had served as an Associate Justice on the United States Supreme Court, expressed the feeling that if Indians were to vanish into American society they should not be allowed to "maintain their own language and habits."⁵⁵

The reformers were firm believers in the policy that could best be termed "cultural genocide." An American Indian

⁵³Mardock, Reformers and the American Indian, 100.

⁵⁴Edwin Lawrence Godkin, "A Good Field for Reform" Nation 46 (March 15, 1888), 210-211.

⁵⁵Francis Paul Prucha, ed., Americanizing the American Indians, Writings by the "Friends of the Indian" 1880-1900 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 39.

without his culture, according to most, would simply become a man--a blank--ready to be molded into the image of his white neighbors. He would then "vanish" either into society or off the face of the earth. If he could compete, he would survive as a member of society and no longer be Indian. If he could not, he would be considered either racially or culturally inferior and doomed to extinction anyway. In any case American Indians would cease to be burdens on society, for the reformers held that nothing from Indian society could possibly be of value to American society as a whole. Although the phrase "kill the Indian and save the man" could not be attributed to any one person, it fully expressed the sentiment of the "vanishing" policy.

Perhaps the most ardent advocate of the vanishing policy, and certainly among the most militant, was Richard Henry Pratt. Pratt, a career army officer, was the leading philosophical exponent of Indian education during the period. Originally a tinsmith from Indiana, Pratt joined the Army to fight in the Civil War. His rise from among the ranks was steady if not astronomical. During the conflict he was promoted through the ranks from private to captain. After the war he decided to remain in the army. He was involved in the campaigns against the tribes on the southern Plains during the late 1860's and early 1870's. In 1875 he began his career as an Indian educator instead of an Indian fighter. He was sent to Fort Marion, Florida, to serve as the warden over the American Indian prisoners

incarcerated there for military action against the United States.⁵⁶

Pratt's tenure at Fort Marion led him into Indian education. He tried to teach the prisoners English and urged them to take up American lifestyle. He believed that society would accept any and all Indian people once they had given up their cultural heritage. To this end he devoted his life's work, eventually establishing an Indian branch at Hampton Institute and founding the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. He firmly believed that an Indian youth should be removed from the reservation influence, for "left in the surroundings of savagery, he grows to possess a savage language, superstition, and life." The goals of Pratt and therefore Carlisle, were to remove American Indians from their families and heritage and make them able to enter the public schools. Once out of Carlisle the youth "should be forwarded into these other schools, there to temper, test and stimulate his brain and muscle into the capacity he needs for his struggle for life, in competition with us."⁵⁷

The "outing system" was another Pratt innovation and perhaps the method of Indian education which he was the most fond of. Pratt insisted that "savagery was only a habit" and

⁵⁶Biographical material on Pratt can be found in Eastman, Pratt, The Red Man's Moses.

⁵⁷Prucha, Americanizing the American Indians, 270.

that Indian people should "get into the swim of citizenship."⁵⁸ In order to get his students "into the swim" Pratt placed Indian children with white families during the summer and even during the school year so that they could learn the white way of life firsthand and, according to Pratt, "become saturated with the spirit of it, and thus become equal to it."⁵⁹ Many reformers praised the system and often referred to it as the hope of the Indian people. Elaine Goodale Eastman, a former director of the schools at the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, stated that the "word 'outing' is used in a new sense by Major Pratt" and that it was the "Carlisle watch-word--out of the tribal bond; out of Indian narrowness and clannishness; out into the broad life of the Nation." As she understood it, the "Carlisle outing is by no means a summer holiday; it has become a fundamental part of the Carlisle training, a definite method--perhaps the method--of Americanizing Indians."⁶⁰

Indian educators placed great value on industrial training. They thought that "the Indians have not been brought up to believe in the dignity of labor."⁶¹ In order to teach all Indian people "habits of labor" the government sent field matrons to

⁵⁸Richard Henry Pratt, "Indian No Problem," Missionary Review 33 (November 1910), 851, 856.

⁵⁹Prucha, Americanizing the American Indians, 270.

⁶⁰Elaine Goodale Eastman, "A New Method of Indian Education," Outlook 64 (January 27, 1900), 222.

⁶¹Proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference, 1888, 6.

the agencies to teach homemaking, obtained the aid of farmers to teach agriculture, provided industrial training at the schools and taught Indian women to make lace.⁶² The Lake Mohonk Conference delegates consistently advocated the policy of home manufacturing and on several occasions promised to help find markets for Indian produced goods.⁶³

The campaign to "educate" American Indians was fully intended to destroy Native American customs and beliefs. The Dawes Act was designed to cut the tribal bond and instill the notion of private property. The Curtis Act was passed in part to appease the reformers' very strong nationalism. Of all the tribes in the country, the Five Civilized Tribes should have welcomed citizenship and entrance into the body politic. When they rejected the concept of private property and asked to remain sovereign, thus retaining their "Indianness," the reformers were scandalized.

The reformers did not overlook a single aspect of Indian life in their vigorous attempt to stamp it out. Any and all American Indian ceremonies were frowned upon and forbidden. Tribesmen were given Anglicized names and Indian women were

⁶²Elaine Goodale Eastman, "The Education of Indians" Arena 24 (October 1900), 414. On lace-making see Jane W. Guthrie, "Lace-Making Among the Indians" The Outlook 66 (September 1, 1900), 59-62.

⁶³Proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference, 1897, 115.

encouraged to make lace instead of doing beadwork.⁶⁴ The reformers urged agents to discourage not only ceremonies but Indian dress, and rebuked showmen such as Buffalo Bill for allowing the "public exhibition of Indians in their savage costumes."⁶⁵

The assault on Indian life styles was not only a clash of cultures but also a very intense intellectual struggle. Although American Indians differed from tribe to tribe in matters of dress, language, dwellings, ceremonials and material culture many philosophical beliefs cut across tribal lines. For the most part Native American world views were based on the premise that man was a part of, instead of being outside, the forces of nature. Land was only to be used and not owned because individuals were subject to death while the land continued forever. Holding land in common also had its practical side. The Union Agent, Robert L. Owen, reported that there were no paupers within his jurisdiction and that each Indian had a home.⁶⁶ Even Henry L. Dawes admitted that the system in the Indian Territory precluded poverty.

⁶⁴For a contemporary view on renaming American Indians see F. Crissey "Renaming the Indians," World To-Day 10 (January 1906), 84-90. A modern account is found in Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., and Lonnie E. Underhill, "Renaming the American Indian, 1890-1913," American Studies 12 (Fall 1971), 33-45.

⁶⁵Proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference, 1891, 114.

⁶⁶R. L. Owen to J. D. C. Atkins, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Annual Report 1887, 112.

American Indian social thought was an anathema to nineteenth century white Americans. The majority of American Indians were tribal in outlook, basing life experiences on shared relationships. This philosophy was seemingly antithetical to American individualism. Interestingly enough, American individualism was somewhat contradictory for in large part it stressed a basic conformity whereas an inherent part of Native American tribalism was the recognition of cultural plurality.

The reformers, however, tended to think that these ideals were dying--doomed with all the rest of traditional American Indian life. They looked confidently toward the twentieth century feeling that their philanthropy would eventually cure all Native American ills and that Indian people would soon disappear into mainstream American society. But American Indian ideals and culture did not die; indeed they survived and eventually brought about a new reformation in American Indian policy.

CHAPTER II

SURVIVAL: CHARLES EASTMAN, LAURA CORNELIUS KELLOGG, REDBIRD SMITH AND THE PERPETUATION OF NATIVE AMERICAN IDEALS

The assault on Indian cultures, despite its intensity, did not wholly destroy two of the most important precepts of Native American ideology. Although American Indian social and ecological systems varied from tribe to tribe, certain values concerning the structure of society and the relation of man to the ecosystem remained alive and seemed to cut across tribal boundaries. A spirit of collectivism was inherent in most American Indian tribal societies and a realization of balance in nature was a part of nearly every Native American world view. According to most tribal systems the universe had definite order--"balance and reciprocal obligations." Man was a part of the system and could not control it. He could only meet the system's requirements. Should the individual or the collective society fail to meet those obligations the system would be thrown out of balance and the "good life" destroyed.¹

¹Robert K. Thomas, "The Redbird Smith Movement" in William N. Fenton and John Gulick, Symposium on Cherokee and Iroquois Culture (Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 180), 163.

These Native American ideals spread in the period between 1900 and the early 1920's and even became part of the philosophy of modern Pan-Indianism (they could just as well have been its impetus). Moreover, in the same period whites began to share some of these ideals concerning universal order and balance in nature. It was indeed ironic and perhaps fateful that the whiteman became more and more interested in conservation and collectivistic world order at the precise point in time when he had all but destroyed Native American tribalism and Indian intellectual achievement.²

Europeans, from the time they first set foot on American shores, looked upon the continent's inhabitants as not only "primitive" but seemingly part of the flora and fauna of the New World. The American descendents of English colonists consistently referred to Indian people as being "children of the forest" or "children of nature." This attitude no doubt reflected the view that American Indians not only were locked in

²"Collectivistic" and "collectivism" are interesting historical concepts. John Wesley Powell, the noted ethnologist and linguistics expert who became the first director of the Bureau of American Ethnology, spent time toying with Lewis Henry Morgan's ideas concerning the steps in cultural evolution. Powell suggested that in addition to the states of savagery, barbarism and civilization there should be a stage of "enlightenment." In this final stage "corporate cooperation" would be achieved. Of course the idea of collectivism in historical jargon is nearly always linked to communism, unionism and socialism, but the large corporations of the late nineteenth century practiced, and continue to practice, forms of "collectivism" by forming trusts, interlocking directories and oligopolies. Some even have experimented with workman's villages, company towns, "welfare capitalism" and profit-sharing to promote loyalty and a sense of labor/management togetherness. Perhaps Native American tribalism was already an "enlightened" development. For Powell's views see Hoxie, "Beyond Savagery," 66-69.

a pre-pubescent stage of human development but totally dependent on, and subject to, the vicissitudes of nature.³ By the early nineteenth century many white Americans, caught up in the romanticism of the period, adhered to the idea that American Indians were mystically in tune with the wonders of the natural world.⁴ Given his romantic view of nature, it was little wonder that Henry David Thoreau died with the words "moose" and "Indian" on his lips.⁵ Native Americans, in the minds of the whites, were forever linked with the untamed forest, fields and streams. With this concept in mind, it was easy for whites to accept the doctrine that American Indians, along with the forests and streams, would be crushed under the advance of a "civilized" society and its offspring, industrialization.

Hand in hand with the growth of industrialization and thus the spread of civilization came an interest in science. With this interest came the advent of a "science" of human development--anthropology. For the new discipline, the reservations offered the chance of studying a "primitive" people before

³For white views on American Indians and their place in nature see Pearce The Savages of America and Richard Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860 (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1973).

⁴Concerning the depiction of Indian people in American fiction see Albert Keiser, The Indian in American Literature (New York: Oxford University Press, 1933).

⁵On Thoreau and American Indians see Frederick W. Turner's introduction to S. M. Barrett, ed., Geronimo, His Own Story (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971, first published 1906); see also Lawrence Willson, "Thoreau: Student of Anthropology," American Anthropologist 61 (April 1959), 100-109.

civilization completely took over and destroyed not only the "untamed" wilderness but its inhabitants as well. A great amount of urgency was involved in collecting American Indian data and for the most part it was gathered in a most empirical manner. By the early part of the twentieth century the urgency of the anthropologists' mission was intensified--the old chiefs were quickly dying off and the "vanishing" policy was presumed to be pushing aside the last remnants of American Indian life styles.⁶ To the great relief of the scientific world, the anthropologists went to Indian country in even greater numbers. S. A. Barrett obtained an autobiography from the Apache chief Geronimo in 1905, a "wild" Indian named Ishi was "found" in California during 1911 and Edward S. Curtis from 1902 through the 1920's captured in photographs the essence of a supposedly vanishing race.⁷

The ethnologists accomplished a remarkable task in collecting and recording the customs and values of American Indians. But their efforts were only intended to prove their theories of social evolution or to preserve items of Indian

⁶That the "old chiefs" and the "old ways" were quickly dying the whites had no doubt. See for instance, "War Chiefs in Peace" The Nation 81 (September 28, 1905), 255-256.

⁷For Ishi's biography and significance to anthropology see Theodora Kroeber, Ishi in Two Worlds: A Biography of the Last Wild Indian in America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961). For contemporary comments on Curtis' work see "Photos by E. S. Curtis" World's Work 12 (August 1906) 7913-7914; and George Bird Grinnell "Portraits of Indian Types," Scribner's Magazine 37 (March 1905) 259-273.

material culture as museum relics. Native American philosophy was similarly recorded and preserved--a collection of "dead" ideals.

But Native American values survived as viable social and ecological philosophies. They were kept intact among the aged and the relatively isolated, in the Kivas of the Pueblos and on the reservations where the vanishing policy was only in its first stages. More important, Native American ideals concerning the social structure and the ecosystem were still alive among those Indian people who had been under the most pressure to cast them aside.

Concerning the environment, Indian people were in almost total agreement in revering the earth and its bounties. It was a universal Native American duty to retain a balanced and ordered society. This concept extended to the natural world as well. When animals were killed for food, it was customary among most tribes to ask forgiveness and explain the reasons which prompted their deaths either to the animal's spirit or to a deity. If the hunter failed to fulfill his obligations, the common belief was that nature would almost certainly take vengeance upon him or perhaps the tribe as a whole. In agricultural and gathering tribal economies these duties were extended to what was grown in the garden or collected in the wild. Some tribal customs dictated that the individual should express his or her thanks and need for forgiveness to the earth even when cutting trees, digging for clay, or preparing meals. For the

most part exploitation of the earth was strictly forbidden. Even in the great buffalo drives where overkill tactics were used, the hunters took it as a sign of the earth's great gift to their people and duly expressed their thanks. Much of Native American ceremonialism stemmed from the efforts to meet the obligations nature had set upon them for reaping its bounty.⁸

One man who never forgot these Native American ideals toward nature was Charles A. Eastman. Although he had left the tribal life at the age of fifteen and never questioned "the advantages of a civilized life over our earlier and primitive existence," Eastman was at his best when writing about American Indian ecological concepts.⁹ In his numerous books and essays Eastman urged every American to "recognize the Indian's good sense and sanity in the way of simple living and the mastery of the great out of doors."¹⁰ In his devotion to prove to whites that American Indians possessed the capabilities to learn and adapt, he gained notoriety among conservationists and won popular approval for Native American ecological precepts.

⁸Ruth M. Underhill, Red Man's Religion, Beliefs and Practices of the Indians North of Mexico (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 49-50, 116-126; and N. B. Johnson, "The American Indian as a Conservationist," Chronicles of Oklahoma 30 (Autumn 1952), 333-340.

⁹Ohiyesa (Charles A. Eastman, M.D.) "First Impressions of Civilization" Harper's Monthly 108 (March 1904), 592.

¹⁰Eastman, The Indian To-day (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1915), 177.

Eastman was Santee Sioux, born in 1858 and brought up according to the customs of his tribe. His father, Many Lightnings, was lost during the Minnesota Sioux war of 1862 and presumed dead. Because his mother had died when Eastman was a small boy, the loss of his father left him an orphan and according to tribal law the responsibility of his grandmother and uncle. Eastman, then named Ohiyesa, was taught the manners and customs of his people. Doubtless he would have lived the rest of his life in Santee society had his father not reappeared.

In his mid-teens Eastman was wrenched from the tribal life. It was at that time when Many Lightnings, who had received a pardon for his participation in the war against the United States from Abraham Lincoln, returned to the tribe to reclaim his son. During the period between the pardon and the return to his tribe, Many Lightnings had learned Christianity, taken a homestead, and renamed himself Jacob Eastman. The newly christened Jacob had no intentions of letting his son, whom he renamed Charles, stay with the tribe. Almost immediately the younger Eastman was sent off to the Reverend Alfred L. Riggs' Santee Indian School. After the rigorous training at Riggs' institution Eastman enrolled in Knox College. From there he went to Dartmouth on that university's scholarship for American Indians. Upon graduation from Dartmouth Eastman entered the Boston University Medical School where he received the training he thought would best aid other Indian people.

Upon graduation from medical school, Eastman accepted the position as agency doctor at the Pine Ridge Sioux reservation in South Dakota. He was thirty-three years old. During his tenure at Pine Ridge he met and married Elaine Goodale, the Superintendent of the agency school system. Mrs. Eastman, a white woman, was a firm believer in the vanishing policy and a follower of Richard Henry Pratt's philosophy of Indian education.

When the massacre of Big Foot's band of Sioux occurred at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1890, Eastman immediately wanted to proceed to the battle site to treat the wounded. The agency superintendent, however, prevented him from going into the area. Whether the superintendent feared for Eastman's life because the doctor was an American Indian or was concerned that Eastman might denounce the carnage and therefore threaten his position was not revealed. In any case, the incident touched off a series of protests from both Eastmans to the federal government. Not only did the agent's apparent insensitivity gall them but they evidently had held long-standing grievances concerning the conditions at Pine Ridge which they believed had led to the massacre. In the end the Eastmans resigned their posts and left South Dakota.

They later moved to Minneapolis where Eastman set up a private practice and began to write. While in the city he became affiliated with the Young Men's Christian Association, eventually becoming the organization's area field secretary.

He would later travel extensively among the Western tribes and represent some of their interests in Washington. At one point in his career he became involved with the renaming of Sioux Indians.¹¹ In 1911 he attended the Universal Congress of Races in London as an American Indian delegate.¹²

By 1912 Eastman was probably the best known American of Indian ancestry in the country. His books were all very successful and had been translated into German, French, Danish and Bohemian.¹³ He was undoubtedly the most highly-respected of all the "progressive" Indians and most whites considered him to be a "race" leader. The title fit him well and when, in 1911, a white man named Fayette McKenzie proposed that he and a few other well-educated Native Americans form an organization to aid in the "transformation" of the Indian people into American citizens, Eastman felt duty-bound to attend.¹⁴

The organization, which was called the Society of American Indians, was made up primarily of those Indian people

¹¹For the details of Eastman's life see his Indian Boyhood (New York: Dover Publication, Inc., 1971 first published in 1902); From the Deep Woods to Civilization: Chapters in the Autobiography of an Indian (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1917); and Hazel Hertzberg, The Search for an American Indian Identity; Modern Pan-Indian Movements (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971), 38-42.

¹²Publishers note in Eastman, The Indian To-day, ix.

¹³Ibid., viii.

¹⁴For the formation of the Society of American Indians see Hertzberg, Search for an American Indian Identity, 59-73; and Wilcomb Washburn, "The Society of American Indians," Indian Historian 3 (Winter 1970), 21-23.

who firmly believed in the idea of progress and therefore acculturation. Their immediate goals were many and somewhat complex but they all felt that the Society would be the pre-eminent organization in helping other Indians bridge the gap between tribal and mainstream American society. Toward this end the organization's leaders sought to instill in all Native Americans an "Indian," rather than a tribal, identity and, with that, a sense of race pride. To them race pride was the open demonstration that certain aspects of American Indian life were "worthy" and should be incorporated into modern society. According to one of the founders of the SAI, "all of the best things in the old Indian life . . . must be brought into and developed higher in the new civilization."¹⁵ Society leaders stressed that Indian people possessed the virtues of generosity, loyalty, and had intellectual capacity in the effort to prove to whites that Indians were morally suitable for and fully capable of acculturation. They thought that the old and the new could be combined thus making it easier for the Indian people to move from "primitivism" into the economic and social life of the nation.

He later became disenchanted with some of the other leaders of the Society of American Indians, but Eastman was committed to providing proof that Indians were intellectually equal to whites and therefore equal to the responsibility of

¹⁵Arthur C. Parker "Editor's Viewpoint" Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians 2 (July-September 1914), 168.

American citizenship. In all of his articles and books he stressed the equality of whites and Indians in morality and learning capacity. American Indians consistently demonstrated courage, honor and the "beauty of generosity."¹⁶ In his first book, an autobiography entitled Indian Boyhood (1902), he emphasized the idea that Indian people learned and had the capacity to learn even while in transition from "savagery" to "civilization." Indian culture, however, emphasized different ideals. In most of his writing he alluded to the idea that while the cultures were different and perhaps unequal, Indian intelligence was very much on par with the whites.

In terms of general knowledge, Eastman most often gave the edge to Western European civilization. He was, after all, a product of American missionary education, married to one of Richard Henry Pratt's most ardent supporters. But when the conservation movement began to show a widespread popular base in the United States, Eastman proudly wrote about, and to his mind, demonstrated the equality, if not the superiority, of American Indian knowledge. In Indian Boyhood he thought he had proven that Indian people were capable of learning white ways; his life demonstrated this fact. The book also indicated that Eastman believed that whites could certainly benefit from Indian ways for, according to Eastman, an Indian's education "makes him a master of the art of wood-craft."¹⁷

¹⁶Eastman, "The Indian and the Moral Code" The Outlook 97 (January 7, 1911), 31.

¹⁷Eastman, Indian Boyhood, 43.

It was easy for Eastman to move from being a philosopher on racial intellectual capabilities to becoming a teacher of "Indian lore." In addition to the widely read and admittedly instructional Indian Boyhood, Eastman continued his autobiography in From the Deep Woods to Civilization (1917). His most popular tracts were youth books. Red Hunters and the Animal People (1904), Indian Scout Talks (1914), and Indian Heroes and Great Chieftains (1918) were among his most widely read monographs for young people. For a more mature audience, Eastman expressed his ideas concerning the American Indian reverence for nature in The Soul of the Indian (1911) and reported on conditions within Native American groups and listed Indian contributions to American society in The Indian To-day. Not only did Eastman's writing reveal a great deal of nostalgia for the life he had lived as a boy among the Santee Sioux, but they also glowed with his own pride in and enthusiasm for the growth in the popularity of Native American ideals. He undoubtedly thought that his popularity and acceptance in the white world would enhance American Indian self-pride and provide a means for white acceptance of other Native Americans.¹⁸ He also thought that the cause of conservation was just and provided a means for Native Americans to make their greatest and most long lasting contribution to the United States. Living in and knowing the "great out of doors" was to him the right and best way for mankind to

¹⁸ Eastman's abilities as a writer were recognized very early. See E. L. Cory "Recent Writings by American Indians," The Book Buyer, 24 (February 1901), 20-25.

exist. It was natural and balanced. Like his people, "the wisest Americans" gave over at least part of their lives to hunting, camping, hiking and fishing thus "receiving the vital benefits of the pure air and sunlight."¹⁹

As a doctor very much in touch with the trends going on within his profession, Eastman wholly recommended outdoor living as the foundation for good health. He firmly believed that his ancestors owed their strong physical attributes to their "natural" life styles. Detriments to Indian health, to his mind, were measles, smallpox, tuberculosis and alcohol--all European introductions. In fact, he once expressed the opinion that these European diseases would have totally annihilated the American Indian race "save its heritage of a superb physique." He was a resounding critic of the overcrowded Indian schools and their lack of outdoor training. He considered the "close confinement and long hours of work were for these children of the forest and plains unnatural and trying at best."²⁰

The American Indian "heritage of a superb physique" was also part of the white imagery built around Native Americans in the period. Jim Thorpe, a Sac and Fox, led the Carlisle Indian School football team in victories over several white colleges, including West Point. Thorpe went on to win the decathlon and pentathlon competitions at the 1912 Olympic

¹⁹Eastman, The Indian To-day, 177.

²⁰Eastman, "The Indian's Health Problem," The American Indian Magazine, 4 (April-June 1916), 141, 143.

games in Sweden. It was true, according to one writer, that Indians "excel in many civilized sports."²¹ Even the motion picture industry played up the image of the Indian athlete. Two productions, "Football Warrior" (1908) and "The Call of the Wild" (1909), both about Native American football heroes, were very popular among movie-goers of the era.²² In the collective white mind American Indians were "naturally" healthy because of their training and life in the great out-of-doors.

In the same year that "Football Warrior" was released--1908--a writer named George Warton James published a lengthy monograph urging whites to learn the beneficial ways of Native Americans. Entitled What the White Race May Learn from the Indian, the book argued that urban areas and contemporary American lifestyles were most detrimental to the human body. For the volume's second printing in 1917, James retitled his "new and enlarged edition" The Indians' Secret of Health--a title which revealed the author's main thesis even more explicitly.

James admonished readers to follow Native American leads and seek the pure air of the wilderness, practice deep-breathing and take up running as a healthful exercise. He called upon "the white race to incorporate into its civilization the good things of the Indian civilization." He stressed that America should "forsake the injurious things of its pseudo-civilized,

²¹Charles M. Harvey, "The Indians of To-day and To-morrow," Review of Reviews 33 (June 1906), 703.

²²Ralph E. and Natasha A. Friar, The Only Good Indian: the Hollywood Gospel (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1972), 80-81.

artificial and over-refined life" and "return to the simple, healthful, and natural life [of] the Indians."²³ James' theme sounded remarkably similar to the ideas expressed by Eastman and other leaders of the Society of American Indians.

The popularity of the subject further motivated Eastman to promote among whites the values of Native American ideals. He took great interest in the preservation of American Indian artifacts and supported programs aiding in the development of the native arts of painting, basketry, beadwork, weaving and pottery-making.²⁴ Because of his status as an American Indian conservationist among the whites, he was able to promote the preservation of Indian art in magazines such as the Craftsman.²⁵

But most important he was able to remind white Americans of the value of the Native American ideal of balance in nature and urge its acceptance to all Americans. Eastman was deeply concerned that there would be no wilderness areas in the future for whites or Indians to visit and reap the healthful benefits

²³George Warton James, What the White Race May Learn From the Indian (Chicago: Forbes and Company, 1908), 11-12. The second edition, published by Radiant Life Press of Pasadena, California, kept the original title as a subtitle.

²⁴See Eastman's comments concerning Indian art at the first meeting of the Society of American Indians in Report of the Executive Council on the Proceedings of the First Annual Conference of the Society of American Indians (Washington: n.p., 1912), 88; and Chapter 10 of his The Indian To-day, pp. 148-163.

²⁵See, for instance, Eastman, "Indian Handicrafts," Craftsman 8 (August 1905), 659-662.

of nature without the aid of Native American knowledge. For this reason he gave his full support to such "back-to-nature" youth groups as the Boy Scouts. In his book, The Indian To-day, the Indian philosopher/physician stated that in "the mad rush for wealth we have too long overlooked the foundations of our national welfare." In order to combat this "unnatural" way of life and protect future generations, Eastman called upon "the parents of America to give their fullest support to those great organizations, the Boy Scouts and the Camp Fire Girls" because the young people who belonged to those groups were "learning through this movement much of the wisdom of the first American." "The contribution of the American Indian," he wrote, was "not to be measured by material acquirment" but that its "greatest worth" was "spiritual and philosophical."²⁶

Eastman was firm in his advocacy of American Indian ideals concerning the ecosystem and quite accurate in their descriptions. Although romantic in style, his words were based on sound ethnological research, his own data collected during his visits to the reservations and boyhood recollections. He wrote that Indian people were true conservationists endowed with a spiritual reverence for the land. The earth's bounties were to be taken with a spirit of thankfulness and due humility. He constantly reminded readers that American Indians killed animals and took from the earth "only as necessity and the exigencies of life demand, and not wantonly." Most of all he

²⁶Eastman, The Indian To-day, pp. 177-178.

kept alive the Native American concept of order and balance. According to Eastman man must meet the demands of nature or else he would lose its benefits of health and beauty. He deeply believed that if the conservation movement died the future of mankind was in grave peril.²⁷

Eastman preserved and made popular Indian ideals for many whites. For the most part the conservation movement made Native American ideals concerning the balance of nature acceptable to white people.²⁸ To the whites other Indian values were less acceptable and perhaps at that time unknown. But Eastman's great contribution lay in paving the way for American Indians to preserve and make popular other important products of the Native American intellect.

American Indian social mores at the beginning of the twentieth century were thought to have been totally antithetical to white American values. Indian modes of living and holding land were communistic and non-progressive to the American mind. The whole object of American Indian policy in the nineteenth century was directed toward the obliteration of Native social values. It was therefore remarkable that they actually survived. It was even more remarkable that, by 1920,

²⁷See Eastman's foreward to his Red Hunter's and the Animal People, iv-v.

²⁸See, for instance, Frank G. Speck, "The Indians and Game Preservation," The Red Man 6 (September 1913), 21-23; B. Buchanan, "Tribute to the First American," World To-Day 20 (January 1911), 28-33 and A. J. Fynn, The American Indian As a Product of Environment (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1907).

they would gain acceptance among some white intellectuals.

One of the founders of the Society of American Indians was an Oneida woman who firmly believed that Native American social values were still viable solutions to Indian problems and perhaps would be a dynamic force behind a new order in the United States. Born in Wisconsin in 1880, Laura Cornelius hardly seemed the type to promote and defend American Indian collectivism among white people in the United States. She had been educated in white schools and was one of very few American Indian women of the period to attend college. After graduating from Grafton Hall in Fond du lac, Wisconsin, she studied at Stanford University, Barnard College and the University of Wisconsin. In 1912, at the age of thirty-two, she married a white man named Kellogg. From her background she outwardly appeared to have been about as far removed from American Indian problems as an upper class, educated white woman should have been. But, in point of fact, upper and middle-class white women were not immune from, or complacent about, the social problems in the United States. Women in America had a long history of repression. Regulated to their positions as repositories of culture, childbearers, and foci of America's households, women were politically and economically constrained. With the advent of more and better labor-saving devices many upper class women became, instead of household managers, part of a "household proletariat."

Frustrated, they channeled their energies into areas of social and political activism. In order to become active in the affairs of the nation many women used the idea that they were America's repositories of culture to their advantage. The women who became involved with American Indian problems during the nineteenth century, for instance, advocated the change in Native American values to match their own cultural mores. Their paternalism, or more properly maternalism, toward American Indians was very much evident and a contributing factor in the development of the vanishing policy. Women also advocated abolition, temperance and were involved in the adjustment of American immigrants in much the same manner.

Because of her ancestry, and in part because of her social position, Cornelius-Kellogg became deeply involved with American Indian affairs. Undoubtedly she knew that in her own tribal culture, a nation within the League of the Iroquois, women had held great political and social powers. Iroquois women dominated tribal culture. Clan lineage was traced through women. Iroquois men, regulated in their positions as hunters and warriors, did not hold nearly as strong a position in the tribal economy. The women raised the crops and therefore provided the larger share of tribal subsistence. Iroquois women were also the tribal political powers for they alone picked the representatives to the League's councils.

When Cornelius-Kellogg cast her lot with the Society of American Indians she undoubtedly thought that she could not

only enhance the position of Indian women but undo the damages done to American Indian societies. At the first meeting of the SAI, held in Columbus, Ohio, in 1911, Cornelius-Kellogg took a very active role in the proceedings. She was a strong advocate of organization and the power of collective activism. When the organization's officers were selected she won a place on the Executive Committee.²⁹ During the discussion on Indian art she proposed that a group be formed to regulate its production in order to prevent the widespread introduction of its "deteriorated" forms.³⁰ But her most interesting, and perhaps most unsettling contribution to this body of acculturated Native Americans was a paper entitled "Industrial Organization for the Indian." She proposed that self-governing "industrial villages" be organized among Indian people living on reservations. In these villages no one individual would be able to obtain controlling interest in the communities' stock and everyone would be entitled to a share of the profits. Evidently she had in mind a touch of Wall Street business combined with "the Mormon idea of communistic cooperation" and what she referred to as the "natural clannishness" of Indian people. In this way Native Americans could "teach the white man" the benefits of group cooperation and equal economic justice for all men.³¹

²⁹Hertzberg, Search for an American Indian Identity, 71.

³⁰Proceedings of the First Annual Conference of the Society of American Indians, 88.

³¹Ibid., 54-55.

She looked upon her plan as a workable solution to Indian problems and completely in keeping with tribal life styles. Like other "progressive" American Indians she wanted Native Americans eventually to become independent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and to prove their worth to whites. But, unlike many of them, Cornelius-Kellogg thought that there should be something to replace the Bureau. The Indian corporation seemed the likely choice provided that a reservation land base be kept intact. The "Lolomi" plan, as she called it, would provide for self-government and the establishment of industrial communities. It would be no problem to found these communities, according to Cornelius-Kellogg, because "all Indians understand village organization . . . and want it." She believed that her idea incorporated the best of both the Indian and the white worlds--tribalism with corporate capitalism.³²

Cornelius-Kellogg believed that the industrial villages could become part of the economic system of the United States, but she was decidedly vague on what exactly they could produce. More than likely she had the idea that the growing interest among whites in Indian-produced "curios" and art would supply a ready made market for village goods. Perhaps she also thought of corporate farming or ranching. She was firmly convinced, however, that the solution to Indian problems lay in curing

³²Laura Cornelius Kellogg (Wynnogene), Our Democracy and the American Indian, A Comprehensive Presentation of the Indian Situation As It Is Today (Kansas City, Missouri: Burton Publishing Company, 1920) 41-42, 50-51, 61-65, 89.

Native American social ills. Economic problems would be solved in the process of revitalizing Indian social philosophies such as tribalism because, according to Cornelius-Kellogg, "so interdependent are the business and social problems of the Red Man they cannot be separated in his life." If she could cure the latter the former would simply fall into place.³³

According to her, Indian ways alone could solve Indian problems. She was convinced that the Lolomi plan was the "Indian way" and also the way out of Native American difficulties. It employed the Native American concepts of group cooperation, shared relationships and world balance. If village life was restored, American Indian pride would soar to new heights, Native American dignity would be reestablished and the solidarity of Indian people would be achieved. Cornelius-Kellogg believed that the fallacy of the vanishing policy lay in the complete disregard for viable Native American social values. She wrote that "of the philanthropists outside the race, who have given themselves to the Cause" and those Indians "who have ardently longed to do something for their own, there did not happen to be one whose experience was that of the race itself." None of them, according to her, had "lived so close to the old days that he could honestly glory in the Red man's inheritance."³⁴

³³Ibid., 82.

³⁴Ibid., 37.

Although it seemed that Cornelius-Kellogg, with her Stanford and Barnard education, was about as far removed from Native American life styles as were most of the white reformers of the Gilded Age, her ideals were in fact based on Indian value systems. She was an avid student of American Indian culture and philosophies. On occasion she had to relearn the history of her own people. But she learned well and indeed became a noted lecturer on Native American history and culture. She was also a playwright and some of her best known works were based on Indian themes.³⁵ During her lifetime she made extensive travels throughout Indian country and undoubtedly became very knowledgeable of the different tribal cultures. The word she used for her community plan, "Lolomi," was borrowed from the Hopi language.³⁶ She often used her Indian name, Wynnogene, on her publications and was considered to be a "real daughter of the race." Her most extensive monograph, Our Democracy and the American Indian (1920), which elaborated the Lolomi idea, although not widely known, was deemed to be practical and, according to the publisher, would bring "new life to a whole people."³⁷

In many ways Cornelius-Kellogg was an eclectic, a borrower of ideas from other Native Americans. For that matter

³⁵Among the titles of her plays were: "The Lost Empire," "The Trail of the Morning Star" and "Eagle Eye."

³⁶Cornelius-Kellogg, Our Democracy and the American Indian, 34.

³⁷See the publisher's preface in Ibid., 9-10

Charles A. Eastman, despite his background, included in his books precepts based on the ideologies of tribes other than the Santee Sioux. Perhaps this eclecticism was in part a promotion of their pan-Indian outlook. Both traveled extensively among and studies other Indian people. The ideals they had heard in their youth as cultural American Indians, and which perhaps they had forgotten while attending Dartmouth or Barnard, were revitalized during their studies of Native American culture.

But they also gave credit where credit was due. Cornelius-Kellogg dedicated Our Democracy and the American Indian to Redbird Smith, who she believed "preserved his people from demoralization and who was the first to accept the Lolomi." Smith, who died almost two years before the publication of Cornelius-Kellogg's book, probably would not have recognized the word "Lolomi." He was Cherokee and spoke only his native language. Nor did he "accept" her plan for Native Americans. Smith was merely trying to keep intact the social and ecological systems which the Cherokees had practiced for generations but which were slowly eroding. Cornelius-Kellogg borrowed from Smith for she thought that he represented all those Native American leaders who maintained their heritage in the face of adversity. Without those leaders she could not have spoken with authority on or passed along the values of the Indian people.

Redbird Smith's people, perhaps more than most other tribes, had been hard pressed to give up their cultural values. At least since the 1790's government officials had urged Cherokee

tribal leaders to promote "civilization" among the tribe's seven clans. In the 1820's Cherokee leaders themselves began a massive attempt to promote acculturation within the tribe in order to stave off removal from their homelands. As a result many learned English, worked small farms, some obtained black slaves, wore "white" clothing and began to move away from village life and its ceremonial grounds. When removal finally came despite the tribe's movement for acculturation many of the more traditional Cherokees were completely despondent. The sacred flame had been put out; Cherokees were losing their idea of clan ties; their ancient homeland was taken away. Most important, the Cherokee idea of universal balance had been destroyed. Traditional Cherokees surely felt that the efforts to acculturate the people and with that process the concomitant loss of reverence for the old ways had laid waste to the natural order of the Cherokee world. Removal was the final and perhaps predictable end to the erosion of the Cherokee system of values.³⁸

But tradition survived removal to the Indian Territory. Although in modified form, an ancient ceremonial group called the Keetoowah Society was kept alive. During the American Civil

³⁸There are several Cherokee tribal histories, most of them concentrating on the removal period. Among them are: Marion L. Starkey, The Cherokee Nation (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946); Thurman Wilkins, Cherokee Tragedy: The Story of the Ridge Family and the Decimation of a People (New York: Macmillan Company, 1970); and Grace Steele Woodward, The Cherokees (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963). Concerning the sacred flame, see the statement of John Redbird Smith, Indian-Pioneer Papers, WPA Project, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma. Vol. 85, 180-181.

War the society was used as a political arm of the pro-Union Cherokees. To traditionalists the full restoration of Cherokee values lay just below the surface.

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century the Cherokee Nation was pressured once again to accept change. In 1893 the Dawes Commission was established to force the Cherokee government to dissolve itself and require its people to accept allotment in severalty. For the traditional Cherokees, who had kept an oral tradition of the removal from the East and its evils, allotment in severalty was a return to the "bad days" of the 1830's. The Cherokee concept of order, if indeed it had ever been reestablished after removal, was surely going to be destroyed again.³⁹

Cherokee customs and beliefs had been greatly modified during the 1820's and as a result of the removal. Fullblood or traditionalist communities had never really been able to recapture fully the village and ceremonial life of the 1700's. By the 1880's traditionalist communities were more on the order of small "neighborhoods" made up of extended families. There were very few, if any, actual Cherokee villages of the type found in the east one hundred years before. Because lands

³⁹The memories of removal had not dimmed fifty years after the fact. In 1887 Union Agent Robert Owen reported that "because of the unwritten history kept alive among the Indians of the distresses of the forced removal from the East, the full-blood is almost unanimously hostile to any act which he imagines would disturb the present peace and security." R. L. Owen to J. D. C. Atkins, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Annual Report 1887, 113.

in the Cherokee Nation were held in common, families could stake out as much land as they could use. Since traditionalist families for the most part still practiced subsistence agriculture, they usually picked and held only small plots of ground. The extended families would usually take up adjacent lands and build their log cabins within sight of each other. Ceremonial grounds were located in chosen areas not necessarily within these neighborhoods. This was more than likely a function of population concentration. In the village of the eighteenth century the ceremonial grounds were part of the community itself. After removal the Cherokee population was evidently more dispersed, the local concentration not large enough to support its own ceremonial areas. Likely as not, ceremonial grounds were located to accommodate those people living in several small communities within a larger geographic region.⁴⁰

The assault on Native American culture in the latter half of the nineteenth century threatened even these modifications. The allotment of tribal lands would mean the absolute end of the tribal institution of holding lands in common. Not only that but the plots allotted would be larger and farther separated thereby destroying even the small neighborhood communities. It was during this period that Redbird Smith

⁴⁰Very little has been written about fullblood communities in the 1890's and early 1900's. I have largely built this view of them from family traditions and interviews with aged Cherokee people.

and the Keetoowahs began the movement to protect tradition and with that the Cherokee concept of order. Removal had meant for the Cherokees the loss of homelands and a disruption of natural balance but with allotment in severalty the traditionalists literally "faced social death."⁴¹

Smith was born in Arkansas in 1851, the son of Pig Redbird. The family name "Smith" came from his father's abilities as a blacksmith. The elder Smith was a traditionalist and a leader in the Keetoowah Society councils. It was at one of these meetings that Pig Redbird received a vision indicating that his descendents were to lead the Keetoowahs and revitalize Cherokee society.⁴²

The younger Smith grew up in a traditionalist community and became involved in tribal politics. In addition to his position in the Keetoowah Society, Smith also served in the Cherokee National Council. By the 1890's he was a recognized and much consulted leader of the fullblood segment of Cherokee society.⁴³ But as the United States government's efforts to force the Cherokees to change their lifestyles increased, Smith began to concentrate more and more on the religious, rather than the political, side of Cherokee life. In the

⁴¹Thomas, "The Redbird Smith Movement," 163.

⁴²Statement of John Redbird Smith, Indian-Pioneer Papers, Vol. 85, 173, 180.

⁴³Morris L. Wardell, A Political History of the Cherokee Nation, 1838-1907 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1938), 328.

1890's the Keetoowahs obtained the sacred wampum belts from the son of a former principal chief. Smith concentrated his energies in the attempt to interpret the belts and to finally restore "God's seven clan law." In his research he traveled among the Creeks and Shawnees seeking their views on the meaning of the belts. Eventually ceremonials were revitalized and by 1903 twenty-three ceremonial grounds were established. To Smith the Cherokees were in dire need of religious revival.⁴⁴

In addition to his attempt to reestablish the Cherokee religion, Smith also made the effort to keep tribal social institutions alive. The Cherokee concept of order and balance rested on religious obligations and tribalism--a sense of shared relationships and experiences. The holding of lands in common not only kept tribalism intact but was, to the traditionalists, part of their religious obligation. Man could not own a piece of property; he could only, with proper humility, reap its bounties. The concept was wholly in tune with the widespread reverence for the earth held in other Native American communities. The policy of breaking up the reservations into individually owned plots of ground would mean for traditionalists the end of society, religion, and a complete disruption of the Cherokee concept of universal order. Smith and his followers were forced to reenter Cherokee politics because of their fervent opposition to the allotment of tribal lands.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Thomas, "The Redbird Smith Movement," 164-165.

⁴⁵John Redbird Smith, Indian-Pioneer Papers, Vol. 85, 181.

Largely because of the Keetoowah Society, Cherokee officials recognized and appreciated traditionalist views. During the negotiations with the Dawes Commission the Cherokee delegates proposed a plan to keep fullblood communal systems intact. The plan made it possible for those Cherokees who desired it to take adjacent allotments and hold them in trust. In these areas a communal title would be issued under United States government protection. The persons involved in the plan would then be able to form a corporation. Unfortunately for the traditionalists the plan "for preserving in effect the continuity of the Tribal Relations of the full blood Indian" was sternly disapproved.⁴⁶ The break-up of these relations was, afterall, one of the primary goals of the "vanishing" policy.

In his effort to preserve Cherokee ideology and develop traditionalist political power, Redbird Smith joined with other cultural leaders from the Creek, Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes to form the Four Mothers Society. After the Curtis Act was passed and the representatives from the tribal governments finally gave in and signed agreements with the Dawes Commission, these "irreconcilables" refused to submit to allotment in severalty.⁴⁷ A Creek leader named Chitto Harjo and his followers met and formed a Creek government based on the old treaties which gave them at

⁴⁶ Angie Debo, And Still the Waters Run (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 34.

⁴⁷ John Redbird Smith, Indian-Pioneer Papers, Vol. 85, 173. Also see Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 54.

least a semblance of sovereignty.⁴⁸ Not only did they refuse to take allotments but they ordered all other members of the tribe to follow their example. Called the "Snakes" after a rough translation of Harjo's name meaning Crazy Snake, they formed a lighthorse troop of calvary to enforce their laws. The lighthorse publicly whipped a few Creeks who took allotments. The Creek Nation government and the federal government held that the Snakes were in open rebellion and creating chaos in the Indian Territory. For the Snakes' refusal to take allotments and for their alleged usurpation of the Creek government, United States marshals were called into the Indian Territory to place them under arrest. In 1901 a fight broke out between the Snakes and the marshals at Old Hickory Stomp Ground, a ceremonial area and Harjo's place of residence. The short gun battle resulted in a roundup of the Creek irreconcilables.⁴⁹ Eight years later a similar incident occurred between the Snakes and United States marshals. This engagement lasted longer, however, and federal troops were put on the alert.⁵⁰

⁴⁸Both Smith and Harjo wanted to keep the old treaties. Their statements to a Senate select committee are found in 59 Congress, 2 session, Senate Report 5013, Serial 5062 and 5063, Vols. I-II, 97-100, 1245-1255.

⁴⁹New York Times January 24, 25, 27, 28, 29; February 4, 1901. Also see Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 53.

⁵⁰For more on Harjo see L. Crane "Man Ruined by an Idea" Harper's Weekly 53 (June 26, 1909), 15. Mel H. Bolster, "The Smoked Meat Rebellion," Chronicles of Oklahoma 31 (Spring 1953) 37-55, and Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 295.

The Cherokee Keetoowahs, called the "Nighthawks," were similarly accused of rebellion. Redbird Smith and a number of his followers were jailed for their refusal to accept allotments.⁵¹ Unlike the Snakes, however, the Keetoowahs tried to avoid fighting. Instead they withdrew into the hills of eastern Oklahoma and attempted to maintain tribal culture.⁵² Although they were continually harassed and sometimes arrested, they continued to live in small communities and take part in religious ceremonies. Most eventually received allotments and became adjusted to them despite the incongruity between holding them and the precepts of Cherokee ideology.

By 1917 the Cherokee government had been officially dissolved and Cherokee land had been part of the State of Oklahoma for ten years. Redbird Smith and the Keetoowahs survived. Although poor and for the most part still the victims of racism in northeastern Oklahoma they retained their optimism. Smith firmly believed that if the Cherokees maintained tradition and held fast to their sense of community they could offer to the whites a model on which the foundation of national unity could be built. When the United States entered World War I, Smith called upon all Cherokees of draft age to go into the army instead of taking advantage of the trust relationship between the government and themselves which would have exempted

⁵¹John Redbird Smith, *Indian-Pioneer Papers*, Vol. 85, 173.

⁵²Thomas, "The Redbird Smith Movement," 166.

them anyway.⁵³ Smith preached the doctrine that the Cherokees must strive to maintain their sense of brotherhood, respect for others and generosity. In this way they would render their obligations toward the maintenance of natural balance and order, prove to the whites the worth of Cherokee values and work for the "betterment of mankind."⁵⁴ The Cherokees, Smith said, were "endowed with intelligence," were "industrious," "loyal," and "spiritual." "[B]ut," he stated, "we are overlooking the particular Cherokee mission on earth, for no man or race is endowed with these qualifications without a designed purpose." "Work and right training," according to the Keetoowah leader, were the ways in which the Cherokees would maintain order and eventually spread it to the white people. "A kindly man," Smith said, "cannot help his neighbor in need unless he have [sic] a surplus and he cannot have a surplus unless he works."⁵⁵

Redbird Smith, like Charles A. Eastman and Laura Cornelius Kellogg, thought of himself as a teacher. If some whites could have learned the value of American Indian ideals, recognized cultural plurality and its values, then Smith would have been assured that the Cherokee contribution to mankind had been fulfilled. But unlike Eastman and Cornelius-

⁵³Emmet Starr, History of the Cherokee Indians and Their Legends and Folk Lore (Oklahoma City: The Warden Company, 1921), 483.

⁵⁴John Redbird Smith, Indian-Pioneer Papers, Vol. 85, p. 190.

⁵⁵Starr, History of the Cherokee Indians, pp. 481-482.

Kellogg he had no way of spreading his philosophy outside the Cherokee communities. After his death in 1918 his sons carried on tradition within Oklahoma and kept his teachings alive. But their contributions were isolated within the old Cherokee Nation, until Cornelius-Kellogg dedicated her book to Smith, and a mixedblood Cherokee named Emmet Starr published a book on Cherokee history. Starr's book was a labor of love and an important step toward the acceptance of Native American philosophies. Entitled A History of the Cherokee Indians and Their Legends and Folk Lore (1921), it contained Cherokee genealogy, folk tales, lists of tribal officials, and biographical sketches of noted Cherokees. One of Starr's longest and most detailed biographies concerned the teachings of Redbird Smith.

Starr's book and the works of Eastman, Cornelius-Kellogg and many of the major ethnologists assured the survival of the knowledge of Native American social and ecological values. These ideals would be partly responsible for the growing ambiguity in white attitudes toward American Indians. In the nineteenth century Native American theories of order and balance, as demonstrated in tribal social and ecological systems, were antithetical to white thought. Ordered, stable and balanced societies seeking slow change were considered static. Mainstream white society, chaotic as it was, to the white man was at least dynamic and therefore progressive. The growing popularity of American Indian ideals and the increased value placed on social order in the early twentieth

century foredoomed the "vanishing" policy. In the nineteenth century the entire theory behind the policy was based on the idea that American Indians had nothing of consequence to offer Anglo-American society. Even the notion that American Indians were romantic "natural men" was taken as a sign of backwardness. When whites discovered that Native Americans had a great deal to offer, ambiguity in white thought concerning Indian people set in. This ambiguity made a dent in the theoretical underpinnings of the "vanishing" policy. Other Native American cultural survivals would prove to be equally disruptive.

CHAPTER III

ADAPTATION: THE CONTINUITY OF NATIVE AMERICAN CEREMONY AND CUSTOM

By 1900 white reformers were thoroughly confident that American Indian culture--its ceremonialism and custom--was doomed. The Dawes and Curtis Acts, designed to destroy the tribal land tenure systems and thus tribalism, were part of the United States code. Under the guidance of men like Richard Henry Pratt, the system set up to educate Indian youth was actively reorienting the lives of reservation-born children. The reservation and agency superintendents were also attempting to "put a stop to the demoralizing influence of heathenish rites" such as the Sun Dance and other ceremonies and practices which Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Hiram Price, referred to in 1883 as "repugnant to common decency."¹

Many Native American tribal customs and rituals particularly incensed the reformers. The Sun Dance of the Plains tribes, plural marriages and the use of medicine men were listed, for instance, as punishable crimes to be tried in the courts of Indian offenses. Give-aways, or "excessive" displays

¹Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Annual Report 1883, 11.

of generosity, were also to be discouraged at the agencies along with the wearing of tribal dress. The Sun Dance was disapproved of because of its feature of self-torture, the fact that it was a ceremony designed to emphasize and renew tribal bonds and because its performance took eight days to complete--not counting the time required to gather the tribe for the annual ritual. The reservation superintendents thought that the time taken up in continuing the ceremony would have been better spent caring for crops or livestock. The reformers, perhaps because of the time and efficiency orientation of their society, regarded such ceremonies and Native American dancing in general to be frivolous exercises and complete misdirections of energy.²

Because of the measures taken in the 1880's to combat Native American cultural practices and destroy the tribal land tenure systems, reformers and most other white Americans believed that American Indians, as a distinctive group of people, would disappear. Certainly, they thought, American Indian culture was dead and unworthy of consideration. If "civilization" was to be maintained then these so-called remnants of "primitivism" had to vanish. This kind of confidence was reflected in 1909 when Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Robert G. Valentine, reported that "the dance, like the blanket, and the bead toggery, and a number of other external features of Indian life,

²See Donald J. Berthrong, The Cheyenne and Arapaho Ordeal, Reservation and Agency Life in the Indian Territory, 1875-1907 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 134, 293-294, for the views of agents concerning the performance of the Sun Dance.

will drop off the race as time goes on."³ Valentine was apparently so consumed with optimism that he failed to recognize the fact that nearly thirty years of official persecution had not yet completely destroyed Native American cultures.

Nor did another full decade of the vanishing policy produce the hoped for results. Sounding a bit discouraged yet still optimistic, another Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Cato Sells, wrote in 1920 that "whatever encourages the Indians to array themselves in warlike costumes of the past, to participate in the oldtime dances, and the like . . . should disappear."⁴ Simply put, Native American tribal cultures, which Richard Henry Pratt would not "dignify . . . with the term," were hardly the cultural deadends the whites thought they were.⁵ They were viable, dynamic systems, adaptable, quite capable of modification and too strong to kill quickly. Tribal cultures persisted throughout the period between 1900 and 1920 and even flourished despite the campaign launched to destroy them.

Because of the survival of Native American views on universal order, much of American Indian ceremonialism was continued. For many Indian people philosophical values were meaningless without ritual. Ceremonies and customary practices such as the Sun Dance, the Hopi Snake, or Rain Dance, the "stomp"

³"Extracts from Personal Letters by the Commissioner-I. Indian Dances," The Indian Craftsman 1 (June 1909), 3.

⁴The Indians Friend 32 (March 1920), 6.

⁵Pratt is quoted in Eastman, Pratt, The Red Man's Moses, 188-189.

dances of the Creeks, Cherokees and Seminoles, and the giveaways confirmed the status of individual leaders, guaranteed group cohesion, and insured the continuity of tribal concepts of stability and balance. Custom and ritual were obligatory for most tribal groups to maintain an orderly and harmonious society.⁶

White opposition to these and other aspects of Native American cultures made the effort to maintain them far more difficult than the struggle to reserve tribal ideologies. White reformers most often condemned Indian practices with high-minded, moral indignity. More than likely, however, they were more concerned with the protection of Euro-American values. American individualism which required of those persons, including American Indians entering the American melting-pot, almost absolute conformity and therefore, could never condone tribalism. Since most ceremonials involved reaffirming the meaning of and spirit of the tribe, reformers regarded them as threats to the changes in Indian life they sought to accomplish. Also, because rituals were time-consuming they would tend to be viewed as lacking in efficiency and essentially non-productive.

In the period from 1880 to 1920 whites regarded American Indians as dependent people. As such, the whites certainly believed that they could ill afford to pass time in ceremony. Nor should American Indians indulge in the widespread practice of gift-giving. Although generosity was an admirable trait in white society and

⁶Underhill, Red Man's Religion, 49-50.

a degree of philanthropy was expected of most American leaders, it was also properly a function of the upper classes. Since American Indians, under the provisions of the Dawes and Curtis Acts had entered American society as the poorest of the rural poor in an era of urbanization, whites probably thought that they should not be allowed to engage in generosity. To the white reformers, Indian people were already recipients of their philanthropy in the form of rations (usually paid for from Indian funds the government held in trust), schooling, clothing and land allotments (taken from lands the tribes already owned). According to this line of thought, American Indians, as poverty-stricken, dependent people, should not give away badly needed material goods. Such a practice, when viewed in the context of Euro-American thought in the period, seemed both wasteful and highly immoral.

As a consequence of the attacks on their customs, Native Americans were forced into accommodation and adaptation. In some cases ceremonials changed radically. Among other Native American societies, the people used a certain amount of deceit and secrecy to protect ritual. But nearly every tribal group in the United States preserved a portion of custom not merely to maintain links with the past but also to fulfill obligations to world balance. In that sense, it kept alive what the philosophical leader of the Society of American Indians, Arthur C. Parker, termed "its own particular mission in the Cosmic

economy."⁷ A sense of mission sparked the writings of the assimilationist, Charles A. Eastman, the cultural revivalist, Laura Cornelius Kellogg, and the actions of the traditionalist Redbird Smith, all of whom thought of their work as serving the cause of instructing the white man. Smith saw his mission as being twofold: not only would he be a teacher but he would attempt to maintain Cherokee ritual and thus preserve balance and harmony for all the world.⁸ The whites found many other Indian people engaged in the attempt to carry out their sense of mission.

Perhaps the most persecuted Native American ceremonial was the Sun Dance. It was the principal yearly renewal ritual of most of the Great Plains tribes. Its performance affirmed their place in the world, provided for a restrengthening of tribal bonds, and fulfilled tribal obligations to the Creator and thus to universal order. The annual assembly for its performance served religious, social, and political functions as well. As such, it was both spiritual and essential to the well-being and maintenance of the tribe as a whole.⁹

⁷Arthur C. Parker, "Making a White Man Out of an Indian Not a Good Plan," The American Indian Magazine 5 (April-June 1917), 85.

⁸Thomas, "The Redbird Smith Movement," 163; and Starr, History of the Cherokee Indians, 482.

⁹Robert H. Lowie, Indians of the Plains (Garden City, New York: The Natural History Press, 1963), 197-9. See also the statement of George A. Dorsey to Major George W. H. Stouch, September 14, 1903, in James Mooney-Cheyenne Sun Dance file, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institute.

In actual fact, the ceremony was not totally consistant in its various aspects from tribe to tribe. Even the name for it varied from one group to another. For instance, in translation from the Ute language it was the Thirsting Dance, the Cheyennes called it Medicine Lodge, the Assiniboine gave it the name "Making a Home" and so on.¹⁰

In basic form, however, the ceremony took eight days to complete and involved the idea of sacrifice--the humility of mankind to the Great Mysteries of the world. During the ritual those who had committed themselves to its performance, either to fulfill a vow or because they had been instructed to do so through reception of a vision, took instruction, fasted and danced themselves to exhaustion. Among many tribes, but certainly not all, these pledgers sacrificed even more. Cheyenne, Sioux, Blackfeet, and other peoples punished their bodies during the ceremony. This aspect of the ritual was done not to prove an imperviousness to pain, as the whites believed, but to demonstrate due homage to the Creator and to carry out the pledgers' duty to the preservation of "natural order."¹¹

Those who went through the ritual were highly regarded and honored among their people. They were properly thanked

¹⁰Reginald and Gladys Laubin, Indian Dances of North America, Their Importance to Indian Life (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977), 275.

¹¹Peter J. Powell, Sweet Medicine, The Continuing Role of the Sacred Arrows, the Sun Dance, and the Sacred Buffalo Hat in Northern Cheyenne History (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 300.

for their sacrifice because the entire Sun Dance was intended to fulfill tribal as well as individual obligations. To further honor the pledgers, their families often held give-aways. This display of generosity, practiced among most tribal groups in the United States, was a method of preserving bonds within the tribe and enhancing the status of individuals or families. Generosity was a widely admired trait bringing honor to anyone who could afford its practice. It was a means for the distribution of wealth, thus assuring the less well-off members of the community that they belonged and would be provided for. It could also insure their loyalty. In its every aspect the Sun Dance served to strengthen the bonds between all tribal members.¹²

Although bans were instituted on some reservations against performing the Sun Dance as early as 1884, it still continued to be held. In most areas where the ceremony persisted, it did so due to the considerable accommodation to white values that Indian people made to protect it. On the Tongue River Cheyenne reservation, for instance, the Cheyennes had already modified their Sun Dance even prior to the ban placed on its performance in 1897. Noting that in ancient form the ritual had not included the infliction of wounds on

¹²Underhill, Red Man's Religion, 142-153.

the pledgers, the Cheyennes freely omitted, at least within sight of the agent, that part of the ceremony.¹³

After the ban was instituted, the Cheyenne headmen made request after request to their agent pleading that the Sun Dance be allowed to take place again. The agent, of course, refused permission despite one Cheyenne leader's convincing and constitutionally sound argument that the Cheyenne people, like other religious groups in the United States, should be permitted the right to freedom of worship. The ban against the Sun Dance at Tongue River was eventually lifted in 1907, in part due to the reasoning behind this compelling argument, but not before several attempts to make the ceremony more palatable to the whites were made.¹⁴

During the ban the Cheyennes asked for and received permission from their agent to hold a "Willow Dance." This dance was actually a greatly modified Sun Dance. It contained no element of self-laceration of the flesh and was given, according to the Cheyenne leaders, as a religious service for the benefit of all mankind. By removing, before the whites, the ceremony from a tribal context the Cheyenne religious leaders were attempting to preserve the mission they thought they had on earth and making a statement that the Cheyennes were worshipping a universal god and not some tribal deity as the whites

¹³Powell, Sweet Medicine, 319-20, 339. See also Margot Liberty, "Suppression and Survival of the Northern Cheyenne Sun Dance," Minnesota Archaeologist 27 (1965), 121-143.

¹⁴Powell, Sweet Medicine, 320, 338.

preferred to think. Another modification, although minor but demonstrative of the knowledge the Cheyennes had of the workings of the white man's patriotism, was to announce that the Willow Dance ceremony would be henceforth held on the long July Fourth holiday. In fact this accommodation was not that great. Before the Cheyennes were confined to the reservation, no precise date was ever fixed for the offering of the Sun Dance. It was, however, always held during the summer months. The small concession gained a great deal, for no patriotic superintendent would, with good conscience, disallow Native Americans to "celebrate" Independence Day.¹⁵

Between the years 1907 and 1911 the ban on the Sun Dance at the Tongue River Superintendency was lifted. Free to hold the ceremony again, the Cheyennes still left out those aspects of the ritual which the whites found repugnant. The concessions, however, were futile, for the ban was re-instituted in 1911. The Cheyennes, despite the ban, continued the dance and argued for their constitutional rights. Eventually they cut the ritual in length to two days, stepped up the emphasis on the performance's social elements and in front of the whites played down its religious connotations. When the superintendent eventually decided to be firm in the enforcement of the ban, even on the "Willow Dance," the Cheyennes pledged themselves in the hills out of sight and earshot of their agent. The tactic of secrecy, after all, had worked in preserving the

¹⁵Ibid., 338-339.

Medicine Arrows' and Sacred Buffalo Hat ceremonies. Whites had not, at that time, been allowed to view those very sacred objects of the Cheyenne religion and faith. The Cheyennes surely believed that perhaps keeping whites away from the Sun Dance would be the best method to preserve it.¹⁶

The Southern Cheyennes and Arapahoes in the Indian Territory also modified their Sun Dance in an effort to maintain its practice. When bans were instituted they, like their Northern cousins, asked for permission to hold Willow dances.¹⁷ On occasions, many Cheyennes and Arapahoes traveled to other reservations to attend the rituals of their perhaps less constrained neighbors. When the bans were lifted, or at least less rigidly enforced, they freely left out lacerating their flesh. In addition, the Southern Cheyennes, with the cooperation of their agent, placed great emphasis on the ceremony's social functions. Parades were held, whites came and even storekeepers and provision dealers were invited in an effort to give the ceremony a festival-like appearance.¹⁸ Local white farmers and even the government superintendents, clinging to the imagery they had built of Indian people, considered tribal cultures to be static. Any change, therefore, made them less "Indian" in the white

¹⁶Ibid., 340-341.

¹⁷Berthrong, Cheyenne and Arapaho Ordeal, 217.

¹⁸James Mooney to W. H. Holmes, Chief, Bureau of American Ethnology, August 24, 1903, Mooney file, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institute.

man's eyes.¹⁹ The Sun Dance, for the whites in western Oklahoma, became more of a fair than a "heathenish rite."

Despite the festivities surrounding the ceremony, which ethnologist James Mooney likened to a "camp meeting or county fair," the Cheyennes and Arapahoes secretly kept the ritual within its religious context. Some pledgers continued to wound their flesh, all received instruction and the ceremony retained the idea of sacrifice. In 1903 an incident occurred during the Cheyenne Sun Dance held near Eagle City, Oklahoma Territory, which further and most emphatically reminded the tribal council and the Sun Dance priests of the white man's vehement opposition to the sacrifice of the flesh. After completion of the ceremony, which extended for five days rather than the usual eight in deference to the white man's concern with time, a Cheyenne had skewers inserted into his back for the purpose of dragging pieces of buffalo skull in a complete circuit of the Sun Dance campsite. John H. Seger, who was the Cheyenne-Arapaho Superintendent, witnessed the action and reported it. The incident was quickly exploited in the press and snowballed into a major controversy between white reformers, white ethnologists and the Cheyennes. Eventually, as with many debates concerning Indian affairs, the battle was purged of any Native American role and the Cheyennes became only minor players in

¹⁹For the best analysis of white images of American Indians see Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., The White Man's Indian (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978).

the entire drama.²⁰ They were not, however, left alone without first promising to alter their ways. Festival or no, social function or religious ceremony, the Cheyennes were warned that the Sun Dance would be banned completely if self-torture was not stopped. Thereafter and until all bans were lifted, the Cheyenne Sun Dance on the Oklahoma reservation became even more accommodative with strict injunctions issued from the tribal councils absolutely forbidding the practice of lacerating the flesh during the ceremony's performance.²¹

The Cheyennes, both in the North and the South, were not the only tribal groups to maintain the Sun Dance ceremony during the period of official persecution against its practice. As late as 1903, the Blackfeet, the Shoshonis and the Utes were still practicing the ritual and, according to James Mooney of the Bureau of American Ethnology, "in every case with the sanction and permission of the Agent in charge."²² Strangely enough, the Ute ceremony was not a part of that tribe's

²⁰ New York Times August 15, 1903; Proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference, 1903, 73 and Berthrong, Cheyenne and Arapaho Ordeal, 294-295.

²¹ Affidavit of Darlington, Watonga and Kingfisher Cheyenne Indians, September 1, 1903, and Affidavit of Colony Cheyenne Indians and Cheyennes at Arapaho District, Oklahoma, September 1, 1903. Mooney file, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institute. The signators, which included Wolf Tongue, Thunder Bull, Wolf Chief, Little Wolf, Three Fingers, Bull Bear and Black Coyote, all chiefs and councilmen contained promises to restrain the practice of self-torture and sided in the controversy with Mooney.

²² Mooney to Holmes, August 24, 1903, Mooney file, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institute.

tradition but a relatively recent introduction from the Shoshonis. The Utes began practicing the ritual in the 1880's and 1890's and immediately incorporated certain Christian symbols into its performance. The Ute Sun Dance lodge was built, for instance, using twelve upright poles in a circle surrounding a center pole. The poles were said to represent Christ and the apostles.²³ In addition to these modifications the Utes performed the ceremony in three days instead of the traditional eight. Another tribe, the Poncas, kept their yearly ceremony fairly intact, with little change or accommodation. They were, however, on occasion forced to hold the dance on the property of the 101 Ranch Wild West Show. The Sun Dance, by 1903, was hardly a "dead" or meaningless, "primitive" ceremonial and neither was it a revival of an "old-time" rite. It was, rather, a continuous yet highly adaptive aspect of Plains tribal cultures.²⁴

Other Native American cultures similarly retained traditional ceremonies. The Hopi Snake Dance, which many of the white reformers thoroughly abhorred because the participants carried live rattlesnakes during the ceremony, was still practiced throughout the period from 1900 to 1920 and in fact attracted large

²³Joseph G. Jorgensen, The Sun Dance Religion, Power for the Powerless (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 19.

²⁴Mooney to Holmes, August 24, 1903; Dorsey to Stouch, September 14, 1903. Mooney file, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institute.

numbers of white tourists in the Southwest to its performance.²⁵ Cherokee, Creek and Seminole ceremonials also continued to be performed despite the fact that the whites considered these tribes to be "civilized" in Euro-American terms. Many of the Cherokee traditionalists, under the leadership of Redbird Smith, made accommodations to the dominant society's religious practices.²⁶ The Keetoowahs repeated over and over that they were worshipping the same diety as the whites--a universal Creator--but in their own way.²⁷ Practically all of the Creek, Cherokee, and Seminole traditionalists felt absolutely no hypocrisy in placating both the white and Indian ministers in their homelands. Many readily attended Baptist or Methodist churches, often moving from the churchyard to the ceremonial grounds after the services.

In the Northwestern United States many tribes continued their traditional dancing with a good deal of aid from whites. The usual accommodation in that region to the white man's apparent revulsion to dancing was to hold tribal dances on July Fourth. At the Klamath agency in Oregon during the early years of this century, the tribesmen "celebrated" Independence Day with traditional dances, feasting and give-aways. Because most white

²⁵The attraction of the Snake Dance was recorded very early in the twentieth century. See, for instance, O. P. Phillips, "Moki Indians and their Snake Dance," Era 11 (February 1903), 115-129.

²⁶Thomas, "The Redbird Smith Movement," 164.

²⁷Statement of John Redbird Smith, Indian-Pioneer Papers, Vol. 85, 181.

people believed that "the race will (soon) cease to be" the agents at Klamath permitted the ceremonies to continue for the benefit of whites "who delight in the study of primitive man."²⁸ Native American ceremony and custom was allowed to be practiced on the West Coast apparently without a great amount of interference, at least not as much as occurred on the reservation and superintendencies of the Great Plains or in the Southwest. Perhaps this lack of interference was in part due to the widespread feeling that since Indian people were "vanishing" ceremonies would eventually pass out of existence. By that time some agents allowed ceremonies to continue on the basis that as "remnants of the past" the rituals would be temporary and would cause no great harm. They considered their allowances to be gestures of kindness to a "doomed" people.

Ethnologists of the stature of Franz Boas were very much involved in doing research among the tribes of the West Coast. Their "scientific" interest alone accounted for much of the Northwest coast's cultural continuity. Interestingly enough, Boas would also involve himself in the attempt to refute cultural evolutionist thinking within his discipline. By 1918 the white reformers finally took notice of the fact that Native American cultures in the Northwest were far from dying out and were not at all pleased with their continuity.

²⁸ Julia F. A. Frather, "Fourth of July at the Klamath Reservation," Overland 42 (July 1903), 116-123.

In that year it was reported that "a scientific effort to preserve ethnological data" had resulted in a revival of dancing during the "Treaty Days" celebrations at the Tulalip and Lummi agencies in Washington state.²⁹ In celebrating the signing of a treaty the Indian people at those two agencies were in actuality using the same tactics to preserve their ceremonies as other tribes had done in celebrating Independence Day.

But "Treaty Days" celebrations and ethnological interest did not account for every Native American cultural survival on the Northwest Coast. Among the tribes of the area there arose a new religion which not only was accommodative and acceptable to whites but upheld a certain degree of Northwest Coast custom. The new religion, known as Shakerism, was started in 1882 under fairly unusual circumstances. In that year John Slocum of the Squaxin tribe of Puget Sound reportedly died and was resurrected after, he claimed, having received a message from God prompting him to begin a ministry to all Indian people. Slocum's new faith was a deliberate affront to tribalism, something the whites were also trying to destroy in the period. But Slocum did not want, as the whites did, to turn Indians into white men. Rather, he wanted Indians to be Indians, practicing an "Indian" religion--his own.³⁰

²⁹Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1918, 79-80.

³⁰Underhill, Red Man's Religion, 262-264.

In the years after his vision, Slocum's following grew remarkably. Even after his death, the Shaker Church, as it came to be called, gained even more adherents. By 1910 there were several Shaker churches in the Northwest organized under a system of bishoprics.³¹

Based on Christianity, the religion was extremely adaptive and also had an important practical function which many white Americans found particularly appealing--according to Shaker doctrine each member must practice absolute temperance. After the turn of the century, this aspect and the fact that the Shakers asked "no help from the whites and desire none" drew, ironically enough, a great deal of white support.³² In 1910 an Olympia, Washington, judge, for instance, agreed to draw up the articles of incorporation for the Shaker Church, thus practically guaranteeing its continued viability.³³ Some whites perceived that the religion would be a means of both spiritual and even physical salvation for Indian people. In that same year national attention was given to the Shakers in two popular magazines. Collier's reported that the new religion had done "more to stamp out intemperance in the Northwest than any other factor."³⁴

³¹DeKoven Brown, "Indian Workers for Temperance, The New Faith that came from the Vision of Old John Slocum, Drunkard," Collier's 45 (September 3, 1910) 24; 24; "Indian Shakers," Literary Digest 48 (March 7, 1914), 496.

³²Brown, "Indian Workers for Temperance," 24.

³³Ibid., 23-24.

³⁴Ibid., 23.

Sarah Endicott Ober, writing for Overland was highly critical of white mishandling of Indian affairs, but in the case of Slocum's followers, according to Ober, "God took a hand where whites failed."³⁵ Her praise for the Shakers was as great as her opinion of American Indian policy was low. She went on to list several seemingly miraculous conversions of alcoholics and added that "[b]ut for this strange religion . . . they would have been left largely to degradation, drunkenness, immorality and possible extinction."³⁶

As a result of the praise and support from whites, the new Church was allowed a great degree of latitude in its practices. Although accommodating to white religious services, it also maintained a remarkable amount of Northwest Native American custom. Even Ober in her unflagging praise for the Shakers admitted that the new religion was "based on Christianity and intermixed with heathenism." Strangely, in the case of this Native American-founded religion whites were able to overlook "heathenish" practices.³⁷

John Slocum's followers retained, among many other aspects of the region's tribal customs, perhaps the most significant social function of Northwest Coast culture--the potlatch.³⁸

³⁵Sarah E. Ober, "New Religion Among the West Coast Indians," Overland 56 (December 1910), 594.

³⁶Ibid., 583.

³⁷Ibid., 583.

³⁸Brown, "Indian Workers for Temperance," 24.

Although different patterns and emphases might have been placed on the various facets of potlatching, in general this ceremonial display of generosity involved the validation of individual or family status within each of the culture area's tribal groups. In the hierarchical social structures of the tribes in the region, status was extremely important to the maintenance of order. Amassing wealth for the purpose of giving it away to others not of the same lineage, clan, or, among some tribes, even of the same tribal moiety, was the principle means of preserving group harmony. Because lineage was extremely important among these people, the status gained through the holding of a potlatch was extended to the entire clan. For this reason family cooperation in the accumulation of wealth was necessary and usually freely given. Thus, the potlatch not only preserved good relations between tribesmen of different family groups but helped maintain sound clan relationships as well.³⁹

The Shakers, under the guidance of Slocum, kept up the practice of the potlatch. They did not, however, maintain it strictly out of deference to Northwest tribal cultures. The "holding of great potlatches" were primarily missionary efforts.⁴⁰ The Shakers continued the practice in order to produce sympathetic responses from traditionalists for holding onto tribal culture

³⁹For a sound, concise treatment of potlatching among the tribes of the Northwest Coast see Robert F. Spencer, Jesse D. Jennings, et al., The Native Americans (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965), 180-193.

⁴⁰Brown, "Indian Workers for Temperance," 24.

and also, in accordance with custom, to gain status for their church and beliefs. Shaker missionary practice, however, was not totally mercenary. More than likely, they believed themselves to be accommodative, freely borrowing and using both white Christian and Northwest Coast tribal practices; the membership of the Shaker Church was made up of persons reared in those very same tribal societies.

In approximately the same period that Shakerism was gaining its first converts, two new and very adaptive religions began to find many adherents among the Indian people of the Great Plains. Both were non-traditional in the sense that they were, like Shakerism, intended to unite all Native Americans under a single banner of religious beliefs. The first, which became known as the Ghost Dance, rose quickly, perhaps too quickly for the whites to accept, and was, at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, suppressed in blood.⁴¹ The other, peyoteism, spread less rapidly but again, like Shakerism, grew strong in the twentieth century.

The use of peyote or Lophophora williamsii was, by the late nineteenth century, already a very old practice among several tribes of Mexico. The Cora tribe, for instance, was reported to have a ritual involving the use of the plant in 1754. Among the Indian people living within the boundaries of the United

⁴¹Despite its age James Mooney's "The Ghost Dance Religion," Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Fourteenth Annual Report, 1892-93, still ranks as one of the best accounts of the rise and fall of the Ghost Dance.

States, however, the use of the peyote button as a religious sacrament and as a medicine began in the 1870's. The Comanches and Kiowas, who obtained it from the Apaches, turned the ceremony surrounding the plant's use from tribal ritual into a Pan-Indian religion. It was spread from Oklahoma in the period 1880 to 1910 to the tribes of Nebraska, the Dakotas, Minnesota and Wisconsin.⁴²

Although the degree of Christian practice in the peyote ceremony varied from tribe to tribe and from region to region, in general peyoteists readily accepted most of Christian doctrine. Some peyoteist worshipers sang in the name of Jesus Christ and most accepted the Christian belief in the Trinity. The "peyote road" was ethically similar to Christianity although many of the peyoteists' original tribal ethics in actual fact differed little from Christian doctrine. Particularly emphasized were the ideas of brotherly love in a Pan-Indian rather than a tribal sense, the maintenance of a strong family group, and abstinence from alcohol.⁴³

Despite its non-traditional Pan-Indianism, peyoteism nevertheless maintained very strong Native American cultural influences. In taking the peyote button the worshiper sought

⁴²Weston LaBarre, The Peyote Cult (New Haven: Yale University Publications in Anthropology, 19, 1938), 122; Harold E. Driver, Indians of North America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 112-114.

⁴³James S. Slotkin, The Peyote Religion (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1956), 70-75. See also Carol McDonald Hampton, "The Sacrement of the Native American Church," (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1973).

a vision. This aspect was very much in tune with Plains and other tribal tradition, and corresponded with the "vision quest" that the men of the Plains groups went on in the pre-reservation period in order to find peace with the supernatural or to seek solutions to personal problems. Visions were sought in order to determine one's life work. The seeking and obtaining of a vision was also roughly parallel to fundamentalist Christian conversion. The ceremonies surrounding the use of peyote utilized a good deal of Native American material culture. The water drum, the eagle bone whistle, the bird tail-feather fan, cedar incense and the gourd rattle were just some of the tribal trappings maintained in peyote ritual.⁴⁴

The old white reformers found the peyote religion to be little else but a return to heathenism. Some thought that the new faith was just a return to traditionalism. One white writer remarked that while peyoteism might have been a successful combatant against alcoholism, it was merely a substitute for it, and a dangerous one at that.⁴⁵

But white attacks against peyote failed to stop its use and could not prevent the chartering of the peyoteist Native American Church in 1918. There were several reasons for the survival of the Church, not the least of which was a certain

⁴⁴Driver, *Indians of North America*, 525.

⁴⁵Gertrude Seymour, "An Indian Cult and a Powerful Drug," The American Indian Magazine 4 (April-June 1916) 2: 160-163; Robert E. L. Newberne, Peyote: An Abridged Compilation from the Files of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (Lawrence, Kansas: Haskell Institute, 1925), 11.

amount of white favor conferred upon it. James Mooney, for instance, testified before a congressional committee deliberating the worth of an anti-peyote bill against its adoption. Mooney believed that peyote had made a dent in alcoholism and was adamant that it should be protected and even fostered if only for this aspect alone.⁴⁶ Another eminent ethnologist, Paul Radin, published a biography in 1913 of a Winnebago man who had been an alcoholic and, through his conversion to peyoteism, was saved from the ill effects of his drinking problem.⁴⁷ Radin's article, although he maintained that it was purely a scientific tract, obviously pointed out the "good" effects of peyote. In 1920 Radin published a biography of the first man's brother, who was an alcoholic and a murderer, and whose life had been turned around through the peyote ritual.⁴⁸

Noted American Indians such as Radin's principal Winnebago informant, Oliver LaMere, and ethnologist Alice C. Fletcher's assistant and co-author, Francis LaFlesche, spoke in favor of the newly created Native American Church and had, indeed, joined the sect. Many of those American Indians who had been educated

⁴⁶Hertzberg, Search for an American Indian Identity, 261, 266.

⁴⁷Paul Radin, "Personal Reminiscences of a Winnebago Indian," Journal of American Folklore 26 (October-December 1913), 293-318.

⁴⁸Paul Radin, The Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian (New York: Dover Publication, 1963). First published by the University of California Press in the University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 16 (April 1920), 7.

at Carlisle were members and some, like LaMere and LaFlesche, helped found the Society of American Indians.⁴⁹ Given the fact that many of the most distinguished scientists in America and the most respected Native Americans favored peyoteism, the Native American Church was unlikely to have been put to death in the same manner white reformers in the previous century had condemned other American Indian practices. Schooled by the 1910's in American ideals of freedom, many peyoteists were hardly going to give up their religion or be put again under white tutelage. In the long run the Carlisle system worked in favor of the protection of Native American ceremony and not, as Richard Henry Pratt hoped for, as the agent of its destruction.

On the surface inter-tribal religious ceremonial developments such as the Native American Church, Shakerism and even the Ghost Dance were the very antithesis of Native American traditions and customs. American Indians were tribal peoples in social function, politics, economic structure and religion. Tribal religion was linked to tribal tradition so as to be inseparable. Pan-Indianism, especially in religion, would therefore be against tribalism and thus against tradition and religious beliefs. Some tribal traditionalists, for example, decried the use of peyote as an affront to traditional values and little better than the white man's Christianity.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Hertzberg, Search for an American Indian Identity, 37-78.

⁵⁰So reported Seymour, "An Indian Cult and a Powerful Drug," 161.

But Pan-Indianism had historic precedent. Unification on the basis of race occurred in several areas of North America very early. The formation of the Creek Confederacy, the League of the Iroquois, Tecumseh's Confederation, and the alliances of the Plains tribes in confrontation to white expansion were seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth century examples of movements which cut across tribal boundaries. Many of these also had religious foundations and promised a return to traditional values. Tecumseh's brother, known as the Prophet, preached traditionalism while, at the same time, urged unification to several different tribes.⁵¹ The Ghost Dance, Pan-Indian as it was, promised the return of the believer's ancestors, presumably to bring back traditionalism.⁵²

Tribalism among Native American peoples was not the absolute value system it outwardly appeared to have been. Tribes have always traded back and forth, borrowed from one another, and joined in alliances. Tribalism did not necessarily mean first loyalty to one's tribe to the extent of complete bigotry. The Utes adopted the Sun Dance from the Shoshonis, a traditional ceremony not their own, and innovated on its foundation. Redbird Smith, in attempting to revitalize Cherokee ceremony, consulted traditionalists of other tribes. The Ghost Dance, Shakerism, and the Native American Church developed in

⁵¹For Tecumseh's biography see Glenn Tucker, Tecumseh: Vision of Glory (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956).

⁵²See Mooney, "The Ghost Dance Religion," for the underlying precepts of the religion.

much the same manner. The leaders freely borrowed and adapted to make their beliefs viable in the era in which they lived.

These developments did not make Native Americans in the twentieth century less "Indian." American Indians had long accepted alternations in their life styles and were merely attempting to survive. Already made poor, Indian people struggled to keep culture viable in an era of change. "Tradition" was even changing. According to the Cheyennes their traditional Sun Dance had been changed to include self-torture long ago. When they were told to abandon its practice they agreed but with reservation, for, by then, it had become part of "traditional" ceremony.⁵³ Indian people displayed a willingness to change but only on their terms, for their ideologies required cultural persistence in any form. North American native cultures were dynamic and adaptable--not "human backwaters" as the reformers of the nineteenth century considered them to have been. This cultural dynamism became a means of escape from the vanishing policy.

⁵³Powell, Sweet Medicine, 339.

CHAPTER IV

INNOVATION AND PATRONAGE: THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIVE AMERICAN ART

Unlike Native American ceremonies, customs and ideologies which the white reformers unmercifully attacked and survived only because of the dynamism and durability of tribal cultures, American Indian art, a vital part of culture, was left unassaulted and was even fostered. White Americans had been collecting Native American artifacts for a number of years, but for the most part the collectors thought of the products of Indian handicraft as the remnants of a bygone age. Objects of Native American manufacture were to them simply the crafts of a vanishing people, soon to be lost forever.¹ By 1890 the "furor for Indian curiosities" was so great that Philip C. Garrett could speak out to the bastion of the assimilation movement, the Lake Mohonk Conference, in favor of fostering the continued production of Yuma pottery as a possible method of educational and economic improvement for the tribe.²

¹B. S. Baker, "Preserving the Indian," Current Literature 33 (December 1902), 736-737.

²Proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference, 1890, 19-20.

The "furor" which Garrett mentioned greatly affected the consensus at Lake Mohonk. Thoroughly imbued with the old adage that "idle hands are the devil's workshop" the reformers wanted their Native American charges to be gainfully and busily employed. In 1894 the Conference welcomed the suggestion that an Indian Industries League be formed in order to "build up self-supporting industries in Indian communities."³ At first the suggested industries largely centered on the idea of setting Indian women to work making lace. But by 1897 Albert Smiley, the founder of the Lake Mohonk Conferences, agreed to provide monetary support to such Indian crafts as pottery-making and the weaving of blankets.⁴ The next year the Conference provided \$1200 to establish the Lake Mohonk Lodge at Colony, Oklahoma, for "industrial work."⁵ Instead of making lace the Cheyenne and Arapaho women at Colony produced beadwork of great quantity and quality.⁶ The fostering of Native American handicrafts, which were rapidly becoming considered art of high quality, made a dent in the absolute theory that in order to assimilate the Indian people of the United States into American society, their cultures must first be destroyed and that they must lose any and all facets of an American Indian identity.

³Ibid., 1894, 71-72.

⁴Ibid., 1897, 53.

⁵Ibid., 1899, 79.

⁶Walter C. Roe, "The Lake Mohonk Lodge: An Experiment in Indian Work," Outlook 68 (May 18, 1901), 176-178.

By 1901 the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian was favorable to the perpetuation of American Indian crafts. In that year the Conference adopted an unprecedented platform inconsistent with staunch assimilationist sentiment. The importance of American Indian industries was such, according to the Lake Mohonk platform, "that the Government, and all teachers and guides of the Indian, should cooperate in the endeavor to revive them." To Indians they were "valuable as a means of profitable occupation and natural expression." For the rest of the country Native American crafts were "specimens of a rare and indigenous art, many of them artistically excellent; some of them absolutely unique." But more important results would come from the perpetuation of tribal art. The majority of people at the 1903 Lake Mohonk Conference believed Indian handicrafts would not only provide "congenial and remunerative employment at home," but "foster, in the Indian, self-respect, and in the white race, respect for the Indians."⁷ The assimilationists, in spite of themselves, finally found something of value in the cultures of Native American people.

There was another side of the question. Richard Henry Pratt was hardly favorable to the perpetuation of an Indian identity even in art and, for this reason, had some objections to the "industry business." He was in favor of keeping American Indians busily occupied to be sure, but not on "native" crafts. In 1903 Pratt adamantly stated before the Lake Mohonk Conference

⁷Proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference, 1901, vi.

that "[i]f we insist on their staying in their teepees and working at these industries it is a hinderance." Permitting American Indians to do beadwork, weave blankets for popular consumption, or build canoes for sportsmen on their reservations was not, according to Pratt, the proper method of making Indian people vanish into mainstream American society.⁸

But by 1903 Pratt, or the sentiment he expressed, could not stop American Indian artistic development. Native American "curios" were becoming entirely too popular among whites to have had production of them discontinued. Not only were American Indian crafts popular, but with the dawning of the new century, the whites who collected them began to realize their intrinsic artistic value.

Perhaps the first Native American handicrafts to gain artistic recognition were the blankets and ceramics of the Navajo and Pueblo people of the southwestern United States. Candace Wheeler of New York City, who was introduced to the Lake Mohonk Conference in 1901 as "the foremost authority in this country as to what is worth perpetuating in Indian art," stated categorically before the assembly that Navajo blanket making represented "the best weaving that has ever been done in the world."⁹ A year later George Warton James was no less enthusiastic in his praise for Navajo blankets in an article

⁸Ibid., 1903, 73-74.

⁹Ibid., 1901, 29.

written for Outing magazine.¹⁰ The poet Edwin L. Sabin wrote an ode in tribute to Navajo weaving, entitled "Indian Weaver" and published in The Craftsman in 1908. Reprinted under the title "The Navajo Blanket," the poem appeared in the Carlisle Indian School publication, The Red Man, in 1910.¹¹ By 1914 George Warton James, continuing his study of Native American life, had compiled an entire book on American Indian blanket weaving which included a whole chapter on "Reliable Dealers in Navaho Blankets."¹²

American Indian pottery, basketry and beadwork were similarly praised as works of fine art. It was during the period from 1900 to 1925 that the potters of San Ildefonso, Acoma and Taos pueblos were first recognized for their artistry in ceramics. The world-famous Maria Martinez of San Ildefonso began her work in this period.¹³ In 1903 the influential art magazine, International Studio, praised the expressionism captured in the symbols woven into Native American-made baskets, and reproduced several photographs of Indian basketry to back its contentions and to serve as examples of the quality of

¹⁰George Warton James, "Indian Basketry," Outing 39 (March 1902), 684-693.

¹¹Edwin L. Sabin, "Indian Weaver: a Poem," Craftsman 13 (March 1908), 643; "The Navajo Blanket," The Red Man 2 (February 1910), 17.

¹²George Warton James, Indian Blankets and Their Makers (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1914), 202-208.

¹³For a biography of the famous potter see Alice Marriott, Maria; the Potter of San Ildefonso (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1948).

Native American art.¹⁴ The beadwork produced in the Lake Mohonk Lodge at Colony, Oklahoma, was admittedly geared for sale to whites yet, according to Mrs. F. N. Doubleday of New York, a collector of Indian art, still "retained the old symbolism and artistic value."¹⁵ The popularity of this industry was great enough that the Ladies Home Journal in 1903 offered tips to its readers on the buying, selling and production of beadwork.¹⁶ By 1919 a book was written on beadwork which, according to its subtitle, would provide "a Help for Students of Design."¹⁷ Even Native American-made canoes were asserted as being "almost deserving to be put under glass as specimens of absolute symmetry of form."¹⁸

Popular as they were and as creative and aesthetically pleasing, ceramics, basketry and weaving could serve practical utilitarian functions. Consequently, there arose very early the question as to whether these forms should be considered art or craft. In some instances the debate undermined the artistic influence of such persons as Maria Martinez and her husband,

¹⁴"American Indian Basket-work," International Studio 20 (August 1903), 144-146.

¹⁵Proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference, 1901, 29.

¹⁶F. Roberts, "How to Make the Indian Beadwork," Ladies Home Journal 20 (August 1903), 24.

¹⁷Clark Wissler, Indian Beadwork, a Help for Students of Design (New York: American Museum Press, 1919).

¹⁸Proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference, 1901, 29.

Julian, who by 1919 had created a new style of highly polished blackware pottery.¹⁹

The "craft revival" grew out of a widespread interest in Native Americans. The white populace of the United States since the 1880's had flocked to attend the Wild West Shows of Buffalo Bill, the 101 Ranch, and Pawnee Bill. Although stereotyped and exploited, to be sure, the Indian people who worked for these shows made the most out of the well-attended performances. There could be little wonder as to why the reformers of the Lake Mohonk Conferences and other organizations detested these shows because Native Americans retained an "Indian" identity. They were able to modify tradition enough to create the inter-tribal pow-wows so important to keeping alive at least a semblance of culture. Economically emasculated, Native American performers were allowed to maintain a degree of their cultures and provide a basis for later Pan-Indianism.²⁰

Whites viewing these extravaganzas could hardly think of American Indians as threats to the viability of the United States any longer. Before their eyes Buffalo Bill crushed Indian resistance to the spread of American civilization and progress. According to at least one writer, the "Indian fighting" was the "most attractive element of the show."²¹

¹⁹Jozefa Stuart and Robert H. Ashton, Jr., Images of American Indian Art (New York: Walker and Company, 1977), 34.

²⁰J. J. Brody, Indian Painters and White Patrons (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971), 61.

²¹William Inglis, "Buffalo Bill's Last Trail," Harper's Weekly 54 (May 14, 1910), 32.

To those whites who attended the performances, Native Americans were a vanishing part of American history. The Indian who had survived the onslaught of "progress" had been tamed and relegated to the position of providing entertainment for the curious.

The motion picture industry further ingrained this notion in the minds of the public. Hundreds of movies were produced in the period dealing with American Indian subjects. In 1911 alone over two hundred "indian movies" were released. But the moving pictures, as opposed to the Wild West shows, presented to the public more romantic images of Native Americans. The "Indian movies" of the period extolled the virtues of a life close to nature. Movie Indians were honest, loyal, brave and soulful. The movie Indians were also quite accurately depicted on the screen, for they were often hired because they could supply their own traditional dress.²²

During the early part of the twentieth century tourism in the West increased. Americans, both nostalgic for the life their forefathers once led and seeking the benefits of a more

²²Some movie-makers attempted to be very accurate or at least acquiesced to the public's demand for authenticity. Indian films were advertised as "under the direction of a native Indian chief," others claimed that there was "not a pale face in the film." See Friar and Friar, The Only Good Indian, 92-93, 95. D. W. Griffith, perhaps the most important producer of the day, attempted to be very accurate in depicting American Indians and even filmed "A Pueblo Legend" on location. Griffith also tended to reflect the romanticism of the period. Some of his "Indian movies" included: "The Redman and the Child," "The Mended Flute," "The Indian Runner's Romance" (evidently propoing the healthy as well as the romantic sides of Indian life), and "An Indian's Loyalty." See Edward Wagenknecht, The Movies in the Age of Innocence (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 87.

healthful climate, came in ever growing numbers especially to the American Southwest. They came to view the American frontier heritage, to roam the National Parks, and to gaze upon the ancient ruins of Mesa Verde, Casa Grande and other newly restored archeological sites. In order to profit from this interest, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad and the Fred Harvey Company actively promoted the tourists' pursuit of beauty, health and history.

These two companies, working together, pioneered tourism in the area and did more to create the image of the Southwest as a place of vast beauty, colorful cultures and historic wonder. During the 1870's Frederick Henry Harvey reached an agreement with the railroad under which he could establish a series of restaurants along the route. At these rest-stops travellers could enjoy a moderately priced meal served by the Harvey Girls--all well-dressed, pleasant young women imported from the East. Harvey's, and the railroad's, success grew. Soon Harvey branched out into the hotel business.²³

To an era used to over-opulent hotels in the cities and nondescript rooming-houses in rural areas, the Fred Harvey Hotels were wonders. Not only did they invoke, in theme, the rustic charm of the "old frontier" but exploited the Spanish and American Indian heritage of the Southwest. In addition to his partnership with the Santa Fe Railroad, Harvey sought an

²³Richard A. Van Orman, A Room for the Night, Hotels of the Old West (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), 113-123.

alliance with Don Lorenzo Hubbell, the leading dealer in Navajo blankets. A long-time trader in the area, Hubbell supplied Harvey with items of Indian manufacture to decorate the Harvey Hotels.²⁴ By the early 1900's, however, the Harvey Company and the Santa Fe line began to employ its own Indian craftsmen and open curio shops directly adjacent to the hotels and restaurants. Travellers to the Southwest could enjoy beautiful surroundings, good food and purchase souvenirs of their trip all at a Fred Harvey Hotel.²⁵ As the numbers of tourists increased the Harvey, Hubbell and Santa Fe companies flourished.

When the influx of white visitors came into the Southwest and other underdeveloped areas of the United States to commune with nature, these tourists simply transferred their images of Native Americans from their hometown movie screens and arenas to the "wilderness" of a Harvey resort. As a consequence, they willingly paid to see dances performed and purchased Indian crafts, not only as souvenirs of their pilgrimage to nature, but to feel that they were obtaining forever a small, very romantic portion of the American heritage.

²⁴Frank McNitt, The Indian Traders (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 210-211.

²⁵Lewis I. Deitch, "The Impact of Tourism upon the Arts and Crafts of the Indians of the Southwestern United States," in Valene L. Smith, ed., Hosts and Guests, The Anthropology of Tourism (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 176-177.

The "curio" industry boomed and collecting items of Native American manufacture became exceedingly popular. American Indian crafts, in fact, changed the appearance of many American homes. In the East, the parlor had not only become a "den" but had "taken on a North American Indian cast" which was "quite as decorative as the oriental scheme, so long in favor." The new interior designs were rugged, individual and "much more stimulating to one's patriotism." As "part of the Indian cult of the day" white people covered their floors and walls with Navajo rugs, animal skins, and displayed Pueblo pots and baskets. "In short," according to the New York Tribune, "there is nothing in birch bark or beadwork that will not fit admirably to the red man's room," provided that "one only has taste in her selection and knows how to dispose of her trophies."²⁶

The Wild West shows, the "curio mania," and the motion picture industry stereotyped Native American cultures unmercifully. White audiences and most collectors probably could not have identified a Sioux from a Winnebago any more than they could have told the differences between Cherokee and Pueblo-made earthenware. But despite these facts, Indian people retained this knowledge and because of the new white interest were allowed to do so. Native Americans, perhaps unknown to many whites and in spite of stereotypes, retained tribal differences and important aspects of culture.

²⁶Quoted in the Vinita (Oklahoma) Weekly Chieftan, January 12, 1905.

There was, however, a good number of whites very much interested in the retention of tribal identity in the manufacture of Native American crafts. The many ethnological museums across the country, "which ought also to be considered as museums of art," according to the influential art magazine Camera Work, collected thousands of items of Native American art to be put on permanent display.²⁷ The Smithsonian, the New York Museum of Natural History and the Field Museum in Chicago all began to expand their collections of both old and modern American Indian material culture. The excellent Denver Art Museum also devoted a large part of its space to the display of Indian art. But the collection which, according to Outlook magazine, stood "alone in the annals of American museums" because of its exclusive nature was the Museum of the American Indian founded in 1916.²⁸

The museum began as a private collection. In 1903 George Gustav Heye, a native New Yorker who had received his education in Germany, formed the nucleus of his extensive collection. A founder of the banking firm of Battles, Heye and Harrison, Heye had enough capital to finance a foundation devoted solely to the gathering of Indian material culture. In 1904 the Heye Foundation sent expeditions into several areas within the United States and Canada. By 1910 it had sent collectors into Peru, Ecuador, Brazil and the West Indies. Six years later the Heye Foundation's

²⁷Marius DeZayas, "Commentary," Camera Work 41 (January 1913), 17.

²⁸"A Museum of the American Indian," Outlook 114 (October 11, 1916), 301.

collection had grown to the point that its founder endowed it as a museum and opened it to public view.²⁹ Although the museum housed a great deal of archeological material, modern art forms were collected and displayed with equal attention devoted to presenting their tribal origins and artistry.

The most widely sought item of Indian manufacture for both private and public display was the Navajo blanket. Here too, the reformers' conviction that American Indians should take part in a home-industry in order to eventually "progress" to the standards of mainstream society led to a development in artistic excellence and retention of tribal identity. Blanket weaving among the Navajo people was a recent introduction. Originally basing their economy on hunting and gathering, the Navajos in the nineteenth century turned to sheep herding. In the 1870's the agents to the Navajos introduced looms and spinning wheels and began to encourage the production of blankets for trade.³⁰

By the 1890's the traders had introduced new dyes and because of the increasing tourist trade encouraged mass production. Two companies, however, the Fred Harvey Company and the Hubbell Trading Posts, prevented Navajo rug and blanket weaving from losing its artistic merit. Both companies insisted that the blankets be of the best quality and be kept well within the

²⁹Ibid., 301.

³⁰McNitt, The Indian Traders, 154-155.

boundaries of traditional Navajo designs. Because they had the capital, these companies could afford to pay the higher prices demanded for the quality they sought and absorb overproduction. The increased prices were passed along to the tourist, and the quality of Navajo weaving never suffered.³¹

Perhaps the most noteworthy admirer of Navajo weaving was Theodore Roosevelt. His collection was very large and several rugs adorned the walls of his residences. After viewing the International Exhibition of Modern Art in 1913, which known as the "Armory Show" introduced modern art in the United States, Roosevelt declared Navajo rugs to be superior to Cubist painting. According to the former President, a Navajo rug "in my bath-room" was "far more satisfactory and decorative" than several paintings at the exhibition based "on any proper interpretation of the Cubist theory." From "the standpoint of decorative value, of sincerity, and of artistic merit," Roosevelt wrote, "the Navajo rug is infinitely ahead of the picture" entitled "Naked Man Going Down Stairs," a Cubist work.³² Roosevelt was no doubt sincere in his admiration for Navajo weaving and Native American art in general. "How many Congressmen do you suppose there are who would understand that there could be

³¹Deitch, "The Impact of Tourism upon the Arts and Crafts of the Indians of the Southwestern United States," 177.

³²Theodore Roosevelt, "A Layman's Views of an Art Exhibition," Outlook 103 (March 29, 1913), 719.

such a thing as 'Indian art?'" he wrote, "they will say, 'Another of Roosevelt's vagaries!'"³³

The interest shown in Navajo weaving was substantial, but perhaps the most spectacular artistic development that came out of the "Indian craze" was the rise of Native American painting. In the closing years of the nineteenth century Indian painters were unknown and hardly recognized as artists. During the first three decades of the twentieth century, however, there developed at least three different stylistic schools of Indian painting. Native American art began to be taught at Carlisle Indian School and American Indian painters finally had their work displayed in museums and in art shows.

One of the first steps in the development in Plains Indian painting came, strangely enough, from a Federal prison located at Fort Marion, Florida. At the end of the wars on the great plains against white encroachment, several Kiowa, Cheyenne and Comanche leaders and warriors were hauled off to prison for alleged crimes against the United States. While they were incarcerated the tribemen's warden, the same Richard Henry Pratt who became perhaps the most resolute speaker in favor of the destruction of tribal cultures, began instructing them in the ways of white men. Ironically, Pratt allowed his charges to draw and paint scenes from their former lives during their leisure time. To Pratt painting provided recreation, a

³³Natalie Curtis, "Perpetuating of Indian Art," Outlook 105 (November 22, 1913), 624.

source of income, because the paintings were sold to several of the Fort Marion guards, and built up good relations between whites and their Native American prisoners.³⁴

The drawings were, at first, much like the skin paintings done on the Plains in earlier times. As time went on, the more talented of the Fort Marion painters learned new techniques and worked with themes much removed not from their own personal experiences but from the ideas behind earlier Plains painting. Instead of recording events as their ancestors had done on skins, the Native American artists at Fort Marion, with their pens and brushes, began to delve into the art of personal expression.

One of the finest examples of Fort Marion self-expression came from the pen of a Kiowa artist named Wohaw. Done in 1877, the drawing depicts an Indian man standing between two cultures--his own and the white man's. Flanking him Wohaw drew the symbols of sustenance for both cultures. On the man's right the artist depicted a buffalo while on his left a steer. In the man's extended hands he held two peace pipes in offering to both animals. At his right foot in miniature a tipi was drawn surrounded by buffalo. On the other side lay cultivated fields and a frame house. As the two ungulates enveloped the man's figure with words and as the sun, the moon and a comet watched, the drawing's subject has turned toward the white man's steer

³⁴Karen Daniels Peterson, Plains Indian Art from Fort Marion (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 261.

and placed his foot on the cultivated field. Wohaw's drawing was a symbolic depiction of his own inner-struggle while a prisoner at Fort Marion. Although nostalgic for the life he grew up in, he was forced to observe and then to accept a changing world.³⁵

Wohaw was not the only artist of note imprisoned at Fort Marion. Among the others were Zotom, a Kiowa; Squint Eyes, who later aided ethnologists at the Smithsonian; and Cohoe and Howling Wolf, both Cheyennes. Their drawings and paintings, although some were technically weak, accurately expressed their moods and in that sense attained true artistic value. Ranging from the melancholy to the nostalgic to the comic, the art from Fort Marion marked a transition in Native American painting from the old to the new without a loss of Indian identity. Unfortunately, most of the Fort Marion painters gave up their art after leaving prison. As a consequence, the drawings came only into the hands of the guards and visitors who purchased them on the spot. Later they were exhibited in museums as anthropological curiosities and not as true art.³⁶

Anthropological interest, although somewhat lacking at first in artistic sensitivity, accounted for the resurgence of Native American painting in the Southwest. During the late 1890's J. Walter Fewkes of the Bureau of American Ethnology hired several Hopi men to depict ceremonial Kachinas. Fewkes

³⁵Ibid., 90-91.

³⁶Ibid., 264-265.

supplied the artists with all the materials for the work and in 1900 collected over two hundred drawings. The artists looked upon their work as educational. It was well within Hopi tradition to fashion Kachina dolls for instructional purposes. Drawings of them would not have been considered sacreligious.³⁷

In 1903 the Smithsonian published Fewkes' collection under the title "Hopi Katchinas, Drawn by Native Artists" in the Bureau of American Ethnology's annual report.³⁸ As an ethnologist Fewkes was concerned with anthropological data and not as much with artistic accomplishment. The drawings, as a result, were detailed but lacking in expression. Fewkes did, however, stimulate interest in the "scientific" implications of ethnic art. In 1902 another anthropologist, Kenneth Chapman, perhaps borrowing the idea from Fewkes, sought out Navajo artists in the effort to collect drawings of ceremonial sand-paintings. Chapman's search resulted in the discovery of the father of modern Navajo painting, Apie Begay. Chapman became somewhat of a patron to Navajo painters and, unlike Fewkes, seemed more interested in the artistic side of the drawings he commissioned.³⁹

Edgar L. Hewett was still another anthropologist who actively fostered the development of Southwest Indian painting.

³⁷Brody, Indian Painters and White Patrons, 76-77.

³⁸J. Walter Fewkes, "Hopi Katchinas, Drawn by Native Artists," Bureau of American Ethnology, Annual Report 21 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 1903), 3-126.

³⁹Jamake Highwater, Song From the Earth: American Indian Painting (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1976), 41-42.

A former professor at the University of Southern California and chairman of the Department of Anthropology at the University of New Mexico, Hewett, from 1905 to 1915 sponsored several Native American artists who later became very well-known among eastern art critics. As director of the School of American Research at the Museum of New Mexico he aided the careers of Awa Tsireh, Fred Kobotie, Ma Pe Wi and Crescencio Martinez, all of whom had paintings displayed at the annual exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists held at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City during 1920. Hewett was decidedly interested in art and not, like Fewkes or Chapman, in ceremonial secrets and strict realism.⁴⁰

Representation of Native American painting at the Waldorf art show was the result of eastern artistic interest. The year before a group of concerned artists and patrons of the arts proposed that the New York Metropolitan Museum organize "a great exhibition of Indian art." Museum officials and others evidently thought of Indian art as being more an ethnological or archeaological subject and therefore a concern of the Museum of Natural History. As it turned out, the Museum of Natural History's exhibition focused on older or at least more traditional art forms. Dissatisfaction with the Museum's exhibit prompted the effort to have Native American painting displayed

⁴⁰ Ibid., 44-45

at the Waldorf show in order to place "more emphasis on the work of to-day."⁴¹

The agitation for an exhibition of Indian art was indicative of the recognition that Southwest painting had already gained. H. Chadwick Hunter, for instance, was enthusiastic in his feelings for Native American painting in an article written in 1919 for Art and Archeaology.⁴² Immediately preceding the Waldorf show, Walter Pach, a founder of the Society of Independent Artists, writing for The Dial said that Kobotie and Ma Pe Wi's paintings were "primitive . . . in the true sense of the word . . . their form and content deriving from an immediate response to the scenes they depict." Very few artists, according to Pach, had attained true expression in primitivism. Pach was, however, unequivocal in his praise for these "untaught young Indians."⁴³

By 1925 Southwest painting had received widespread critical acclaim. Not only that, individual artists began to be recognized for their work instead of being grouped together as faceless Indian painters. The New York Times, for example, singled out Awa Tsireh's work stating that "[h]is drawings are, in their own field, as precise and sophisticated as a

⁴¹Walter Pach, "The Art of the American Indian," The Dial 68 (January 1920), 62-63.

⁴²H. Chadwick Hunter, "American Indians in Painting," Art and Archeaology 8 (March-April 1919), 81-96.

⁴³Walter Pach, "Notes on the Indian Water-Colors," The Dial 68 (March 1920), 343.

Persian miniature." American Indian painting, by that time, was an artistic "field" and individual artists were recognized for their contributions in it.⁴⁴

As early as the 1910's Southwest Indian painting reached Europe. Elizabeth Richards, a teacher at San Ildefonso Pueblo, allowed her students to pick their own topics and with school supplies render them on paper. Richards sent what she considered to be the best artistic compositions abroad in 1911. Her efforts produced a small but expanding clique of Europeans very much concerned with the development of Native American art.⁴⁵

Other white teachers in Indian schools, perhaps under the influence of John Dewey's new concepts in education, allowed their pupils to express themselves in terms of art. Susie Ryan Peters of Anadarko, Oklahoma, who began working with Kiowa students in 1916, gave the impetus to a revitalization of Plains Indian painting. Displaying a great interest in the development of the artistic skills of some of the Kiowa youths, Peters used her own funds to hire teachers to give art instruction to her students. Included in these private art classes were Monroe Tsatoke, Stephen Mopope, Spencer Asah, James Auchiah and Jack Hokeah. As their talent developed, Peters sought more and better instruction for these five budding artists. From 1923 to 1927 she was able to get her former students enrolled in the University of Oklahoma's art program under the supervision of Oscar B.

⁴⁴New York Times, September 6, 1925.

⁴⁵Highwater, Song From the Earth, 44.

Jacobson. Tsatoke, Mopope, Asah, Auchiah and Hokeah founded, by the late 1920's, a dominant school of Native American painting and had become almost an institution in and of themselves, known as the "Five Kiowas."⁴⁶

Although the Kiowa school was not directly connected with Fort Marion art, some of the prisoners made their homes in the same area where the Five Kiowas grew up. Some of the Kiowa artists were related to some of the Fort Marion prisoners. Wohaw for instance, was connected by marriage to the Tsatoke family.⁴⁷ Even if the prisoners did not continue their artistic pursuits after returning home, their influence showed in the new Kiowa art. Like the Fort Marion prisoners, the Kiowa school painted expressionistic compositions. Their paintings were in large part nostalgic and they produced highly stylized and symbolic works. Using flat colors, no shading and flowing forms the art of the Five Kiowas was decorative as well as representational. Tsatoke, Mopope, Asah, Auchiah and Hokeah basically conformed to Fort Marion art with, however, a great deal more technical skill.

The Kiowa school was very influential in the development of Native American painting. In 1928 Jacobson, the Five's instructor at the University of Oklahoma, arranged for some of their paintings to be shown at the International Folk Art Exhibition in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Later, he published a

⁴⁶Ibid., 61.

⁴⁷Petersen, Plains Indian Art From Fort Marion, 210.

portfolio of their work. This volume was one of the earliest books to deal specifically with the emergence of Native American painting as a true art form. The Kiowa school was later copied and modified and Southwest painters even recognized the value and influence of its decorative, free flowing style.⁴⁸

Even before the Kiowa school got its start, Carlisle Indian school began to feel the pressure and influence of Native American art. Under Richard Henry Pratt, Carlisle had been primarily dedicated to providing manual training instruction for practical application in the white world. Art, especially with a Native American identity, hardly conformed to Pratt's ideas of Indian education. After he departed the school in 1904, the new director, Moses Friedman, began to pursue a more liberal attitude regarding American Indian art. As a result, two Native American artists were hired to teach at Carlisle. The pair, Angel De Cora Dietz, a Winnebago, and her husband, William, who was also known as Lone Star, gave instruction in metalwork, weaving and especially in painting.⁴⁹

For the most part the Dietzes emphasized design and decorative art. In keeping with the ideas on which Carlisle was developed under Pratt, Angel De Cora Dietz, a member of the first conference of the Society of American Indians and very much concerned with Native Americans making their own way in the world, pushed the youthful Carlisle artists toward commercial

⁴⁸Brody, Indian Painters and White Patrons, 124-126.

⁴⁹"Indians to Foster Their Native Art," The Indian Craftsman 1 (April 1909), 19.

ventures. In 1911, before that first meeting of the Society of American Indians, she reported that the director of the Pennsylvania School of Industrial Art in Philadelphia had offered aid in her attempts to apply Carlisle designs to "modern house furnishings." Dietz further stated that through "careful study and close application many hundred designs have been evolved." Many of the Carlisle designs were put upon the open market and had brought their "financial reward." But more important to Dietz, the Carlisle artists drew "the attention of artists and manufacturers to the fact that the Indian of North America possessed a distinctive art" which promised "to be of great value in a country which heretofore has been obliged to draw its models from the countries of the eastern hemisphere."⁵⁰

The Dietzes work did gain a good deal of artistic recognition. One of their students, Moses Stranger Horse, a Sioux from South Dakota, became well known among connoisseurs and collectors of Native American art.⁵¹ Interestingly enough, it was to the Dietzes that a writer from the Literary Digest came when that magazine decided to do an article on western art and how it actually misrepresented Native American life.⁵² Indian criticism of white America's art was unheard of at the

⁵⁰Proceedings of the First Annual Conference of the Society of American Indians, 86.

⁵¹Highwater, Song From the Earth. 44.

⁵²"How Art Misrepresents the Indian," Literary Digest 44 (January 27, 1912), 160-161.

time, but the fact that Native Americans were even asked to comment on art of any kind reflected the growing respect for, and the stature of, American Indian artistic accomplishment.

The respect which white Americans demonstrated for Native American art in the first decades of the twentieth century was not limited to the decorative crafts of weaving, basketry, ceramics or to Native American mastery in painting. To the dismay of the strict assimilationists, a great deal of white interest was given to the "heathen rites" of American Indian dancing and singing. Like the interest shown in painting, white Americans first took notice in Native American music out of ethnological curiosity. In fact a member of the Lake Mohonk Conferences, Alice C. Fletcher, spent a great part of her ethnological career recording and thus assuring the partial survival of American Indian songs.⁵³

As a scientist Fletcher was a member of the cultural evolutionist school.⁵⁴ To her, American Indians were an evolving people just emerging from the depths of primitivism into a modern civilization. She had no doubt that Native American cultures were dying out. In fact she aided in the destruction to the best of her ability. Early in her career she participated

⁵³Some of Fletcher's titles were: "Indian Song," The Nation 71 (July 12, 1900), 31; Indian Story and Song From North America (Boston: Small Maynard and Company, 1907); Indian Games and Dances with Native Songs (Boston: C. C. Birchard and Company, 1915) to list a few of her more popular, as opposed to her purely ethnological, tracts.

⁵⁴Hoxie, "Beyond Savagery," 82-90

in the parcelling out of Omaha, Winnebago and Nez Perce Indian lands to individual tribal members after the passage of the Dawes General Allotment Act.⁵⁵ Her interest in Native American music was purely academic--an effort to record for posterity the folk ways of a doomed people.

Fletcher, who held the Mary Copley Thaw Fellowship from 1891 to her death, was one of the very few ethnologists welcomed at the Lake Mohonk Conferences. S. J. Barrows said before the meeting in 1903 that she "is the best ethnologist in the United States."⁵⁶ Her involvement was deep and to her any kind of "Indian work," whether anthropological or parceling out allotments, was "humanitarian work."⁵⁷ Owing to the belief that American Indians were rapidly vanishing, she became part of the effort to collect Native American goods, record languages, take photographs, make life masks, and even to record music. After her death, in 1923, she was recognized as being the person who "inaugurated the work in this interesting branch of investigation, which bids fair to enrich the music of the world."⁵⁸ The ethnologist had aided in the perpetuation of American Indian art despite her conviction that American Indians would soon vanish from the face of the earth.

⁵⁵"Alice Cunningham Fletcher," American Anthropologist 25 (April-June 1923) 2:254.

⁵⁶Proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference, 1903, 79.

⁵⁷Quoted in Washington Times, July 14, 1911, Alice Cunningham Fletcher Papers (Miscellaneous), National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institute.

⁵⁸"Alice Cunningham Fletcher," 255.

Following in Fletcher's footsteps there came a flood of ethnological and artistic interest in American Indian music. As early as 1903 Arthur Farwell, a musician and composer of some note, was recording and experimenting with Indian motifs in his own music.⁵⁹ Six years later Frederick R. Burton published a book-length study of Native American music. Burton's volume was intended for artistic consumption and dealt with rhythms and themes in American Indian music.⁶⁰ The Nation gave the book a favorable review and wholeheartedly agreed with Burton's rather ethnocentric view that "primitives" did not "develop rhythm to a higher plane" than "civilized" peoples. Despite the reviewer's and Burton's ideas, the article stressed that the problem was still unsolved and welcomed "more compositions on Indian themes" in music in order to test Burton's thesis.⁶¹

Composers wasted little time in answering The Nation's call. By 1912 Antonin Dvorak, Carlos Troyer, Harvey Worthington Loomis and, "to an extent," Carl Busch had all expressed interest in developing compositions based on the "native" music of American Indians and Black people. According to Arthur Farwell, American Indian music was the most significant of the two. He

⁵⁹ "The Music of the American Indian," Literary Digest 27 (September 5, 1903) 283.

⁶⁰ Frederick R. Burton, American Primitive Music (New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1909).

⁶¹ "Review of Frederick R. Burton's American Primitive Music," The Nation 90 (February 24, 1910), 196.

stated that "it is the Indian's music that has been seized upon by the composer in America, while the development of negro melodies has been practically at a standstill."⁶²

American Indian themes were very popular in music during the period. Dvorak was said to have listened to recordings of Native American music and used their "mystic and austere" motifs in his "New World Symphony."⁶³ Following Dvorak's lead other serious composers incorporated themes that they considered to be of Native American origin into their music. They included Carl Busch, "Minnehaha's Vision"; Charles Cadman, "Thunderbird Suite"; and Anton Heinrich, "Indian Fanfares."⁶⁴

Popular composers were far less scholarly in their approach to music and probably never attempted to listen to the actual recordings of Native American songs. Still, to appease the public, Tin Pan Alley produced "Indian" music in great quantity. Among the most popular of tunes were: "Navajo" (1903), "Cheyenne" (1906), "Dearest Pocahontas, Her Wooing" (1907) and "By the Waters of the Minnetonka" (1921), "From the Land of Sky-Blue Waters," a very popular and long-lasting piece of music, was written in 1909.⁶⁵

⁶²"Indian and Negro in Music," Literary Digest 44 (June 29, 1912), 1347.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 1347 and Friar and Friar, The Only Good Indian, 17.

⁶⁴Friar and Friar, The Only Good Indian, 17-18.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 17.

By 1913 alleged Indian music enjoyed widespread popularity. In that year Literary Digest reported that even the Interior Department had selected an official to go on tour of the country and record Native American songs.⁶⁶ The appointment was demonstrative of the degree of bureaucratic confusion regarding American Indian policy. It was still the official stance of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to frown upon the continuance of Native American ceremonies. The Interior Department, under which the Indian office operated, in effect sanctioned ceremonial singing and with it, dancing, without a great deal of concern over Bureau policy.

Along with music, Native American dance was given artistic merit. In 1918 Marsden Hartley, writing for The Dial, lamented the government's active attempt to destroy Native American ceremonial dancing. Hartley was unquestionably enthusiastic about the "dramatic intensity" of tribal dance which he referred to as "the solemn high mass of the Indian soul."⁶⁷

During the first twenty years of the new century artistic acceptance of Native American painting, ceramics, basketry and music and dance became fact. This recognition was the result of many seemingly unrelated factors. To whites American Indians represented a quickly vanishing part of the natural setting. A. J. Fynn urged the conference of the National Education

⁶⁶"Recording the Indian's Music," Literary Digest 46 (April 26, 1913), 951.

⁶⁷Marsden Hartley, "Tribal Esthetics," The Dial 65 (November 16, 1918), 399-400.

Association in 1909 to instruct American Indians in their native crafts because "conservation is the watchword of the hour."⁶⁸ American Indian talent, like the forests, streams, and minerals should be preserved and fostered for the enjoyment of future generations. Collecting Indian art was to many white Americans a gesture to the "child of Nature" stereotype and to nature itself.

The conservation movement in the United States was as romantic as it was practical. Living in the "great out of doors" was not only healthful but spiritually stimulating. Many white academic artists left the cities for "wilderness" areas in order to capture on their canvases the "frankness, honesty, simplicity, directness (which) characterize the manufactures of the Indian."⁶⁹ The Southwest particularly attracted several excellent painters. Oscar E. Berninghaus established a studio in Taos, New Mexico, early in the century and quickly became known for his studies of Pueblo life. Following Berninghaus were Irving Couse, John Hauser and Ernest L. Blumenschein, the founder of the Taos Society of Artists.⁷⁰ All of these painters were interested in painting American Indian subjects, indeed Couse had left Oregon because he found the Indians of

⁶⁸A. J. Fynn, "The Preservation of Aboriginal Arts," National Education Association, Journal of Proceedings and Addresses, 1909, 947, 950.

⁶⁹James, What the White Race May Learn from the Indian, 241.

⁷⁰Ernest L. Blumenschein, "The Taos Society of Artists," The American Magazine of Art 8 (September 1917), 451.

that area unwilling to pose. In Taos he had no such trouble finding subjects. Hauser painted Native American subjects from all over the United States and became a well-respected figure among the people with whom he worked. The Sioux of South Dakota, in fact, formally adopted him as one of their own in 1901. Despite Hauser's acceptance elsewhere he always returned to Taos and Santa Fe, which were quickly gaining notice for their production of excellent art.⁷¹ Marsden Hartley, a product of Alfred Stieglitz's photo-sessionist movement in New York, spent two years in the Southwest before moving to Paris. His later abstracts showed a great deal of Indian influence. Many of his paintings contained geometric designs not from Cubist tradition but found in the basketry and weaving of the Southwestern tribes.

Interestingly, everyone of these artists, from Blumenschein to Hartley, wrote and spoke out in opposition to the government's handling of Indian Affairs. Hartley believed that the government was destroying a source of profound artistic accomplishment because American Indians were "artists of the first degree."⁷² Others thought as Hartley did. The founders of the Society of Independent Artists in New York, Walter Pach and John Sloan, were deeply concerned with the perpetuation of

⁷¹Doris Ostrander Dawdy, Artists of the American West (Chicago: Sage Books, 1974), 21-22, 27, 56-57, 109.

⁷²Hartley, "Tribal Esthetics," 400.

Native American art. It was largely through their efforts that Indian painters were included in the Waldorf show of 1920.

The nationalistic side of the American people even fostered the interest in Native American art. To some Americans, Indian art was "the only American art there is."⁷³ It was utterly unique, very American because the "first Americans" created it and it seemed to be part of the American frontier heritage--natural and unspoiled. As such, it had "never stood in the path of progress."⁷⁴ Artistic "back-to-nature" tendencies led to a minor vogue in the production of "primitive" art. According to George Warton James, there was in Indian and white primitivistic efforts "no wild straining after unique effect; no fantastic distortions to secure novelty; everything is natural and rational, and therefore artistically effective."⁷⁵ With all of these factors taken into consideration many whites of diverse backgrounds found it easy to accept some Indian artists and craftsmen as Hartley and James thought of them. As one writer put it, "at last we are beginning to understand that the heathen's spiritual blindness does not prevent his producing great art." It was true, according to the same author that the

⁷³Howard Fremont Stratton, "The Place of the Indian in Art," The Red Man 2 (February 1910), 5.

⁷⁴Warren K. Moorhead, "Indian Arts and Industries," The Indian Craftsman 2 (January 1910), 9.

⁷⁵James, What the White Race May Learn from the Indian, 241.

"sixteenth century discovered America, the seventeenth colonized it, but it has been left for the twentieth to realize the importance of its art."⁷⁶

⁷⁶W. G. Constable, "Indigenous American Art," Living Age 306 (July 24, 1920), 247.

CHAPTER V

PROGRESSIVE AMBIGUITY: INDIANS AND AMERICAN SOCIAL THOUGHT 1900-1920

The ideal of assimilating American Indians was based on a set of beliefs which demonstrated, to a great extent, the complexity of the American mind in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. White Americans in the nineteenth century easily combined the extreme nationalistic view that their civilization was the greatest of all cultures and, at the same time, retained their Christian zeal with notions of brotherly love, charity and kindness. "Kill the Indian and save the man" adequately put into words the Christian reformers' curious love-hate relationship with Native Americans. To them the word "Indian" meant not only a race but a lifestyle--a lifestyle which they could castigate in the most deprecating terms and seek to destroy completely. These same people could later praise Native Americans for their "distinctive abilities" and speak in glowing terms of the "marvelous skill and patience and idea of beauty of these people."¹

During the last century the reformers intermixed and rationalized these concurrent emotions regarding American

¹Proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference 1904, 6; 1903, 62.

Indians. To them Native American lifestyles were not cultures at all but in fact primitive existences. The greatest acts of charity, kindness and brotherly love would be to confer on these people the lifestyles of mainstream American society. Tribal cultures were unworthy, yet the reformers felt that the people who lived in these societies were well worth "saving."

During the first twenty years of the twentieth century, Indian cultures became attractive to many whites. To them the "vanishing policy" which the old reformers thought of as the "salvation" of the Native American race, was rapidly eroding the lifestyles they were just beginning to find value in. Caught up in the images of Native Americans which they themselves had created, they could not accept the idea that Native American cultures were dynamic and adaptive. These new "preservationists" thought that any modification of Indian custom would only make that custom less "Indian" and therefore work toward its complete loss. Of the Native American cultures that were maintained, or at least retained their "purity" in the minds of the preservationists, many whites began to feel remarkably protective. This new interest in preserving elements of tribal culture allowed many Indian people even greater latitude in their quest to preserve tribal identities. To those who believed in the doctrine of "kill the Indian and save the man," the preservation of an Indian identity was totally antithetical to assimilation and an affront to their missionary zeal. The clash between the two ways of thinking was actually an outcome of white society's old love-hate syndrome regarding Indian people. It also served to

create ambivalence among the ranks of the white people involved in American Indian affairs. Their ambivalence, in turn, led to a loss of credibility on their part in dealing with Native Americans and to a complete breakdown in the theoretical underpinnings of the vanishing policy.

During the period from 1900 to 1920 it became no longer feasible, nor completely wise, for the advocates of total assimilation to call for the destruction of Native American lifestyles--perhaps the most important aspect of the vanishing policy. Criticism of the missionary spirit and its effect on the cultures and art of Native America was very heavy and severely wounded the total concept of assimilation. As early as 1901 Outlook carried an article which was very critical of the fact that the assimilation movement was so emersed in its own idea of civilization that it indiscriminately destroyed some facets of Native American life which were by then deemed highly commendable. To the author of the article the arrogance shown in the vanishing theory only served to make Indian people feel unworthy. "After one hundred and thirty years of dealing with the American Indian we may quite frankly admit that, so far from developing what was best in him," according to the Outlook, "the methods hitherto followed have produced in the modern Indian on the reservation a lower type than the colonists found."²

According to Outlook, the effort to force some aspects of tribal life out of existence represented a misguided zeal.

²"Indian Industrial Development," Outlook 67 (January 12, 1901), 101.

The article lashed out against the "home industry" of making lace which was forced upon Indian women. As the author put it, "Did we try to learn what industries he already possessed. . . . Not at all!" Lace was "a product evolved to meet the requirements of a European aristocracy" and not suited to American ideas of beauty and an affront to rugged individualism. The article lamented the fact that many American Indian industries were rapidly disappearing because of an arrogance not worthy of America's greatness.³

A few months after these comments on Indian industries another article appeared in Outlook which, although it dealt with much the same subject matter, was even more critical of the missionary spirit of the assimilation policy. The author, Walter C. Roe, was a missionary and vice president of the recently formed Indian Industries League of Boston. The League was formed primarily as an effort to instill in Native Americans what the white reformers habitually referred to as the "dignity of labor." As an organization designed to aid in the development of industry on the reservations, it was given the full support of the assimilationists. Its president, Colonel John S. Lockwood, and Roe were, for instance, both highly regarded members of the Lake Mohonk Conferences of the Friends of the Indian. In fact when the Conference established the Lake Mohonk Lodge

³Ibid., 101-102.

for "Indian industrial development," Roe was appointed to oversee its functions.⁴

While at the Lodge in Oklahoma Roe began to reassess the presumptions underlying the assimilationist thought. He became enamored with "the beautiful art of beadwork" and worked for its survival among the Cheyennes of the area. Although Roe believed in assimilating the Native American population and in allotment in severalty as methods to promote assimilation, he also believed that Indian people should enter American society with dignity. According to Roe, "the underlying mistake of our National policy toward the Indian has been the attempt to crush the Indian out of him." Roe believed that Indians should feel equal to whites and have pride in their heritage. Because he believed that the white assimilation policy had deemed tribal cultures unworthy and had instilled into Indian people a sense of self-hatred, Roe felt that the "lofty type of savage" of one hundred years before had been transformed into "a wretched type of civilized man."⁵

As Roe conceived it, the Lake Mohonk Lodge was intended to be a half-way house--"a link between the old and new." It became a meeting place and social center for many of the Cheyennes living nearby. It also became a workshop for the production of beadwork. Serving these functions, the Lake Mohonk Lodge was

⁴Proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference, 1899, 79; Roe, "The Lake Mohonk Lodge," 176.

⁵Roe, "The Lake Mohonk Lodge," 178.

keeping a sense of tribalism intact and therefore working against, from the assimilationist viewpoint, the effort to "individualize" American Indians. According to Roe, however, places like the Mohonk Lodge would eventually aid assimilation because "the Indians are naturally and strongly social" and needed some form of social interaction in order to cope with the "individualization" process. Roe believed that their "strong gregarious tendencies" kept Native American people from immediately and wholeheartedly accepting the dictums of the assimilationist movement and were "the greatest obstacles to the success of the allotment system."⁶

Roe was not the only person to realize the deleterious social effects of allotment in severalty. A year after Roe's article appeared in Outlook, the novelist Hamlin Garland published his views on the problems of Native Americans in the North American Review. Like Roe, Garland believed that Native American "gregariousness of habit" made it extremely hard for Indian people to "adopt the Dawes land theories." Garland commended Roe's work in Oklahoma and agreed also that the maintenance of Native American art and the self-respect it brought with it "cannot be overestimated."⁷

Unlike Roe, however, Garland felt that the allotment policy should have been revamped. He suggested that families

⁶Ibid., 177.

⁷Hamlin Garland, "The Red Man's Present Needs," North American Review 174 (April 1902), 479, 482.

of each tribe be grouped together along the waterways of the reservation with lands outlying. After recounting his apparent hatred for the "solitary life of western farming," Garland argued in favor of the Native American system of holding lands in common. According to Garland, "[t]he red man's feeling that the earth is for the use of all men, is right; he has always distinguished between the ownership of things and the ownership of land and water."⁸

He further urged that cultural biases be eliminated from Indian policy. Those Indians who had accepted allotments and gained citizenship should have the full rights and privileges of all American citizens. American Indians should be free to do as they pleased in "dress, dance and religion."⁹

He also attacked the boarding schools where the Indian youth was taught "to abhor his parents." To Garland these schools were no less than "monstrous and . . . unchristian." Finally Garland assaulted the very core of the assimilationist movement--the missionary. Missionaries, according to Garland, were mere "sojourners" leading solitary lives on the reservations. In their zeal they failed to recognize the "good" qualities of Indian people and nearly destroyed the artistic and social attributes which would give to Native Americans the dignity so badly needed before they could enter American society. Garland further stated that the missionaries did "not represent

⁸Ibid., 480-481.

⁹Ibid., 485.

the culture and scholarship of our day," hence they were not "good examples to send to Indian country." Not only that, they degraded Indians and left them a demoralized people.¹⁰

Garland and Roe both thought that one day Indians would either enter into mainstream society or vanish from the face of the earth. In either case they believed that Indians had the right to maintain their self-pride and with that win the respect of white America. According to both writers, American Indian dignity would be uplifted only if they were allowed to glory in identifiably Indian achievements. Garland, Roe and even the anonymous writer for Outlook all were of the view that the development of Native American art would instill in Indian people the self-pride once had but lost because of the white man's mania to turn American Indians into carbon copies of himself. Garland and Roe attempted to break down stereotypes and teach white people to respect Indians. To them Native American cultures were in a steep decline, not because they were "primitive" and incapable of adapting but because of white arrogance, greed, and misdirected missionary zeal.

The ideas and actions of the nineteenth century reformers continued to come under attack. Seven months after Garland's article was published The Independent printed a mild attack on missionary wrongs committed against American Indians.¹¹ Although

¹⁰ Ibid., 484.

¹¹ "Ethnologists and Missionaries," The Independent 54 (November 6, 1902), 2663-2665.

the article was far less severe than Garland's tract, it did expand on one of the key questions the novelist had raised. Garland had frankly stated that the missionaries did not possess enough knowledge of Native Americans to adequately deal with their problems. But while Garland asserted that the missionaries did not represent the scholarship of the day, he was decidedly vague on exactly who did possess the knowledge required to work solutions to Indian problems.

The Independent was less vague. Missionaries, according to the article, were failing because their zeal bordered on maliciousness. They condemned anything "heathenish" to the destruction "of the good which exists in the inferior." To the writer Native Americans were backward, simple and racially inferior to whites but still possessed some admirable qualities such as a gift for artistic excellence. American Indians, when pressed to change, duly conformed outwardly, yet retained the "old" convictions, and "the net product is a hypocrite." The missionaries created more problems than they solved because they had been "ignorant of ethnological knowledge and of both the scientific and moral value of aboriginal traditions, customs and arts." Clearly, The Independent implied that Indians could only be "uplifted" through a careful study of ethnology. According to the article, it was "only the trained student" who fully understood how closely in substance were "human customs and institutions" that differed "most widely in outward expression

and how important, for the moral well-being of the lowly, the familiar forms of expression may be."¹² The time had come for the true "friends of the Indian" to accept a more scientific approach to the solution of the "Indian problem," because sending "into the mission field teachers whose chief qualification is a religious zeal can only work cumulative mischief."¹³

The Independent article reflected the growing ambiguity in white thought about American Indians. Whites could admit that some aspects of Native American life were indeed worthy of acceptance and even emulation. But they were still convinced of their own cultural superiority. They had not yet even considered the idea of cultural pluralism. The whites fully believed that their civilization was modern and developing. Culture was synonymous with that civilization. American Indians, on the other hand, were in transition from the old to the new. As a consequence of this attitude, they felt that those Indian people who retained a degree of the "old" lifestyles were "backward."¹⁴

"Backwardness" was not, however, a totally negative trait to some white people. Many conservationists, for example, argued for a more simplistic lifestyle--a lifestyle seen in the "backwardness" of American Indians. To these people civilization or modernity or culture had gone entirely too far. In his book,

¹²Ibid., 2664.

¹³Ibid., 2665.

¹⁴See Hoxie "Beyond Savagery," 274-322 for a discussion of the idea of "backwardness" as associated with Indian people.

What the White Race May Learn From the Indian, George Warton

James wrote that as a nation "we do not know how to eat rationally; few people sleep as they should; our drinking habits could not be much worse; our clothing is stiff, formal, conventional, hideous, and unhealthful." Not only that but, according to James, American architecture was "weakly imitative, flimsy, without dignity, character or stability" and white religious practice was "a profession rather than a life." His attacks on society were unlimited and even touched the American educational system. In James' view the institutions of learning in the United States turned out "anaemic and half-trained pupils who are forceful demonstrators of the truth that 'a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.'"¹⁵ In addition, James stated that civilization created the "dull and vacant eye, the inert face" of the city-dweller.¹⁶ To the people who believed that civilization could be seen in a negative sense, the "backward" Native American lived simply and was romantically "close to nature." He therefore was inclined to develop a healthful physique and produce great art.¹⁷ The "old," to many whites could also be looked upon as being positive.

Predictably, conservationists of James' ilk, persons with artistic interests and both professional and amateur

¹⁵James, What the White Race May Learn From the Indian, 28.

¹⁶Ibid., 39.

¹⁷Ibid., 12, 59, 241.

ethnologists, continued the attack on the missionary mentality. James Mooney of the Bureau of American Ethnology clearly disliked missionaries. In 1903 before a board investigating the pilfering of funds from the Bureau, Mooney blamed the assimilation movement for turning a Kiowa friend of his into "a dilapidated tramp."¹⁸ One writer for the conservation-oriented Overland Monthly feared further interference in the lives of the Havasupais, and thus the end of the beauty of the natural life he found in their domain.¹⁹ Another conservationist, Dillon Wallace, writing for Outing magazine, stated that Native American life should not be changed quickly and that the missionary zeal was "misdirected."²⁰ James furthered his attacks in 1914 in his book Indian Blankets and Their Makers. To him the Indian, through missionary efforts, had been turned into "a peculiar nondescript, in whose life aboriginal superstitions linger side by side with white men's follies, vices, customs and conventional ideas."²¹ Most of the conservationists believed that Native Americans were rapidly disappearing and duly set the blame for their decline on missionary zeal.

¹⁸Hearings before the Special Committee on Administrative Affairs of the Bureau of American Ethnology, June 29-July 28, 1903 (typescript), National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institute, 975.

¹⁹Arthur Inkersley, "Cataract Canyon, The Havasupais," Overland 42 (November 1903), 382-390.

²⁰Dillon Wallace, "Saddle and Camp in the Rockies, Across the Navajo Desert," Outing 57 (January 1911), 407.

²¹George Warton James, Indian Blankets and Their Makers, vi-vii.

Natalie Curtis, daughter of the photographer Edward S. Curtis, a patron of Indian arts and an amateur ethnologist, attacked the policy of assimilation as a "form of racial suicide" forced upon Native Americans.²² Ethnologists, conservationists and artists became the driving forces behind the movement to preserve elements of Native American cultures.

Interestingly, there was in the period, along with the growing awareness of the effort to conserve America's natural resources, a concomitant rise in the popularity of the academic professions of anthropology and archeology. Americans were displaying antiques and traveling to visit archeological sites.²³ The conservation movement stirred up a nostalgic interest in the past. It also led to an interest in preserving American Indian antiquities. Indeed several bills were put before Congress to insure that archeological sites would be placed under federal protection. During 1904 alone, four such preservation bills were introduced into the House and Senate. One, Senator Shelby M. Cullom's (R. Illinois) bill 4127 was specifically designed "for the preservation of aboriginal monuments, ruins and other antiquities." A House bill even contained a provision for dealing with counterfeiting prehistoric and archeological objects.²⁴

²²Natalie Curtis Burlin, The Indian's Book (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1907), xxxviii.

²³A. J. Fynn, "The Preservation of Aboriginal Arts," 947.

²⁴58 Congress, 2 session, Congressional Record Vol. 38, Part 2, 1651, 1872, 2000; Part 3, 2712.

Anthropologists were very much caught up in the preservation movement. Natalie Curtis attempted to enlist Franz Boas' aid in obtaining legislation for the preservation of Hopi towns. "I believe in progress," she wrote, "but it seems to me that the Moqui (Hopi) towns are too rich in ethnological, historic and artistic interest to be carelessly intrusted for 'improvement' to government officials." Even if those officials were conscientious, Curtis thought that they could have "but little appreciation of the real worth of such towns to the world's history."²⁵

Boas kept a running correspondence with Alice C. Fletcher and the President of Columbia University, Nicholas Murray Butler, concerning the preservation bills. His influence, through Butler, was so strong, for instance, that one of the proposals was defeated because Boas objected to its stipulation which gave the Smithsonian the exclusive right to issue permits for the exploitation of United States protected archeological sites. Boas felt that this provision would preclude foreign scholars from digging and stir up antagonisms within the profession.²⁶

The preservation movement linked American Indians with the discipline of anthropology and also with the conservation movement. To most whites, Native Americans were living American

²⁵ Natalie Curtis to Franz Boas, August 15, 1903, Boas Papers (microfilm), National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institute.

²⁶ Boas to Alice C. Fletcher, February 15, 20, 26, 1904; Boas to Nicholas Murray Butler, February 19, March 7, 1904, Boas Papers.

antiquities who possessed some admirable qualities such as a "closeness to nature." In the minds of many white people, in order to learn about how the "natural life" gave Indian people their healthy physiques and artistic propensities according to the stereotypes, one would have to turn to anthropology and not to the missionaries who had done everything they could to destroy Native American societies. Anthropologists, after all, had introduced Native American art and had written about the physical achievements of American Indians in the days before the coming of the whites.²⁷ Perhaps it was not totally incongruous to the whites that "Anthropology Days" were staged during the St. Louis Olympic Games of 1904, during which a Sioux Indian won the hundred yard dash.²⁸

The need to "preserve" American Indians also implied that Native Americans were vanishing. As a consequence Edward S. Curtis, with financial aid from J. Pierpont Morgan, launched a career based on photographing "Vanishing Indian Types."²⁹ Later

²⁷Even Boas wrote popular pieces on Indian art. See Boas, "Decorative Art of the Indian," Current Literature 35 (November 1903), 560-564 and "Methods in Indian Woodwork," The Red Man 2 (April 1910), 3-10.

²⁸Dick Schaap, An Illustrated History of the Olympics (New York: Ballantine Books, 1976), 76.

²⁹Edward S. Curtis, "Vanishing Indian Types, The Tribes of the Southwest," Scribner's Magazine 39 (May 1906), 513-529; "Vanishing Indian Types, The Tribes of the Northwest Plains," Scribner's Magazine 39 (June 1906), 657-671; "Photos by Curtis," World's Work 12 (August 1906), 7913-7914.

a writer and photographer named Karl Moon would follow Curtis's lead.³⁰ In addition, a New York lawyer, Joseph K. Dixon, organized the Wanamaker expeditions of 1908, 1909 and 1913 in order to photograph, record the culture of and pay tribute to the "first Americans" before they passed from the face of the earth.³¹ Curtis, Moon, and Dixon not only got their starts because they believed that American Indians were vanishing but also helped perpetuate and popularize this very widespread and ingrained myth.³²

To many people, American Indians were not only dying out as cultural entities but as a race.³³ Disease and alcoholism took their toll to be sure, but many Americans believed that intermarriage was leading to the rapid decline in the numbers of racially identifiable American Indians. According to one writer, "Cononchet's, Pontiac's and Tecumseh's race will be as dead as the buffalo, and a hybrid will have taken its place."³⁴ Even Franz Boas was interested in the "process" of Indian-white

³⁰ "Karl Moon's Portraits of Southwest Indians," Century Magazine 74 (October 1907), 923-927; Karl Moon, "In Search of the Wild Indian," Outing 69 (February 1917), 533-545.

³¹ Joseph K. Dixon, The Vanishing Race (Glorieta, New Mexico: The Rio Grande Press, 1973), first published in 1913.

³² There were others engaged in photographing American Indians before they "vanished." See E. S. Meany, "Hunting Indians with a Camera," World's Work 15 (March 1908) 10004-10011.

³³ Honoré Willis, "We Die! We Die! There is no Hope!" Everybody's Magazine 26 (March 1912), 337-344.

³⁴ Harvey, "The Indians of To-day and To-morrow," 697.

"amalgamation" and even suggested that it might be the solution to Indian problems.³⁵ In 1916 Albert Ernest Jenks, an anthropologist interested in the Minnesota Chippewa population, suggested that repeated intermarriages tended to dilute "Indian blood." His conclusions tended to support the idea that American Indians were doomed.³⁶

During the period from 1900 to 1920 white people had amassed an incredible number of images regarding Native Americans. To whites Indian people were backward but possessed the redeeming qualities only a "backward," "natural" people could have. At the same time, whites believed that Native Americans were vanishing--destroyed as a noble race by the arrogance of white missionaries and well-meaning, if misguided, philanthropy. To protect Indian people, or at least protect their images of Indian people, many whites, such as Garland, Roe, Natalie Curtis, and James attacked the notion that assimilation required the destruction of culture and turned for knowledge about American Indians to the ethnologists.

As early as 1903 the "Friends of the Indian" were very aware of the criticism aimed at them. As a consequence of the widespread attacks on their beliefs and actions, many toned

³⁵Hearings before the Special Committee on Administrative Affairs of the Bureau of American Ethnology, June 29-July 28, 1903, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institute, 939. Also see Franz Boas, "Making the Red Faces White," World Outlook 4 (January 1918), 6.

³⁶Albert Ernest Jenks, Indian-White Amalgamation, An Anthropometric Study (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Studies in the Social Sciences, 6, 1916).

down their assaults on "heathenism" and began to advocate the perpetuation of American Indian art. Their ambivalence in thought, however, created tension rather than solutions for Indian problems. To them their philanthropy and zeal had only gained undue criticism. Actually, they were caught between their own conflicting attitudes toward Indian people--repugnance and at the same time, admiration.

The meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of 1903 was rife with the tension only this kind of perplexed state could have spawned. At first the members sat placidly through speeches that attacked the core of the Christian reform philosophy. Alice M. Robertson, who was the Supervisor of the Creek Nation schools and descended from missionaries, even justified and condoned the Creek traditionalists' hostility toward allotment in severalty. According to Robertson, the Snakes under Chitto Harjo were "as sincere in rising against the United States authorities as our people were in rising against taxation without representation."³⁷ She also was quite frank in her appraisal of the notion that Native American lifestyles were in some way unworthy of the white man's civilization. In that vein she related the following anecdote:

The other day I took a New York college girl to an Indian cabin, and showed her their simple life, their simple furniture, and the beautiful white flour meal made from the peculiar kind of corn they raise. We had just taken her in to see one of the rented houses of the cotton people, and I said to her, "Which do you think is really the

³⁷Proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference, 1903, 79.

higher type of civilization to-day?" She said she thought the Indian was far beyond the white.³⁸

As the meeting wore on, however, the tension grew and finally was released in a series of defensive outbursts. In large part the clash centered on the usefulness, or lack of same, of ethnology. But the conflict entailed more complex implications. Richard Henry Pratt, for one, looked upon anthropology as the principal culprit in the perpetuation of Native American lifestyles and the maintenance of tribalism. He was adamantly opposed to tribalism in any form and dutifully attacked "an Indian agency where three tribes are located under one agent" that had evidently set up a school for each tribe. Pratt denounced the system in no uncertain terms and called it "a kind of anthropologist and ethnologist arrangement to keep up tribal distinctions."³⁹

Pratt's defensiveness was quite obvious, and it seemed as if he was fighting for everything he held dear, which, in fact, he was. He had long been an advocate of "kill the Indian and save the man" and, at that time, his ideas concerning the education of Indian youth were under a barrage of criticism. Garland called Pratt's method of removing Indian children from their families in order to segregate them from "tribal influences," no less than an "unchristian" approach to Indian education. Pratt's "outing" system which placed Indian children

³⁸Ibid., 24.

³⁹Ibid., 51.

in white homes during the summer months was evidently viewed, by some, as making household servants out of his Indian charges.⁴⁰

But apparently believing the old military dictum that attack was the best defensive tactic, Pratt focused his attentions on ethnology. It was the perfect time for an attack on anthropologists. In July of that year an incident involving James Mooney and George A. Dorsey, of the Field Museum in Chicago, occurred at the Cheyenne Sun Dance held near Colony, Oklahoma. On the day that the Cheyenne camp was due to break up, a Cheyenne man had skewers placed in the flesh of his back. He then had lines strung with bits of buffalo skull attached to the skewers. After the attachment of the lines, the man walked in a complete circle around the large campsite. Mooney and Dorsey, who were in attendance, had observed the man's actions and hurried to a better vantage point. John H. Seger, the superintendent of the Cheyenne agency, had also observed the proceedings and met Mooney and Dorsey at the point where the Cheyenne had begun his long walk. According to the two ethnologists, Seger said absolutely nothing to the Cheyennes involved in the incident nor did he speak to them at that time.⁴¹ After the camp disbanded, however, Seger publicly accused Mooney and

⁴⁰ See Ibid., 51-52

⁴¹ Mooney to Holmes, August 24, 1903; Dorsey to Stouch, September 14, 1903; W. A. Jones, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 23, 1903. Mooney file. National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institute.

Dorsey of paying the Cheyenne man to undergo the "tortures" of the Sun Dance.⁴²

Mooney and Dorsey denied the charge and issued a counter-accusation.⁴³ According to Mooney, the Cheyenne headmen had asked him to attend their council meeting which took place immediately prior to the Sun Dance celebration. During the meeting one of the chiefs told Mooney that a pledger was "anxious to sacrifice himself in the old style." Mooney said that he "strongly advised" against sacrificing, even though the Cheyennes "had now all the ordinary rights of American citizens in religious matters." Seger, Mooney asserted, was the real culprit in the matter because he was alleged to have told the Cheyennes that their Sun Dance was not "genuine" without self-torture. The superintendent was said to have further stated that if the ceremony was made "genuine" by including sacrifice, "he might think it worth while to attend."⁴⁴ Dorsey supported Mooney's claims as did most of the Cheyenne headmen.⁴⁵

Pratt, despite all the testimony supporting Mooney's side of the question, chose to believe and support Seger.

⁴²New York Times, August 15, 1903.

⁴³Ibid., August 26, 1903.

⁴⁴Mooney to Holmes, August 24, 1903. Mooney file. National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institute.

⁴⁵Dorsey to Stouch, September 14, 1903; Affidavit of Darlington, Watonga and Kingfisher Cheyenne Indians, September 1, 1903; Affidavit of Colony Cheyenne Indians and Cheyennes at Arapaho District, Oklahoma, September 1, 1903. Mooney file. National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institute.

Although Pratt was never mentioned in any of the accounts of the incident he said, "I was there, and I know it happened just about the way our good old Seegar said it did." Moreover, Pratt not only stated that Mooney paid the Cheyenne to undergo self-torture, but implied that the ethnologist was currently occupied in the process of paying the entire Cheyenne tribal council to come to his defense. With that, Pratt declared that the "usefulness of the Bureau of Ethnology has gone in the way they hold the people to the past."⁴⁶

Others at the Conference were far more cautious in their statements regarding ethnology. Although many condemned any ceremonial that caused injury and those scientists who went among the tribes "simply . . . to delve in the past of the Indian," they were not ready to completely dismiss the entire profession.⁴⁷ One prominent member of the Conference, Merrill E. Gates, felt that "[t]he whole Indian problem is a problem of ethnology!"⁴⁸ Another member stated that the study of ethnology had attracted him to the attempt to preserve American Indian art because it "appealed to my sense of beauty" and, in turn, led him to devote himself "to the interest of downtrodden people."⁴⁹

Clearly the membership only favored those ethnologists who clung to the evolutionist school of anthropological theory.

⁴⁶Proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference 1903, 73.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 79.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 105.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 60.

Alice C. Fletcher, for instance, was cited at this same meeting as "the best" science had to offer.⁵⁰ Gates, in his address even dredged up Lewis Henry Morgan's concepts of social evolution to "prove" how "deeply rooted" Indian problems were in the attempt to overcome the transition from "barbarism" to "civilization."⁵¹ Even the Sun Dance, which was an ongoing religious ceremony, was referred to as part of the Indian past--a remnant of savagery. It was obvious that the reformers at Lake Mohonk were going to continue to respect "science," but they were also going to use a great deal of caution concerning ethnologists as individuals.

Less clear were their attitudes toward the absolute ideal of assimilation. Incorporating Indian people into the body-politic seemed less urgent--Indians were "backward" and could not be expected to be immediately assimilated. Moreover, an "Indian" identity, especially in the production of crafts, was entirely too popular. The reformers at Lake Mohonk were already under fire for providing the philosophy which nearly destroyed certain features of Native American life, features the whites had only just begun to appreciate. As a result of these factors, the members of the Lake Mohonk Conference of 1903 seemed to accept an ambivalent attitude in thought as well as in deed.

⁵⁰Ibid., 79.

⁵¹Ibid., 106.

Perhaps the only person at that meeting who was consistent in his ideas concerning the assimilation of American Indians was Richard Henry Pratt. He disliked the "industry business" and lashed out against any whites, especially ethnologists, for aiding in the perpetuation of the Native American "past."⁵² His fervor in defending the Carlisle system was never greater. In an impassioned speech before the assembled members of the conference, Pratt attacked those persons who had accused his institution of attempting to make servants of Indian children and stated that Carlisle was merely following the government's policy of turning Indians into farmers. Teaching Native American youths the manual arts and the rudiments of reading were, according to Pratt "the best way to make the Indian a farmer, and at the same time enable him to realized what it is to be a citizen." Allowing Indians to remain Indian amounted to a denial of American greatness. Pratt insisted that the "melting pot" theory was the method of keeping America great despite the influx of Europeans and the "Indian problem." "I have said over and over again," he continued, "that putting a community of Italians in one of our greatest cities to settle by themselves in a mass will simply reproduce a little Italy in America."⁵³ Pratt was attempting to maintain his own sense of duty and uphold convictions that were quickly falling by the wayside.

⁵²Ibid., 73-74.

⁵³Ibid., 51.

Despite Pratt's passion, some of the members began to treat his "old" ideas rather lightly. He was, in fact, chided several times for his attacks on ethnologists. Samuel J. Burrows talked about Pratt putting "on his war paint" and pursuing scientists.⁵⁴ Merrill E. Gates was a bit more caustic toward Pratt's outbursts. According to Gates, "we cannot help laughing here when Colonel Pratt lifts his tomahawk over the head of the ethnologist!"⁵⁵ Pratt, one of the most earnest and militant of the nineteenth century reformers, was being treated like a crusty old uncle--to be listened to but not to be taken seriously. This attitude prevailed outside the confines of the Mohonk Conference as well. The very next year Pratt was forced to resign his position at Carlisle because of the stance he took in wanting to dissolve the Bureau of Indian Affairs. His assimilationist fervor had evidently led to his undoing.

Chiding Pratt for his constancy only served to pronounce the other members' own ambivalence. Lyman Abbott, the editor of Outlook and one of the Conference's oldest members, became decidedly ambiguous in his positions regarding American Indian affairs. He could, for instance, print Roe's article which spoke in favor of the Indian Industries League and, then in less than three years, reprint and agree with a reservation agent's letter attacking the idea of preserving Indian art. The letter, which Pratt had read to the Lake Mohonk Conference of

⁵⁴Ibid., 79.

⁵⁵Ibid., 105.

1903, was a thoroughly assimilationist document. It told of how the agent was asked to help provide objects of Indian art for display at the St. Louis World's Fair. The agent, who remained anonymous, was proud to report that "the Indians in my charge" could not supply any of the materials requested because "I do not know of an old Indian in this district who can make a basket." He added that he would much rather have displayed crops and other "works of industry," and did so at a local fair. The agent then made a mild attack on the Boston headquarters of the Indian Industries League. "I did not," he stated, "enter in my exhibit any old time golf-belts or music rolls or the war-club with which Captain John Smith was not killed." Instead, he left "that kind of exhibits to the frontiersmen from Boston and other frontier places."⁵⁶

The agent's letter proved that there were men and women of the Pratt philosophy still active in Indian affairs. As late as 1920 an agent was reported to have attacked "a well archeologist" who had urged several tribal leaders to continue their ceremonies. The agent was alleged to have told the archeologist "[i]f it weren't for you damned scientists we'd soon have the Indians off the mesas and at work."⁵⁷

But for the most part ambiguity and inconsistent ideals reigned supreme concerning Native Americans. Even the Board of Indian Commissioners was not unaffected. In 1905 the members

⁵⁶"Correspondence," Outlook 75 (October 31, 1903), 519-520.

⁵⁷Walter Pach, "The Art of the American Indian," 60.

stated that the "wisest friends of the Indian recognize with great delight and value highly the art impulse in certain Indian tribes," which had been demonstrated "in Indian music, in Indian art forms--such as the birchbark canoe, in Indian basketry, and more rarely in Indian pottery." They did not, however, think it right to keep Native Americans "out of civilization in order that certain picturesque aspects of savagery and barbarism may continue to be within reach of the traveler and the curious." The "savagery" which had created these works of art should not be allowed to continue for the benefit of "even the scientific observer."⁵⁸

During the period from 1900 to 1920 racial biases added heavily to white ambiguity in thought toward Indian people. In the nineteenth century the assimilationist rhetoric was curiously lacking in racial overtones. Richard Henry Pratt and those who agreed with him were primarily "cultural bigots" and not true racists. According to them American Indians with hard work and diligence could become like white men. Charles A. Eastman had graduated from one of the top-ranking medical schools in the nation and had since become a very well-known and respected writer. According also to assimilationists some American Indians, again like some white men, were bound to fail in accordance with the "natural law" of evolution. But as time went on even the old reformers began to link race with American

⁵⁸ Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners,
1905, 17.

Indian lifestyles. Slowly they began to think that all men were not born "blank" and that there were certain inherited factors which kept Indian people from dropping their "old" lifestyles.

Because they thought of Native American tribes as "non-cultures"--simply primitive or pagan--they fully expected Indians to develop "culture" or "civilization" with the help of white people, just as whites had already developed. But due to the dynamic qualities of Native American tribal cultures, identifiable Indian ceremonies, arts and ideologies were maintained. As a result of this retention of Indian lifestyles, many whites believed that these cultures continued to exist only because American Indians had some sort of inherited racial propensity which kept them from "evolving" into "civilized" men. To them, since Indian lifestyles were obviously inferior, American Indians, as a race of people, were therefore also inferior.

In the twentieth century these ideas concerning race only served to confuse the issue of American Indians even further. White Americans could fully believe that Native Americans were a "backward" race--not that "backwardness" was totally negative--yet at the same time feel that American Indian art was wholly and beautifully creative. Whites could believe that "[a]n Indian can no more resist the temptation to drink liquor, if it is accessible, than a two-year-old child can help taking a lump of sugar if it is within his reach," yet also feel that Native American ideals concerning ecology should be taught to

white youngsters.⁵⁹ During World War I whites argued persuasively that Native Americans should be integrated in all of the white regiments and treated just as any other soldier. Yet with pride The Indian's Friend reported that "Indians in the regiments are being used for scouting and patrol duty because of the natural instinct which fits them for this kind of work."⁶⁰ This kind of racial stereotype coming as it did from an assimilationist newspaper would have been laughable had not the stereotype forced Native Americans into that type of lethal duty in time of war.

The ambivalence of the period even effected some American Indians, principally those who were fully acculturated to the manners and morals of white middle class society. Carlos Montezuma, one of the founders of the Society of American Indians and like Charles A. Eastman, a medical doctor, was trapped in the ambiguity of the period. A follower of Pratt, Montezuma often preached in favor of absolute conformity to white society. Yet, on the other hand, he, as did so many other members of the SAI, could glory in the fact of his ancestry. His personal war on the Bureau of Indian Affairs was especially intriguing. On the surface he wanted to abolish the Bureau because it hindered assimilation. The maintenance of a special agency for American Indians was, to him, a method of keeping Indian people segregated from the rest of the body politic. But the abolition of the

⁵⁹George Bird Grinnell, The Enforcement of Liquor Laws a Necessary Protection to the Indians (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1893).

⁶⁰The Indian's Friend January, July, 1918.

Indian office also meant a good deal more to Montezuma. With it out of the way Native Americans would be free to be "Indian"--a thought that probably would have horrified Montezuma's mentor, Richard Henry Pratt.⁶¹

Perhaps the most perplexed American Indian leader, however, was Arthur C. Parker. As the editor of the SAI's journal, which was first called simply the Quarterly Journal and later changed to the American Indian Magazine, Parker filled its pages with his own philosophies and observations. Parker's ambivalence was the result of the sometimes incongruous ideas of his profession, as an anthropologist, and his ancestry. As a Seneca he firmly believed in maintaining an Indian identity and thought in terms of structuring the SAI along the lines of the League of the Iroquois. He often spoke in glowing terms concerning the achievements of Indian people and actively supported the scouting and camping movements of the era because he felt that these activities helped perpetuate Native American ecological ideas.⁶² To him they would also prove to whites the equality of the Native American mind at least in some intellectual pursuits. Parker was dedicated to breaking white stereotypes

⁶¹Glenn W. Solomon, "The Odyssey of Carlos Montezuma" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1972); Neil M. Clark, "Dr. Montezuma, Apache Warrior in Two Worlds," Montana, the Magazine of Western History 23 (Spring 1973), 56; Edward H. Spicer, Cycles of Conquest, the Impact of Spain, Mexico and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest 1533-1960 (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1962), 530-531.

⁶²Hertzberg, The Search for an American Indian Identity, 101-102, 167-168, 302.

of Native Americans. He filled the pages of the Quarterly Journal with examples of Indian achievements and scholarly treatises concerning the "past" lifestyles of American tribes. His editorials were often larded with examples of the ways in which some of the tribal cultures roughly corresponded to the morality of white society.⁶³

Still, doubts plagued him. Not an institution-trained anthropologist, although Franz Boas offered to take him as a student at Columbia, Parker was continually toying with anthropological theory. In the end, he was always drawn back to social evolutionist thinking despite the newer and perhaps more liberal theories concerning the "culture" concept as professed by Boas and his students. He remained convinced that the lifeways of his ancestors were destined to bow before "civilization." To him they were static yet possessed some worthwhile aspects. As a result of his professional bias, he urged other Indian people to "avail themselves of every bit of business training they can get" in order to be able to individually compete with the white men.⁶⁴ Firm in his belief that the future of American Indians lay with whites, he promoted the idea that Native Americans through education should attempt to become "competent" in the eyes of mainstream American society. Only

⁶³See, for instance, "Editorial Comment," Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians 3 (January-March 1915) 1: 2-3.

⁶⁴"Editorial Comment," The American Indian Magazine 5 (April-June 1917) 2: 84.

after becoming competent should Indians be allowed to "parade in buckskin and plumes."⁶⁵

Concerning the preservation of Native American art, Parker was markedly ambiguous. On the one hand he could berate peyoteism because "[m]ore than all the labors of the missionaries, perhaps, it has led to an abandonment of the old native religious customs."⁶⁶ On the other hand, in the same issue of Quarterly Journal, Parker could justify the destruction of Native American art, if need be, to force Indian people into American society. Regarding Indian art he wrote that although "many sentimental white men and women" mourned that "the old Indian type is passing away and that his art and craft are being swept away," such were the consequences of progress. "Would these same good-hearted friends be willing to say," he asked, "that they would like to go back to the days of Queen Elizabeth, or hie back to the time of Chaucer?" Did they feel, Parker continued, "that the loss of simple arts of early England" were "not paid for by modern invention?" To him even Native American art was a remnant of the past, an idea that was totally unacceptable to many whites.⁶⁷

⁶⁵Parker, "Making a White man out of an Indian Not a Good Plan," 86.

⁶⁶"Editorial," Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians 2 (April-June 1914) 2: 100.

⁶⁷"The Editor's Viewpoint," Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians 2 (April-June 1914) 2: 111.

Parker was trapped in a dilemma that effected many other people, both Indian and white, during the Progressive Era. He was convinced that individualism and the idea of making "individuals" out of Indian people were sound philosophies. The individualism that so dominated American thought during the late nineteenth century, was an apparent driving factor behind Parker's ambitions for Indians. But individualism as an all-consuming philosophy apparently was undergoing modification in his era. Several noteworthy whites wrote to Parker urging him to impress upon other Indians that citizenship was not merely the gaining of individual liberties. President William Howard Taft, for instance, reminded the membership of the Society of American Indians that citizenship involved "more than benefits to the individual." There were "obligations and burdens toward the community" which American Indians "must recognize and assume." Any plan "for the development of the Indian as an individual must," according to Taft, "include efforts to impress upon him the fact that he must accept the responsibilities if he demands the benefits of citizenship."⁶⁸

No doubt these ideas influenced Parker. In 1916 he wrote, "we must demonstrate what the attitude of the individual is to the body of people and prove that Indians in the

⁶⁸Reprinted under the title "The Indian Must Assume Responsibility If He Demands Rights," Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians 2 (July-September 1914) 3: 44.

same proportion as the whites are 'social minded!'"⁶⁹ But Parker already had evidenced a more collectivistic attitude even before receiving Taft's letter of commendation to the SAI. The formation of the Society itself, Parker felt, was a collective American Indian effort to secure the basic rights of citizenship for themselves and aid in the "transition" of the "Indian race" from the "old" ways to the new. In 1914 he offered his own definition of civilization. To him it meant "order and respect of the rights of other men."⁷⁰ Ironically, his definition coincided with the shifting values of many white Americans and at the same time captured the essence of what many Native Americans defined as tribalism. Perhaps Parker merely put Iroquois tribal values on a larger scale and happened to pinpoint the direction in which much of American social thought was directed.

Social thought in the period did not exactly change; it was in the process of changing. There was a tendency for many Americans to be more social minded yet at the same time hold American individualism sacrosanct. This mind-set could attack "Big Business" for creating corporate behemoths which infringed upon the "right" of individual free trade. It could also attack "Big Business" on the basis that it was born out of the chaos of rampant, laissez-faire individualism. Individualism, in other

⁶⁹"Editorial Comment," The American Indian Magazine 4 (April-June 1916) 2: 108.

⁷⁰"Editorial," Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians 2 (July-September 1914) 3: 167.

words, could go too far. Immigrants, American Indians, and Blacks had to give up their individualism and conform to the values of mainstream society because, according to this mindset, they should not infringe upon the rights of their fellow men. The American middle-class felt itself threatened. The lower classes were frightening because, in their poverty, they could either become rebellious or burdens on society. Big business was frightening because it also represented a strain on the middle-class, destroying free trade, gouging society for more profits and, at the same time, turning out inferior products. Many middle-class Americans began to believe that everyone, as individual Americans, owed the rest of the nation an ordered, stable society.⁷¹ Americans were caught in the ambiguous position of advocating collectivism and individualism at one and the same time.

Outwardly this line of thought ultimately had the same effects on Indians as the idea of social evolution had upon the general populace in the nineteenth century. Native Americans would have to undergo change to become "civilized" and also, in accordance with the newer progressive ideas, to conform to the manners and morals of mainstream society so as not to infringe upon the rights of others. But, according to many white people, Indians too had the rights of individualism. Not

⁷¹See Otis L. Graham, Jr., The Great Campaigns: Reform and War in America, 1900-1928 (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1971), 10-13 and Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 133-195.

only that, Native Americans were no longer threatening the whole of American society. In fact, many felt that Indians through entertainment, art and ecological ideas were indeed enhancing American lifestyles. As a consequence of these apparent conflicting sentiments, American Indians were left in a limbo during the period.

In the equivocal mind of the person interested in Indian problems, Native Americans should conform to the rest of society and thus vanish as "Indians" while, at the same time, maintain an Indian identity. It was a totally ambivalent way of thinking in a period of ambiguity. As opposed to the nineteenth century with its theories of "uplift" and "civilization," the Progressive Era left persons involved with formulating Indian policy without direction or even long-range goals. The old reformers, primarily because of their growing tendency to equivocate on what exactly was to be done with the Indian population of the United States, lost their credibility as the theoreticians of American Indian policy.

But neither could policy makers turn to the conservationists, artists or ethnologists. Anthropology was already undergoing internal upheaval and probably could not have been of help in any case even had the profession offered assistance. Conservationists and artists were primarily concerned with the protection of only a few facets of Native American life and not particularly with the people themselves. Although they could offer criticism, they had no theoretical basis on which to build a workable policy. Lacking any kind of base, there could be

little wonder why Fayette Avery McKenzie, the white "father" of the Society of American Indians, called the government's dealings with Native Americans a "great confusion in Indian policies."⁷²

⁷²Fayette Avery McKenzie, "The Indian and His Problem," The Dial 49 (October 1, 1910), 230.

CHAPTER VI

"THE GREAT CONFUSION IN INDIAN POLICIES"

1900-1924

Indian policy in the period 1900 to 1924 was a confused attempt to find order in chaos. The turmoil grew from a clash between the old notions of liberalism and newer ideas of reform. The old reformers were ardent supporters of individualism, yet were culturally bigoted. The newer types held the notion that individual liberties were subordinate to the public good, were somewhat tolerant of different lifestyles, yet clearly possessed strong racial biases against Indians. In addition, neither group was particularly consistent--an old reformer might very well argue in favor of more governmental regulation concerning Indians and then turn around and espouse unfettered individualism. American Indian policy was not so much a change from the old to the new as it was an attempt to satisfy both notions of reform. As was the case in the nineteenth century, Native Americans themselves were not included in making the policies which directly effected their lives--reform, whether of the nineteenth century mold or of the twentieth century type, was still basically intolerant.

The reformers of the nineteenth century intended that their policies followed in Indian education, the destruction

of tribal cultures and the allotment of tribal lands in severalty, would eventually free Indians from the "cramping reservation yoke."¹ After Indian people had become "Americanized" and made into citizens, the entire government structure which had been built up to deal with the tribes was to be eliminated. Along with the extinction of the tribes as separate social groups within the United States, the Board of Indian Commissioners assured others interested in Indian affairs that they could also look forward "to the speedy extinction of a separate bureau for Indians."² The old reformers asserted over and over again that once American Indians individually accepted the "white man's road" and ceased to live in the "past" then they could either sink or swim in mainstream American society. In any case, government control was to be eventually phased out.

But in order to obtain their goals the old reformers hoped for and promoted the imposition of greater control over Native Americans. John Marshall's Federalist ideas, rendered in the Worcester versus Georgia case in 1832, that Indians should be looked upon "as wards" in relationships with the United States government were later taken literally and in their most extreme sense. The federal government, with reform support, took on complete guardianship over Indian people. The

¹Frances Campbell Sparhawk, "The Indian's Yoke," North American Review 182 (January 1906), 61.

²Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1900, 5.

Dawes and Curtis Acts, the extension of United States jurisdiction over crimes committed on Indian lands, and even the removal of Indian children from families to boarding schools could not have been done without violating treaties and treading upon individual rights. American Indians were forced to conform to Euro-American values in order to enter the "individualistic" society of the United States. Indian people were to become not individual Indians but individual citizens--a clear distinction to an old reformer.

In the twentieth century government control of Native American lives was built up even more. At the same time government officials clung to the rhetorical ideal of assimilation. Consequently, Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane declared in 1913 the Indian office to be a "vanishing bureau" without apparent recognition that the number of employees at the Washington office alone had more than doubled since 1900.³ This kind of inconsistency could only have led to the confusion in Indian affairs to which Fayette McKenzie addressed himself in 1910.

When McKenzie wrote about the "great confusion" in United States Indian policy, his main purpose was to review Francis E. Leupp's book entitled The Indian and His Problem. Actually, he was reflecting upon the course that the government's

³"A Plan to Free the Indian," Literary Digest 47 (August 9, 1913), 196; Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Annual Report, 1920, 63, Table 1 gives the number of office employees for each year beginning in 1899. In 1900 there were 115 on the staff and in 1913 there were 237.

relationships had taken regarding Indians since 1900. That Leupp, as Commissioner of Indian Affairs from late 1904 to 1909, had been the primary director of much of that course only served to make McKenzie's review an indictment against early twentieth century Indian policy. Leupp, according to the reviewer, had effectively become the greatest barrier to the realization of the vanishing policy.⁴

Actually the year 1903 killed the vanishing policy. It was in that year that the Cheyenne Sun Dance incident touched off the controversy at Lake Mohonk regarding the usefulness of ethnology and the value of preserving Native American art. This occurrence effectively demonstrated the ambivalence of their entire program for Indian people. It was also the year that two controversies involving the allotment of Indian lands erupted, both of which confused the issue of assimilating American Indians even further.

The first controversy involved the Supreme Court's decision in a suit brought about by a Kiowa leader named Lone Wolf against Secretary of the Interior Ethan Allen Hitchcock. Lone Wolf sought an injunction against the opening and allotment of the Kiowa, Comanche and Kiowa-Apache reservation in southwest Oklahoma. Under the Treaty of Medicine Lodge, completed in 1867, the tribe and the United States government had agreed that any further land cession would require a three-fourths adult male majority approval of the signatory tribes

⁴McKenzie, "The Indian and His Problem," 228-230.

for any new agreement to be binding.⁵ With the passage of the General Allotment Act in 1887, the Kiowas were forced into, in effect, another treaty. The act carried a provision that allotment in severalty would be accomplished only with Presidential discretion. Hence, to speed the process along, Congress set up commissions to seek agreements with the tribes essentially asking the executive branch for the "sectioning" of reservation lands. Congress could then ratify these agreements and allotment would begin. The Kiowa agreement with the Jerome Commission was reached in 1892 under rather dubious conditions. It lacked, for instance, tribal ratification as required under the Treaty of Medicine Lodge. Despite claims of fraud, Congress eventually passed on the new agreement in 1900 without an attempt to obtain the majority consent of the Kiowa people.

Lone Wolf, with legal aid from the Indian Rights Association, brought suit against Hitchcock in an attempt to prevent the Secretary from moving ahead with the allotment of the reservation. The Wolf's lawyers argued that the new agreement could not be binding because of the stipulations of the 1867 treaty. Despite their arguments, the court ruled against Lone Wolf. In the opinion of the majority of the justices, "[p]lenary authority over the tribal relations of the Indians has been exercised by Congress from the beginning" and was "not subject to be controlled by the judicial department of the

⁵Kappler, Indian Laws and Treaties, 2: 758.

Government." Therefore, the power existed "to abrogate the provisions of an Indian treaty." This power, according to the court, should be exercised only when circumstances arose which would "not only justify the government in disregarding the stipulations of the treaty, but may demand, in the interest of the country and the Indian themselves, that it should do so."⁶

On the surface the Lone Wolf decision should have brightened the outlook of the strict assimilationists. The ruling made it possible to allot tribal lands and destroy tribal relations without regard for former treaties. But many of the old reformers disliked the court's ruling. The Indian Rights Association openly contested the original Kiowa agreement as being fraudulent and smacking of land speculation.⁷ The organization even provided lawyers to try the case. George Kennan, a writer for Lyman Abbot's Outlook magazine, had warned the year before that there was little or no protection for Indian land holdings.⁸ With the new ruling in Lone Wolf, Kennan believed that the only protection that Native Americans had would be to count on the moral principles of white men "which

⁶187 U.S. Reports, 553-556.

⁷Annual Report of the Indian Rights Association, 1903, 20-24.

⁸George Kennan, "Have Reservation Indians Any Vested Rights?" Outlook 70 (March 29, 1902), 759-765.

the Court assumed that Congress would observe."⁹ But the implications of Lone Wolf were more unsettling to those who advocated assimilation. Presumably, the old reformers wanted allotment in severalty in order to free Indian people from government entanglements but the decision served to extend government direction of Indian matters. To an old reformer it could only be taken as an affront to their ideas of individualism.

Within months of the Lone Wolf decision another setback to the vanishing policy occurred. On August 16, 1903, the New York Times revealed that an Indian Rights Association agent, Samuel M. Brosius, had uncovered a scandal in the Indian Territory "in comparison with which most of the other recently reported scandals in Government departments are paltry." Brosius asserted that members of the Commission to the Five Civilized Tribes, which had been formed in 1893 as the Dawes Commission, were defrauding Indian allottees of money and lands. According to the New York Times, choice townsite lots and effective control of the allotments had fallen into the hands of such companies as Muskogee Title and Trust and the Canadian Valley Trust Company. Tams Bixby, who had replaced Dawes as head of the Commission, and George Wright, a representative of the Secretary of the Interior, were found to have had connections with companies involved in speculating in

⁹George Kennan, "Indian Lands and Fair Play," Outlook 76 (February 27, 1904), 498. See also "A Trust Not Trustworthy," Independent 56 (February 25, 1904), 450-451.

allotted Indian land. Brosius stated that the lands were leased and then the lessees refused to pay rent leaving the rightful owners, poor to begin with, without funds enough to seek legal action. Bixby was not only a stockholder in the Muskogee Title and Trust Company but was president of the board of the Canadian Valley Trust Company. Wright was a board member of the former company also. Indignant that a commission which had been established to carry out what they considered to have been a noble undertaking had even been accused of committing such acts, the reformers immediately called for a thorough investigation.¹⁰

Two days later the Justice Department was implicated in the scandals. Again according to the Times, Brosius' reports had been known for some time but officials in the Department of Justice had failed to act in the allottees' behalf, no doubt because of sinister connections with members of the Commission.¹¹ The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, W. A. Jones, and Secretary of the Interior Hitchcock initiated an investigation. Within another two days, however, Hitchcock was called upon to remove himself from the matter. A Times article stated that there was "a strong want of confidence . . . in the Secretary's ability to conduct an impartial investigation" because "large sums," supposedly from the sale of town lots in the Indian Territory, "have been deposited in St. Louis

¹⁰New York Times, August 16, 1903.

¹¹Ibid., August 18, 1903.

banks in which Mr. Hitchcock's friends are interested as stockholders." Ominously the Times warned that the "secretary is a St. Louis man."¹²

Soon the scandals had reached great enough proportions that President Roosevelt sent his friends, Charles J. Bonaparte of Baltimore and Clinton Rogers Woodruff of Philadelphia, to investigate the situation in Indian Territory.¹³ Roosevelt was reacting out of political expediency. His administration had already been assaulted for alleged wrongdoing in the Postal Department and the national press was giving the Indian Territory scandals full coverage.¹⁴ The Literary Digest had even suggested that the scandals might have grave effects on the outcome of the 1904 elections because the Democratic press was issuing the battle cry of "Turn the rascals out" as a result of the trouble in Indian Territory.¹⁵ Outlook, under the editorship of Lyman Abbott, was even more indignant and asked the plaintive question: "Who Will Guard the Guards?"¹⁶ Soon

¹²Ibid., August 20, 1903.

¹³"The Interior Department and the Indians" Outlook 76 (March 19, 1904), 679.

¹⁴New York Times, August 21, 25, 1903. See also "Land Scandal in Indian Territory," Independent 55 (August 20, 1903), 1951.

¹⁵"Government Scandals as an Issue," Literary Digest 27 (September 12, 1903), 309-310.

¹⁶"Who Will Guard the Guards?" Outlook 74 (August 29, 1903), 1020-1021.

Roosevelt decreed that all members of the Commission would either drop their business relations or resign from government work.¹⁷

The effect of the scandals on the Lake Mohonk Conference of 1903 was at least as great as the Cheyenne Sun Dance incident. In large part the debate centered on the issue of government regulation. Lyman Abbott spoke out in favor of tighter controls and even suggested that the Bureau of Indian Affairs be turned over to the War Department "because it is the only direct, straightforward way of breaking up the spoils system."¹⁸ Merrill E. Gates argued that the whole intent of the assimilation program was to give American Indians freedom and not "turn him over to the army 'to be governed.'"¹⁹ Richard Henry Pratt, although he felt that Abbott had made a "good point," took the anti-regulatory stance. According to Pratt, "the Indian is to become free from Bureau control and from the clutches of this all-absorbing administration of his affairs and destiny, which is really the Indian problem."²⁰ Clearly the Lake Mohonk reformers were stalemated over the issue of

¹⁷"The Interior Department and the Indians," 679.

¹⁸Proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference, 1903, 43. Abbott was convinced that the War Department could handle the duties of Indian Affairs and became insistent on the transfer. See "The Indian Question," Outlook 75 (September 19, 1903), 149-151 and "Our 'Subject' Races," Outlook 75 (October 31, 1903), 482-485.

¹⁹Proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference, 1903, 45.

²⁰Ibid., 50.

regulation. Despite Pratt's arguments and the goals it had set for American Indians, the Indian Rights Association nevertheless published Brosius' arguments in favor of strict regulation. Brosius felt that control had to be maintained and even enhanced if Native Americans were going to have any kind of security for their allotments.²¹

Obviously there were many whites who believed that American Indians were incapable of handling their own affairs, or at least thought that Indian people did not yet possess the knowledge required to adequately deal with the land speculators. During 1906 and 1907 a Senate select committee was sent to the Indian Territory to investigate the many problems surrounding the land allotment of the Five Civilized Tribes. The committee's members: Chester Long of Kansas, Clarence Clark of Wyoming, Frank B. Brandegee of Connecticut, Henry M. Teller of Colorado and William A. Clark of Montana took testimony that filled two volumes of the Senate Reports. In large part the investigation dealt with the apparent insecurity of Indian allotments. Some fullblood members of the tribes petitioned the committee asking that the government remain in its role as the guardian of Indian lands and even requested that the United States withhold citizenship from them.²² Not only did they feel that if the trust relationship with the government was cancelled

²¹Samuel M. Brosius, The Need of Protecting Indian Allotments (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1904).

²²Debo, And Still the Waters Run, 141, 202.

they would be swindled, but they also rejected citizenship on the basis of tribal pride. In their minds they were Creeks, Cherokees and Choctaws in the same way that Teller and Clark were Americans. Mixed blood tribal members had apparently succumbed to the land speculators as well. D. W. C. Duncan, a mixed blood Cherokee lawyer, stated that prior to the allotment policy the Cherokees had "more than enough to fill up the cup of our enjoyment." Duncan argued for regulation effectively for he, an educated man, had even lost the major portion of his family's estate.²³

On December 7, 1904, Francis E. Leupp took office as Commissioner of Indian Affairs. A one-time agent for the Indian Rights Association, Leupp was firmly convinced that while American Indians possessed in their cultures "a great deal which is admirable," they nevertheless remained a "backward" people.²⁴ McKenzie quoted Leupp as saying that Native Americans "must remain fundamentally incapable of certain of our moral, social, and intellectual standards."²⁵ American Indian lifestyles confused Leupp. He actively supported programs for the development of art and thought Native American ecological ideals were well worth cultivating. He attempted to replace boarding schools with reservation day schools, started a program to find

²³59 Congress, 2 session, Senate Report 5013, serial 5062, 186.

²⁴Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Annual Report 1905, 12.

²⁵McKenzie, "The Indian and His Problem," 229.

employment for Native Americans, and tried to promote the incorporation of a few tribes into joint stock companies in order to bring all of the tribes' assets together.²⁶ Leupp's plan of "improving" the Indian "instead of struggling vainly to convert him into a Caucasian" was totally inconsistent with the thinking of the old reformers.²⁷ It was also demonstrative of Leupp's own confusion of thought.

Although Leupp had the idea that in some ways Native Americans were inferior to whites, he was extremely tolerant for that age toward American Indian custom and dress. On occasion, his liberalism in these matters shocked the old reformers. He permitted Indians to join the Wild West Shows and act in movies which, although Leupp did not consider these forms of employment "particularly exalting," nevertheless allowed his charges "to see the world."²⁸ Leupp also had no qualms about the wearing of native dress. He wrote that in "the matter of costume, I never could see why we should not allow the Indian the same latitude we grant to members of other races." "If a white man," he continued, "preferred a suit of chain-armor to one of broadcloth, I suppose we should set it down to eccentricity." To Indians, however, there was granted "no such range

²⁶Francis E. Leupp, "Back to Nature for the Indian," Charities and the Commons 20 (June 6, 1908), 336-340; "The Red Man Incorporated," Collier's 42 (January 9, 1909), 16: 20; "Four Strenuous Years," Outlook 92 (June 5, 1909), 328-331.

²⁷Francis E. Leupp, The Indian and His Problem (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 53.

²⁸Ibid., 324-325.

of liberty." If an Indian wore his hair in braids or covered himself with a blanket instead of an overcoat, he was, according to Leupp "pronounced a savage without more ado, and every effort is made to change his habits in these regards."²⁹

Despite his stance on Native American custom and dress, he held certain stereotypes of Indians to be absolute truths. To Leupp American Indians were stoic, unchanging, and prone to alcoholism. Yet, he believed on the other hand, that Indian people could gradually change and become less and less dependent on the government.³⁰ He advocated the policy of treating American Indians as part of the body politic, yet during his tenure in office Congress passed a bill which severely limited Indian citizenship with Leupp's full approval and backing.³¹

House Resolution 11946, later called the Burke Act after its author Charles H. Burke, was an amendment to section six of the Dawes General Allotment Act. It provided that instead of granting citizenship to individual Indian people upon the assignment of an allotment, it was to be deferred for twenty-five years. In addition, the bill allowed that the Secretary of the Interior could "in his discretion" grant certificates of citizenship to individual allottees provided he deemed them competent. The measure was introduced, referred to

²⁹Francis E. Leupp, In Red Man's Land (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1914), 93.

³⁰Hoxie, "Beyond Savagery," 404-436.

³¹Leupp, "Four Strenuous Years," 328-329.

committee, reported on, debated, slightly amended, and passed in the House during late March and early April of 1906. The Senate also passed the bill with relative ease. On April 20 the bill was debated on the Senate floor. The only real objection to the bill came from Senator Heyburn of Idaho who was disturbed that some Indians were already citizens under the Dawes Act, and that the Burke Act would thus "create an aristocracy of citizenship." The bill finally passed the Senate with minor amendments on April 25.³² President Roosevelt signed the new law on May 8, 1906.³³

The Burke Act was a direct outcome of the widespread belief that Indians as a race had a special propensity toward alcoholism. After the Dawes Act was passed, which granted citizenship to Indian allottees, many whites feared that the new liberties would lead to universal Indian addiction. In 1893 George Bird Grinnell warned of the necessity of maintaining strict laws forbidding liquor to Indians. The Board of Indian Commissioners feared that the new citizens would be tempted "to prove their freedom by ruining themselves through the use of alcohol."³⁴

³²59 Congress, 1 session, Congressional Record, 1110, 2812, 3598, 3602, 3668, 4153, 5605-5606, 5805, 5980.

³³³⁴ U.S. Stats., 183.

³⁴Grinnell, The Enforcement of the Liquor Laws a Necessary Protection to the Indians; Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners 1905, 18.

In 1905 their fears were realized. A whiskey trader named Heff was arrested and convicted for selling liquor to Indian allottees in Kansas. Sentenced to a four-month jail term and a \$200 fine, Heff and his lawyer appealed to the higher courts. In April the United States Supreme Court deliberated the case and rendered its verdict in favor of Heff. Since the allottees were made citizens of the United States, in the opinion of the Court, they were subject only to state and local liquor laws. Federal marshals who made the arrest and the United States District Court that rendered the basic decision had overstepped their authority because Heff had committed no federal crime.³⁵

In effect the Supreme Court ruled that Indian citizens were no longer wards of the government. Leupp, as head of the Indian office, heartily recommended that Congress find some method of preserving the wardship status in order to protect Native Americans from problems associated with alcohol. The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs agreed. Referring to the Heff case, the Committee judged the Burke Act to be a feasible means of maintaining the wardship status of Indians and thus the ability to enforce prohibition on Native Americans. According to the Senate report, since the decision had been rendered there was widespread "demoralization" among the tribes because "most of them have taken allotments and liquor has been sold to them, regardless of the fact that they are Indians." Due to this fact

³⁵197 U.S. Reports, 488.

of birth the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs thought it advisable "that all Indians who may hereafter take allotments be not granted citizenship during the trust period" and that Native Americans "shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States."³⁶

The old reformers universally loathed the Burke Act. Despite its recommendation in favor of some form of regulation regarding Indian allotments, the Indian Rights Association resoundly criticized governmental interference with individual liberties.³⁷ The Board of Indian Commissioners, who had the year before expressed their concern over the possibility that individual liberty might add to the growth of the alcohol problem in Indian country, stated "we regret this modification of the allotment law, designed to keep Indians out of citizenship for twenty-five years after they receive their allotments." The Commissioners were primarily concerned that the new law would create a "class of 'Indians untaxed and not citizens'" to be perpetually under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Not only did the Board of Indian Commissioners want the Burke Act either amended or repealed, but they also wanted to completely dismantle the Indian Office.³⁸

³⁶ 59 Congress, 1 session, Senate Report 1998, Vol. 1, serial 4904, p. 2.

³⁷ Annual Report of the Indian Rights Association, 1906, 45-48.

³⁸ Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners 1906, 8, 18.

The issue of regulation versus individual liberty was basic to the arguments surrounding the passage of the Burke Act.³⁹ No one came out clearly on one side or the other in the matter. The Board of Indian Commissioners and the Indian Rights Association called for regulation of the liquor traffic in order to quell the supposed inherent trait of Indians to "crave stimulants," yet balked when it came to denying citizenship to American Indians. The old reformers opposed Indians wearing tribal dress or engaging in ceremonial dancing and had even regulated these aspects of Native American life. At the same time they could enthusiastically recommend that Indians be granted citizenship. On the other hand, Commissioner Leupp and, evidently, Congress could allow Indians every degree of latitude in regard to dress and art, yet they could deny citizenship on the basis that Indians were incapable of dealing with liberty. Both sides were trapped in a dilemma of their own making.

Perhaps the longest battle which reflected the intellectual turmoil of the Progressive Era was the controversy surrounding the government funding of Catholic schools on the reservations. The reform movement of the late 1800's was primarily Protestant oriented. But with the influx of eastern European immigrants in the late nineteenth century, Catholicism grew in numbers of adherents and, to a certain extent, in influence. During the 1880's several Catholic schools were established on the

³⁹See "Congressional Guardianship," Nation 82 (June 21, 1906), 503-504.

reservations under government contract. In the final decade of the nineteenth century anti-Catholicism, however, became rampant, especially among the ranks of the members of the old Indian reform movement. Eventually the reformers, arguing that Catholic education on government reservations violated the American principle of separation of church and state, were able to convince Congress to stop direct funding of Catholic schools.

The Catholics fought back and from 1900 to 1912, and beyond, the battle raged. Taking a position that echoed earlier Protestant arguments for missionary education on the reservations, one supporter of Catholic schools wrote that when "a race or tribe living under a government is in a state of wildness, and is a source of danger to the commonwealth, because it refuses to conform to the laws of the nation, it is the duty of the government" to civilize it.⁴⁰ It was necessary, according to the same writer, that religious instruction should be given to this "wild" race because "without religion there can be no morality." Therefore, since it was the duty of the government to make American Indians "peaceful and intelligent members of this Christian nation," religious instruction was "not contrary" to the Constitution but rather "fully in conformity with it."⁴¹

Other Catholic supporters relied on the argument that American Indians, as humans, had the right of freedom of religion

⁴⁰M. P. Casey, "Indian Contract Schools," Catholic World 71 (August 1900), 629.

⁴¹Ibid., 637.

and education. If the money expended for Catholic schools came from trust and treaty funds, the Catholics argued, it was Indian money and, therefore, the tribes should have the right to spend it the way they saw fit. Sounding the Catholic battle cry, R. R. Elliot of the American Catholic Quarterly wrote that the "autocratic control over the education of Indian youth" must be eliminated.⁴²

In 1905 Commissioner Leupp, with authorization from Roosevelt, allowed a little over \$100,000 of tribal trust monies to go to sectarian schools for Indian education. The old reformers were outraged. Outlook magazine called the expenditure a "mischievous appropriation" and declared that it would set "Catholic Indian against Protestant Indian." Moreover, the editors stated that the allocation was in direct "violation of the first Amendment."⁴³ The journal continued to print the "main facts" in the case. In an incredible rush of words, Outlook reviewed the controversy in this way:

The sum of \$102,000 has been or is to be, disbursed by the Indian Office to Catholic and Luthern schools for the sectarian education of Indian children; the money comes from a trust fund belonging to the Indians; the Indians have not given their consent to the expenditure, because, so far as we can learn, as many Indians have petitioned against this disbursement as have petitioned for it; the Chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs opposes the obtaining of this consent on the floor of the House, throws obstacles in the way of those who are earnestly, and we think wisely, working in Congress for

⁴²Richard R. Elliott, "Government Secularization of the Education of Catholic Indian Youth," American Catholic Quarterly 25 (January 1900), 163.

⁴³"The Week," Outlook 79 (January 21, 1905), 150.

non-sectarian Indian education, and dust in the eyes of Outlook readers who in the exercise of their perfectly proper rights as voters and citizens are trying to see into the somewhat dusky and unilluminating atmosphere of the Indian Committee Room.⁴⁴

In less than a week the Nation covered the question and settled itself ever so gently on the side of the Protestants.⁴⁵ Lyman Abbot and Outlook, however, remained in the forefront of the battle and continued as the anti-Catholic standard-bearers. On February 11, 1905, the magazine reprinted Samuel M. Brosius' charges against Professor E. L. Scharf of the Catholic University for threatening Congressman John H. Stephens with defeat through the Church's organization in the next election if Stephens did not immediately withdraw his opposition to the Catholic schools.⁴⁶ In the next issue Lyman Abbott, the assimilationist, came out in favor of tighter controls on the Indian funds. Arguing that the money was for the "tribes," he stated it could not be disbursed to any one denomination. Abbott also claimed that the money was "public money" and should not be allotted without public consent. Although Abbott stated that "the same principles are to be applied to Indians and to Anglo-Saxons, to black men and the white men," he declared that Native

⁴⁴"Unfair Indian Fighting," Outlook 79 (February 4, 1905), 264-265.

⁴⁵"Trust Funds for Indian Catholic Schools," Nation 80 (February 9, 1905), 106. See also "Indian Funds for Sectarian Schools," Independent 63 (December 19, 1907), 1507-1508.

⁴⁶"The State, the Church, and the Indian," Outlook 79 (February 11, 1905), 371.

Americans were wards of the government and that their trust funds should be managed for them. According to Abbott the government "cannot rid itself of that responsibility by saying that its wards want the money spent in some particular fashion."⁴⁷

The Indian Rights Association did not sit idly during the controversy. In 1905 the organization published Matthew K. Sniffen's pamphlet entitled, aptly, Indian Trust Funds for Sectarian Schools. Sniffen, then President of the IRA, was against the "arbitrary use" of the trust funds and believed that some form of regulation or at least discretion should be used regarding the disbursement of the money. The pamphlet also contained a petition from the Rosebud Sioux Reservation against the allocation of trust money to sectarian schools.⁴⁸ The IRA next instituted a suit in the name of Reuben Quick Bear of the Rosebud agency against Commissioner Leupp to enjoin the Indian Office from giving out trust money. The IRA lawyers argued that such allocations not only violated the First Amendment but that in 1900 Congress had passed an appropriation for sectarian education in order to fulfill contract stipulations on the grounds that it would be the final allocation. In 1908, however, the Supreme Court ruled in Quick Bear versus Leupp

⁴⁷"The President and the Indian, A Step Backward," Outlook 79 (February 18, 1905), 417-419. Interestingly, the article was preceded by an editorial entitled, "The President and the Negro, A Step in Advance."

⁴⁸Matthew K. Sniffen, Indian Trust Funds for Sectarian Schools (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1905).

that the trust funds were Indian money and that Congress had no right to oversee their disbursement.⁴⁹

The Quick Bear decision did not end the sectarian school controversy. In 1912 the entire issue flared up again. During that year Leupp's successor at the Indian Office, Robert G. Valentine, ordered that priests and nuns teaching in reservation schools either discard religious dress or resign their positions. Again the anti-Catholicism was cloaked in the argument of separation of church and state. President Taft immediately rescinded the order and told both sides to prepare cases either for or against.⁵⁰

By the time Taft had intervened, the "nun's garb controversy" was already making national news. The Literary Digest carried, for example, several articles concerning the question. Catholics were convinced that Valentine should be forced to resign. According to the Catholic Universe of Cleveland, "only the most wanton and arrant bigotry could inspire a bureaucrat like Valentine to promulgate (such) an order."⁵¹ The Protestant press agreed with Valentine but for the most part requested that a full investigation be carried out.⁵² In the end the President refused to support Valentine's position which, according to the

⁴⁹210 U.S. Reports, 50.

⁵⁰"Religious Garb in Indian Schools," Literary Digest 44 (February 24, 1912), 379.

⁵¹Ibid., 380.

⁵²"Critics of Religious Garb in Indian Schools," Literary Digest 44 (March 2, 1912), 428.

Literary Digest would have amounted "to a discharge" had it not been for the civil service law.⁵³

In their most basic forms the "trust fund" and "religious garb" battles concerned the question of government regulation. The Protestant side was clearly in favor of using the federal government to prevent American Indians from coming in contact with Catholic education. On the other hand, the Catholics, although they argued that Native Americans should have the right of choice, wanted government support for their efforts to promote "civilization" among the tribes. Neither side was totally in favor of granting to American Indians the right, if they so desired, to continue tribal religious practice.

The United States government grappled with these kinds of problems in American social thought during the Progressive Era. To most Americans citizenship still implied individual liberty in a democratic society. Yet at the same time the citizenry demanded more and more regulation on the part of the government. The federal bureaucracy grew larger in order to meet these demands and at the same time attempted to protect individual rights. All through the period, however, there was a lingering doubt--government guardianship and citizenship were incongruous. The government grew larger and more paternalistic to be sure, but it could not extend regulation too far without

⁵³"Religious Garb in Indian Schools," 379; "The Nun's Garb Question," Literary Digest 45 (October 12, 1912), 626.

interfering with American ideals of individualism. As a consequence, perhaps, the government began to deal in specifics. As new demands arose the government, or at least its ever-growing bureaucracy, dealt with problems on an individual basis, primarily treating symptoms of larger social ills. To a cynic this kind of policy would have implied confusion, but to a government bureaucrat it was the most effective means of obtaining "efficient" control over the vast number of problems then plaguing the nation.

This tendency held true to form in the Bureau of Indian Affairs and its policies toward Native Americans. Indian policy ceased to be the all-encompassing theoretical course of action that it was in the nineteenth century. The Indian Office began to deal in policies--health, education, employment, alcoholism and land. The theory that all of these problems would find their remedies in the totality of the vanishing policy was gone. The government, consequently, continued treating symptoms without even attempting to root out the actual diseases in society.

Indian education had been under fire for many years. Such personages as Hamlin Garland had referred to the boarding schools as "unchristian" and degrading. But the main criticism was aimed primarily at the supposed lack of "practical" training in the Indian schools. One writer stated that in "contrast with the sane and sensible policy of negro education pursued by such institutions as Hampton and Tuskegee" was the "mistaken attempt of certain well-meaning philanthropists to give the

American Indian an education of which he can make no possible use in actual life."⁵⁴ The same author suggested that "the rudiments of book learning" should be taught to the Native American youths but the main emphasis would have to be placed on manual arts training.⁵⁵ There were two basic reasons behind the new demands for vocational training in the Indian schools. The first rested on the belief that many whites held regarding the capacity of Indians to learn. Those who believed in the idea that Native Americans were in some way "limited" demanded that Indians receive limited educations. The second reason lay in the overall trends in education during the Progressive Era. There was a strong demand for efficiency and practicality--old, classical curricula across the nation were being thrown out in favor of classes relevant to life in particular locales.⁵⁶

The Bureau of Indian Affairs followed these trends. Boarding schools began to be de-emphasized in favor of day schools on the reservations. Instruction in the manual arts was given a higher place on the revised curriculums. The schools also placed a great degree of emphasis on learning "native" arts which to the Commissioners of Indian Affairs

⁵⁴"The Failure of the Educated American Indian," Review of Reviews 33 (May 1906), 629.

⁵⁵Ibid., 630.

⁵⁶Graham, The Great Campaigns, 26.

during the period not only demonstrated creativity but served as vocational training.⁵⁷

Vocational training went hand in hand with employment and again the Bureau reacted to demand. Matthew K. Sniffen, for instance, called upon the Office to "make the Indian the American Cattle King."⁵⁸ Another writer, elaborating on Sniffen's remarks about building the cattle industry among the tribes of the Plains, recommended that the Navajos be instructed in better animal husbandry in order to make raising sheep more profitable. He also suggested that the people of the woodlands be employed cutting timber because they "are lumbermen by instinct."⁵⁹ Francis E. Leupp set up a job service during his tenure selecting a Peoria Indian, Charles E. Dagenett, to head the new office. In 1909 Robert G. Valentine, the new Commissioner, commended Dagenett for his activities in placing Indian people to work on railroads, as farm laborers, and in other "sundry employments for which their strength and abilities are equal."⁶⁰ By 1924 another commissioner, Charles H. Burke, reported what he considered to be even greater successes. According to Burke, the year "marked a steady gain in the number of

⁵⁷See Hoxie, "Beyond Savagery," 488-561 for an excellent account of the changes taking place in Indian education during the period.

⁵⁸Matthew K. Sniffen, A Man and His Opportunity (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1914).

⁵⁹"The Failure of the Educated American Indian," 630.

⁶⁰Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Annual Report 1909, 4.

Indians finding remunerative employment." "The demand for Indian labor," he continued, "is greater than the supply, and no shortage of good wages and food prevails for Indians willing to work." The Commissioner reported that American Indians were employed in agriculture, railroading, land reclamation and in the telephone and telegraph services. Automobile factories were hiring Native Americans and advancing them "as their skill and experience warrant." Burke even counted migrant fruit and vegetable picking as "remunerative employment." But he took greater pride in reporting that "hundreds of Indian school graduates are giving excellent service in Government and commercial positions." In fact, the Bureau itself had, at the time, approximately 2,000 Native Americans in its employ.⁶¹

"Native" industries were fostered and helped aid the Bureau's quest for full Indian employment. "Big Business" was even brought into the buildup of the tourist trade in order to create jobs for Indian artisans. The Santa Fe Railroad, in its promotion of Southwestern tourism, exploited the white image of the peaceful Indian artist to be sure, but it also provided patronage for these craftsman. As Burke happily stated in 1921, the "railway system found it profitable to continue to provide attractive workrooms for families of Indian artisans at stations along the line, where their handiwork sells readily."⁶² Given the white images of American Indians during the period,

⁶¹Ibid., 1924, 15.

⁶²Ibid., 1921, 14.

it was easy to understand why the Bureau was able to obtain jobs, not only as craftsmen, but in summer camps acting as guides and in Boy Scout work. American Indians also continued to "make good" in athletics and, when that failed, working in shops selling athletic equipment.⁶³

Perhaps the greatest demand placed on the Bureau was for more and better health care. Throughout the period tuberculosis plagued the tribes. Primarily blamed on the Indian transition from the "old life in the open" as a "barbarian athlete" to confinement and the "accumulation of filth," tuberculosis accounted for more Native American deaths in the era than any other two causes.⁶⁴ As early as 1907 the Indian Office in cooperation with the Bureau of American Ethnology carried out a survey of the disease's effects.⁶⁵ In some areas persons suffering from the disease made up nearly sixty percent of the population. The demand for a solution to the problem was tremendous. Nearly everyone who wrote about the subject agreed that the Bureau of Indian Affairs should take a direct interest in the problem and establish sanatoria, hire field nurses, institute a health education program, supervise the building of

⁶³Ibid., 14-15.

⁶⁴Ibid., 1909, 2 and Delorme W. Robinson "Tuberculosis Among the Sioux," Review of Reviews 33 (March 1906), 341.

⁶⁵Ales Hrdlicka, "Tuberculosis in the Indian," Charities and the Commons 21 (November 7, 1908), 245-247; Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners 1908, 17.

houses on the reservations and guarantee a "rigid enforcement of proper sanitary conditions."⁶⁶

By 1909, according to Commissioner Valentine, the reservation physician was "next to the superintendent in importance" within the Bureau's hierarchy.⁶⁷ Eight years later Cato Sells had expanded the government's health care programs to include all of the above suggestions plus a great deal more. Sanatoria had been established, nurses were hired and inspections were frequently made of reservation households. The Indian service also became interested in trachoma, infant welfare, and contagious diseases such as smallpox. The campaign was intense. Sells reported that pupils in the day and boarding schools all received "compulsory treatment for trachoma" and that a smallpox vaccination campaign had been launched.⁶⁸ One Sells' innovation which emphasized infant health care was the holding of an annual "baby contest" at the Indian fairs. Sells had printed hundreds of "standard score cards" which "will be carefully graded by the physicians, and the cards of the babies having the highest scores will be sent to Washington, where suitable

⁶⁶Robinson, "Tuberculosis Among the Sioux," 341; John M. Oskison, "Making an Individual of the Indian," Everybody's Magazine 16 (June 1907), 723; F. Shoemaker, "Tuberculosis, The Scourge of the Red Man," Indian Craftsman 1 (June 1909), 23-31; Charles A. Eastman, "The Indian's Health Problem," American Indian Magazine 4 (April-June 1916) 2: 141-145; U.S. Department of the Interior, Tuberculosis Among Indians (Washington: Acme Printing Company, 1917).

⁶⁷Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Annual Report 1909, 2.

⁶⁸Ibid., 1917, 16-17.

certificates will be issued to the parents."⁶⁹ Commissioner Sells' programs were apparently working well. In a letter to Red Bird Smith, Chief of the Cherokee Keetoowah Society, which requested his help in the Bureau's "Choctaw and Cherokee Health Drives," Sells stated that "the first obligation of the Government to the Indians is to exert itself to the uttermost to save the race--to perpetuate its life." Toward this end the Bureau started a campaign to improve home and health conditions among the tribes throughout the United States--"to give the Indian baby an equal chance with the white child to live and to the Indian father and mother an opportunity to enjoy the fruits of life in a manner equal to that of their white neighbors." Between 1914 and 1917 Sells stated that this "vigorous effort" through the hiring of physicians, nurses and field matrons and the building of more and larger health facilities had made it possible to say "for the first time in more than 50 years, there were more Indians born than died from every cause." Accordingly, Sells happily wrote "that the Indian is no longer a dying race."⁷⁰

Another disease which in the period was treated as a moral problem was alcoholism. Typically the Bureau launched a vigorous campaign to suppress the liquor traffic. Congress was more than willing to advance the program. In 1909, for

⁶⁹Ibid., 17.

⁷⁰Ibid., 20.

instance, Congress allowed \$40,000 for this purpose.⁷¹ By 1917 the amount had grown to \$150,000.⁷² In 1919 the sum was cut to \$100,000 and was further reduced to \$65,000 in 1920.⁷³ By then national prohibition, according to Commissioner Sells, made it "very much more difficult for Indians to obtain intoxicating liquors."⁷⁴ Congress had put the same kinds of controls on the white citizenry as it had always placed on non-citizen American Indians.

The Bureau's new policy of pragmatism could not solve the ever-growing problems surrounding the legal status of American Indians. Because its policies were essentially regulatory and built around the idea that Indians were wards of the government, the Bureau was unable by itself to justify or meet the demand for Native American freedom in the form of United States citizenship. It was not until after the government was fully imbued with the idea that individual liberty was indeed subordinate to the public welfare or national security, and consequently was able to place regulatory controls on the white citizenry, that Native American citizenship became justifiable.

There were a great number of Indian people who had already become United States citizens under the Dawes and Curtis

⁷¹Ibid., 1909, 10.

⁷²Ibid., 1917, 25.

⁷³Ibid., 1920, 47.

⁷⁴Ibid., 46.

Acts. Also a few were given certificates of citizenship under the auspices of the Burke Act's provisions pertaining to the demonstration of competency. All of those who had obtained it, however, did so during the period in which the government was building its function as a regulatory agency. Hence, Native Americans were either given limited citizenship or were non-citizens. Many Indians wanted citizenship while others did not. Some refused citizenship on the basis of tribal loyalty while others were denied it under the provisions of the Burke Act. Typically for the period, the legal status of Native Americans living within the boundaries of the United States was confused and almost indefinable. Not only that, but whites, who granted citizenship, were in the process of attempting to work out in their own minds the seeming incongruity of individual liberty and wardship. Added to the confusion, a rapidly growing anti-bureaucratic movement began to make itself known. Its primary interest seemed to concentrate on the Bureau of Indian Affairs.⁷⁵

To many whites of a more individualistic bent and to some Indians, reservations were little more than white-ruled concentration camps. They believed that the Bureau's trend toward regulation not only built up "red tape," but effectively segregated Native Americans. They refused to accept the fact

⁷⁵Carl E. Grammer, Responsibility for Indian Management (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1914); F. A. Cleveland, "An Analysis of the Indian Bureau," American Indian Magazine 4 (April-June 1916), 154-159.

that most reservations had been part of original tribal homelands and that most of the tribal people living on them wanted to retain their boundaries. Several strong spokesmen favored the old reform stance of demolishing the Indian Office and giving Native Americans full, unfettered citizenship.

At one point in his career as a reformer, Arthur C. Parker adamantly opposed the Bureau. In 1917 he declared that the "Indian Bureau is an un-American institution; it must go." At most, according to Parker, the Bureau should serve simply as a "disbursing office" which would "pay the Indians their due." "The fundamental errors of the Bureau are those of its attitude toward Indians," he wrote, and those errors were "paternalism, segregation, autocratic action, amounting to tyranny, politics." The attitudes were not only menacing but in some cases actually criminal. In order to eradicate the menace, therefore, the Bureau should be eliminated. "Make the Indian a citizen," Parker admonished Congress, and "demonstrate that America is a safe place for every American citizen . . . whether he happens to be the First American or of a later importation."⁷⁶ The issue of Indian citizenship was even more confused by 1917 when Parker wrote these words than it was in 1906 when the Burke Act was passed.

The World War effectively ended the confusion. When Congress declared war, thousands of Native Americans were either

⁷⁶ Arthur C. Parker, "Editor's Views," American Indian Magazine 5 (October-December 1917), 213-214.

drafted into or they volunteered for the armed services. Many went into the services as non-citizens, refusing to take advantage of their draft-exempt status.⁷⁷ By 1918 there were over 10,000 American Indians in the armed services, eighty-five percent of whom entered voluntarily.⁷⁸ As The Indian's Friend reported: "Indians--men and women alike--are doing their bit to help make the world safe for democracy."⁷⁹ In 1920 Commissioner Burke stated that Indians had purchased over \$60,000,000 in war bonds amounting to a cash outlay of over \$25,000,000.⁸⁰ To many whites, American Indians were doing all they could to prove that they wanted to be United States citizens and stand "shoulder to shoulder with the white man."⁸¹

The war also created a tremendous outburst of patriotism. It was the kind of patriotism which called for unswerving loyalty and devotion to the government. As a result, the war really created an atmosphere in which the government was able to become more and more regulatory with only slight opposition. Congress, for instance, had been able to pass laws against sedition and subversion. By the end of the war, rampant individualism had become fully subordinate to the government's notion of the public good.

⁷⁷The Indian's Friend, November, 1917.

⁷⁸Ibid., January 1919.

⁷⁹Ibid., January 1918.

⁸⁰Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Annual Report 1920, 8.

⁸¹The Indian's Friend, March 1918.

The war created the feeling that regulation was not really incompatible to citizenship. Given this notion, which became widespread during the war, it was easy to understand how prohibition, for example, could be enforced on the nation's citizens. Also, taking this for granted, it was not difficult for many whites to overcome their qualms about conferring citizenship on those Indian people who had served in the war.

The bill granting citizenship to Indian soldiers and sailors was introduced into the House on June 5, 1919, and referred to committee. After a favorable report the House passed the bill and sent it to the Senate. The bill, which remained in committee only nine days, was passed and sent to the president on October 25.⁸² Because of President Wilson's absence the bill became law without his signature on November 6. The new law provided that any American Indian with an honorable discharge from one of the armed services could receive a certificate of citizenship from a United States court "with no other examination except as prescribed by said court."⁸³ In other words, those who applied would not have to be judged according to lifestyle.

In less than five years another bill was introduced in Congress which conferred United States citizenship on all American Indians who were not already citizens. Introduced on January 29, 1924, the bill, entitled "an act to authorize the

⁸²66 Congress, 1 session, Congressional Record, Vol. 58, pts. 1, 3, 6, 8, pp. 720, 2977, 5463, 5491, 6017, 7505.

⁸³41 U.S. Stats., 350.

Secretary of the Interior to issue certificates of citizenship to Indian," quickly passed the House. The Senate was slower and did not return the bill with its amendments until mid-May. The only debate surrounding the bill concerned the issue of regulation. Congressman Garrett of Tennessee wanted to know if the bill would infringe upon his state's voting laws. When Congressman Snyder, the author of both citizenship acts, assured Garrett that the act would not, the Tennessean ceased objection.⁸⁴ President Coolidge signed the law on June 2.⁸⁵

These confirmations of citizenship on American Indians were hardly the measures the old reformers or the individualists had hoped for. All the regulations of the Bureau of Indian Affairs remained standing, as did the Bureau itself. Not only that, the new citizenship laws were, like the other measures of the era concerning American Indians, completely makeshift and lacking any kind of broad framework. Despite the citizenship acts, the employment services and the new policies in education, Indian people remained the poorest of the poor in a booming economy. However, Native Americans had physically and culturally survived the vanishing policy and had watched as it broke down in theory as well as in deed. And perhaps this was the greatest achievement of all.

⁸⁴68 Congress, 1 session, Congressional Record, Vol. 65, pts. 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, pp. 1665, 2977, 4446, 4477, 6753, 8621-8622, 9303-9304.

⁸⁵43 U.S. Stats., 253.

CHAPTER VII

AN END TO AMBIVALENCE: JOHN COLLIER AND INDIAN REFORM 1922-1934

The greatest problem in Indian policy during the first two decades of the twentieth century was that as a policy of opportunism it failed to satisfy nearly everyone concerned with American Indian affairs. Allowing Native Americans to continue ceremonies and retaining an Indian identity was still, to many whites, the antithesis of assimilation. On the other hand, whites who maintained that Indians should have the right of cultural survival looked upon the government's continuation of allotment in severalty as a travesty of justice.

Indians were no longer "vanishing," either physically or in a cultural sense. As early as 1917 Cato Sells had announced that the Native American birth rate exceeded the death rate.¹ In 1920 the Commissioner reaffirmed this fact and, according to Century Magazine, exploded "the myth of the vanishing race."² Many tribes remained culturally viable and many other Indians were receiving, with their educations in government

¹Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Annual Report 1917, 20.

²Glenn Frank, "A Vanishing Race Comes Back," Century Magazine 99 (April 1920), 800.

schools, lessons in American Indian history and culture. Although the Bureau of Indian Affairs emphasized "the utilitarian side of education," Commissioner Sells stated that the schools under his jurisdiction also had "a definite regard for the influences that foster (Indian) spiritual and artistic aspirations." "We recognize," he said, "that in the Indian's tribal lore, his art, handicrafts, and some of his ceremonies were cultural elements of value, which should be retained and encouraged."³

But Native Americans remained economically emasculated and grew poorer as time went on. Allotment in severalty continued throughout the period and with it the concomitant loss in tribally as well as individually-held lands. Despite the economic boom in the 1920's, farm prices remained low and rural poverty became rampant. Few Indians had as much arable land as their white neighbors, and even those whites who had leased Indian land were able to eke out only a poverty level existence. Poverty and, with it, all the problems in Native American health and welfare were the legacies of the vanishing policy. Clearly, it had to be changed, but unfortunately there was no grand scheme which would solve all Indian ills. Indian policy seemed confused during the period because it lacked the broad philosophical basis which had been part of the vanishing policy. Both the assimilationists and the preservationists became involved in a search for that elusive solution.

³Cato Sells, "The Indian Bureau and its Schools," Saturday Evening Post 193 (April 9, 1921), 42.

There were far more doubts than there were policies. During the Progressive Era many whites resigned themselves to the proposition that governmental administration was not incompatible with citizenship. Individual liberties could, in fact, be curtailed if they threatened the welfare of the state which represented the totality of its citizenry. Whites conferred citizenship on Indians knowing full well that it was given with limitations. This very fact could do nothing but upset both the assimilationists and the preservationists. The former, of course, wanted Native Americans to be citizens but free from government entanglements. The latter wanted Indians to be free to be "Indian"--something a controlling bureaucracy could never allow completely.

In substance, the doubts came down to a basic flaw in white thought during the Progressive Era. During that period the vanishing policy lost its credibility and turned into a policy of management. The Bureau of Indian Affairs instituted several programs designed to deal with specific Indian problems in order to calm the fears of middle-class America. The government's services in health, employment and education were, for the most part, in keeping with the idea that no one had the right, whether willfully or unintentionally, to threaten the rights of others. To most whites, Native Americans who had contracted tuberculosis or trachoma or who were unemployed became not only threats to the public welfare but burdens on society as a whole. These symptoms of larger ills, according to this kind of logic, had to be cured in order to assure the rest of

the citizenry that their lives were secure. But to treat Indian problems, government bureaucracy grew along with these commitments thus adding what was considered to be a financial burden on the rest of the United States. If anything, "the Indian problem" boiled down to a white intellectual dilemma surrounding the question of whether or not the government should extract itself from its commitments or attempt to keep them. In either case there was bound to be opposition, thus leaving the entire problem unresolved.

As a result of these questions and the search for order in American Indian policy, there grew in the early 1920's a new movement for reform. Like the old reformers of the "vanishing" mentality, the new reformers promised economic uplift, progress and freedom for Indian people and had backing from the then current vogues in scientific thought. They came not from the old movement but from the conservation/artistic criticism of the Progressive Era. The "preservationists" had finally developed an all-encompassing theoretical basis for change in American Indian policy. Prophetically, the movement began in the artist/intellectual white community of Taos, New Mexico, and found as its champion John Collier.

Collier's first battle in the effort to reform American Indian policy came in the attempt to pass the Pueblo Indians Land Act through Congress. On July 19, 1922, Senator H. O. Bursum from New Mexico, with the full support of Secretary of the Interior Albert Bacon Fall, introduced the bill designed to solve a

series of disputes over Pueblo land titles.⁴ Under the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, which ended the Mexican War, Congress had confirmed the ownership of certain lands to the various Pueblos. In addition, the Pueblo people were granted citizenship and were not considered wards of the government. As independent citizens, the people sold land to whites. But during the period from 1910 to 1920 several people questioned the right of the Pueblos to sell their land. In 1913 the Supreme Court decided that the Pueblo people were indeed wards and, therefore, incompetent, since 1848, to negotiate sale of their lands.⁵ The Bursum bill essentially sought to end the problem by confirming, not the Indian title, but all non-Indian claims.

Almost immediately Collier launched a campaign to defeat the Bursum bill. He, along with Stella Atwood, who was chairperson of the General Federation of Women's Clubs' Indian Welfare Committee, wrote several articles protesting the bill in Sunset Magazine and Survey.⁶ They also enlisted several

⁴67 Congress, 1 session, Congressional Record Vol. 61, pt. 4, p. 2274.

⁵U.S. v. Sandoval 231 U.S. Reports, 28-49; Felix S. Cohen, Handbook of Federal Indian Law, with Reference Tables and Index (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1972), 383-390.

⁶John Collier, "The Red Atlantis," Survey 48 (October 1922), 15-20, 63, 66; "Plundering the Pueblo Indians," Sunset 50 (January 1923), 21-25, 56; "The Pueblos' Last Stand," Sunset 50 (February 1923), 19-22, 65-66; "Our Indian Policy," Sunset 50 (March 1923), 13-15, 89-93; "No Trespassing," Sunset 50 (May 1923), 14-15, 58-60; "The Pueblos Land Problem," Sunset 51 (November 1923), 15, 101; Stella M. Atwood, "The Case for the Indian," Survey 49 (October 1922), 7-11, 57.

other members of the Taos community, including authors Witter Bynner and D. H. Lawrence, to write tracts in opposition to the proposed legislation.⁷ Eventually public opinion was rallied to the Pueblo side of the controversy and the bill was killed.⁸

During 1923 another piece of proposed legislation attracted Collier's attention. On January 16, 1923, Congressman Snyder introduced the Indian Omnibus bill designed to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to appraise tribal property, pay American Indians the cash value of their assets in land, and terminate responsibility for lands held in trust.⁹ In essence the bill was a logical conclusion to the, by then, crumbling vanishing policy. It would have immediately and irrevocably cancelled all treaties, court decisions and laws relating to the protection of Native American land holdings. Indians, in theory, would then be free from government control and placed in the competitive world of the whites.

The bill went through the House in fairly quick order and was duly sent to the Senate. There it met its demise in the hands of Senator Robert LaFollette. The old Progressive

⁷Witter Bynner, "'From Him That Hath Not,'" Outlook 133 (January 17, 1923), 125-127; New York Times, November 26, December 24, 1922.

⁸For the best analysis of the crusade to save the Pueblos see Kenneth R. Philp, John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform 1920-1954 (University of Arizona Press, 1977), 26-54. Also see Randolph C. Downes, "A crusade for Indian Reform," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 32 (December 1945), 331-354.

⁹67 Congress, 4 session, Congressional Record, Vol. 64, pt. 2, p. 1866.

demanding, during the debate on the bill, that it should be passed over. Since the sixty-seventh Congress was then in its last session, the Senate supporters of the legislation could ill-afford its being tabled--that would have effectively killed it then and there. LaFollette, who had, had contact with Collier, did not submit to the blandishments of his colleagues who supported the bill. When told that the bill was for the "welfare" of Native Americans, LaFollette replied: "it has to do with the 'wrongfare' of Indians, I think. I insist on the objection." The Indian Omnibus Act was dead.¹⁰

One of the major issues that plagued those whites who still advocated total Indian assimilation was the continuity of many tribal ceremonies and customs. The old reformers had been defeated again and again concerning this particular question but had nevertheless refused to admit or accept defeat. Perhaps in frustration, they began a renewed campaign to destroy ceremony within the tribal societies. In 1918 the Board of Indian Commissioners reported that in several areas across the United States, Native Americans were still conducting tribal rituals with much the same vigor as they had done before the vanishing policy. The Board contended that these ceremonies were "revivals" of the old ways and constituted a "reversion" to paganism. Accordingly, the Board warned that "we cannot see anything but evil in permitting these dances."¹¹

¹⁰Ibid., pts. 3, 5, 6, pp. 2972-2997, 3027, 4831, 5083, 5386.

¹¹Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1918, 79.

Because the World War had created a fever pitch of patriotism, the Board of Indian Commissioners evidently believed that the dances could be stopped by inferring that the Native Americans who continued their ceremonial activities were doing so in order to subvert the will of the government. To them, Indian dancers were not only "uncivilized" but un-American as well. In this completely narrow-minded vein, the Board reported that there were "good reasons to believe that a considerable number of these Indians are covertly disloyal to the United States and have been victims of pro-German propaganda." The Board further "endeavored to bring to bear such influence as we could upon them to point out the impropriety of such conduct on their part and the probability of its getting them into serious difficulty." In order to breakup "this hotbed of sedition" the Commissioners called upon the Indian agents to stop the dances and keep close watch on those white people who showed interest in preserving native ceremony. "The same persons among the Indians," according to the Board's annual report, "who were active in trying to reintroduce the pagan dances are those who are apparently the leaders in sowing disloyalty." Try as they did the Commissioners, however, were unable to discover any connection between the two, if indeed pro-German propaganda had really ever been introduced among these tribes.¹²

Anti-ceremonial rhetoric such as this cropped-up occasionally during the Progressive Era. For the most part, however, it

¹²Ibid., 80.

had been relegated to a lower priority on the "Indian problem" agenda. There were far greater problems to deal with and, in addition, the artist/conservationist/ethnologist critics of American Indian policy had pointed out several sound reasons for the government to allow tribal ceremony to persist. The allegations of disloyalty in time of war could have been serious. But due to the American Indian war record, the Bureau of Indian Affairs refused to act upon the charges.

Native American cultural continuity was a serious matter to the whites who believed in absolute assimilation. Culture change for American Indians was the core of the entire philosophy. As a consequence, it was perhaps the most difficult part of theoretical underpinnings of the vanishing mentality to dispel. Predictably, the question was raised again in the early 1920's.

In 1920 the Indian Rights Association had issued a scathing attack on the continuance of "depraved and immoral" Native American dances. According to the IRA, the dances only served to demoralize Indian people and hold up their entrance into mainstream American society. It called upon the Indian Office to effect an immediate ban on ceremonies.¹³ Typically, Commissioner Burke took an equivocal stand on the matter. In Burke's words: "it is not the policy of the Indian Office to denounce all forms of Indian dancing." The Commissioner was "tolerant of pleasure and relaxation sought in this way, or of

¹³Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the Indian Rights Association 1923, 25-27.

ritualism and tradition sentiment thus expressed." He also thought that dance united "art, refinement and healthful exercise" and thus was "not inconsistent with civilization." On the other hand, Burke issued orders that Native American ceremonies were to be repressed if they practiced any form of torture, "immoral acts," "reckless" give-aways, or used any kind of "harmful" drug or alcohol, or took too much time to perform.¹⁴

Criticism of the repression of Indian dance came quick and cut to the core of the problem. Many of the critics argued that the dances were artistically valuable and that opposition to self-expression was against all principles of human rights.¹⁵ The eminent ethnologist, F. W. Hodge, took direct issue with the charges of immorality that had been leveled at Native American dancing. Hodge stated emphatically that the persons who had made these claims were totally misinformed or at least had not taken the trouble to properly investigate the ceremonies in question.¹⁶

But it was Collier who brought the issue into focus as a case of whether or not Native Americans had the right to enjoy religious freedom in the United States. Late in 1923 Collier wrote to the New York Times criticizing the suppression of Indian

¹⁴The Indian's Friend, July 1921.

¹⁵See, for instance, John Sloan, "The Indian Dance from an Artist's Point of View," Arts and Decoration 20 (January 1924), 17.

¹⁶New York Times, December 20, 1923 and October 26, 1924.

dances as a violation of the principles of religious liberty as defined in the Constitution. He argued that all Native American rituals were religious in practice, and that those who sought to ban them were no less than tyrants seeking to rob Indian people of their own uniqueness.¹⁷ Eventually the attacks on tribal ceremonies lessened and by 1930 most opposition to dancing had ceased with the Bureau of Indian Affairs' adoption of a policy of non-interference. Religious freedom for Native Americans had not been fully regained, however and there was continued suppression of peyote well into the 1960's. Dancing, on the other hand, ceased to be an issue by the time Collier had accepted the position of Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1933.¹⁸

The net effect of most of Collier's battles was a resurgence of public interest in Indian Affairs. Popular magazines and newspapers of the 1920's devoted a great deal of space to the debates and even stimulated large scale scholarly studies of Native American problems. Perhaps as a result of this interest, Secretary of the Interior, Hubert Work, requested that the privately funded Institute for Government Research undertake a thorough investigation of Native American problems within the United States. The study, undertaken in 1926, was a comprehensive survey of conditions among the Indian tribes. It was the

¹⁷Ibid., December 16, 1923.

¹⁸See Philp, John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 55-70 for full coverage of the "Dance Imbroglia."

work of a professional staff headed by Lewis Meriam, a member of the Institute.

The Meriam Commission's report, published in 1928 under the title The Problem of Indian Administration, was a revelation to some and a confirmation of John Collier's beliefs in the fight to reform American Indian policy. In its total picture, the Meriam Report was an attack on the vanishing policy. It sided with the artist/conservationist camp in criticizing the assault on Indian cultures as being an effort which only served to make American Indians feel degraded. The report attacked the boarding schools as being not only poorly administered and improperly financed, but as the destroyers of Native American families. Meriam and his staff, which included a former member of the Society of American Indians, Henry Roe Cloud, also attacked the allotment policy. Allotment in severalty was, to the members of the Commission, the primary factor behind the grinding poverty which Native Americans were forced to deal with in everyday life. Obviously, if one was to acknowledge the validity of the Commission's research, the policy of allotting Indian lands in severalty had to be changed.¹⁹

The immediate result of the report's attack on allotment in severalty was the decline in the issuance of allotted lands. In the four fiscal years prior to the initiation of the study, approximately 10,000 Indians were allotted from their reservations

¹⁹Lewis Meriam and others, The Problem of Indian Administration, Institute for Government Research, Studies in Administration (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1928).

over three million acres of land. In comparison, during the fiscal years 1929 through 1932, the four years immediately following the publication of The Problem of Indian Administration, a little over 2,800 Native Americans were allotted under 500,000 acres.²⁰ Although the numbers and acreage dropped considerably, the policy was continued. To many Americans the allotment of Indian lands was the result of an outmoded philosophy and should be discontinued.

Interestingly, the organization which had been most responsible for the development of the philosophy behind allotment in severalty met in 1929, after a thirteen-year hiatus. The Lake Mohonk Conference had last met in 1916. The World War and the relative disinterest in Indian affairs, which immediately followed it, intervened with the yearly meetings. But with the renewed interest in Indian policy and the publication of the Meriam Report, Daniel Smiley, brother of the late Albert Smiley, the founder of the Conference, called another meeting.²¹

The shadow of the Meriam Report hung heavily over the mid-October meeting. It was constantly referred to and quoted throughout the three-day convention, and, most important, it received no criticism during the open sessions. Lewis Meriam even presented before the conference a lengthy discussion concerning the organization of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and

²⁰ Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Annual Report 1923, 8; 1924, 8; 1925, 10; 1926, 9; 1929, 9; 1930, 15; 1931, 36; 1932, 28.

²¹ Proceeding of the Lake Mohonk Conference 1929, 13-14.

steadfastly advocated a policy of decentralization in its dealings with Indians.²²

In large part the meeting reflected a changed viewpoint regarding Native Americans. One missionary, who had spent nearly forty years trying to convert Native Americans to Christianity, even lashed out against "the innate Anglo-Saxon snobbery which is convinced that anybody that does not look and talk just like us must therefore be inferior" which created the "Indian problem" in the first place.²³ The members of the conference consistently urged patience and a less zealous approach toward making Indian people, not into ordinary citizens, but into "citizens of Indian descent."²⁴ Very little mention was made during the conference of allotment in severalty except within the context of trying to find some method of modifying its disastrous effects. Finally, the Conference adopted a resolution which called for the amendment of the allotment laws in order to make Native American land holdings "inalienable and non-taxable."²⁵

Within five years allotment in severalty was abolished. On June 18, 1934, Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law the Indian Reorganization Act. Collier, the new Commissioner of

²²Ibid., 25, 39, 53, 91, 97, 127-128, 133, 156; for Meriam's address see pp. 128-132.

²³Ibid., 17.

²⁴Ibid., 15.

²⁵Ibid., 12.

Indian Affairs had supervised its drafting. The law ended allotment and permitted tribal governments to incorporate and in part to consolidate each tribe's trust lands. It provided for the establishment of a revolving fund "from which the Secretary of the Interior, under such rules and regulations as he may prescribe, may make loans to Indian chartered corporations for the purpose of promoting the economic development of such tribes."²⁶ Although the law failed to immediately solve Native American problems it, at the very least, ended government ambivalence in relations with Indian people. Collier had won his twelve year battle.

Collier's ideas concerning the management of American Indian affairs were primarily based on the reestablishment of tribal society. In this manner, Indian people would be allowed to maintain culture and thus would be saved from the degradation of being robbed of their uniqueness. Collier also believed that tribal reorganization would lead to economic uplift and serve to free Indian people from the control of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. If the tribes were incorporated with advisory boards somewhat in the manner of the National Recovery Act, they could control their natural resources and industrial output for their own benefit. It would also aid in the program to decentralize the Bureau and remove the Office from further entanglements. It was a plan which combined the progressive notions of management and collectivism, while at the same time protected individual

²⁶48 U.S. Stats., 984.

liberties and extracted the government from its long-standing commitments to Native Americans.

The new Commissioner's philosophies were rooted in the intellectual conflicts of the Progressive Era. In his youth he had been an outdoor enthusiast and an avid student of human relations. He became, as a social worker among immigrants in New York, a proponent of collectivism and at the same time a firm believer in the protection of individual liberties in order to preserve cultural plurality.²⁷

In 1920 he visited his old friend from New York, Mabel Dodge Luhan, at Taos, New Mexico, in order to investigate her reports of the beauty and social and artistic value of Pueblo Indian life. According to Collier, "the Taos experience . . . changed my life plan."²⁸ There he found among the Pueblo people exactly the type of communities he thought could be emulated. To him the tribal community at Taos represented a perfect example of gemeinschaft relationships, an excellent example of the ability of a people to combine communal living with individualism and an escape from the "selfish individualism" of white society.²⁹

Collier was an intellectual who believed himself alienated from mainstream American society. He abhorred the industrialization and urbanization of the United States because he thought

²⁷Philp, John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 5-25.

²⁸John Collier, The Indians of the Americas (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1947), 20.

²⁹John Collier, "Our Indian Policy," 13; "The Red Atlantis," 15.

that they necessarily disrupted the basic tenets on which the nation was founded. Family life was destroyed and any kind of cohesion was nullified within the competitive structure of American society. Not only that, but aesthetic values which could be found in some rural areas were non-existent, according to Collier, in an urbanized America caught up with the idea of individual competition. At Taos he could mingle with like-minded people and escape from a society which found his idealism impractical.³⁰

The Taos community eventually attracted persons like Mabel Dodge Luhan. She had established a salon in New York for intellectuals and artists to meet and discuss both the horrors of American society and their alienation from it. Already a Bohemian, she escaped the urban scene for the serenity and isolation of Taos. There she met and married a Pueblo man, Antonio Luhan. Later she attracted D. H. Lawrence and Collier to the New Mexican town.³¹

By the time Mabel Dodge arrived in Taos in 1917, it had already been established as a Bohemian artists' colony. Around 1900 two young painters from New York came to the area in search of new subjects and to commune with nature. Like Collier they evidently believed that urban societies stultified creativity. In its materialism, industrialization could never

³⁰Philp, John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1-4, 24.

³¹Christopher Lash, The New Radicalism in America, 1889-1963 (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), 104-140.

condone or even be cognizant of the aesthetic side of life. But "in the land of the Indian" at Taos, these two artists "found so much to admire and respect, and were so deeply moved by the sights and the life of this beautiful valley" they decided to stay. In 1915 there were enough artists at Taos to form a league named, appropriately, the "Taos Society of Artists." By 1916 there were nearly one hundred painters who either regularly visited or lived in the town.³² Because of their alienation, they felt kinship with alienated people. Hence, they became critical of American society in general and of American Indian policy in particular. Even before Collier or Mabel Dodge came to the area, members of the artists' colony at Taos had sharply criticized the course of governmental dealings with Indian people. Dedicated to Native American cultural preservation, one artist wrote that the Indian people were "struggling against the mighty white race that threatens to swallow them up and spit them out again, servants with short hair and clad in overalls!"³³ From this protective philosophy it was a short step to the Collier Indian policy.

The anti-urban, aesthetic and nostalgic aspects of the conservation movement appealed to Collier. He found almost everything in Native American life to be just as men like Charles A. Eastman had purported it to be--ecological-minded, socially cohesive and balanced. He along with most of the

³²Blumenschein, "The Taos Society of Artists," 449-451.

³³Ibid., 448.

others who had gravitated around Taos, fought against the destruction of a worthy, though different, culture. In their efforts to maintain tribal cultures they were necessarily advocates of cultural pluralism. In this aspect of their new theories in American Indian policy and regarding the Native American place in the body politic, the newest trends in anthropological and sociological thought gave them creditable support.

The culture concept in anthropological theory began in the United States largely through the efforts and research of Franz Boas and his students at Columbia University. Trained in Germany as a physicist, Boas firmly believed in the value of empirical research. In the United States he ignored his own scholastic fields of study and turned to ethnology. Yet, once he entered the new discipline he carried with him the devotion to empiricism normally associated with his initial scientific training. As a consequence he stressed in his own work among the Eskimos and the tribes of the Northwest Coast and to his students, in-depth studies of each separate social group. He and his students studied separate cultures imposing their own social and possible racial biases. Conjecture concerning the superiority or inferiority of a group was to be eliminated.

The Boasian school sounded the death knell for the social evolutionists during the 1920's and 1930's. Their findings in physical anthropology, linguistics and tribal ecosystems could not be totally accounted for in the linear sequences of evolutionary thought. Aspects of cultures changed at different rates from group to group and many tribal cultures could possess

remarkably similar traits without being on the same evolutionary level. To the Boasian school, cultures were neither higher nor lower, they merely differed.³⁴

But scientific theory, especially a social theory, was usually publicly accepted only when it corresponded to the general pattern in public thought. Hence, Social Darwinism was made acceptable in the 1870's only because it closely jibed with the American ideals of individualism and competitive capitalism. The old Indian policy reformers readily accepted the theory of social evolution in much the same manner. Social evolution served to confirm their conviction that Native Americans should be "uplifted" from savagery and barbarism to civilization. If Lewis Henry Morgan or John Wesley Powell had advocated a theory of cultural pluralism in the 1880's and 1890's, the old reformers probably would have done without scientific support. They were Christians, nationalists and, by their lights, civilized persons convinced of their own cultural superiority. They had conceived that Indian people were savage and barbaric long before the publication of Morgan's book, Ancient Society, which outlined social evolutionist theory.³⁵

Although the Boasian school thought was a development of the first decade or so of the twentieth century, it did not

³⁴For an excellent review of the Boasian school see Berkhofer, The White Man's Indian, 62-69.

³⁵Lewis Henry Morgan, Ancient Society, or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery Through Barbarism to Civilization (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964). First published in 1877.

become widely acceptable until the late 1920's and early 1930's. By that time, however, many whites had already accepted the idea that several aspects of Native American cultures were indeed valuable to white "civilized" society. The mere thought of preserving tribal cultures was logically antithetical to the totality of social evolutionism. Its "natural" progression already should have seen the demise of Native American art, ceremony and custom. The fact that tribal cultures did survive the onslaught of the white man's civilization could have done nothing but weaken the absolutism of evolutionist theory. The "preservationists" of the Progressive Era, probably without knowing it, had caught a glimmer of the cultural pluralists' rising star. Collier, the new reformer, professed cultural plurality just as the old reformers had welcomed the idea of social evolution.

Strangely, Boas himself disapproved of Collier's programs. But Collier was a social scientist and a theorist in his own right. In addition, one of Boas' own students, A. L. Kroeber, was a member of the Indian Defense Association.³⁶ Even though he might have been the father of cultural pluralism, Boas was not essential to the "Indian New Deal." But then again, Lewis Henry Morgan was hardly essential to the vanishing policy.

Although Collier was considered to have been an important social conceptualist, his ideas were not completely new. Laura Cornelius Kellogg propounded the use of tribalism in order to

³⁶ John Collier, From Every Zenith (Denver: Sage Books, 1963), 216-217.

solve Native American social and economic problems as early as 1911. Red Bird Smith also held to a sense of community and attempted, through Cherokee cultural survival, to maintain his tribe's sense of mission on earth. Many other traditionalists held the line in this manner, if only to retain their concepts of balance and order. Collier was not only caught up with the idea of collectivistic reform, but caught up also in the anti-urban, practical, yet romantic side of conservation--a side which Charles A. Eastman had earlier wrote and spoke about so eloquently. Collier was a missionary. And his particular mission rested not only in the attempt to maintain Native American traditions, but to use them as models for the restructuring of white society. He was a white man trying to spread the Native American ideas of order and social balance.

Collier's greatest mistake during the Indian New Deal, however, was to stereotype tribalism and thus disregard the dynamism of Native American societies. Incorporating a Pueblo tribe might have been a workable method of solving some of their problems. A Pueblo town, for the most part, was a complete and operative community. But, incorporating as a tribe the entire Sioux people living on the Pine Ridge Reservation, for instance, would have made for a completely different type of situation. The Sioux were communally operative on a smaller scale, for not only did they recognize themselves to be of different tribes, but their governmental organizations even broke down to band level, sometimes even socially to extended family groups, in

order to cope with allotment in severalty. Nearly all Native American groups were communal, but only the smallest of groups operated in this manner on a tribal level. As populations grew larger through time, the primary social elements of many tribes rested on band, village or perhaps clan systems. Collier's observations on Native American communal groups were essentially correct but unfortunately his perceptions and thus his policies rested solely on the Taos Pueblo experience.

Collier, like the nineteenth century reformers of American Indian policy, made policy according to the perceptions of Indian people. His actions in American Indian affairs were different because his images of Native Americans were different. Whereas the nineteenth century reformer believed that nothing from the tribal cultures of North America was worthy of white emulation, Collier believed that nearly everything at Taos Pueblo should be incorporated into white society. Between Collier and, for instance, Richard Henry Pratt lay the conflicts and ambivalence of the Progressive Era.

CONCLUSION

John Collier's policies, although they did not particularly enhance the economic status of American Indians, at least represented a change in attitude toward Native American cultures. An Indian identity was to be maintained and what remained of tribal cultures preserved. The assault on tribal identity ceased with the termination of allotment in severalty, the incorporation of tribal governments and the official recognition that Native Americans had viable cultures. Even though it was exhumed in later years, the vanishing policy was officially pronounced dead in 1934.

Collier's changes were spawned in an era of intellectual conflict. In this case conflict was the precursor of change. In the nineteenth century white Americans developed a philosophy which abetted the willful destruction of tribal cultures and ideologies. Despite the assault of the white man's social thought, Indian ways survived and eventually became recognized by whites as valuable to society as a whole. In the twentieth century many non-Indians could welcome aspects of Indian culture even if they did not accept Indian people. They became willing to preserve the "vanishing" Indian in the face of government policy which, of course, was designed to produce the opposite effect.

Nineteenth century Indian policy was based on the rhetorical ideal of assimilation. American Indians were to be "Americanized" and then welcomed into the national polity. But during the Progressive Era whites began to question the processes under which Indians were being "Americanized." They still wanted Indians to conform to their social, political and economic standards; yet they also wanted to maintain an "Indian" identity in art and in certain ideals concerning the environment. Certain old stereotypes were given new vigor. To many whites, Indians were healthful products of nature--Jim Thorpe proved this in his athletic prowess and Charles Eastman continually reminded his readers of the benefits of outdoor life. The romantic "child of nature" image of Native Americans became a practical example of the way in which non-Indians could maintain a healthful existence in an era of rapid urbanization and industrialization. The whites also believed that living in tune with the environment stimulated man's aesthetic nature. One needed only to view the objects of beauty produced by Indians to gain this insight.

Whites and some Indians wrestled with the ideological problems the new Indian image had created. Torn between the idea that tribal cultures must be destroyed in order to make Indians a part of the body politic and the wish to preserve a Native American identity in art and certain ideologies, policymakers were caught in a seemingly impossible dilemma. As a result, the vanishing policy simply broke down because it lacked a strong underlying philosophy.

It was immediately replaced by an opportunistic series of policies which actually conformed to the Progressive gospel of efficiency. In the first twenty years of the new century Americans were groping toward a new definition of citizenship. Rampant individualism had to give way to the idea that individual liberties were subservient to the public good. Members of the middleclass thought themselves to be on the verge of being crushed by either the monopolistic business community or the non-conforming lower classes. They had to regulate both the avaricious big businessman as well as the out-of-work laborer prone to violence and alcoholism. Government opted for more regulation and rationalized the growth of bureaucracy as an efficient means of dealing with America's many problems.

Despite these factors America's "Indian problem" continued to exist. There was no theoretical basis for its solution. Persons involved in Indian affairs saw only the confusion of Progressive "efficiency," the incongruity of wardship with liberty, and the ambiguity of trying to make Indians vanish on the one hand while preserving Native American cultures on the other. John Collier stepped in with a different theory in Indian policy and, even if he failed to solve Indian problems, he ended the confusion.

Collier's philosophies concerning Indian policy were diametrically opposed to the theories which bolstered the vanishing policy. To an old reformer, such as Richard Henry Pratt, nothing of American Indian cultures or ideologies were worthy of retention. Collier, however, thought that Indian customs and

beliefs were not only worthy of retention, but emulation. He was a twentieth century thinker and a firm believer in the idea that the individual in society should not be allowed to upset the cohesiveness of the group. Collier also believed in group rights such as freedom of religion, dress and, to a certain extent, local self-government. In addition, he was determined to preserve Native American societies to the best of his abilities.

Collier, his thought and policies, were the legacies of the Progressive Era. He might not have been a true Progressive but his philosophies were the outcome of the turmoil of the period. A true Progressive might be best labeled as a thinker caught and confused between nineteenth century individualism and twentieth century collective liberalism. Collier was not confused, nor was he caught between changing liberal thought. He was a firm believer in collectivism and strong-willed enough to see his ideas become policy.

Without the conflicts of the Progressive Era there would have been no John Collier. Not only that, there would have been no conflicts regarding Indian policy had Native Americans simply given in totally to the precepts of the vanishing policy. But Indians themselves kept their cultural values alive in the face of persistent efforts made to crush them. They adapted, to be sure, but this only pointed out that tribal societies were viable and not remnants of the primitive past. Even those American Indians who had given up the tribal life preserved their identities as Native Americans and refused to

forget their tribal ideologies. Charles A. Eastman, a supporter of assimilation, only admitted that the white man was superior in technology. Even then he alluded to the idea that Euro-American technology had gone entirely too far. Forced into economic poverty, Native Americans remained rich in culture and intellectual achievement.

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