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Rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles in Oklahoma During the Great Depression

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By

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RURAL CHEROKEES, CHICKASAWS, CHOCTAWS, CREEKS, AND SEMINOLES
IN OKLAHOMA DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY

Abstract

This dissertation analyzes rural Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole communities in Oklahoma during the Great Depression. It examines the impact of Indian New Deal policies in the areas of economic, education, health, and political reform. Moreover, it refutes the commonly held belief that the rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes were a largely landless people, starving and spiritually bankrupt by the 1930s. In fact, this study argues that those Indians who continued to live in the small, rural communities of the Five Civilized Tribes region relied upon time proven kin and clan networks to maintain their social and cultural traditions. This better enabled them to endure the economic hardships caused by the Great Depression. The devotion they showed to their communities and traditions also allowed them to assimilate or resist assimilation on their own terms as opposed to the terms set down by whites, more assimilated tribal members, or the federal government. In that sense, it is, more than anything else, very much a study of Indian cultural and social perseverance.

Title: Rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles in Oklahoma During the Great Depression

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Acknowledgments

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Joyce Marie Bateman-Hochtritt, the most beautiful person I know. I have become a much better man because of her love and friendship. Also, it is warmly shared with my mom, Marie, and my best bud, Bob Mello, their faith in the dreams of a foolish man, is deep.

In addition, I would like to thank Dr. Donald Pisani, Dr. Robert Griswold, and Dr. Terry Rugeley for their intelligent insights and constructive criticisms that have made me a better historian. I would also like to give special thanks to Dr. Gary Cohen. Not only is he a fine scholar and teacher, but he is a good person as well; a rarer combination than one might think in the so-called ivory tower of academia.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Paul Gilje. When I first arrived at the University of Oklahoma I was warned to steer clear of this critically sharp and demanding historian. Indeed, many students feared this man with the stern reputation. Instead of mimicking many of my fellow graduate students, I sought out Dr. Gilje and took a number of courses and directed readings under his guidance and tutelage. I am forever indebted to that experience. I learned more from Dr. Gilje than any other professor in the department and his door was always open for scholarly and personal advice. His gruff Brooklyn demeanor is only the outer shell of an intuitive and insightful man.

I would also like to say that this dissertation and the Ph.D. it granted me is the rather startling end point of a quest that began 12 years ago when I decided to return to college at the age of 35 to obtain an undergraduate degree. From the age of 18 until that

time, I lived the fast life, extremely poor, always on the edge, and counted among my friends and acquaintances two-fisted drinkers, brawlers, wild women, and hard working people who possessed very little formal education, but who always had a ready smile, a helping hand, and a sense of things that no college degree could grant; people who never took themselves so seriously that they believed that they were somehow better than others around them. Despite all of my formal education, my roots remain with them, their company, their sweet recklessness, and their wisdom.

Lastly, this dissertation is pensively dedicated to those who did not survive its completion: My father, James Hochtritt, John Jacobs, Terry Johnson, Charles Peterson, Paul Gallagher, Kay Mello, and Odis Bateman. My life was greatly rewarded by their lives; my life has been greatly diminished with their passing.

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Introduction

This dissertation examines rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles in central and eastern Oklahoma during the Great Depression. More specifically, I focus on those Indians who inhabited small rural communities and settlements and who were less willing than other members of the Five Civilized Tribes to embrace many of the cultural, economic, and social values of twentieth-century America. At times, I use "less integrated" or more "tradition-oriented" to define their behavior, and to better distinguish them from their tribal brethren. Although some rural Indians renounced completely white society and their more integrated tribal members, the majority of rural Indians neither rejected completely nor wholly embraced integration, but rather negotiated a middle ground between the two extremes. When possible, they preferred to distance themselves from whites. But they were also shaped by a combination of both Indian and white values. Their ability to adapt, and yet still retain basic elements of their culture, cushioned the disruption of change.

My study is indebted to the work of other scholars such as Loretta Fowler, *Arapahoe Politics, 1851-1978* (1982), Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency* (1983), Albert L. Hurtado, *Indian Survival on the California Frontier* (1990), Morris Foster, *Being Comanche* (1991), Joan Weibel Orlando, *Indian Country, L.A.* (1991), Richard Nostrand, *The Hispano Homeland* (1992), and K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *They Called it Prairie Light* (1994), all of whom explain how Indians and other ethnic groups mitigate change so as not to compromise completely their cultural dynamism or identity. They

maintain that the ability of subordinate groups to construct dual identities that allow them to satisfy both their own cultural prerogatives, while at the same time appeasing the demands of interlopers or oppressors, determines the resiliency and survival of their heritage. Rather than remain passive, Indians reinvent traditions or find new ways to disguise traditions to minimize conflict with whites and outsiders.[1]

My analysis of rural Indians is placed within the context of the Great Depression although it is not a study of the Great Depression. I assess Indian New Deal policies as they applied to the Five Civilized Tribes in the areas of politics, economics, education, and health and the response of rural Indians and their communities to federal programs. This is not, however, a political history. I do not concentrate on tribal leaders and their political dialogue with federal bureaucrats and politicians. I am concerned primarily with the nature of rural Indian communities and how the people of these settlements sustained their identity and cultural integrity as they responded to the Indian New Deal and to the economic downturn of the 1930s.

My research is based on numerous communities scattered throughout the Five Civilized Tribes region, but at no time, do I analyze one specific community. There simply does not exist enough primary sources to allow a detailed examination of one or several of these isolated settlements. Anthropologists Morris Opler, *Creek Indian Towns of Oklahoma in 1937* (1972) and Alexander Spoehr, *Kinship System of the Seminole* (1942) and *Changing Kinship Systems: A Study in the Acculturation of the Creeks, Cherokee, and Choctaw* (1947), as well as geographer Leslie Hewes, *The Geography of the Cherokee Country* (1940), examined several rural Indian communities of the Five

Civilized Tribes in the 1930s, but aside from their work, no other detailed studies of rural Indian communities of the Five Civilized Tribes in the 1930s have been undertaken.[2] I examine Cherokee communities in Adair, Cherokee, Delaware, Mayes, Muskogee, and Sequoyah Counties; Chickasaw communities in Johnston, Marshall, and Pontotoc Counties; Choctaw communities in Bryan, Choctaw, Le Flore, McCurtain, Pittsburgh, and Pushmataha Counties; Creek communities in Hughes, McIntosh, Okfuskee, and Okmulgee Counties; and Seminole communities in Seminole County. I focus on these 20 counties because they contained the heaviest population of rural Indians.

Virtually all rural Indian communities of the Five Civilized Tribes consisted of three-fourths blood and full-blood Indians. However, even though many rural Indians possessed a high degree of Indian blood, blood quantum is not used to determine behavior or to assess their cultural predisposition. That would be a far too simplistic and fatuous way to classify those Indians who inhabited the countryside settlements. They themselves did not necessarily define other Indians in that manner. The criteria for defining themselves and others was oftentimes sociological rather than biological. They found community with those Indians who they recognized as "living Indian" or possessing "an Indian heart." That meant Indians who clung tenaciously to communal ways marked heavily by an adherence to tribal traditions and values; individuals, culturally similar to themselves, who lived almost exclusively in the isolated and rustic settlements of central and eastern Oklahoma.

As a result, rural Indians were oftentimes suspicious of more integrated Indians and some tribal leaders. Because more acculturated Indians mimicked whites, less

integrated Indians referred to them as white Indians. This is not to argue that all rural Indians were antagonistic to whites or that they completely rejected white ways. Numerous market farmers existed among the Seminoles, for example, and some rural Choctaws were regularly employed. Nor is it to say that the leadership of the Five Civilized Tribes consisted entirely of assimilated, mixed-blood Indians. Indeed, there were mixed-blood Indians who participated fully in the cultural and social life of their tribes. Similarly, there were full-blood Indians who did not adhere to tribal traditions.

Community involvement, not blood quantum or degree of assimilation, determined one's acceptance among rural Indians. Identity of any kind, although complex and not immutable, is the result of shared historical experience and traditions. Because tribal leaders and more acculturated Indians tended to live in urban areas, they were not active participants in the countryside enclaves. That alone, did not alienate them from their rural brethren. Visiting frequently and partaking in rituals and ceremonies would have validated their place in the community. But some Indians permanently moved away and seldom, if ever, visited the countryside. Their disconnection from the isolated settlements was significant in the minds of rural Indians.[3]

Although the extent of integration into white society is not based upon blood quantum, my research found that the majority of Indians who lived in rural communities were overwhelmingly full blood. However, it is difficult to determine the exact number of full-blood Indians among the Five Civilized Tribes between 1930-1940. Faulty enumeration and the unwillingness of Indians to identify themselves based upon blood-quantum have made for unreliable totals. Thus, the following totals are only

approximates. The 1930 census classified Indians as either full blood or mixed blood. It enumerated 72,446 Indians in the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma of which 19,403 were full bloods. That figure included 7,091 Cherokees, 1,150 Chickasaws, 5,075 Choctaws, 4,754 Creeks, and 1,333 Seminoles.[4]

Although reliable population totals were difficult to determine, enough evidence existed to conclude that rural Indian communities and settlements contained anywhere from 5 to 20 families spread over a 1-7 mile radius. Unlike white rural communities or towns, rural Indian settlements did not contain such things as general stores, post offices, gas stations, banks, or schools, but were simply homes located around Indian ceremonial grounds and churches.

Indians who inhabited rural communities adhered to a communal way of life that emphasized tribal traditions. They resisted, the best they could, integration into white society. Their culture and communities were not static or immutable, nor were their traditions unchanging. Rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes mitigated change on their own terms as much as possible. They did not capitulate to the outside pressures being placed on their settlements. They did not allow either Anglo encroachment or their more integrated tribal members to compromise the basic cultural, economic, and social integrity of their settlements. Instead, they adjusted to the economic, environmental, and social transformations that occurred within their respective regions in ways that allowed them to maintain their Indian identities and to continue to find meaning in the face of change. This was possible because they adhered to a fundamental ethos that defined their lives. They preserved and perpetuated that ethos in the following manner.

Rural Indians relied heavily on their communities for nurture and support. Predominantly cloistered, the communities were sustained through extended kin, clan, town, and tribal relationships. Adherence to values that stressed commonality and reciprocity as opposed to selfishness, individualism, and a preoccupation with profit served as the foundations of their communalism. They exhibited very little economic mobility. Indeed, economic stratification was considered detrimental to their communities.

Less integrated Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles were tenacious in their devotion to place. That sense of place was infused with a profound degree of sacredness or sanctity. Their shared history was manifest in the land that their families had occupied since removal; land that the majority of rural Indians continued to own in the 1930s. Because of their deep attachment to the land, less integrated Indians seldom ventured beyond the immediate areas of their birth. Kinship and privacy defined their rural enclaves. Rural Indians exhibited a significant amount of suspicion toward whites as well as toward their more integrated, tribal brethren. They were leery of outsiders, particularly those who asked too many questions, and of geographically separated tribal leaders who professed to speak for them and their communities.

The cultural traditions and values of rural Indians were perpetuated through ceremonies, dances, rituals, and stories passed along through generations. Language was an important component in sustaining a cultural link to the past. Rural Indians spoke English, but their native languages were commonly used within their homes and between one another. It was the language used in their churches as well. In both a concrete and

symbolic way, language forged and validated group identity.

My thesis is very simple. I argue that the economic downturn of the period did not have a significant impact on the rural, less integrated Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes. It is not to say that they faced absolutely no hardship during that period, but because of their strong sense of community and the retention of an historically dynamic tribal culture they were better able to endure the Great Depression than their rural white counterparts or their more integrated Indian brethren.

I assert, moreover, that the numerous New Deal programs of the federal government largely proved ineffective in aiding the rural Indian population. The Indian Bureau under the direction of John Collier, in conjunction with the Five Civilized Tribes Agency, promoted policies that attempted to turn rural Indians into self-supporting, market-oriented farmers despite the fact that rural Indians relied on a collective network of reciprocity and exchange. They viewed economic development and white encroachment as detrimental to the maintenance and perpetuation of their traditions and lifestyles; lifestyles based upon communalism rather than individualism.

Moreover, the policies that the Indian Bureau pursued throughout the 1930s in areas of education, health, and politics also conflicted with the cultural ethos of rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. I also maintain that cultural, economic, political, and social dynamics integral to rural Indian identity were strongest and most evident not at the tribal level, but at the community level.

The narrative within my chapters, moves from the macro level to the micro level. I begin with a chapter on the cultural and social aspects of rural Indian settlements. I then

incorporate successive chapters on politics, economics, education, and health. In those chapters, I first examine the impact of federal policy on the tribes, and then I focus more specifically on rural Indians and their communities.

The first chapter explores the cultural and social dynamics of rural Indian communities. I examine the various elements that combined to help rural Indians maintain their individual identity and continuity of their communities. I argue that their historically dynamic communities held together through clan, family, extended- kin, and political relationships allowed them to maintain a high degree of cultural integrity as well as remain predominantly separated from rural whites. It is a chapter about the persistence of traditions and human vitality under economic duress and in the face of change.

Chapter two analyzes the legal and political circumstances of the Five Civilized Tribes just prior to and during the 1930s. It studies how the tribes were impacted by changes in laws and federal Indian policies. It focuses on the debates surrounding the Indian Reorganization Act and the subsequent Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act. More importantly, it examines the impact that the OIWA had on rural Indian communities of the Five Civilized Tribes.

Chapter three traces the development and influence of Indian New Deal economic policies on the rural Indian communities. I maintain that despite the best intentions of the Office of Indian Affairs to help the Indians help themselves, the policies attempted to implement changes that rural Indians did not all desire. It is a chapter, that in a broader sense, addresses the issue of cultural miscommunication. It also examines

the economic strategies that rural Indians employed to endure the hardships of the Great Depression.

Chapter four assesses education among the Five Civilized Tribes and how both the federal government and the state of Oklahoma attempted to raise the standard of living among rural Indians through schooling. I analyze the policies that were designed to transform Indians into viable, productive individuals of American society. In order for that to occur, the Indian Bureau believed that Indians needed to be educated. I argue that circumstances and cultural perspectives unique to less integrated Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles either compromised, or thwarted outright, the education policies of both the state and federal government.

Chapter five evaluates health conditions among the five tribes and the efforts of both Oklahoma and the federal government to improve those conditions. I discuss the various health programs implemented by the Indian Bureau and their impact, or lack thereof, on rural Indian communities. Again, it is a chapter that probes the cultural chasm that existed between whites and rural Indians in the areas of health and medicine.

My dissertation is significant for the following reasons: First, it attempts to prove that there were rural Indian settlements among the Five Civilized Tribes that shared little, in terms of values, with their more integrated tribal members or the whites that lived nearby. This is important because the Five Civilized Tribes were largely defined as a predominantly assimilated, somewhat homogeneous people prior to the 1930s. In some respects that viewpoint was justified. The Five Civilized Tribes had a considerable, interracial population. They had assimilated whites into their tribes as far back as the

early 18th century. Creeks and Seminoles had incorporated blacks into their societies. By the early 20th century, the number of mixed-blood Indians in the Five Civilized Tribes outnumbered full-blood Indians two to one. Moreover, at the turn of the century tribal chiefs were all mixed-blood Indians. Most of these mixed-bloods had more in common with white society than they did with Indian society. Historical precedent dictated that dynamic.

Historically, the Five Civilized Tribes inhabited what became the southeastern region of the United States. They occupied portions of Alabama, the Carolinas, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi. The tribes combined agriculture with hunting and fishing to ensure their livelihood. When Europeans first colonized the region in the 16th and 17th centuries, the Indians accommodated themselves the best they could under the circumstances. They incorporated the clothing, farming techniques, and housing styles of whites. They learned animal husbandry and began raising cattle, chickens, hogs, and horses. The more ambitious among the tribes also learned English and embraced Christianity. The Cherokees and Choctaws, in particular, readily built churches and schools. They adopted constitutions and formal laws. Some developed slave plantations. More importantly, perhaps, there was a high degree of intermarriage between Indians and whites, particularly among the Cherokees, Chickasaws, and Choctaws.

Despite their accommodation to European colonization, the tribes were unable to gain the respect and trust of whites advancing into their traditional homelands at an increasing rate. The successful adaptation of many of the Indians only increased white enmity. Tribes such as the Cherokees increasingly found themselves coming under the

authority of state laws. The federal government forced removal negotiations upon the five tribes. Their sovereignty violated, the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s witnessed significant portions of the tribes removed West of the Mississippi to Indian Territory or what is the present state of Oklahoma.

In Indian Territory, the tribes became known as the Five Civilized Tribes to distinguish them from supposedly less civilized Indians in the Great Plains region. Indeed, some tribal members of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole Nations lived in spacious homes replete with imported European furniture and other luxuries. Moreover, slavery still existed in all of the tribes. The tribes continued to assimilate Christianity and they developed a well-managed school system. By the late 1800s, Cherokees, Choctaws, and Chickasaws had a higher percentage of educated people than their white counterparts in nearby states. Moreover, throughout the second half of the 19th century intermarriage between Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes and whites continued to increase. Along with prominent full bloods, this mixed-blood population played a central role in the business affairs and politics of the five nations.

The historically high degree of intermarriage differentiated the Five Civilized Tribes from most other Indian groups within the United States. No other groups of Indians so readily and so successfully integrated whites into their nations. This has created problems, however, when examining the Five Civilized Tribes. It has given the false impression that Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes have been and are somehow less Indian than their Native American counterparts in other regions of the country. Slave owning, living on substantial farms and plantations, integrating into and eventually

involving themselves in the affairs of the state of Oklahoma have all validated that impression. I take issue with that assessment. I argue that there remained a significant number of Indian settlements among the Five Civilized Tribes in the 1930s that retained traditions and lifestyles dating to the 18th century. In fact, there are Cherokee settlements in eastern Oklahoma even today that are very cloistered and conservative in nature.

I also wanted to fill a gap in the historiography on the Five Civilized Tribes. The majority of research on these tribes has analyzed their development prior to the 20th century. I suspect that the primary reason for that is the fact that a significant amount of archival material exists to chronicle the activities of the Five Civilized Tribes during the course of the 19th century. Duane Champagne, *Social Order and Political Change* (1992), Angie Debo, *The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic* (1989), and *The Road to Disappearance* (1941), Grant Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes* (1934), Arrell Gibson, *The Chickasaws* (1971), William G. McLoughlin, *After the Trail of Tears* (1993), and J. Leitch Wright, *Creeks and Seminoles* (1986), have all looked at the post-removal period. These studies, however, have focused on economics and politics, assessing the strategies employed by tribal leaders in their efforts to accommodate or minimize change.[5]

Angie Debo, *And Still The Waters Run* (1940), an examination of the dissolution of the land of the Five Civilized Tribes after detribalization, devotes only two chapters to the 1930s. It is primarily a political history that shows little understanding of the more tradition-oriented, rural Indian communities of the tribes in question. Throughout Debo's book, Indians are portrayed as hapless, exploited victims in a state of complete physical and spiritual decay at the onset of the Great Depression. I have reassessed this "victim"

history and my conclusions are quite the opposite. Indeed, rural, less integrated Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles and their communities proved quite resilient and dynamic in the face of change.[6]

My research also adds to the body of literature on the Indian New Deal although, by my own admission, I do not offer up any provocative new insights into John Collier. Kenneth Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920-1954* (1977), covered Collier's life as an Indian policy reformer in a very comprehensive manner. Along with Philp, I believe that Collier was enigmatic. He was not an assimilationist, certainly, but under his direction the Indian Bureau continued to impose programs upon the rural members of the Five Civilized Tribes that were antithetical to their collective living. Collier was more culturally sensitive than his predecessors, but he too often viewed Indian culture as monolithic rather than diversified. In that sense, I am much more critical than Philp of Collier's impact.[7]

My assessment is more in line with Lawrence Kelly, *The Assault on Indian Assimilation: John Collier and Origins of Indian Policy Reform* (1983), who maintains that Collier's intentions were admirable, but his vision not conducive to reviving Indian tribal identity. Extremely opinionated, he was unable to readjust his policies as the situation dictated. Uniform programs were ill-suited to the unique situations that prevailed among numerous tribes. Collier's Indian New Deal policies ultimately had little impact on tribes such as the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma.[8]

In terms of the Indian New Deal's overall impact I am agree with Donald Parman, *The Navajos and the New Deal* (1976), and Graham Taylor, *The New Deal and American*

Indian Tribalism: The Administration of the Indian Reorganization Act, 1934-1945 (1980), both of whom argue that because of the diversity of circumstances that prevailed among Indians in the 1930s that this period and the dynamic shift in Indian policy is best understood on a tribal or a regional basis. In that respect, my study adds to the historical understanding of the Indian New Deal as it impacted a heretofore understudied Indian population and their response to Indian Bureau policies.[9]

Similar to Parman, I found that Collier's mistake was believing that the reconstruction of tribal governments was the key to the revitalization of Indian political autonomy. Similar to the Navajo response to the Indian Reorganization Act, none of the Five Civilized Tribes adopted constitutions or charters under the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act. Both the Navajos and the Five Civilized Tribes refused to do so because of cultural prerogatives. Intra-tribal tensions manifested themselves as federal programs designed to benefit Indians were not equally embraced by all tribal members. Because of that, Indian Bureau programs initiated to improve conditions oftentimes exacerbated the situation.

Not all scholars acknowledge, however, that federal Indian programs were unsuccessful. Although Lawrence Hauptman, *The Iroquois and the New Deal* (1981), agrees with Parman that Collier's certitude in regard to his Indian policy, and his failure to completely understand Iroquois culture, resulted in the Iroquois rejecting the IRA, but Hauptman stresses that federally funded programs initiated during the 1930s among the Iroquois, such as the Seneca Arts Project and the Oneida Language and Folklore Project, reinvigorated Iroquois cultural traditions and gave rise to a new generation of tribal

leaders. Unlike the Iroquois, however, rural Indians among the Five Civilized Tribes were ambivalent or indifferent to Indian New Deal cultural programs initiated in their communities. Arts projects in the Five Civilized Tribes area aroused very little enthusiasm, primarily because rural Indians in the region did not have a history of creating arts and crafts for public purchase.[10]

Thomas Biolsi, *Organizing the Lakota: Political Economy and the New Deal on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations* (1992), also explores Indian ambivalence and cultural tensions. His study is particularly significant because it is the first study of an Indian tribe that accepted the Indian Reorganization Act. Biolsi argues that "grass roots" Indians accused Lakota IRA council members of not being "real Indians." Moreover, these "grass roots" Indians believed that federal programs were designed not to improve their condition, but to manipulate them and control their economic resources. He asserts that "grass roots" Indians blamed their own tribal leaders rather than the federal government for their condition in the 1930s. Similar intra-tribal tensions occurred among the Five Civilized Tribes as rural Indians believed that some of their tribal leaders were illegally imposed by the federal government.[11]

Dissimilarities between more integrated and less integrated Indians are also explore by Terry Wilson, *The Underground Reservation: Osage Oil* (1985) and John Moore, *The Cheyenne* (1996), both of whom maintain that cultural differences among tribal members determined their economic, social, and political perspectives as well as their reaction to the Great Depression. I agree with Wilson, who asserts that it was the more integrated tribal members who experienced the most economic difficulty during the

1930s. They were unprepared to confront the dramatic downturn in the economy because of their dependency upon oil revenues. Moore argues that "traditionalists" among the Cheyenne were suspicious of more assimilated tribal members who they viewed as too sympathetic to Indian New Deal economic policies; economic policies that "traditionalists" found detrimental to their way of life.[12]

My research also adds to our understanding of the impact of the New Deal and the Great Depression on the Midwest and Oklahoma. Previous studies such as Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (1979), Douglas R. Hurt, *The Dust Bowl: An Agricultural and Social History* (1981), and Marsha L. Weisiger, *Land of Plenty: Oklahomans in the Cotton Fields of Arizona* (1995), have analyzed the causes and consequences of not only the drought that plagued the region, but also the responses of agri-business and dispossessed tenant farmers to the Great Depression. Their work, however, provides no insight into the responses of rural Indians during this period.[13]

Lastly, my research reflects my interest in ethnicity and race in the twentieth-century American West. This region of the country continually transformed and reinvented itself throughout the period as African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and Indians relied upon their own cultural and social institutions to find meaning in their lives. Minority groups, often operating on what Richard White has called the "peripheries of power," between themselves and a more dominant Anglo society, depended upon the vitality of their communities to serve as buffers to ameliorate change.[14] Historically, subordinate groups in American society, and in the West in particular, have readjusted rather than discarded institutions essential to their cultures. As a result, adaptability and

dynamism, rather than failure and dissolution, define those peripheral groups.

Although this project is rather ambitious in scope, it is certainly not without its shortcomings. Those critics wanting statistically quantified conclusions will be disappointed. It is not a quantitative study, but a qualitative examination. That is not to say that there is no statistical analysis in my dissertation, but I am not inclined toward quantitative social history. I am more comfortable taking a holistic approach. In addition, I do not focus on the black population in any of these tribes. Even though Seminoles, for example, politically recognized two black towns or bands within their Nation, I have uncovered no evidence to suggest that blacks adhered to tribal traditions such as the Stomp or Square Grounds or the matrilineality of Seminole family and clan structure. And the Cherokees, after the abolition of slavery, exhibited no inclination to incorporate blacks into their society.

For those wishing to read a detailed economic, cultural, political, and social account of each tribe will be disappointed. My narrative examines certain differences that existed between the rural populations of the tribes, but I believe they were far more similar to one another than dissimilar. Rural Indians and their communities among all the Five Civilized Tribes adhered to a fundamental ethos that made them distinct from their more integrated, tribal brethren, thus I chose to examine them collectively. More importantly, because virtually no work had been undertaken on rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles during this period, I also thought it best to look at them as a group. Hopefully, my research will encourage scholars to focus more on the post-allotment period and analyze the individual tribes in a more comprehensive

manner.

There are a number of other specific reasons why I chose to take a qualitative, holistic approach and focus my attention on rural Indians of all five of the tribes. When I began my research, I had serious doubts about how much material existed that would provide the means for an extensive narrative on any one of the tribes. When the Five Civilized Tribes underwent detribalization at the turn of the century, bureaucratic dialogue between the tribes and the federal government diminished significantly. Although the Five Civilized Tribes Agency continued to function, the tribes themselves did not continue to generate a significant records documenting their activities. Therefore, I did not have the luxury of examining two or three major depositories that chronicled the history of the Five Civilized Tribes in the 1930s. Although an abundance of records exist in the Federal Archives, they are spotty in nature. They document some areas quite well, but address other areas not at all.

In addition, what federal and public archival records that exist for this period document almost exclusively tribal leaders and spokesmen and their legal and political discussions with people such as John Collier, United States Congressmen, the Superintendents of the Five Civilized Tribes, Oklahoma businessmen and politicians, as well as some correspondence between themselves. This would be serendipitous if this was a study of these tribes from the top down, so to speak. However, because I have focused on rural Indian communities, the records and documentation have been sparse.

Rural Indians were not usually those people involved in larger tribal matters, lawsuits, or those individuals who debated political and legal issues with the Indian

Bureau. Indeed, the majority of rural Indians were apolitical when it came to issues at the tribal, state, and federal level. At worst, they distrusted many of their tribal leaders. At best, rural Indians were ambivalent. The majority of them had no more connection to their tribal leaders than most citizens living in the United States have with their state governors. Seldom did they articulate their feelings. Very few rural Indians left behind accounts of themselves. I have had to rely on a diverse body of sources drawn from the fields of anthropology, geography, health, history, and social work to document their circumstances. It has been a daunting task to paste bits and pieces together to create my narrative, and there are substantial gaps in the analysis. For example, few records exist that document the activities of rural Chickasaws. Although there were less tradition-oriented Chickasaws, for example, than Seminoles, nevertheless they existed. For whatever ever unfortunate reasons, however, their past is not well chronicled. Their presence in my narrative is much smaller than I would have hoped.

Lastly, in order to avoid the potential disaster of working for several years only to discover that not enough sources were available for a study of rural Seminoles, for example, I took the safer route of gathering information on all the tribes. The value to that approach is that I have provided a sound, general analysis of the rural, less integrated population of the Five Civilized Tribes during the 1930s. The shortcoming or failure, is that scholars who want a very meticulously detailed account of the rural population of one of the tribes will be disappointed. I take full responsibility for that decision.

Endnotes

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Chapter 1

Home Is Where The Spirit Lives

During the 1930s in Oklahoma, the Indian Bureau and Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal attempted to improve the living conditions of the Five Civilized Tribes. Through political legislation, economic programs, and education and health reforms, the federal government worked to alleviate hunger, poverty, sickness, and social and cultural fragmentation that had apparently destroyed the lives of countless rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles since the allotment of their tribal lands at the turn of the century.[1]

Under the guidance of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, John Collier, the Indian Bureau sought to reinvigorate what it perceived as a hapless group of backward people struggling to survive in modern, twentieth century America. Collier wanted to restore their cultural vitality and dignity. He also wanted to transform these people into productive citizens, able to fend for themselves and their families. Such was the empathetic, but often problematic strategy that underscored federal policy as it applied to Indians living in the central and eastern half of Oklahoma. What Collier and the Indian Bureau failed to understand was that the predominantly rural, less integrated members of the Five Civilized Tribes remained highly suspicious of the beneficent hand of the federal government. Contrary to the assumption of policy makers, the Indians' will to live had not been shattered. Indeed, their spirit and well being were as vital and intact as

they had always been, sustained in the lifeblood of their communities and their traditions.[2]

Although many Indians lost their allotted lands in the decades prior to the Great Depression, that was not the case for those Indians who had maintained communally oriented, subsistence lifestyles. Contradicting the dire reports of some historians about the debilitating effects of land loss among members of the Five Civilized Tribes, most rural, restricted Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles still had their allotments in the 1930s. Much of the land they occupied had been in their families for generations. The Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes reported in 1940 that "the majority" of restricted Indians continued to live on their allotments.[3]

A survey undertaken in 1940, for example, revealed that out of 650 Chickasaw and Choctaw families still retaining their allotments, only 130 of the families possessed less than one-half Indian blood. A social worker examining another group of rural Choctaws in the 1930s in McCurtain, southwestern LeFlore, and northeastern Pushmataha Counties indicated that 92 out of 100 families owned land. The eight families who did not own land in the settlement areas lived on Indian church land. It was noted, however, that the eight families owned land elsewhere. Eighty-six percent of the Choctaws in that study were full blood.[4]

Another survey taken during the same period revealed that two-thirds of all Creeks possessing one half or more Indian blood still held their allotments. A subsequent investigation conducted in the early 1950s, found that 26,000 restricted Indians still maintained their allotments. Despite historically faulty enumerations conducted among

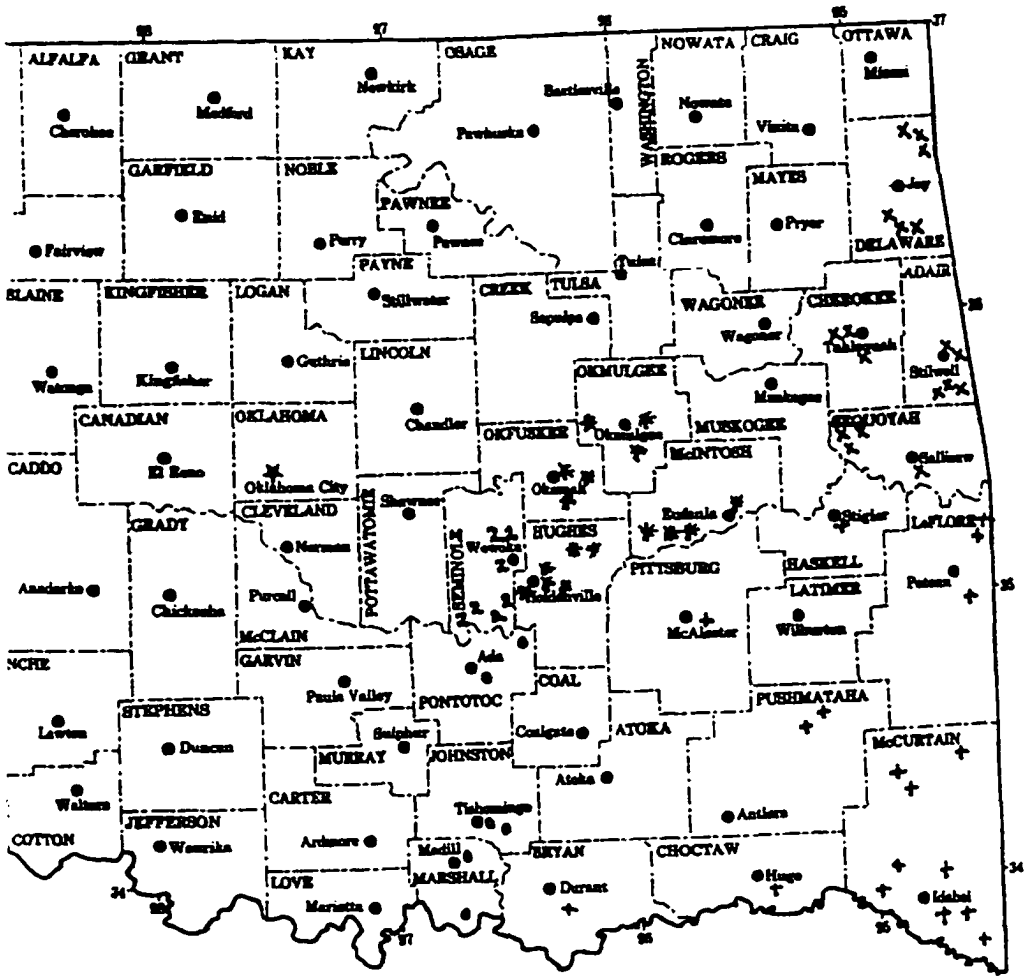
the Five Civilized Tribes the point is clear: most rural, restricted Indians, the majority of whom lived tradition-oriented, communal lifestyles, clung tenaciously to their homesteads in the 1930s and beyond.[5]

Although the Great Depression had a tremendous impact on Oklahomans, those Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes who inhabited the small, secluded, rural communities or settlements were better prepared to endure the hardships because of their land ownership and devotion to the areas where they were born. They were better able to cope with the adversity because of the manner in which they lived. Their ability to survive depended upon the resiliency and vitality of their settlements. Moreover, the location of those communities was as important as the social and cultural institutions that defined the communities. Despite the changes wrought by time, the fundamental nature and social integrity of those settlements had persisted into the 1930s.[6]

The majority of restricted, less integrated Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes lived in remote and isolated, rural areas. Their homes and settlements were oftentimes located in places that were not easily accessible by automobile. The communities did not appear on maps and were largely unknown to outsiders. Indeed, the Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes reported in 1940 that some Chickasaw and Choctaw homes "were completely inaccessible." Only narrow trails, commonly mistaken by the casual observer as deer trails, wound their way into those areas (see Map 1.1).[7]

Because most rural Indians were not interested in market farming, they did not establish their homes on lands possessing the richest soil. They purposely left the more fertile valleys and choice bottomland to whites and the more acculturated brethren of

Map 1.1 Some Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole Rural Communities



Derived from *The Historical Atlas of Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press,1980).

LEGEND:
Cherokee Communities: x
Chickasaw Communities: o
Choctaw Communities: +
Creek Communities: *
Seminole Communities: z

their respective tribes. In the Cherokee region, for example, virtually no "full bloods" inhabited "the better farming districts." Observers noted that they lived in the "less favored communities."[8] By that it was meant that they avoided land that was especially suitable for agriculture for lands that were more rugged. Privacy not profit was their chief motivation. Detached from cities and towns, highways and roads, the Indians preferred secluded, wooded hollows, and tracts of land concealed by groves of trees.[9]

Many of their homes were located in the same areas that had been first occupied by their ancestors after their removal to Oklahoma in the 1830s. Even allotment did not greatly disturb that dynamic nor did the dislocation caused by the Great Depression. It is not to say that Oklahoma did not lose people during the Great Depression, but not to the degree that popular culture has fixed in the imagination. Out migration was certainly not the behavior of rural, restricted Indians.[10]

It is difficult to ascertain the exact number of restricted, full-blood and mixed blood Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes who lived in Oklahoma between 1930-1940. Historical statistics regarding the various blood classes of Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles have been notoriously unreliable. The primary cause were faulty enumeration during allotment and subsequent, inaccurate censuses. Nevertheless, a survey conducted in 1931 by the office of the Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes enumerated 20,899 restricted Indians in the 20 central and eastern Oklahoma counties that are the focus of my research (see Table 1.1). According to the 1930 census, there were19,403 full-blood Indians out of a population of 72,626 Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles (see Table 1.2). The same 20

Table 1.1 Restricted Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes in 1931 in 20 Selected Counties

Cherokees	**Chickasaws**	**Choctaws**	**Creeks**	**Seminoles**
Adair 1,968	Johnston 813	Bryan 644	Hughes 1,288	Seminole 1,280
Cherokee 1,585	Marshall 627	Choctaw 1,081	McIntosh 1,375	
Delaware 2,388	Pontotoc 551	Le Flore 605	Okfuskee 1,117	
Mayes 1,317		McCurtain 1,796	Okmulgee 1,032	
Sequoyah 567		Pittsburgh 501		
		Pushmataha 861		

Derived from the Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, *Annual Report*, 1932

Table 1.2 Full Bloods and Mixed Bloods in the Five Civilized Tribes in 1930

Cherokees	**Chickasaws**	**Choctaws**	**Creeks**	**Seminoles**
Full Bloods 7,091	Full Bloods 1,150	Full Bloods 5,075	Full Bloods 4,754	Full Bloods 1,333
Mixed Bloods 33,634	Mixed Bloods 3,488	Mixed Bloods 11,406	Mixed Bloods 3,830	Mixed Bloods 437

Derived from the Bureau of the Census, 1930, *Indian Population of the United States and Alaska* (GPO: Washington D.C., 1937).

counties contained an Indian population of 43,401 people in 1930. That number included people possessing any degree of Indian blood. Ten years later in 1940, the same 20 counties had a "non-white" population of 35,147 people. The only racial or ethnic category the 1940 census used was white and non-white. Despite the loss of people, census records do not indicate a precipitous decline in the non-white population.[11]

Between 1930 and 1940 there was a loss of 31,379 people in all 20 counties. According to the census, that twenty-county total included 8,254 non-white people. That meant that each county lost roughly 412 non-white people over a ten year period. That averages out to a loss of 40 people per county per year. That is not a significant number, particularly if one takes into account the fact that non-whites also included blacks. Moreover, 13 of the 20 counties gained people during the 1930s. Seminole County showed the most precipitous decline as its population went from 79,261 in 1930 to 61,201 in 1940. Much of that decline can be attributed to the collapse of the oil industry as a result of the Great Depression. Few Indians were employed in the oil industry in the 1930s in Oklahoma. Statistics point out that most of the people who left the rural areas of the Five Civilized Tribes region, as well as the state of Oklahoma during the 1930s, were not the Indians who inhabited the rural settlements. Surveys conducted during the 1930s confirm the fact that rural Indians, the majority of whom belonged to the restricted class, continued to own their allotments between 1930-1940.[12]

Rural Indians seldom moved away from their sparsely populated communities. Of 100 Choctaw families examined in the early 1930s, in 1940 ninety-one percent continued to live in the counties in which they were born. Similarly, out of 486 Seminoles studied

in 1939, only 20 adults had moved "from or to another county" during the course of their lifetimes. Only 51 individuals of the 486 had been born outside Seminole County. Rural Cherokees exhibited the same attachment to place of their birth. It was not unusual to find full-blood settlements in the Cherokee country, for example, whose families had lived in the area for generations. Cherokees revealed to researchers in the 1930s that they still maintained many of the cultural and social traditions first introduced to Oklahoma with Cherokee removal in the late 1820s and1830s. Perseverance not dissolution best described rural Indian settlements.[13]

In 1934, one researcher discovered that a "high percentage" of full-blood Cherokees continued to live in the areas of their birth. Martin Blackwood, a full blood Cherokee, indicated that he lived one hundred yards from where he was born. He lived in the house his grandfather built in the 1840s. Virtually all the Indians who lived in the Upper Jenkins Creek community, in southern Adair had remained "not more than four to five miles from where they were born." Winnie Benjamin, an elderly Choctaw full-blood woman, echoed these sentiments. She said that she had lived in the same place nearly all of her life. Another Choctaw full blood, James Baker, emphasized that he still lived on his original allotment. Similar to other Indians, he had never left the area of his birth.[14]

In addition to census records, however flawed they might be, there is enough other evidence to conclude that rural Indians exhibited a deep devotion "to place." Continuity, despite the encroachment of modernity and the influx of outsiders, played an integral role in their lives. And yet incongruous as it might have seemed, rural Indians did not view their settlements as dynamic, but rather as static. Not static in the sense that

no change occurred, but rather static in the sense that people, even if they left their communities, continued to feel a profound connection to those communities that neither distance nor time transcended. The communities continued to be the focal point of their lives. Moreover, the small percentage of people who moved regularly returned to their settlements. Although they might have lived in cities such as Okmulgee or Tahlequah, they continued to identify the rural settlements as their homes. In that regard, community encompassed something much more than a geographic location.[15]

The permanence of their communities, both as a physical place and a state of mind, instilled in individuals a sense of "belonging." As the magazine, *Indians At Work*, reported in 1936, the communities served as the basis "of the psychological resources" of the Indian. The communities represented the "moral and spiritual backbone of the people."[16] Even the extensive droughts Oklahoma experienced in the 1930s, did not force rural Indians to abandon their settlements. The Little Lee's Creek area between Sallisaw and Stilwell, for example, experienced a severe drought in 1936. In addition, lumber mills closed. It was reported that numerous whites left the area, but Indians remained. The downturn in the coal industry in Pittsburgh County and the oil industry in Seminole County in the 1930s had the same economically debilitating impact. White workers in those industries moved on, while Indians stayed.[17]

About the only thing that forced Indians from their rural settlements were extensive federal projects such as the Grand River Dam constructed in the late 1930s. A conservation and reclamation project, it flooded thousands of acres of land in northeastern Oklahoma destroying numerous Cherokee settlements. But projects such as

those were rare in the state in the 1930s. Indians remained resilient in the face of change. As a Creek man once told Alexander Posey, another Creek, as "you see me here today tilling my ground, tomorrow you will find me here."[18]

Depending upon the tribe and the locale, the topography of the land where these communities existed, varied. For example, in the Cherokee region of northeastern Oklahoma, in counties such as Adair, Cherokee, Delaware, Mayes, and Sequoyah, woods, ridges, modest plains, sandstone hills, steep slopes, and deep valleys defined the landscape. Known as the Ozark Uplift or Ozark Plateau, many restricted, tradition-minded Cherokees lived in the rugged, eastern portion of those counties. Small springs and creeks marked the terrain. The Arkansas, Grand, and Illinois Rivers and their tributaries traversed the Cherokee region.[19]

Johnston County, home to numerous restricted Chickasaws, was hilly in the north and defined by a sandy plain in its southern slope. The Arbuckle Mountains extended through much of the county. The Chickasaw area was divided somewhat evenly between prairie and timber. Many tradition-oriented Choctaws lived in the Kiamita Mountains in the southeastern region of the state. They also settled along the Red and Arkansas Rivers, separated by the Ouachita Mountains. The terrain of such counties as LeFlore, McCurtain, and Pittsburgh was wooded and broken with broad, shallow valleys located between high ridges. The mountains in northern McCurtain County, home to the majority of less integrated Choctaws in that county, were as high as 2400 feet.[20]

Rural Seminoles, on the other hand, most of whom were predominantly full blood, lived in the flat and gently rolling countryside around such towns as Konawa,

Sasakwa, and Wewoka in Seminole County. Sandstone hills, deeply dissected by numerous creeks and streams, defined much of the area. Trees such as hickory, oak, pecan, and walnut instead of pine concealed their homes. Rural Creeks lived in a similar manner, particularly in McIntosh and Okmulgee Counties. They lived some distance from urban areas, instead preferring the gently rolling terrain of the countryside. A substantial number of Creek full bloods lived outlying areas around the small town of Hanna, Oklahoma. In the Five Civilized Tribes region, the majority of restricted, subsistence-oriented Indians removed themselves, as much as possible, from more heavily populated areas. They used isolation and seclusion to maintain their communities on their own terms as much as possible.[21]

The manner in which they lived on this land followed distinct patterns. Most Cherokees, for example, lived in small cabins, cottages, or houses. In the Ozark region of northeastern Oklahoma, approximately eighty percent of their homes were frame houses made of wood native to the areas they inhabited. Another 17 percent were constructed from logs, with the remaining 3 percent assembled out of stone. Regardless of style, the dwellings were usually smaller than those of their white neighbors.[22]

Moreover, interspersed throughout rural Cherokee settlements were additional buildings and homes that, to the casual observer, appeared to be "crude" and uninhabitable. However, that was not the case. Families had either abandoned them because of deaths or people had moved to another location simply for a change. The structures were temporarily out of use, but the Indians had every intention of using them in the future when necessity dictated.[23]

Despite their small size, approximately 60 percent of the homes contained from three to four rooms. For example, a survey of 2,252 restricted Cherokee families reported that 1,377 lived in homes with three or more rooms. A 1932 study conducted among predominantly full-blood Choctaw families found that "most of the homes" consisted of four rooms. A similar study involving Creeks, revealed that 56 percent of the Indian homes had three or more rooms. The majority of rural Seminoles also lived in multi-room dwellings. Moreover, contrary to one report that concluded that the areas that Indians inhabited east of the Grand River was "one vast slum," field work undertaken in the region throughout the 1930s proved otherwise. Although modest in size, and cheaply constructed, the majority of rural Indian homes were clean and well-kept. A family health survey of rural Choctaws and Chickasaws begun in 1938, found the yards free of debris and the homes to be "extremely neat." Even when the homes contained dirt floors, the ground was swept regularly and packed down to minimize dust.[24]

The interiors of rural Indian homes reflected the rustic style of living they preferred. Indians possessed little furniture. Except for beds, most homes lacked chairs, pictures, and tables. The furniture that existed was usually home made. Oftentimes, pallets placed upon the floor served as beds. Virtually no families possessed radios, telephones, or other modern conveniences such as washing machines. For example, out of 100 Cherokee families surveyed in the early 1930s, only one family owned a telephone. On the rare occasion when a person happened to own such modern amenities as an automobile or gas-powered washer, they were shared with others.[25]

Running water supplied by indoor plumbing was virtually non-existent. Among

the Five Civilized Tribes, rural Creeks and Seminoles appeared to have the most wells. Some Seminoles even used city water, and some Creek families had electricity, but they were anomalies. No matter the tribe, the majority of rural Indian families had no bath tubs or indoor toilet facilities. People used either outhouses or the convenience of the surrounding woods and underbrush. Individuals bathed in nearby creeks, streams, and springs. They used some of the same water sources to wash clothes. Fire places and wood stoves heated their homes. Rural Cherokees, perhaps more than the other four Indian groups, lived the most rustically. The regions they inhabited were also the most rugged and the least developed.[26]

In addition to preferring certain geographical locations and housing types, the physical organization of rural Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole communities and settlements followed distinct patterns. Anywhere from 6 to 30 houses, for example, made up the small Cherokee settlements. These communities were sometimes referred to as towns, although they contained no banks, grocery stores, post offices, or other such institutions most often associated with white towns. Small paths, trails, and narrow country roads connected the communities. Settlements such as Double Spring Creek in Cherokee County, Honey Creek in Delaware County, Upper Jenkins Creek in Adair County, and Upper Tesquantnee Hollow in Delaware County all followed this pattern. Other main Cherokee full-blood settlements included Peavine Creek in Adair County, Redbird Smith in Sequoyah County, and Brewer in Mayes County. Small families and their extended kin lived within several square miles of one another. For example, the Double Spring Creek community contained 44 restricted Indians

comprising 11 families. Honey Creek consisted of 12 families that contained 63 people. Upper Jenkins Creek was home to 19 families and 150 people spread over a 5 mile radius. Seven families made up of 34 individuals populated the steep slopes of Upper Tesquantnee community.[27]

Among the Choctaw, the rural settlements were known as *Chuka lokoli* or group of houses. In McCurtain County, for example, rural communities were located in areas approximately four to five square miles in size. The "average population" of the *Chuka lokoli* consisted of 10 to 30 families. Although one 20 mile long valley in southeastern McCurtain County was home to 60 Choctaw families. In the majority of these settlements, Choctaws indicated that they knew of no one, however distant, who was not related. They said that "very rarely" was a mate found "outside of the community." These settlements were "isolated from white towns" of any significant size. Most Choctaws visited the towns primarily for supplies. Whites and blacks lived near the *Chuka lokoli*, but evidence based upon Choctaw informants and the Indian Bureau indicated that their relationship with their Indian neighbors was virtually non-existent. McCurtain County alone, contained 37 rural Choctaw settlements that were situated around Choctaw churches. *Hotcha Tanaha, Kulli Chitto*, *Kulli Tuklo*, *Nanih Chitto*, *Ponki Bok*, St. Mathew, *Tohwali*, and *Yashu* were some of the larger communities. Kulli Chitto, for example, 1 ½ miles north of the small town of Bethel, contained 15 families. Approximately 17 families lived in Kulli Tuklo, located 8 miles southeast of Idabel. [28]

Despite the organizational pattern and social structure of Choctaw settlements, evidence indicates that they were not as cloistered as their Cherokee, Creek, or Seminole

counterparts. One observer noted that Choctaw settlements in the 1930s did not reflect any kind of social cohesiveness nor did they appear to operate communally. Yet this is not to imply that rural Choctaw settlements were similar to white communities, but that they tended to be more "atomistic" and less "corporate" in nature. Part of that dynamic can undoubtedly be attributed to the "enormous amount of success" many Choctaws had "integrating themselves" into white society in the aftermath of the 1898 Curtis Act. In the following decades, prominent Choctaws such as Ben Dwight, who had an undergraduate degree from Columbia University and a law degree from Stanford University, William Durant, Victor Locke, Gabe Parker, William Stigler, and United States Senator W.B. Pine lobbied hard to have restrictions lifted from Choctaw land thus allowing Choctaws to "become full-fledged American citizens." Prominent Choctaws encouraged their people to obtain educations and work at becoming contributing members of American society.[29]

Nevertheless, one has to be very cautious in reaching the conclusion that rural Choctaws communities were less corporate in nature and contained Indians who desired to integrate into American society. Anthropologists, historians, Indian Bureau field agents, social workers, as well as Indians themselves, repeatedly stressed that many Indians appeared to be assimilated who were not assimilated at all. An elderly Seminole man referred to this as "walking in both worlds." They refrained from "acting Indian" in the presence of whites in order to reduce tensions between themselves and those they considered to be "outsiders."[30] The secluded nature of many of their settlements benefitted them in their effort to remain less integrated in regard to the white population

surrounding them.

This is not to argue that all rural Indian settlements were cloistered enclaves comprised of Indians who disliked whites. F. W. Kirch of the Indian Bureau reported that "no translator was needed" in the Cherokee rural community of Honey Creek. Other Indian Bureau field agents reported that Honey Creek was a fairly "progressive" community. There were 12 families, 6 of whom were full blood. There were two main family groupings in a "stretch" of 7 miles. There were also, however, 11 non-Indian families in the immediate area. The geographer Leslie Hewes stated that the Honey Creek settlement was "somewhat unusual for the rest of the Cherokee area." Hewes reported that the Indians in Honey Creek were more "communicative" than other rural Indians in other areas.[31]

Not only did the physical structure of rural Indian settlements distinguish them from whites, but family composition and size as well as household organization distinguished rural, less integrated Indians from whites. Moreover, there existed fundamental differences between full-blood families, who were overwhelmingly tradition-oriented and less-integrated, and those Indian families who were more integrated into white society.[32]

Rural, less integrated Indian couples were less likely to be married in a civil ceremony. They simply "took up together." A verbal pledge between a man and woman sealed their bond. A Creek man, Billie Byrd, said that when a man desired to live with a woman he went to her house, placed either his coat or hat on the floor, and if the woman picked the article of clothing up it signified that she was willing to live with the man.

How widespread this practice was is difficult to ascertain. What is important is that a significant number of common-law unions were prevalent in all rural Indian communities. When a man and woman shared a home and attended Indian "social affairs" as a couple, the community recognized them as man and wife. The children they bore were considered legitimate, not only in the eyes of their community, but in the eyes of Oklahoma courts as well.[33]

If formal wedding ceremonies took place, they usually did so after a couple had been living together. Both rural Cherokee and Choctaw couples were married in civil ceremonies at approximately the same rate. Out of 165 full-blood Cherokee couples questioned in 1934, 90 had been married in civil ceremonies while 75 marriages were common-law unions. Out of 100 predominantly full-blood Choctaw couples surveyed in the early 1930s "about one-half...had been married in a civil ceremony."[34] The percentage of less integrated Creeks couples married in civil ceremonies was similar. Moreover, the anthropologist Alexander Spoehr found evidence that "some Seminoles" continued to practice polygamy in the 1930s. This sometimes entailed, for example, a man marrying sisters. When wives were not related, they "sometimes lived in separate houses" from one another. Despite Spoehr's findings, polygamy was the exception rather than the rule among Seminoles. There is no indication that polygamy existed among the other Five Civilized Tribes.[35]

Common-law Indian marriages were dissolved when either the man or wife permanently left the home. When individuals "lived in a marital state" with a new partner they were considered divorced from their previous partner. Among 200 Choctaw

men and women, 25 reported they had been married before. The other 175 people said that they had been married anywhere from 6-30 years. Divorce or separation rates among a group of 200 Seminole men and women were slightly higher. Thirty-six percent of the women and 39.5 percent of the men said that they had been married more than once. Among the Cherokees studied in 1934, 47 people said that they had been in previous marriages. It did not appear that divorce among rural Cherokees carried much of a stigma. Those interviewed maintained that people were granted a large degree of freedom in "making and breaking marital agreements."[36]

In addition to marriage, a survey that the Indian Bureau began in 1938 revealed distinct variations in family structure among rural Indians. Although it would be irresponsible to define Indian behavior based upon blood-quantum, evidence indicates that family and household patterns differed between full-blood and mixed-blood Indians. The differences were most acute between restricted and non-restricted Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes. Not surprisingly, virtually all of the Indians that inhabited the rural communities that are the focus of this study, were of the restricted class and a high percentage were full blood.[37]

Among 100 Chickasaw families analyzed in Johnston County in the late 1930s, 30 per cent were mixed-blood families. The majority of the mixed-blood households consisted of a white man and a full-blood Indian wife. Only four families were headed by a full-blood Chickasaw man and a white woman. The mixed-blood families contained, on average, 1.8 kids while the full-blood Chickasaw families averaged 3.8 children. Twelve of the 70 full-blood, more tradition-oriented families contained five or more

children. Seventy-seven per cent of those full-blood Chickasaw families lived in extended-kin households. Mixed-blood families, on the other hand, were far less likely than their full-blood counterparts to have extended kin living within the household. Only 13 of the 30 mixed-blood families, or 43 per cent, had relatives sharing their home. This was in contrast not only to the majority of Chickasaw full-blood households, but to full-blood households among the Cherokees, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles as well.[38]

Similar patterns were also prevalent among 100 Choctaw families in Choctaw County that contained at least one full-blood husband or wife. The "majority" of the 30 mixed-blood marriages consisted of a white husband and an Indian wife. Consistent with Chickasaw mixed-blood families, only 40 per cent of the mixed-blood couples lived in extended-kin households. On the other hand, 45 out of 70, or 64 per cent of full-blood families shared their homes with relatives. Unlike the Chickasaws, full-blood and mixed-blood Choctaw families contained a similar number of children. They averaged 3.65 children. The one significant difference, however, was that full-blood Choctaw families were more likely to have 5 or more children than their Chickasaw counterparts. Twenty-four families out of 70 followed that pattern. That was consistent with another Choctaw full-blood settlement near the town of Damon in Latimer County where full-blood Choctaw families averaged from 6 to10 children.[39]

Among Creeks, full-blood marriages were even more pronounced. Out of 100 couples studied in the late 1930s, 80 per cent were full-blood marriages. This was consistent with the fact that full-blood Creeks clung tenaciously to their traditions. Because of that they were less likely to associate with whites much less inter-marry.

However, Creek families, whether full blood or mixed, averaged 3.64 children per family. And yet 46 of the Creek full-blood families, or 57 per cent, lived in extended-kin households. Of the 20 mixed-marriages, only 30 per cent of the couples shared their homes with relatives. This compared to other studies that concluded that a high percentage of Creek full bloods lived in extended-family households. A similar adherence to the extended-family structure was found among rural, restricted Cherokees in the 1934 study. Forty-seven out of 100 homes contained from one to four people who were not members of the family In another traditional Cherokee area, outside of the town of Stilwell, extended families were also prevalent. The Sanders family contained 12 members ranging in age from 2 to 50. The Humingbird family consisted of 23 people aged 3 to 49. The Sequichie family was comprised of 9 members differing in age from 4 months to 61 years.[40]

Several conclusions can be reached from the aforementioned data. The size of the predominantly full-blood families that were surveyed was consistent with the overall size of the majority of restricted Indian families of the Five Civilized Tribes throughout the 1930s. Most restricted families averaged from 3.5 to 4 children. In addition, restricted Indians, the majority of whom lived subsistence lifestyles, were far more likely to live in extended-family households than their non-traditional, more integrated Indian counterparts. Houses that contained upwards of 20 members were not out of the ordinary.[41]

The extended-kin pattern found in more tradition-oriented, mostly full-blood communities also reinforced the cultural cohesiveness of the communities. Even though

most rural Choctaws informed one researcher that they had no preference about Indian or white spouses, a white man, Claude Gilbert, who had been raised among the Choctaw, told the researcher otherwise. Gilbert said that the Choctaws were just being polite when they indicated that they had no preference. Gilbert stressed that rural Choctaws preferred to marry other Indians so as to keep their small communities culturally and socially together. And yet despite Gilbert's assessment, one does not want to reach the conclusion that all rural Choctaws were bias against whites or their culture. Jimmy Belvin, whose father was a full-blood Choctaw and whose mother was white, recalled that his father did not allow the children to speak Choctaw in the home despite the fact that Belvin's father could neither read nor write and spoke very little English. Belvin indicated that his father wanted the children to obtain an education and move comfortably in the white world.[42]

Nevertheless, those rural Indians who adhered to common-law marriage and their flexible attitude toward the sanctity of marriage also reflected the less rigid manner in which they structured their lives and their communities. This does not mean that they disrespected the institution of marriage, but their approach allowed for more fluidity and precluded them from having to legally dissolve their marriage in a white court of law. The informality or atypicality of some rural Indian marriages was also revealed by the occasionally drastic difference in age between rural Indian spouses. A Chickasaw woman, Mickeo Stick, was 20 when she married Mose Burris, sixty. They produced 13 children during the course of their marriage. Their age difference was quite extreme, but rural Indian spouses who differed in age by 15-20 years was not that unusual.[43]

There was no set pattern, however, that defined rural Indian, extended-kin

households. Relatives that shared homes with married couples varied in their relation to the couples. Although Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles were matrilineal, and they adhered to that construct in determining clan and town membership, there is no conclusive evidence that indicated that only relatives of the wife shared households with rural Indian couples. The matrilineal construct appeared to be more pronounced among the Seminoles. Although a Creek man, Woodrow Haney, indicated that his mother was one-fourth Creek and his father was three-fourths Seminole, but he considered himself Creek because that was his mother's tribe. Among the other groups, however, there seemed to be a good deal of flexibility in terms of household structure. Some couples lived with mother and father-in-laws of either the husband or wife. Brothers, sisters, nieces, and nephews made up extended-families. Aunts and uncles, grandmothers, and grandfathers all helped raise children. People such as Buster Ned, a full-blood Chickasaw, whose grandparents raised him, were not uncommon in the rural areas of eastern Oklahoma. The offspring of rural, restricted Indian couples, no matter the age, continued to share homes with their parents and found refuge with extended kin when necessity dictated.[44]

In rural Indian families among all of the tribes, it was not unusual to find single children in their thirties continuing to live at home. There did not appear to be any kind of stigma attached to that type of behavior. Families also allowed their married sons and daughters to remain in the home with their respective spouses. It was not out of the ordinary to find homes where sons and daughters, their spouses, and their children continued to live with their parents. Moreover, extended households were not strictly

limited to blood relatives, but included unrelated friends, as well as fellow clan or town members.[45]

The extended family also consisted of adopted children. It was assumed that either friends or relatives would care for the children of "transient unions." That is, friends and relatives helped raise illegitimate children. Rural Cherokees, for example, treated adopted children the same as their own. There were even rare instances when rural, full-blood Indian families adopted white children. Claude Gilbert was raised among the Choctaws. Gilbert recalled that when his father moved from Oklahoma to Los Angeles, "I ran away" and moved back to Oklahoma. Gilbert stated that he was accepted among rural Choctaws because "being Indian was a matter of attitude."[46] Tradition-oriented communities among all the Five Civilized Tribes possessed an informal, integrated living system contingent upon families shouldering the responsibility of caring for one another. Household structure was open and flexible.[47]

In addition to family settlements, clans and towns played an integral role in the social organization of rural Indians. The persistence of clans and towns was most evident among the Creeks, Seminoles, and Cherokee Nighthawk and Seven Clans Society Keetoowahs. Clans and towns were not simply clusters of family groups, but rather the organizing principle through which people traced their lines of descent. The lineage was matrilineal. Moreover, the clans were based upon kinship and not necessarily where a person lived. Thus, a person could belong to a specific clan, but not necessarily live in the same area as other members of that clan. In all of the tribes, people from the same clan could not marry one another. They had to seek mates outside of their clans.[48]

Within Creek and Seminole clans, children related to adults in proscribed ways. For example, children referred to all of the men of their father's clan and family as their "little fathers." They called the women of their father's clan and family their "grandmothers or little mothers." Moreover, children identified all of the men of their mother's family who were older than themselves as their uncles. Their mother's brothers who were their age or younger were called their "brothers." Similarly, all of the women of their mother's clan and family were known as their "aunts or grandmothers." Those women who were their age or younger were recognized as their "sisters." In addition, after they reached adulthood, Seminole men who had sisters considered their sisters' homes exactly like their own home. In fact, a woman's brother or brothers, not her husband, were responsible for the discipline of her children. Brothers also provided help around the house undertaking various tasks as needed. Seminole fathers were responsible for teaching their sons manual skills, hunting, and fishing as well as passing along traditions. Because of this extended clan network, Indian children had a number of adults they could turn to for nurture and advice.[49]

In the 1930s, active, matrilineal, exogamous clans among the Seminole included the *Aktayahcvlki*, Alligator, Bear, Beaver, Bird, Buzzard, Coon, Deer, Eagle, Earth, Fox, Grass, *Kapiccvlki*, Mole, *Nokfilvlki*, Otter, Panther or Tiger, Potato, Pumpkin, Salt, Skunk, Snake, *Tamvlki*, Toad, Turkey, *Waksvlki*, Wind, and Wolf. There also existed 14 Seminole bands, towns, or *talwas*. The *talwas* served economic, political, religious, and social functions. Both undertook civil and ritualistic duties. Politically, each *talwa* was represented on the Seminole Council. Not all *talwas*, however, contained every clan.

Moreover, Seminole Chiefs traditionally were chosen from either the Bear, Beaver, or Bird clan at Tallahassee Square Ground. According to Willie Lena, a full-blood Seminole, Square Grounds still active in the 1930s included *Ochesee*, Tallahassee, and Gar Creek all within 14 miles of Wewoka; Eufala and *Latokala* outside of Cromwell; *Tiwati* 9 miles from Sasakwa; and *Mikasuki* approximately one half mile from Seminole.[50]

Similar to the Seminoles, Creek clan membership was kinship rather than residence based. Those who belonged to the same clan considered themselves relatives, although strict adherence to that dynamic varied from community to community. Creeks belonged to both the clan and Town of their mothers. A man or woman's given Indian name, known as their Town or "Square name," was "a password of sorts." Every young, tradition-oriented Creek girl and boy were given that name when they were "old enough to partake in the rituals and festivities" of the Town. It was kept on the "Town books" in place of their family or Christian name. Jimmie Barnett, a full-blood Creek, said that when a man married he became "like a brother to everyone in his wife's Town."[51] This contradicted the common belief among some Indian Bureau field agents that Creeks no longer had an interest in Creek Towns. More than likely, the Indian Bureau was referring to Creeks who lived in the northern part of Creek County. Known as Lower Creeks, historically they were the more integrated of Oklahoma Creeks. Those Creeks in the southern part of east-central Oklahoma, known as Upper Creeks, were considered to be more tradition-minded and less willing to integrate with whites.[52]

The Creek clans were always subordinate to the Towns. Forty-four Towns existed

in 1937. They were associated with either the Red or White moiety or division. Towns belonging to the same moiety "belonged to the same side of the fire." All Creek Towns, or *idalwas*, descended from four principal or Mother Towns. These were *Abika*, *Kawida*, *Kisita*, and *Tugabatse*. Each of the 44 Creek Towns in Oklahoma had their own meeting places and ceremonial grounds. Most Town members lived within five miles of their Town square grounds or church. The area around Hanna, Oklahoma had a significant population of rural Creeks, clustered around several key Towns. Most, but not all of the Creeks in this area, were less-integrated or more tradition-conscious Indians. A few of the Towns were *Kayaleychi*, *Hilapi*, and *Okchayi*. The Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes reported in 1930 that there were approximately 750 Creeks in the vicinity of Hanna who made up 150 families.[53]

Creek Towns functioned autonomously. They formed "cultural units" incorporating their own unique ceremonies and electing their own officers and advisors. The Towns usually had a King or *miko*, First and Second Warriors, and a House of Warriors. These officers served as the Town's administration. They were also responsible for organizing "the ceremonials." In addition, they represented the Town in external matters that involved other Creek Towns, other Indians, or whites.[54]

Creeks could request to be adopted by a Town or transfer from one Town to another if special circumstances dictated the change. Reasons for the move might be because of work or because one's allotment was situated miles from one's original Town. An individual had to approach the Town *miko* or chief and formally request the transfer. The *miko* then consulted with the *miko* of the Town to which the person wanted

to transfer. For example, a Creek woman named Katy Yardy wanted to shift from *Hilapi* Town to *Kasihta* Town. Her request was approved and she was adopted by *Kasihta* Town. Some of the key Creek Towns in 1937 included *Tokipahchi* near Holdenville, *Laplako* outside of Okemah, *Kayaleychi* and *Hilapi* and *Kialeegee* near Hanna, *Apihka* located outside of Henryetta, *Lalokalka* close to Greenleaf, *Kasihta* southeast of Okmulgee, and *Pakantalahasi* east of Vernon.[55]

In 1937, the anthropologist Morris Opler stated that the Creek Towns still "adhered to their ancient mode of organization in every detail." Although Opler's bold statement has to be looked at with some suspicion, as nothing remains static over time, the historical function or purpose of the towns had persisted into the twentieth century. A Creek woman, Mulsey Chulakee, a member of the *Lucapoka* clan, said that the clan system had undergone "some change in terminology" but that its basic structure was still intact.[56] Other Creeks, such as Jackson Yahola from *Tukabahchee* Town, indicated some changes had occurred in clan structure. Creeks no longer treated clan members the same as they would immediate, blood relatives. The degree to which Creeks treated clan members like blood relatives, varied.[57]

Rural, tradition-oriented Cherokees, similar to Creeks and Seminoles, also recognized clan membership, although it did not seem to be as pervasive. Cherokees that exhibited the most devotion to clan organization were the tradition-conscious Nighthawk *Keetoowahs* and the Seven Clans Society *Keetoowahs*. But their orthodoxy appeared to be the exception to the rule. As with the other four tribes, Cherokee children took the clan membership of their mothers. The seven Cherokee clans were the *Ani-tsiskwa* or

Bird; the *Ani-sahoni* or Blue; the *Ani-kawi* or Deer; the *Ani-gilohi* or Long Hair; the *Ani-wati* or Red Paint; the *Ani-gotigewi* or Wild Potato; and the *Ani-waya* orWolf. The Nighthawk *Keetoowahs* had four *gatiyo* or "Square or Stomp" grounds. They consisted of Blackgum Grounds outside of Gore; Sequoyah Grounds at Marble City; Sugar Mountain Grounds near *Wahilau*; Kenwood Grounds "near the boundary of Mayes and Delaware Counties." The Seven Clans Society had their Square Grounds at Pumpkin Hollow. Both clan and Town membership, in all of tribes, emphasized "brotherhood, spirituality, and ritual respect."[58]

The degree that clans and Towns persisted in the 1930s is difficult to pinpoint. It is generally acknowledged that most rural, restricted Creeks and Seminoles remained faithful to clan and Town organization. The Cherokees, particularly the *Keetoowah* groups, adhered to those organizing principles as well. Clan importance among both integrated and less-integrated Choctaws, appeared to have diminished substantially by the early twentieth century. The same was true for the Chickasaws. Some rural Choctaws knew to which clan they belonged while others did not. For example, in 1937 Ben Dwight, a more integrated Choctaw, said he had just recently found out that he belonged to *Oklafalaya* clan. At the same time, Emeziah Bohannon, a full-blood Choctaw who spoke no English, told an interviewer that he had no idea to which clan he belonged. People such as Dwight and Bohannon make it difficult to categorize Choctaws with tidy generalizations. However, even among Choctaws and Chickasaws, "small groups of hard core conservative full-bloods" existed who continued to culturally and socially organize in historically more traditional ways.[59]

In addition, matrilineal descent remained strongest among the Creeks, Cherokees, and Seminoles. Among the Choctaws, however, there was more emphasis on patrilineal descent. By the 1930s, kinship had contracted to the "bi-lateral family." Although even that process of contraction fluctuated from one Choctaw family to another. Age had some influence on how devout one remained to clans and Towns, but even then no absolute conclusions can be drawn. There still persisted enough ambiguous behavior among even younger Creeks, for example, in the 1930s to determine any definite patterns in relation to age.[60]

On the other hand, among older, tradition-minded Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles, adherence to clan and Town remained strong. Despite the variance between the tribes and the organizational structure, one thing is certain. Rural Indians retained their "kinship systems" despite the "aggressive invasion of white ways." And members of tradition-oriented Indian communities were more integrated with one another than their white counterparts. Even though time and modernization had impacted their lives, studies undertaken during the period found enough evidence to substantiate the fact that rural Indian settlements remained vital and integral to less-integrated, rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes. Rural Indians depended upon historically dynamic cultural and social institutions that, although not unchanged by time, continued to provide them with some degree of stability and continuity. As modernization infiltrated the outlying areas in which they lived, rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles accommodated change in "culturally meaningful ways" and relied upon their communities and traditions as the foundations of their identity.[61]

A key part of the social stability in rural Indian settlements depended upon neighborliness and visiting and the maintenance of native languages. Visiting among family and community members reinforced Indian culture in numerous ways. For example, many tradition-minded Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes did not normally speak English among themselves. In some communities, rural Indian children grew up speaking their native language within their homes. At other times, adults spoke their native languages among themselves, but spoke English to their children.[62]

Jimmy Belvin, whose father was a Choctaw full blood, said his father did not allow Choctaw spoken in the home even though his father hardly spoke English. An unnamed Chickasaw woman recalled that her family moved to Wapanucka when she was young. Most of the kids in that town were white and she spoke English. She said, however, that when she visited her great aunt "in the countryside" she was always "very careful" about making sure she spoke Chickasaw. She remembered, with some humor, how her great aunt always asked her, "Well, you become white girl yet?"[63] Another Chickasaw woman, Mickeo Stick, also indicated that she never spoke English around her grandmother. However, Mary Fillmore, a full blood Chickasaw woman, said that she was raised in a home where Chickasaw was the only language spoken. Along with other traditions, language retention was important to maintain cultural integrity.[64]

Visits from fellow Indians also involved story telling. Tribal myths and histories were passed along to younger generations. Religious and secular songs were also sung. Willie Lena, a Seminole, said that "story telling season" usually began in early autumn and lasted until early spring. Community members moved among the various homes in

the settlement to tell and listen to stories. A Chickasaw woman, Mrs. Mose Burris, said that people were always "dropping in" to visit and spend the night. Wilma Mankiller, a Cherokee woman, also indicated her family's vital tradition of parents and "visitors" telling stories and legends.[65]

A Creek man, Bear Heart, confirmed that storytelling by "elders" was a always eagerly anticipated by the children in his family. He stressed that Creek traditions as well as proper behavior were taught through the stories that were told during winter nights. Annie Belle Sixkiller Mitchell, a Cherokee full-blood woman, also said that stories instilled in children good behavior. She said that it was during visits from her mother's relatives that she heard Cherokee traditions such as the "little people" and how they took bad children away. Josiah Billy, a Choctaw full blood, said that his mother and the other women in his community gathered their children around them at night and told them Choctaw stories and sang traditional Choctaw songs. It was during visits and storytelling that Jimmie Harjo, a Seminole full blood, stressed that Indian elders told him to "keep everything dear to the Seminoles secret from the whites."[66] It also was not unusual for Indian children to spend summers with older members of their tribes. Elders passed along language, songs, and stories so integral to their tribal culture and history.[67]

The social permeability of rural Indian households and their settlements as well as the maintenance of traditional customs and habits bolstered their sense of communalism. The continual interaction between people "fostered interdependence" as opposed to independence. This pattern of behavior differentiated rural Indians from rural whites as well as urbanites during the period. Whereas in white society such things as

individuality prevailed, in more tradition-conscious, rural Indian communities independence was constrained, in some ways, by mutuality. Certainly, one could argue that rural whites behaved in the same manner. Perhaps true, to some extent. But historically, Oklahoma white rural enclaves were not linked through political and social Town, clan, and extended kin relationships. Even in rural white society, individualism took precedent over communalism. Because of one's reliance upon the market economy, there was far more reason for people to act autonomously. The "survival of the fittest" ethos ruled people's behavior.[68]

Moreover, there was far less group interaction on a regular basis among white communities than that found in rural Indian settlements. White churches, schools, work, clubs, and neighborhoods divided people's devotions. In white communities, both rural and urban, there were more apt to be complete strangers or people that others hardly knew. In rural Indian enclaves, where the majority of people were oftentimes related by blood, clan, Town, and tribe, strangers were virtually non-existent. Extended families, both in a household and a community sense, reinforced people's connection to fellow tribal members as well as to their settlements. Mutual obligations substantiated through visiting and other forms of cultural exchange strengthened community as well as rural Indian identity. Cultural foundations were further reinforced because there was a high degree of mobility among Indians who inhabited historically traditional, less-integrated areas. People moved about constantly and sharing and reciprocity between neighbors stabilized the community.[69]

In rural Indian communities, social cohesion was dependent upon the good will of

community members. That amity fostered cooperation. It was the responsibility of the settlement to care for those who were dependent such as widows, the aged, and the mentally and physically handicapped. It was not unusual for children to live with relatives, clan members, and family friends. Oklahoma Department of Public Welfare records indicated few Indians in the Five Civilized Tribes region received either old age assistance or aid to dependent children. In Delaware County between 1936-1937, for example, only 86 Indians received aid to dependent children. During the same period in Seminole County only 17 Indians received aid to dependent children. Only 10 Indians received old age assistance in Seminole County in the year in question.[70]

People depended upon an informal welfare system. Relatives regularly stayed at each other's homes for short periods of time. A 73 year old Cherokee man, Bud Choate, and his 60 year old wife raised three grand kids on their own. Adam Bean, a Cherokee, recalled that he went to live with another Cherokee family. He did it in order to remove financial pressure from his parents. He said it helped them better care for his other brothers and sisters.[71]

Widows also shared homes with other widows. Nor was it out of the ordinary for non-related neighbors to live with one another. Nora Barberhouse, a Chickasaw, said that "the door to their place was always open to other Indians."[72] Wilma Mankiller, a Cherokee, recalled that there were always people coming by to visit who remained for several days. Melvin Worcester, a Chickasaw, recollected that when he was young he "was always welcome in other houses." Another Chickasaw, Mateo Stick, said that people were always "dropping by unannounced." Pallets were prepared for them so they

could spend the night.[73]

When relatives visited, they usually brought food that was shared with other members of the household. Bear Heart, a Creek, said that the extending of food to guests was something that his father stressed to him when he was young. His father indicated that if people did not bring food, it was the duty of the family to prepare a meal for the guests. This especially held true if the visitors were elderly. Even if a family did not have much food, it was still expected. At the same time, when one visited an older person's home it was proper to take them either something to eat, money, or some other gift that "helped them out." Lola Maud Johnson Amerson, a Chickasaw woman, recalled the same sense of community sharing. She said that neighbors lent money and food to one another and that "communal eats" were quite common. Groups of people got together for wild onion feeds as well as hog fries. An elderly Seminole man did not recall any Indian that he knew going hungry "during the depression."[74]

Moreover, the more financially well-off people of rural Indian communities were expected to assist needy families. They helped clothe, feed, and even educate the children of less fortunate Indians. Sometimes the money was given outright to people in need and at other times loans were extended to less well-off people. But even those individuals who possessed more wealth, the result of oil royalties, for example, did not set themselves apart from other members of the community. Their beneficence did not accord them special status nor did they flaunt their wealth. Although there were cases of Indians who spent enormous sums of money on automobiles and other luxuries, my research has uncovered no evidence that this was widespread in the small, rural Indian

settlements. Some people did have more money than others, but they did not build large ornate homes, or dress in clothing different from their neighbors. Indeed, a white woman, Mary McKinney Frye, reported attending a Seminole church meeting and said that "it was difficult to tell those who were wealthy from those who were not." She commented that wealth "does not seem to have brought...a marked change in appearance or mode of living." Economic class stratification was not a hallmark of subsistence-oriented, rural Indian communities.[75]

The communal nature of rural Indian settlements was also reflected in their practice of allowing those people who did not own property to "squat" on the land of fellow Indians. Individuals and families moved into empty houses and also built their own homes on the land of community, clan, and tribal members. One unidentified full-blood Cherokee woman in the Nicut area accommodated 6 families on her 60 acres. The homeless were also allowed to live in the small camp houses located on Indian church lands and the stomp or square grounds. Sometimes rent was demanded, but that was not the norm. Most lived free of charge or compensated for rent through voluntary work. There was no disgrace or shame associated with living on the land of friends, neighbors, and relatives.[76]

Cooperation also extended to labor exchange. This was particularly important during the fall and winter months. Jimmie Harjochee, a full-blood Seminole, and Joe Hogner, a full-blood Cherokee, said that community members helped one another out clearing brush, repairing homes, cutting and stacking firewood, and building and mending fences. In the early spring months settlement members tilled soil and planted

crops. Minnie Wimberley Hodge, a Creek full-blood woman, said that women got together to refurbish family gardens.[77]

Rural Indian settlements also cultivated communal gardens. Usually, male members of each family were expected to contribute time and labor to provide for the settlement. The resultant crops were then divided among families according to their respective needs. Each family followed an honor system whereby they took only what was necessary. People who lived too far a distance to help work on the community gardens on a regular basis paid a small amount of money each year for seed, tools, and "other expenses." Their financial contribution allowed them to receive their share of the produce. After each family in a settlement took their share, the remaining portion was distributed among the "real needy." Widows and the elderly were given shares of food without having to contribute either "labor or money." Cooperative farming was evident in nearly all of the rural Indian settlements.[78]

Work was not rigidly divided by gender in Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, or Seminole settlements. The nature of men's and women's work tended to vary depending upon the needs of the community. Hunting and fishing, however, were predominantly male activities. Most families relied on fish and game to supplement their diets. To bring in extra income, men sold produce from "truck gardens." Both men and women cultivated truck gardens. On the other hand, women were primarily, though not exclusively, responsible for the maintenance of family gardens. Women gathered foodstuffs such as berries, nuts, and wild herbs and vegetables. Women were also employed outside the community. Mary Green Johnson, a Seminole woman, said that she

and her grandmother "found some kind of work when necessary." She recalled that Seminoles in her community picked peaches for a white farmer. Women also got together and traded food and clothing with one another. Indian women canned fruits and vegetables as well. Drying fruit and meat was a shared responsibility. Johnson indicated that women were often the "economic mainstays" of the home.[79]

Within the small rural settlements, it was not imperative that Indian men hold steady jobs. Rural Indians took a more informal attitude toward work. Unlike many whites, rural Indians did not define themselves or measure their self-worth through their jobs. Indeed, it was rare for the men of the community to work on a regular basis although many supplemented their subsistence lifestyles with part-time jobs. Creek men, for example, picked cotton for local farmers. Cherokees men, for example, earned money working in the woods. They provided wood for ties used in the construction of rail road tracks as well as wood for house shingles. Some Cherokee women and children also shared in this activity. Although Cherokee men worked more wage labor jobs than their counterparts in the other four tribes, they partook in work that allowed for some degree of flexibility. They chose when and how much they wanted to work. It was rare to find a more tradition-oriented Indian man holding down a steady, full-time job. Rural Seminoles appeared to be most comfortable with participation in the market economy. Approximately 1/3 of rural Seminoles farmed for market.[80]

Indians who did not work were not considered lazy or castigated by the community. People believed that if a person chose not to work that was the decision of that individual. Wage labor did not appear to be a deciding factor in a family's ability to

survive. Indeed, many families required little, if any income. Nannie Barcus, a full blood Choctaw woman, said that "her family never had any use for money."[81] It is not to argue that people did not work, but most Indians who inhabited the isolated communities did not seek out wage labor jobs. When they did, they preferred work that allowed them flexible schedules. They engaged in seasonal work, or they found wage-labor jobs for a few weeks at a time and then did not work for several months.[82]

Although rural Indians did not possess much money, they did not consider themselves poor. They did not view their lives as "economically hopeless." As a Cherokee woman remembered, "people did not seem to be depressed."[83] One's level of comfortableness was not measured by one's financial situation. The notion of poverty, a term used to measure the level of one's affluence within an affluent society, did not resonate within subsistence-oriented Indian communities. Hoarding and measuring one's success based upon the accumulation of consumer products and luxuries that they did not utilize or desire was not the goal of most rural, less-integrated Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. Indeed, when many Indians acquired substantial sums of money, such as the Seminoles from oil royalties, the majority did not put it into savings accounts. What little money that rural Indians acquired was usually spent it until it was depleted. Re-distribution rather than accumulation was the main priority of people within less-integrated settlements. The concept of saving money for retirement or some future emergency contradicted the present-focused lifestyle of many rural Indians. Thus, steady employment was not something seen as necessary or desirable.[84]

Certainly, there were rural Indians who possessed more money than others, but

they were exceptions. Choctaw women such as Nellie Poston and Emeline Baier Stallaby earned money off land leases. Tony Ponkilla, a Seminole woodcarver, helped his father work a 120 acre farm that earned them a comfortable living. Some Cherokees operated portable saw mills that provided them a steady income. Cherokee full bloods Dave Sap and Louis Walkingstick worked for the Indian Bureau. Steve Peak, a Cherokee full blood was the Superintendent of Schools in Delaware County. Choctaws such as Noah Wilson and Francis Taaffe both farmed and were regularly employed. Wilson was a sheriff and Taaffe was an engineer for the city of Idabel. Victor Brown, a Choctaw full blood, worked for the Five Civilized Tribes Agency in McCurtain County. Another Choctaw full blood, Darius Wilson, was a banker in Haworth. But people such as these were atypical. Overall, per capita income in the counties inhabited by rural Indians was low. It was even low for whites in comparison to other counties around the state. In 1940, the per capita income in Adair, Bryan, Cherokee, Choctaw, Delaware, Johnston, Marshall, McCurtain, McIntosh, Pontotoc, and Seminole Counties ranged from zero to one hundred ninety-nine dollars. As a result of the Great Depression, even if Indians had wanted to work, jobs were scarce. Because of racism in Oklahoma during the 1930s, what jobs were available went first to whites, not minorities such as blacks or Indians.[85]

There were other, perhaps more important, reasons that most rural Indians did not seek out regular employment. They were hesitant to get tied down to full-time work because jobs required them to leave their communities. Moreover, less-integrated Indians found the rigidity of the workplace foreign to their more relaxed approach to life. For those reasons, they avoided wage labor whenever possible. Such activities as fishing,

however, reinforced the mutuality that bound members of a community together. Both men and women participated in community fish kills. N.E. Billy, a Choctaw full blood, said that men and women camped on the opposite sides of the chosen creeks or rivers. Married men were not allowed to sleep with their wives on the first night. The men used either natural toxins or nets to catch the fish. Choctaws used a sedative made from mashed green walnuts. A Creek full blood, Alex Alexander, said that Creeks used a natural tranquilizer called "Devil's shoestring." These substances stunned the fish and they floated to the surface where they were then either shot with arrows or hand-gathered by the men. Choctaws trapped fish using nets made from brush called *numashubska.* Once collected, the women cleaned and fried the fish. In addition to fish fries, communities also conducted hog fries and wild onion feeds. As with fish kills, hog fries and onion feeds possessed pragmatic and ritualistic functions. People acquired both physical nourishment and psychological sustenance.[86]

The same could be said for hunting. It served not only to provide game for the table, it connected Indian men and boys to the physical world. Cherokees, for example, believed that the "Creator"placed wild game on the earth specifically for the sustenance of man. Therefore, Cherokees believed that by hunting wild game they were, in essence, demonstrating their "covenant with their Creator." They believed that it was their "primordial right" to hunt. Moreover, Creeks, for example, believed that killing an animal demonstrated a person's "generosity and respect." Hunters were expected to share their kill, particularly with the elderly and the needy.[87]

Regardless of gender, rural Indians possessed a very casual attitude toward work.

If it interfered with visiting, family obligations, and ceremonies it became a non-priority. Employers during the period complained of Indians not showing up for work for days at a time. In stark contrast to many white men during the Great Depression, even those Indians who received some form of welfare did not suffer shame or lose self respect. White men blamed themselves for helping to bring on the economic disaster. The sense of guilt and shame they felt drove some of them to leave their families. They believed that they had somehow let their families down. Rural Indian communities did not suffer that phenomenon during the Great Depression. Poverty did not stigmatize Indians in the manner that it did poor people in white society. And rather than find employment in menial jobs, Indians relied on the more traditional institutions within their communities.[88]

Cherokee settlements, in particular, operated what were known as *gadugi*. The word means "working together." Consisting of both men and women, settlements maintained *gadugi* or cooperative labor groups to meet community needs. They managed communal treasuries to help provide for people who could not afford such things as burial or travel expenses. Community funds purchased food or medicine for the poor and the infirm. The *gadugi* organized work groups that periodically assisted families with work that needed to be done on their homesteads. Anna Belle Sixkiller Mitchell, a full-blood Cherokee woman, said that the house she lived in had been built by the men of her community. Similar examples of communities either building new homes or rebuilding homes that had been destroyed by disasters such as fires were also found among the other four tribes.[89]

Gadugi in some Cherokee settlements also contained individuals who fulfilled specific functions. For example, one man might be the community fishermen who distributed his catch throughout the settlement. Another man might serve as the community hunter. He organized communal hunts to provide game for the settlement. Benefits and "give-aways" were emblematic of Cherokee generosity. The community functioned as an informal welfare system, addressing the needs of its members. The *gadugi* reinforced "economic and social reciprocity."[90]

As labor exchange defined rural Indian settlements, Indian families also shared equipment and possessions with one another. Indians who had no wells or nearby water supplies, for example, borrowed wagons from those who had them in order to collect water from the wells of neighbors. Indians also shared horses and mules. In a few settlements, a single tractor was available for all people to borrow. Tools were exchanged on a regular basis. On those occasions when a person did not wish to share a tool, such as a power saw for example, they themselves would undertake the necessary work. In that respect, they did not deny the request of the borrower. In addition, automobiles were loaned to relatives and neighbors. Indians shared cars to make long trips to medical facilities, to pick up supplies in towns, or to visit distant friends and relatives. The most overt example of exchange occurred when families traded farms or houses simply for a change of scenery.[91]

Whether exchanging labor or equipment, sharing within a community reflected the notion that less integrated Indians lived "within themselves," but not "for themselves." Their primary responsibility was to the settlement. As a result, the

community sheltered a person beneath "the umbrella of kinship." Cooperation and generosity, not selfishness, preserved the integrity of settlements and kept resentment to a minimum. A "pervasive ethos of mutuality and hospitality" fostered equality as opposed to inequality. Economic competition and aggressive materialism were inimical to "interpersonal harmony." The Cherokee referred to this as the "harmony ethic." Indeed, not only did the "harmony ethic" reinforce economic reciprocity and communalism, but it was at the core of child rearing and the process of socialization that kept rural Indian communities intact.[92]

More tradition-oriented Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole families raised their children differently from more integrated Indians and whites. Certain values were instilled in efforts to maintain the community ethos. Although Indian mothers played the largest role in a child's development in the first few years after birth, in the subsequent years relatives and the community participated to a much larger extent. Multi-generational households dispersed child rearing responsibilities. Siblings, grandparents, aunts, and uncles all participated in the raising of children. "Special relationships" played a key role as well. Children received preferential attention from a favored or "special" relative.[93]

In addition, such things as pre-marital pregnancies among rural Indians did not carry a stigma. Family and community embraced the unwed mother and her child. And the placing of orphans in foster homes was rare among tradition-oriented Indians. If relatives were unable to accommodate orphaned children, other families in the community opened their homes. For example, an elderly Creek woman raised 7 children

of her own and another 63 who were not blood related.[94] Children learned at an early age that they could depend not only upon their immediate family for nurture and support, but that their family extended beyond the home and into the broader community. Even in cases when parents abandoned their children, relatives embraced the child. A Seminole full blood, Elmer Lusty, recalled that his mother simply "ran off when he was young." He stated that he was raised by his grandmothers as well as his aunts.[95] As Frank Melvin, a Choctaw said, "children were never allowed to feel abandoned or isolated."[96]

The flexibility of social relations was crucial to maintaining harmony. Group identity was extremely important to rural Indian settlements because they were constantly besieged by the outside influences and forces of white society; a society and culture that stressed individualism and competition as opposed to communalism. This is not to argue that Indian settlements were immune to internal conflict. Communities contained individuals prone to drinking too much, fighting, and, in general, who caused trouble, but disruptive behavior did not appear to be widespread. A study conducted among rural Choctaws in the 1930s, found that 80 per cent of the families reported that no member drank to get drunk. Because most rural Indian communities and settlements were small, populated by people culturally and socially related, their was less likelihood of abhorrent behavior. Unruly individuals ran the risk of alienating themselves because their actions adversely impacted the lives of other community members. But even then, there is no evidence to suggest, for example, that alcoholics were banished from rural Indian settlements or people prone to fighting were ostracized and forced to leave. Mutual obligations fostered certain expectations in rural Indian settlements and created

an environment that kept social discord to a minimum.[97]

Group unity was dependent upon equality, humility, and freedom of expression. From the moment of their birth, Indian children were given a tremendous amount of personal freedom. Unlike the manner in which whites raised their children, less-integrated Indian parents did not coerce their children to behave a certain way. Instead, rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles believed that all humans possessed certain qualities; that people were born with an individual "nature." It was considered inappropriate to interfere with that "nature." To do so was arrogant.[98]

Many rural Indians also abided by the concept of "becoming." That is, a person's "essence" is in a continual state of development. That process is never static nor does a person ever achieve his or her true "essence." The manner in which they lived their lives is a "contiguous expression" of their unique character. And unlike western civilization that historically has emphasized the "control" of life, Cherokees, for example, adhered to the notion that "knowledge" comes from "accepting rather than dominating the flow of life." Therefore, they thought that it was improper to tell someone how to act.[99]

Rural Indian children were shaped by example. This idea was known as "passive forbearance." Parents supervised their children, both at home and in public, as little as possible. Children, therefore, were allowed to explore things on their own with few restrictions placed upon their conduct. Their attitudes were "absorbed" through observation and "repetition." More tradition-minded Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes believed that "things were not taught, but lived"or "caught." Children learned from watching the behavior of their parents, relatives, and older siblings. Parents began this

process with newborn infants. Instead of babies lying down and looking up at the ceiling, Indian infants were propped up in their baskets so they could view what was taking place in their immediate surroundings. It was believed that this allowed infants to have a more direct or intimate experience with nearby people and activities.[100]

Even as adults, the Indians who inhabited the rural communities extended a great deal of latitude to one another in terms of how a person lived his or her life. As long as a person's behavior did not interfere with the goals of a community, their behavior was accepted. To attempt to interfere in another individual's life was considered rude. The Cherokee called the maintenance of good relations between people in a community the "White Path." Anything that might create conflict or animosity was avoided.[101]

Confrontations were minimized because failure to do so disrupted the harmony of the community. Indians were careful to avoid what was known as "boxing-in" people. That simply meant that it was inappropriate to compromise or impinge upon the individual character or autonomy of others. For example, to ask a direct question was considered "a form of intrusion or aggression." Indeed, for Indians, the social cohesion of their settlements took priority over everything else. Keeping in touch with clan, community, kin, and tribal members was integral to the cultural identity and integrity of the group. People did not necessarily have to like all individuals in a community, but they were expected to tolerate the conduct of other community members. A person could be a drunk, stingy, or aggressive and yet other people did not necessarily find that behavior insulting, nor did they feel compelled to change that behavior. As inappropriate as it might have been, it was dismissed as that person's "nature."[102]

The flexibility with which more tradition-oriented Indians raised their children and structured their lives also extended to their notion of time. Instead of time being thought of as minutes, hours, or even days, time was viewed as a "rhythmic process." It was an ongoing phenomenon, a cyclical process. The past was not disconnected from the present. Because less-integrated Indians interpreted reality in a holistic manner, time was not fragmented into specific moments defined by calendars, clocks, or schedules. Reality was non-temporal. That is, time was relative to each individual. Spontaneity rather than rigidity defined people's lives.[103]

The Indian notion of time frustrated whites who worked among Indians during the 1930s. Indian Bureau field personnel, educators, social workers, and others complained that it was virtually impossible to make appointments with Indians. Unlike whites, less-integrated Indians were present-oriented. They believed that where they were at a given moment was where they belonged. One arrived when one arrived. The notion of punctuality was absurd. The idea of thinking about tomorrow, next week, or ten years in the future were foreign concepts. Indians' approach to time was important in maintaining the fluidity and flexibility of their communities and lives. It fit neatly with their flexible social organization.[104]

As family, community, clan, and town structure served to maintain their social cohesion, other institutions, as well as ceremonies, rituals, and traditions solidified Indian unity. Regardless of the group, the focal point of rural Indian communities were the churches and the Stomp or Square Grounds. By the 1930s, churches had either taken their place alongside or superceded Stomp and Square Grounds in many places as the

locus of community organization. Rural Indian settlements were located either around or near these community and cultural centers.

Indian families lived within an 8 to 10 mile radius of their churches and sacred grounds. The Choctaw called the church the "*tunaha*" or community house. Choctaw churches were considered the center of the community. The name for Choctaw rural communities or "groups of houses" was *Chuka lokoli*. The majority of rural Choctaw settlements were in McCurtain County. For example, *Kulli Tuklo*, 8 miles southeast of Idabel, consisted of the Battiest, Brazier, Collins, Sockey, Steward,, and Washington families among others. *Ponki Bok*, 6 miles south of Eagleton, was made up of the Amos, Ashalintubbie, Fobb, Jones, Kyser, Wesley, Wilson, and Winship families. There were 37 rural Choctaw communities similar to these in McCurtain County. Among the Cherokee, churches were often named after a creek or spring. Examples of Cherokee rural Indian communities included Double Spring Creek, Evening Shade, Honey Creek, Mulberry Creek, Upper Jenkins Creek, and Upper *Tesquantee* Hollow. Most were similar to Upper *Tesquantee* Hollow that contained 7 families. Regardless of the tribe, church grounds in rural Indian settlements usually consisted of a main church building, a preacher's house, camp houses, an arbor, and a graveyard. The camp houses were used as temporary residences during church meetings as well as by "dependent families" that did not have their own homes. Dependent families included elderly couples, widows with children, and women who had taken in orphans.[105]

The majority of rural, church-going Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles were either Baptist, Methodist, or Presbyterian. For example, of 35 rural

Choctaw settlements in McCurtain County surveyed in 1940, there existed 22 Presbyterian and 13 Methodist churches. In rural Choctaw settlements in Pushmataha and Le Flore Counties, Presbyterian and Methodist churches were also the norm.[106]

In Cherokee full-blood communities such as Spavinaw Creek and Old Flint in Adair County, Rocky Ford and Oaks in Cherokee County, and Evening Shade or Upper Vian Creek in Sequoyah County, Baptist churches predominated. In Cherokee County in the mid-1930s, there were 13 Baptist churches affiliated with Cherokee rural settlements. Within rural Seminole communities during the same period, there were four times as many Baptist as Methodist churches. The majority of Christian Creeks were also Baptist with Methodist and Presbyterian being the second and third choices respectively. What all of these churches had in common was the fact that they were attended exclusively by Indians. For example, a survey conducted among 500 rural Choctaws in the 1930s, revealed that not one single person attended a white church.[107]

Churches and church grounds functioned as more than merely places to hold religious services. They served as buffers between Indians and whites. They were one of the few places that "whites had not invaded." Because Indian church participation gave the white community the impression that Indians had become "assimilated," rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles, for the most part, "were left alone."[108]

In addition to their religious role, churches also hosted "fund raising" benefits, community meetings, social gatherings such as "singin's," and communal work activities such as canning, preserving, and sewing. Churches also provided houses for people

without homes. As Tony Harjo, a Seminole, said, the churches "did good work" for the community. For example, an elderly Seminole, Jacob Harrison, said that when he was sick young people from the church sang songs and prayed for him at his bedside. Seminole women organized church food drives as well as work parties to aid members of the community. Creek churches such as Montezuma, Big Arbor, Littler Quarsarty *Qulmochussee*, and Deep Fork Hillabee regularly provided food for needy children. Because churches were one of the key focal points of rural Indian settlements, they were crucial institutions that maintained traditions and group solidarity. As both the geographical and social center of rural Indian communities, churches reinforced ethnic and tribal identities.[109]

Devotion to Christianity, however, varied among rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. In several Cherokee settlements in northeastern Oklahoma, roughly 60 percent of adults belonged to a church, but only two-thirds of those people attended church on a regular basis. For example, Wilma Mankiller, a Cherokee woman, recalled that her family had never been regular "church goers" and knew little about Christianity. Among 100 Creek families studied in McIntosh and Okmulgee Counties, 37 percent did not belong to a church. Some families held ad-hoc or informal services in their homes.[110]

Moreover, despite their adherence to Christianity, Indians were not antagonistic to those members of their communities and tribes who continued to adhere to traditional ceremonies and rituals. In fact, it was not unusual to find Indians who considered themselves Christians who continued to believe in their own traditional tribal forms of

spirituality. And Indians who did not consider themselves Christian, nonetheless, frequented the churches because they were the locus of group activities. [111]

Both Seminoles and Creeks, for example, saw no contradiction in attending church and Stomp or Square Ground rituals. One Seminole man said that some Seminoles attended the church meetings during the winter months, but attended Stomp Ground activities during the warmer months of the year. He said that "at times" there were "tensions" between "more traditional Indians and church Indians" but that "church Indians" were always welcome at the Stomp Grounds.[112] Bear Heart, a full-blood Creek, said that his mother was very active in the Greenleaf Indian Baptist Church and yet she continued to cling to "Indian beliefs." For example, his mother had told him that fasting was a means to "the Great Spirit." Along with other Creek women, she regularly fasted prior to church meetings.[113]

Jimmie Barnett, another Creek full blood, said that "church Indians" often attended the Green Corn dances. He remarked that they fasted and partook in the drinking of the medicine. They also danced. However, Barnett maintained that there was no pressure placed upon them to participate in traditional activities.[114] A Mrs. Duvaill, a full-blood Cherokee woman who lived outside of the town of Gore, combined Baptist religious beliefs with Cherokee religion and superstitions. And the Choctaw Durwood Baptist Church in Carter County, for example, did not discard Choctaw customs and rituals. Instead they were fused with Baptist tenets. Members of Durwood Church attended both Christian services and tribal ceremonies. Nora Barberhouse, a Chickasaw full-blood woman, said that even though her mother was a tradition-oriented full-blood,

she "was a Christian."[115]

Rural Indian churches, although Baptist, Methodist, or Presbyterian in name, were linguistically dissimilar from white churches of the same denomination. Services in the majority of rural Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole churches were conducted in the respective language of the tribe. For example, Seminoles held their services in the *Mvskoke* language. In addition to sermons being delivered in their native language, rural Indian congregations also combined traditional religious hymns with Indian songs. And not only were young people "taught fundamental biblical knowledge," but they also learned about their own tribal cultures and histories. Among Cherokees, for example, language instructors played integral roles within their churches. They passed along the Cherokee language to children through traditional Indian tales and Bible stories.[116]

Adherence to tribal languages and customs, however, caused consternation among white church officials within Oklahoma. White Presbyterians, for example, attempted to persuade Choctaw Presbyterian congregations from partaking in that practice, but Indians refused to change. They remained adamant that their services be conducted in their native tongues. Indeed, some Indian ministers such as Emiziah Bohanan, a Choctaw Presbyterian minister, spoke no English. The same held true for a Cherokee preacher, Jackson Standing Deer Larvin. Because of the bi-lingual nature of Indian churches and settlements, tradition-minded Indians possessed both Indian and English versions of the Bible. Most Choctaws who attended Indian churches in Southeastern Oklahoma, for example, had Bibles written in the Choctaw language. One

survey found that 77 out of 100 families had Choctaw Testaments. The same 100 families had only 59 English Bibles. The same held true for 100 rural Cherokee families who lived in Adair and Sequoyah Counties. Homes contained both a Cherokee and English Bible.[117]

Even though some Indians, such as the Cherokee *Keetoowahs*, opposed Christianity, which they considered a "white" religion, and some Christian Indians opposed any kind of traditional rituals because they regarded such activities as pagan, those were not the prevailing viewpoints of the majority of rural Indians. There certainly existed staunchly traditional settlements that viewed Christianity as another means for whites to "exploit" Indians, and occasionally Indian church leaders publicly denounced traditional tribal ceremonies, but most rural Indians remained indifferent to a person's spirituality.[118]

People viewed the churches and the Stomp and Square Grounds in a positive rather than antagonistic or negative manner. Both institutions worked to unify rural settlements and therefore were seen as beneficial. They brought people together which reinforced interpersonal relationships and mutual obligations. People interacted within the context of shared language, symbols, and values. The syncretism of Judeo-Christian traditions with tribal traditions allowed Indians to frame their worship within the context of their ethnic history. They had assimilated Christianity, but they had done so on their own terms. This made them distinct, in numerous ways, from white churches of the same denominations.[119]

A significant difference between white and Indian Baptist churches, in particular,

was the fact that Indian Baptist churches did not identify themselves with the white, national Baptist Assembly. Rural Indian churches "fiercely" protected their independence. Although most white Baptist churches belonged to the national Baptist Assembly, Baptists also had a long history of granting individual churches a high degree of autonomy. Baptists were not forced to become affiliated with the national organization. Because Baptists were "creedless," it was left up to individual congregations to interpret "faith" in their own manner. This freedom of expression complimented the independence found in rural Indian settlements and fit well with the desire of the communities to manage their own affairs. Free from "official dogma," individual congregations controlled and molded their rituals to suit their specific needs. As a result, they were allowed to develop their own "expression of faith" as well as choose their own pastors.[120]

Most Indian ministers or pastors, particularly among the Creeks and Seminoles, had to have grown up in the community in which they served. They were carefully selected based upon their reputations within a settlement. Methodist Creek "preachers" such as March Monday, Millere Tarpalechee, Sam Checote, Sam Haynes, and Tome Field had all grown up in the Cussetah, Newtown, Tallahassee, Onaba, and Little Cussetah communities to which they ministered. People had to vouch for the integrity of an individual. As respected members of their communities, Indian preachers provided moral authority and guidance.[121]

Seminole Indian pastors, for example, could not "become qualified" by simply attending a seminary or college. If an individual was chosen to become a pastor, he had

to undergo training determined by the Indians of that community. Sometimes this entailed "fasting" or other such tests that gauged a person's willpower and character. Neither Creek, Seminole or Cherokee ministers could be outside appointees imposed by a church hierarchy miles removed from the rural Indian settlements. The pastors had to reside in the areas in which they preached.[122]

Choctaw ministers, however, did not usually come from the communities in which they served. Sometimes, contrary to the wishes of a settlement, they were appointed by the Methodist or Presbyterian "state board." They were supposed to be "aloof and disinterested" and not emotionally linked to the communities in which they preached. It was believed that this better enabled them to lead. In McCurtain County, for example, 5 Choctaw ministers known as "*abainupa pishi*," or message carriers, administered to Choctaw churches in 13 different settlements. They rotated from settlement to settlement each month. More isolated settlements might only be "visited by a preacher once every two or three months." Choctaw preachers were considered very conservative and orthodox, perhaps more so than their contemporaries in the other four tribes.[123]

Similar to other Indian ministers, Choctaw preachers were viewed as "holy men," beyond reproach. Alice Marriott, who conducted research among rural Choctaw settlements in the 1930s, stated that the reverence Indians had for their preachers differed, in some ways, from the manner in which rural whites perceived their ministers. She stated that many rural whites were suspicious of ministers who appeared to have "too much money." White communities occasionally experienced ministers who were

nothing more than "grafters....looking to line their pockets at the people's expense." This did not appear to be a problem within rural Indian settlements.[124]

Choctaw preachers in McCurtain County, because they did not come from the rural settlements to which they ministered, had less social connection to the communities than their Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole counterparts. Thus, Choctaw rural communities selected lay members from among their own who assisted the preachers. Called *iksa pihilichi*, these men had a more personal and "intimate" relationship with the people in the settlement. Elders, they were chosen for their "prestige" and propriety. People served in this capacity for "two or three years."[125]

In addition to *iksa pihilichi*, Choctaw church communities also contained men referred to as captains, or *inush koboka*. These men were tribal sub-chiefs who were responsible for civil matters that were vital to their communities. Usually, but not always, the men were the chief elders in the church and in that respect, they, not the ministers, were the head of the church. Selected by community members, the elders were "influential people of respect" who were also required to read and write English.[126]

In addition to being the church heads, *inush koboka* fulfilled three other primary functions in the Choctaw settlements. They provided advice in secular matters that impacted both the community and individuals. They also represented their communities in external civil and political matters. For example, they served as spokesmen not only in relations with other Indian communities, but also for their communities in talks with the Indian Bureau. Lastly, *inush kaboka* oftentimes accompanied those Choctaws who wound up in court. They gave advice, acted as interpreters, and testified to the character

of Choctaw defendants. Men who became *inush kaboka* had build their reputations during the course of their lifetimes. Most residents of Choctaw communities, as well the residents of other Choctaw communities in the surrounding area, knew years in advance those men who were in line to become *inush kaboka*. Choctaw *inush kaboka* usually held their offices until their deaths.[127]

Seminole Baptist churches also had people who played key roles in both religious and secular matters. Both Seminole men and women assisted preachers. Selected men who served as assistant ministers and deacons assumed less spiritual roles. They functioned as counselors who people could seek out for advice. They also conducted Sunday schools. Usually elderly Seminole Baptist church women assumed roles known as *hoktake enhomathoyv* or front women. They were female deacons. Most Seminole Baptist congregations contained seven hoktake enhomathoyv. They performed such ancillary duties as cooking and child care. But the oldest, senior woman among them could also "publicly chastize" the church pastor if she believed he was not performing his duties in a responsible manner.[128]

Unlike white churches, Indian churches did not hold services every Sunday. It was not unusual for services to be held only once a month. Among rural Creek settlements in McIntosh and Okmulgee Counties, churches "met every fourth Sunday." And yet the monthly meetings became affairs that lasted for several days. Religion was combined with visiting and eating. People began gathering on a Thursday and remained until the "sunrise service"the following Monday. Seminoles also organized what were referred to as "Big Church" meetings which lasted for a week. Indian church services and

sermons sometimes lasted all day and they were very casual in nature.[129]

Frank Melvin, a Choctaw, said that even though services might be slated to begin at a certain time, people were not expected to arrive at a precise hour. However, it was considered inappropriate for ministers to arrive later than expected. During services it was acceptable if individuals felt like going outside and visiting with other members. While ministers delivered their sermons it was not unusual for people to be wandering in and out of the church or children to be running around. It was not considered a sign of disrespect. In addition, if the preacher was present for only part of the time services continued. Elders delivered "ad hoc" sermons and also conducted Sunday schools.[130]

Although religious worship was the primary function of church meetings, socializing and communal feeds were also key components. Rural Indians oftentimes visited several churches in a given area. Traveling from one meeting to the next allowed them to maintain relationships with relatives and other tribal members. Whether weekend meetings or "Big Church" meetings, people came prepared with bedding and supplies to make their stay more comfortable. An integral element of the meetings was the elaborate feasting that took place over the course of three or four days. Families who lived in the camp houses were expected to provide for guests that shared their homes. People also brought their own food or ate food provided by other members of the church. Families brought chickens as well as "hogs for butchering." However, it was not considered rude or inappropriate for people to show up empty-handed. They were welcome to eat.[131]

Some Indian churches had their own protocol in terms of food preparation. For

example, at the Spring Indian Baptist Church near Sasakwa in Seminole County, the pastor, Louis Harjo, forbade the congregation to cook on Sunday. Thus, the food was prepared Saturday afternoon following morning services. During the course of the church meetings, Indians cooked and consumed all of the food. This caused consternation among Indian Bureau extension workers who tried to get the "full bloods" to conserve their resources. They could not understand how people, who they viewed as malnourished, could eat up all the food they had without thought to the immediate future. They believed that some Indians took advantage of the church meetings to get free handouts. Extension workers thought that this encouraged laziness among Indians. They accused them of not taking responsibility for their own needs. Indian congregations did not share that perspective. People were welcome, regardless of their contribution.[132]

Although churches occupied a significant place in rural Indian settlements, they were not the only religious institutions that engendered group unity and reinforced ethnic identity. For many Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles, churches did not nor could not supersede Stomp and Square Grounds in terms of their spiritual importance. Sacred grounds, known as *gatiyo* among the Cherokee, were both physical and symbolic locations where ceremonies and rituals perpetuated tribal traditions. For rural Indians, those ceremonial traditions and sacred grounds were the true embodiment of their religiosity. Not only were the Stomp and Square grounds the locus of their spirituality, but the foundations of their social stability.[133]

In the minds of more traditionally-oriented Indians, there existed no distinctions existed between the secular and the sacred. Spirituality and the supernatural were

inextricably linked with everyday reality. Nature was infused with spiritual elements. For conservative, rural Indians, the physical landscape, particularly water sources, were sacred. Humans, the flora, and fauna shared space equally. In addition, for those who "lived Indian,"the past was inseparable from the present. Tribal rituals and ceremonies confirmed that the link between the two would be maintained. Ceremonials renewed and affirmed Indian spirituality validating the sustenance conservative Indians derived from their traditions and communal settlements.[134]

Square or Stomp Grounds were a primary part of the cultural and physical landscape of rural Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole communities. Even many Indian church communities were simultaneously organized either around or within a short distance of ceremonial grounds. There existed, however, rural Indian communities whose religiosity related exclusively to ceremonial grounds. For those Indians, the Stomp or Square Grounds represented their ancient town squares. For example, in 1896, Cherokees who belonged to the *Keetowah* Society, disgruntled with allotment and their tribal leaders, rekindled fires and ceremonial grounds in several communities in northeastern Oklahoma. *Keetoowahs* were very orthodox in their practice of Cherokee religious traditions. There were no Christians among the *Keetoowahs*. The *Keetoowah* fires are maintained to this day.[135]

Other Indians who adhered to traditional, orthodox native religious practices existed among the other four tribes as well. For example, among Creeks, *Kialeegee* Town consisted of less-integrated Creeks such as Albert Coachman, Louis King, Alex Jimboy, John Fish, and Joseph and Charles Canard among others. The *Kialeegee* Town

had been in existence "since Andrew Jackson was president." Their ceremonial grounds were outside the town of Hannah, Oklahoma. [136]

Similar to church grounds, Stomp or Square Grounds contained clan houses. Among the Cherokee, for example, there existed seven, representing the seven Cherokee clans. The four Square Grounds of the Nighthawk *Keetoowahs* consisted of Black Gum, Sequoyah, Sugar Mountain, and Kenwood. There was also a Square Ground operated by another *Keetoowah* group, the Seven Clans Society, at Pumpkin Hollow in Cherokee County. Active Seminole Square Grounds in the 1930s included *Ochesee*, Tallahassee, Gar Creek, Eufala, *Tiwati*, *Latokala*, and *Mikasuki*. Stomp Grounds among the Creek included, among others, Greenleaf, Hickory Ground, Little River, and *Nuyaka*.[137]

The Square or Stomp Grounds of rural Indians from all of the five tribes were said to have been established from a sacred fire. Indeed, the sacred fire represented man's "communion with God" or "providence"that the Seminole referred to as *Ipofvnka*. Seminoles believed that the fire was the "earthly manifestation of the sun." It had been bestowed upon them by *Ipofvnka* or the "Master of Breath." Carefully selected "wise" men or "medicine" men were responsible for the sacred fire at all of the ceremonial grounds. Among the Cherokee *Keetoowahs*, there existed both religious and civil officials or leaders. The religious leaders consisted of the Head Chief, Chief Medicine Man, and seven council men who represented the seven clans. The civil officials were comprised of an Assistant Chief, seven council men, and an Orator. In addition, there were two primary Fire Chiefs and their assistants who were responsible for taking care of the Stomp Grounds and managing the ceremonies.[138]

The ceremonies, dances, and rituals that were held at the Stomp or Square Grounds attracted Indians for various reasons. The primary reason for the Seminole Green Corn Dance was to "restore the sacred fire." Individuals attended for religious reasons that entailed reconfirming one's faith and purifying "one's self through ceremony." Indians took medicine, or what the Seminole called *hoyvnijv*, to cleanse their bodies and insure both their physical and spiritual health. Fasting, and taking medicine known as *Micco Anija* among Creeks, was also to show that men respected and swore allegiance to their wives. Among the Seminole, medicine was taken on the first day of the Green Corn Dance. Indians both washed with and drank the medicine. They then went "to water" to bathe in a nearby stream which finished the purification process. They were not allowed to eat the remainder of the day. Indian men could not eat the "green corn," traditionally consumed the morning of the second day, unless first undertaking the purification process.[139]

At the Cherokee dances, all people who attended smoked from a common pipe. Each individual took seven puffs which represented the seven sacred fires of the Cherokees. Symbolically, the smoking was a prayer for sustenance and peace. In addition, among the Cherokees, medicine was taken after a period of fasting. But unlike the Seminoles, Cherokees ate the same day after first taking the medicine and performing their "Going to the Water Prayers." The emphasis at all of the dances was on kinship, "spirituality, and ritual respect."[140]

The annual ceremonies were also a time when "Indian names and clan seats" were bestowed upon young men as well as the "adoption" of young men into towns. The

dances also served to preserve and maintain what was known as "memory culture" — information passed along from living relatives and "dead ancestors." In addition, the annual rituals paid homage to the "tutelary spirits of certain animal species" in order to "maintain" their continued "good will." Other people came only to dance or socialize reconfirming their obligation to friends and fellow tribal members. Lastly, gatherings also helped identify those people who might be in need of assistance or aid. For whatever reason they chose to attend, however, individuals were not forced to partake in any ritual.[141]

Traditional ceremonies held at the Stomp and Square Grounds were cyclical in nature. Among Seminoles and the Creeks, the "ceremonial cycle" began in April or May of each year with an all night Stomp Dance. At this first dance a piece of meat such as liver or the heart of a deer was stuck on a stick and then placed over the flames in order to "appease the fire." Subsequently, Indian Stomp Dances were held throughout May and June. The ceremonial cycle was highlighted by the annual, main ceremony held in midsummer. Among Seminoles, the main ceremony was known as the Green Corn Ceremonial.[142]

Creeks referred to their primary ceremony as the *Bustk*. They usually held their *Bustk* in July. This annual Creek ceremony lasted for four days, a number Creeks considered sacred. The ceremonial cycle was then completed in August and September with subsequent Stomp Dances. At the last dance of the season, called the Soup Dance, both Seminoles and Creeks prepared a ritualistic kettle of soup. The "ritual" of making the soup was the responsibility of "two respected women." It had to be prepared from

wild game such as squirrel. It was served to the dancers from a common "cauldron" or pot. Creek dancers ate their soup right on the dance ground while Seminole dancers consumed it at one of the adjacent camp areas. Again, the function of the Soup Dance and the eating of the soup was a symbolic act of communion signifying appeasement between the Indians and the spirit world.[143]

Indians defined Stomp Dance in two ways. It referred both to the "entire sequence of nighttime dances performed" at a Stomp or Square Ground and it also pertained to a specific "dance form." In the *Mvskoke* language, the specific dance is known as the *Opvnka hajo* or crazy dance, or the *Satkita opvnka* or common dance. The crazy dance was the highlight of the *Bustk*. The Choctaws were the only tribe that did not perform the specific Stomp Dance. Among Cherokees, Creeks and Seminoles, women dances wore terrapin rattles. They consisted of turtle shells filled with gravel and laced with leather. The women wore them on their lower legs. Creek and Seminole medicine men prepared the rattles the women wore. In general, although with some variation among the different groups, the Stomp Dances consisted of a series of dances performed from sunset to sunrise. Among the Chickasaws and the Choctaws, for example, the dances were divided into five segments which included Jump Dances, Walk Dances, Drunk Dances, War Dances, and a Snake Dance. There were more specific dances within each of these five categories. The Creeks and Seminoles had Duck, Fish, Ribbon, Soup, Snake, Wind, and Wolf dances among others.[144]

Occasionally, Indians from the Five Civilized Tribes held their ceremonies together. For example, Creeks and Seminoles held their main dance together in1937

when some 1500 Creeks and Seminoles attended that year's Green Corn Dance in Spaulding, Oklahoma. Another example of inter-tribal ceremonials were those organized by Clement Fixico, a full-blood Creek, who led a pan-Indian group known as the Four Mothers Society. It included members from all the five tribes. They had common ceremonial grounds near Okmulgee. Their other Square Grounds were located in Cherokee country near the towns of Stilwell and Braggs. Also, both Cherokees and Creeks attended dances at the Cherokee Black Gum Square Grounds near Vian. Apparently, many of the families in the Vian Creek area were of both Cherokee and Creek descent as well as Natchez and Yuchi., ethnic groups within the Cherokee and Creek respectively. In addition, Choctaws and Chickasaw attended one another's ball games and dances.[145]

No matter the tribe, all Stomp and Square Dances were very serious and sober affairs. They were religious ceremonies. People were not allowed to drink alcohol. If people were found drunk, they were tied to a stake or tree until they were sober. Nancy Grayson Bennet, a Creek woman, said that it was a bad omen for all Creeks if an individual broke any rules or protocol at the dances. Moreover, a full-blood Creek man, Jimmie Barnett, said that if people could not attend the Green Corn Dance they were expected to send something that "everyone could enjoy,"such as food, money, or tobacco.[146]

After the taking of the medicine in the morning or the afternoon, the dancing followed in the evening. It continued all night. Traditional Indian stick ball games ensued the following dawn. They lasted most of the day. The purpose was for a team to move the

ball forward with sticks or their hands and strike the ball pole at one end of the field. Whoever tallied the most scores won the match. The Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole ball games were very similar. Played by both men and women, ball games had been traditionally used to settle inter-town differences. By the 1930s, the competitions were just as enthusiastic and rough, but more friendly in nature. [147]

Stomp and Square dances and rituals helped maintain the cultural and social unity of rural Indian communities. They reinforced mutual obligations as well as a shared sense of Indian identity. Although any Indians could attend the dances, they were overwhelmingly frequented by the more tradition-oriented members of the Five Civilized Tribes. At the same time, it was not unusual for "church Indians" to attend the dances. Yet some stridently Christian Indians criticized the dances claiming that they were antithetical to "Christian ideals." Indian Bureau workers derogatorily referred to those Indians who attended the dances as "shirkers," "dancers," or "ritualists."[148]

More integrated Indians among the five tribes said that the "full-bloods played stupid music." A Creek man said that they made "fools of themselves" and all they did was "run around in a circle and yell."[149] Criticisms, however, did not stop the dances. The traditional gatherings continued throughout the 1930s. All Indians were welcome, and some of the dances could even be attended by whites. For example, for 25 cents, whites could attend the Creek Green Corn Dance or *Bustk* that was held in 1938 near the town of Kellyville. In one Cherokee community, although only one person officially belonged to the *Keetoowahs*, another "thirty five Indians attended" *Keetoowah* meetings and ceremonials. The dances were not maintained to foment exclusivity, but rather

preserved to perpetuate a sense of shared community and respect for traditions.[150]

Social structure and shared culture were the defining elements of more tradition-oriented, rural Indian settlements. The immediate family, clan, extended-kin, tribal relationships, institutions, and traditions engendered stability and continuity. It is not to argue that the Indians or their communities were static, but their communalism allowed them to assimilate those aspects of white society that they either thought useful or could not avoid all together. Although not entirely, rural Indians, for the most part, "defined the relationships" they formed with whites and more integrated Indians. They attempted to negotiate the encroachment of outside forces to ensure that those outside forces did not completely disrupt the basic nature of their settlements. In that sense, rural Indians creatively adapted in ways that allowed them to change, but without complete disruption to their communities and lifeways. They were able to maintain their shared expectations. Their geographical isolation and social structure permitted rural Indians to achieve that goal, as best as possible, in the 1930s.

The unity forged in the relative isolation of their communities permitted them to weather the Great Depression as well maintain the fundamental integrity of their traditions. This made them distinct from the more integrated members of their respective tribes. Despite years of so-called "assimilation" they had managed to preserve a way of life, replete with its time-honored ethos. Adaptation not assimilation defined their behavior. Indeed, the less integrated Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes contradicted the observation of the famous photographer Edward Curtis who remarked in 1927 that he had had difficulty in finding "real Indians" in the Five Civilized Tribes region. Instead,

he focused his attention on the western tribes in Oklahoma such as the Comanches, Cheyennes, and Wichitas. This certainly would have amused many tradition-minded Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks and Seminoles. Or, as a Cherokee so wisely observed about outsiders and white people, in general, "they have eyes, but they cannot see."[151]

That adage certainly applied to Curtis as well as to the Indian Bureau throughout the 1930s. Although good intentions underscored the political, economic, educational, and health objectives of the Indian Bureau in its efforts to aid the rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes during the Great Depression, its goals oftentimes fell short of its aspirations. Part of its problem was trying to overcome decades of federal mismanagement. On the other hand, the obstacles the Bureau attempted to surmount were undermined by the cultural chasm that continued to exist between less-integrated, rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles and the whites and more integrated tribal members who endeavored to help them.

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29. Charles Wisdom and Alice Marriott, "Memorandum on the Present Condition of the Oklahoma Choctaw," n.d., Box 8; Alice Marriott to Louis West, 14 April 1937, Box 16; Alice Marriott Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Jordan, "Politics and Religion in a Western Cherokee Community, pp. 7-8; Chunestudy, "The Stomp Dance in the Keetoowah Society of the Western Cherokees, pp. 28-31; Howard in collaboration with Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, p. 225; Hutchings, "Cherokee Country," p. 6; Valerie Long Lambert, "The Fall and Rise of the Oklahoma Choctaw Nation: Corporate Discontinuities, Socio-Political Indeterminacies, and Shifting Ethnicities in America's Heartland," (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1999), pp. 42-60, 63.

30. Jordan, "Politics and Religion in a Western Cherokee Community, pp. 7-8; Chunestudy, "The Stomp Dance in the Keetoowah Society of the Western Cherokees, pp. 28-31; Hutchings, "Cherokee Country," p. 6; Charles Wisdom and Alice Marriott, "Memorandum on the Present Condition of the Oklahoma Choctaw," n.d., Box 8; Alice Marriott to Louis West, 14 April 1937, Box 16; Alice Marriott Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Howard in collaboration with Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, p. 225.

31. Hewes, "Geography," pp. 68,158.

32. Family Health and Survey Forms, 1938-1951, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Records Center.

33. Kenneth Ernest Fink, "A Cherokee Notion of Development" (Ph.D., diss., Union Graduate School, Ohio, 1978), pp. 59-60; Merrill, "Status of the Choctaw," pp. 70-72; Hall, "Status of the Cherokee," pp. 54-56; Alexander Spoehr, *Kinship System of the Seminole*. (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History), p. 92.

34. Merrill, "Status of the Choctaw," pp. 70-72.

35. Kenneth Ernest Fink, "A Cherokee Notion of Development" (Ph.D., diss., Union Graduate School, Ohio, 1978), pp. 59-60; Merrill, "Status of the Choctaw," pp. 70-72; Hall, "Status of the Cherokee," pp. 54-56; Family health and Survey Forms, 1938-1951, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Records Center; Richard Sattler and Frederick E. Hoxie, *Reports of the American Indian Family History Project, Occasional Paper #9, Part Three: Marriage* (Chicago: D'Arcy McNickle Center for the History of the American Indian, The Newberry Library, 1992), pp. 12-15; Box 9, Subject Files, Elmer Thomas Collection, Carl Albert Center, University of Oklahoma; Spoehr, *Kinship System of the Seminole*, p. 92;

36. Fink, "A Cherokee Notion," pp. 59-60; Merrill, "Status of the Choctaw," pp. 70-72; Hall, "Status of the Cherokee," pp. 54-56.

37. Family Health and Survey Forms, 1938-1951, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Records Center; Sattler and Hoxie, *Reports of the American Indian Family History Project*, pp. 12-15; Box 9, Subject Files, Elmer Thomas Collection, Carl Albert Center, University of Oklahoma.

38. Family Health and Survey Forms, 1938-1951, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Records Center.

39. Family Health and Survey Forms, 1938-1951, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Records Center; George Nelson Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

40. Family health and Survey Forms, 1938-1951, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Records Center; Richard Sattler and Frederick E. Hoxie, *Reports of the American Indian Family History Project, Occasional Paper #9, Part Three: Marriage* (Chicago: D'Arcy McNickle Center for the History of the American Indian, The Newberry Library, 1992), pp. 12-15; Box 9, Subject Files, Elmer Thomas Collection, Carl Albert Center, University of Oklahoma.

41. Family Health and Survey Forms, 1938-1951, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Records Center.

42. Family Health and Survey Forms, 1938-1951, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Records Center; Dorothy Milligan, *The Indian Way: The Choctaw* (Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1976), pp. 46, 61, 84,107.

43. Family Health and Survey Forms, 1938-1951, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Records Center; Dorothy Milligan, *The Indian Way: The Chickasaws* (Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1976), pp. 34, 42-44.

44. Family Health and Survey Forms, 1938-1951, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Records Center; Lee Anne Nichols, "The Infant Caring Process Among Cherokee Mothers" (Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 1994), pp. 36-38; Howard in collaboration with Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, pp. 104-105, 107-108, 110-111; Spoehr, "Kinship System," pp. 75-80; Dorothy Milligan, *The Indian Way: The Creeks and Seminoles* (Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1976), pp. 30-35.

45. Family Health and Survey Forms, 1938-1951, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Records Center; Nichols, "The Infant Caring Process," pp. 36-38; Howard in collaboration with Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, pp. 104-105, 107-108, 110-111; Spoehr, "Kinship System," pp. 75-80.

46. Milligan, *The Indian Way: The Choctaw*, p. 46.

47. Family Health and Survey Forms, 1938-1951, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Records Center; Nichols, "The Infant Caring Process," pp. 36-38.

48. Family Health and Survey Forms, 1938-1951, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Records Center; Howard in collaboration with Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, pp. 104-105, 107-108, 110-111; Spoehr, "Kinship System," pp. 75-80. The following studies offer trenchant insights into community, identity, and social organization. James Clifton, *Being and Becoming Indian: Biographical Studies of North American Frontiers* (Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waverly Press, 1989; Otis Dudley Duncan and Leo F. Schnore, "Cultural, Behavioral, and Ecological Perspectives in the Study of Social Organization," *American Journal of Sociology* 65 (September 1959), pp. 132-146; Mauriece Godelier, *The Mental and the Material*, Martin Thom, trans. (London: Vero, 1986); Donald Meinig, *Three Peoples in Geographical Change, 1600-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971); Richard Nostrand, *The Hispano Homeland* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992); Joan Weibel Orlando, *Indian Country, L.A.: Maintaining Ethnic Community in Complex Society* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); John R. Swanton, *Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians* (Birmingham: Birmingham Public Library Press, 1993); and Mario D. Zamora, Michael Maher, and Henry Orenstein , eds. *Themes in Culture: Essays in Honor of Morris E. Opler* (Kayumanggi Publishers: Quezon City, Philippines, 1971).

49. Howard in collaboration with Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, pp. 104-105, 107-108, 110-111; Spoehr, "Kinship System," pp. 75-80. Clifton, *Being and Becoming Indian*; Duncan and Schnore, "Cultural, Behavioral, and Ecological Perspectives," pp. 132-146; Godelier, *The Mental and the Material*; Meinig, *Three Peoples in Geographical Change*; Nostrand, *The Hispano Homeland*; Orlando, *Indian Country, L.A.*; Swanton, *Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life*; and Zamora, Maher, and Orenstein , eds. *Themes in Culture*.

50. John R. Swanton, "Social Organization and Social Usages of the Indians of the Creek Confederacy," *Annual Report*, Bureau of the American Ethnology, 1924-1925, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1928), pp. 79,97, 114, 120, 156-57, 167; Alexander Spoehr, *Changing Kinship Systems: A Study in the Acculturation of the Creeks, Cherokee, and Choctaw*, (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History), pp. 164-178; "The Creek Indian Towns of Oklahoma in 1937," Morris Opler Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Howard in collaboration with Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, pp. 104-105, 107-108, 110-111; Alice Marriott and Charles Wisdom, "Memorandum on the Present Condition of the Choctaw," n.d., Box 8, Alice Marriott Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma. Depending upon which source one consults, "town" is spelled in both a capitalized and non-capitalized manner. I have followed the primary source's usage when using "town" as it applies to the five tribes.

51. Interview 7088, Indian Pioneer Papers; Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

52. Interview 7088, Indian Pioneer Papers; "The Creek Indian Towns of Oklahoma in 1937," Morris Opler Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

53. Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, *Annual Report*, 1932, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Records Center.

54. Morris Edward Opler, "The Creek Town and the Problem of Creek Political Organization," in *Human Problems in Technological Change: A Casebook*, ed. Edward Spicer, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1952), pp.165-180. Technically, *idalwas* were not towns, but rather referred to a group of people associated by both heredity and tradition. "The Creek Indian Towns of Oklahoma in 1937," Morris Opler Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma. There appears to be some disagreement among exact spelling of these towns as well as the correct name of each mother town. Opler, on two separate occasions, refers to the Mother Towns by different names. I have listed in the text one list of the four towns. The other includes the following: *Apihka*, *Kawita*, *Kasihta*, and *Tokipahchi*. Interview 7529; Interview 7088, Indian Pioneer Papers; Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; A.C. Monihan to

Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1 May 1940, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Central Classified Files, 1907-1939, Series B, Reel 2.

55. "The Creek Indian Towns of Oklahoma in 1937," Morris Opler Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

56. Spoehr, *Changing Kinship Systems*, p. 176.

57. Opler, "The Creek Town and the Problem," pp.165-180. "The Creek Indian Towns of Oklahoma in 1937," Morris Opler Collection; Interview 7529; Interview 7088, Indian Pioneer Papers; Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; A.C. Monihan to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 1, 1940; Ben Dwight to A.C. Monahan, 2 February 1939, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Central Classified Files, 1907-1939, Series B, Reel 2, microfilm copy, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

58. Population, American Indian File, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Hutchins, "Cherokee Country," pp. 13, 24, 47, 84, 96; Hewes, "Geography," pp. 68, 111-112, 138-141, 151-152, 162, 170; Chunestudy, "Stomp Dance," pp. 8-9; Milligan, *The Cherokees*, p. ix; "Notes on the Cherokee Keetoowahs," Box 73, Alice Marriott Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

59. Spoehr, *Changing Kinship Systems*, pp. 166-177, 180, 184-185, 196-218; Population, American Indian File, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Hutchins, "Cherokee Country," pp. 13, 24, 47, 84, 96; Hewes, "Geography," pp. 68, 111-112, 138-141, 151-152, 162, 170; Chunestudy, "Stomp Dance," pp. 8-9; Milligan, *The Cherokees*, p. ix; "Notes on the Cherokee Keetoowahs," Box 73, Alice Marriott Collection; Interview 5733; Interview 5994, Indian Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection; Box 9, Subject Files, Elmer Thomas Collection, Carl Albert Center, University of Oklahoma; Box 16, Angie Debo Papers, Oklahoma State University.

60. Spoehr, *Changing Kinship Systems*, pp. 166-177, 180, 184-185, 196-218; Box 16, Angie Debo Papers, Oklahoma State University; Alice Marriott Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

61. Spoehr, *Changing Kinship Systems*, pp. 166-177, 180, 184-185, 196-218; Box 16, Angie Debo Papers, Oklahoma State University.

62. Hutchins, "Cherokee Country," pp. 15, 151-154; Howard in collaboration with Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, p. 240; Milligan, *The Indian Way: The Chickasaws*, p. 50; Mankiller with Wallis, *Mankiller*, p. 37; Federal Writer's Project, Works Progress Administration, *American Guide Series*, pp. 233-234; Spoehr, *Changing*

Kinship Systems, pp. 166-177, 180, 184-185, 196-218; Box 16, Angie Debo Papers, Oklahoma State University; Population, American Indian File, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Hewes, "Geography," pp. 68, 111-112, 138-141, 151-152, 162, 170; Chunestudy, "Stomp Dance," pp. 8-9; Milligan, *The Cherokees*, p. ix; "Notes on the Cherokee Keetoowahs," Box 73, Alice Marriott Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Heart with Clarkson, *The Wind is My Mother*, p. 19; Interview 6582; Interview 12844; Indian Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma..

63. Milligan, *The Indian Way: The Choctaws*, pp. 84-107; Milligan, *The Indian Way: The Chickasaws*, p. 34.

64. Milligan, *The Indian Way: The Chickasaws*, pp. 44, 50, 124.

65. Hutchins, "Cherokee Country," pp. 15, 151-154; Howard in collaboration with Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, p. 240; Federal Writer's Project, Works Progress Administration, *American Guide Series*, pp. 233-234; Spoehr, *Changing Kinship Systems*, pp. 166-177, 180, 184-185, 196-218; Milligan, *The Indian Way: The Chickasaws*, p. 50-51; Mankiller with Wallis, *Mankiller*, p. 37.

66. Interview 12844; Indian Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

67. Hutchins, "Cherokee Country," pp. 15, 151-154; Howard in collaboration with Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, p. 240; Milligan, *The Indian Way: The Chickasaws*, p. 50-51; Mankiller with Wallis, *Mankiller*, p. 37; Federal Writer's Project, Works Progress Administration, *American Guide Series*, pp. 233-234; Heart with Clarkson, *The Wind is My Mother*, p. 19; Interview 6582; Interview 12844; Indian Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

68. Box 20; Box 25.2, Angie Debo Papers, Oklahoma State University; Fink, "A Cherokee Notion," p. 37; Box 238, E.E. Dale Collection; "The Oklahoma Ozarks as the Land of the Cherokees," Leslie Hewes Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Fowler, *Shared Symbols*; pp. 6-7; L.G. Moses and Raymond Wilson, eds., *Indian Lives: Essays on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Native American Leaders* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985), pp. 2-4; Karen I. Blu, *The Lumbee Problem: The Making of an American Indian People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 164, 167, 170-171.

69. Nichols, "Infant Caring," pp. 55, 72; Albert L. Wahrhaftig and Jane Lukens Warhhaftig, "New Militants or Resurrected State?: The Northeastern County Oklahoma Cherokee Organization," in *The Cherokee Nation: A Troubled History*, Duane H. King, ed., (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press,1979), pp. 223-

246; Box 20; Box 25.2, Angie Debo Papers, Oklahoma State University; Fink, "A Cherokee Notion," p. 37; Box 238, E.E. Dale Collection; "The Oklahoma Ozarks as the Land of the Cherokees," Leslie Hewes Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Fowler, *Shared Symbols*; pp. 6-7; Moses and Wilson, eds., *Indian Lives*, pp. 2-4; Blu, *The Lumbee Problem*, pp. 164, 167, 170-171.

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71. Nichols, "Infant Caring," pp. 55, 72; Wahrhaftig and Wahrhaftig, "New Militants," pp. 223-246; Box 20; Box 25.2, Angie Debo Papers, Oklahoma State University; Box 238, E.E. Dale Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Fink, "Cherokee Notion," p. 37; "The Oklahoma Ozarks as the Land of the Cherokees," Leslie Hewes Collection; Oklahoma Department of Public Welfare, *Annual Report*, August 6, 1936 to June 30,1937," Box 1, Oklahoma Department of Public Welfare, Oklahoma Department of Libraries; Interview T44; Interview T510, Interview T571, Interview T536, Interview T547-2, T243, T51, T259-1, Doris Duke Collection; Interview, 10407, Interview 5898, Interview 13125, Interview 6371, Indian Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

72. Interview 13125, Indian Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

73. Interview 13125, Indian Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Dorothy Milligan, *The Indian Way: The Chickasaws* (Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1976), pp. 50, 81; Mankiller and St. Wallis, *Mankiller*, pp. 32-33.

74. Nichols, "Infant Caring," pp. 55, 72; Wahrhaftig and Wahrhaftig, "New Militants," pp. 223-246; Box 20; Box 25.2, Angie Debo Papers, Oklahoma State University; Box 238, E.E. Dale Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Fink, "Cherokee Notion," p. 37; "The Oklahoma Ozarks as the Land of the Cherokees," Leslie Hewes Collection; Oklahoma Department of Public Welfare, *Annual Report*, August 6, 1936 to June 30,1937," Box 1,

Oklahoma Department of Public Welfare, Oklahoma Department of Libraries; Interview T44; Interview T510, Interview T571, Interview T536, Interview T547-2, T243, T51, T259-1, Doris Duke Collection; Interview, 10407, Interview 5898, Interview 13125, Interview 6371, Indian Pioneer Papers; Hampton Tucker to Ben Dwight 13 February 1931, Box 11, Hampton Tucker Collection; A.M Landman to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 4 January 1933, Box S26, Seminole Nation Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Milligan, *The Indian Way: The Chickasaws* pp. 50, 81; *Wewoka Times Democrat* 10 January 1936; Box 239, E.E. Dale Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Heart with Clarkson, *The Wind Is My Mother*, pp. 18-19, 45; Interview 10407, Indian Pioneer Papers; Interview T210, Doris Duke Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

75. Nichols, "Infant Caring," pp. 55, 72; Wahrhaftig and Wahrhaftig, "New Militants," pp. 223-246; Box 20; Box 25.2, Angie Debo Papers, Oklahoma State University; Box 238, E.E. Dale Collection; Fink, "Cherokee Notion," p. 37; "The Oklahoma Ozarks as the Land of the Cherokees," Leslie Hewes Collection; Box 1, Oklahoma Department of Public Welfare, *Annual Report*, August 6, 1936 to June 30,1937, Box 1, Oklahoma Department of Public Welfare, Oklahoma Department of Libraries; Interview T44; Interview T510, Interview T571, Interview T536, Interview T547-2, T243, T51, T259-1, Doris Duke Collection; Interview, 10407, Interview 5898, Interview 13125, Interview 6371, Indian Pioneer Papers; Hampton Tucker to Ben Dwight 13 February 1931, Box 11, Hampton Tucker Collection; A.M Landman to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, January 4, 1933, Box S26, Seminole Nation Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Milligan, *The Chickasaws*, pp. 50, 81; *Wewoka Times Democrat* 10 January 1936; Mary McKinney Frye, "Visit to an Indian Church," Box 239, E.E. Dale Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

76. Nichols, "Infant Caring," pp. 55, 72; Wahrhaftig and Wahrhaftig, "New Militants," pp. 223-246; Box 20, Box 25.2, Angie Debo Papers, Oklahoma State University; Box 238, E.E. Dale Collection; "The Oklahoma Ozarks as the Land of the Cherokees," Leslie Hewes Collection; Interview T44; Interview T510, Interview T571, Interview T536, Interview T547-2, T243, T51, T259-1, Doris Duke Collection; Interview, 10407, Interview 5898, Interview 13125, Interview 6371, Indian Pioneer Papers; Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

77. Interview 12995, Interview 6976, Interview 13131, Indian Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

78. Works Progress Administration, Federal Writer's Project of Oklahoma, *American Guide Series: Calendar of Annual Events in Oklahoma* (Tulsa: Tribune

Publishing Co., 1938), pp. 231-233; John R. Swanton, *Social Organization and Social Usuages of the Indians of the Creek Confederacy, 42nd Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1924-1925* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1928), pp. 334-335, 363, 384-385; Dr. Virgil Berry Collection; Interview 12995, Interview 6787, Interview 13131, Indian Pioneer Papers; Alice Marriott to Rene d' Harnoncourt, n.d., Box 8, Alice Marriott Collection; Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Moore, "Status of the Seminole Indians," p. 56.

79. Merrill, "Status of the Choctaw," p. 108; Hall, "Status of the Cherokee," pp. 66-68; Howard with Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, p. 233; Gunter, "Health Problems and Practices," pp. 97-99; Milligan, *Indian Way: Cherokees*, p.26; Interview T536-2, Doris Duke Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; King, Cherokee Indian Nation, pp. 204-205; Heart with Clarkson, *The Wind Is My Mother*, p. 12; Interview 13125, Interview 7465, Indian Pioneer Papers; Interview T536-2, Doris Duke Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

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81. Interview 7465, Indian Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

82. Hall, "Status of the Cherokee," pp. 66-68; Gunter, "Health Problems and Practices," pp. 97-99; Mankiller and St. Wallis, *Mankiller*, pp. 32-33; Milligan, *Indian Way: Cherokees*, p.26; Interview T536-2, Doris Duke Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; King, *Cherokee Indian Nation*, pp. 204-205; Heart with Clarkson, *Wind Is My Mother*, p. 12; Interview 13125, Interview 7465, Indian Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Jordan, "Politics and Religion," pp. 8-11; Hutchings, "Cherokee Country," pp. 66, 252.

83. Mankiller and St. Wallis, *Mankiller*, pp. 32-33.

84. Hall, "Status of the Cherokee," pp. 66-68; Gunter, "Health Problems and Practices," pp. 97-99; Mankiller and St. Wallis, *Mankiller*, pp. 32-33; Milligan, *Indian Way: Cherokees*, p.26; Interview T536-2, Doris Duke Collection, Western

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86. Interview 6582, Interview 13615, Interview 6780, Interview 13131, Indian Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), p402; Hutchins, "Cherokee Country," pp. 151-155.

87. Wahrhaftig and Wahrhaftig, "New Militants," pp. 229-230; Heart with Clarkson, *Wind Is My Mother*, pp. 22, 45;

88. Hall, "Status of the Cherokee," pp. 66-68; Gunter, "Health Problems and Practices," pp. 97-99; Milligan, *Indian Way: Cherokees*, p.26; Interview T536-2, Doris Duke Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Wahrhaftig and Wahrhaftig, "New Militants," pp. 204-205; Heart with Clarkson, *Wind Is My Mother*, p. 12.

89. Cinda Kaye Red Baldwin, "Sequoyah Weavers Association: A New Deal for the Oklahoma Cherokee," (Master's thesis, University of Arkansas, 1984), pp. 2-4; Jordan, "Politics and Religion," p. 224; Hutchins, diss, pp. 131, 152-153; Dr. Virgil Berry Collection; Madelina Czarina Colbert Conlan Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Frederich and Gritts, eds. *Shadow of Sequoyah*, p. 75.

90. Cinda Kaye Red Baldwin, "Sequoyah Weavers Association: A New Deal for the Oklahoma Cherokee," (Master's thesis, University of Arkansas, 1984), pp. 2-4; Jordan, "Politics and Religion," p. 224; Hutchins, diss, pp. 131, 152-153; Morris

Opler, "Creek Towns of Oklahoma in 1937;" Dr. Virgil Berry Collection; Madelina Czarina Colbert Conlan Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Frederich and Gritts, eds. *Shadow of Sequoyah*, p. 75.

91. Merrill, "Status of the Choctaw," pp. 54-56; Hall, "Status of the Cherokee," pp. 54, 79; Hutchins, diss, pp. 131, 152-153; Morris Opler, "Creek Towns of Oklahoma in 1937;" Brian F. Rader, "The Political Outsiders: Blacks and Indians in a Rural Oklahoma Community," (Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1977, pp. 183-184; Milligan, *Indian Way: Cherokees*, pp. xi, 110.

92. Merrill, "Status of the Choctaw," pp. 54-56; Hall, "Status of the Cherokee," pp. 54, 79 Brian F. Rader, "The Political Outsiders: Blacks and Indians in a Rural Oklahoma Community," (Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1977, pp. 183-184; Milligan, *Indian Way: Cherokees*, pp. xi, 110.

93. Nichols, "Infant Caring," pp. 53, 55, 72; King, *The Cherokee Nation*; Box 20, Box 25.2, Angie Debo Papers, Oklahoma State University; *Wewoka Capital Democrat* 3 September 1937; *Wewoka Times Democrat* 10 January 1936; September 1937; Box 238, E.E. Dale Collection; "The Oklahoma Ozarks as the Land of the Cherokees," Leslie Hewes Collection; Interview T44; Interview T510, Interview T571, Interview T536, Doris Duke Collection; Interview, 10407, Indian Pioneer Papers; Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

94. Nichols, "Infant Caring," pp. 53, 55, 72; King, *The Cherokee Nation*; Box 20, Box 25.2, Angie Debo Papers, Oklahoma State University; *Wewoka Capital Democrat* 3; *Wewoka Times Democrat* 10 January 1936; September 1937.

95. Interview T-571, Doris Duke Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

96. Hunke, *Frank B. Melvin*, p. 16.

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Chapter 2

The Laws and Politics of Good Intentions

The termination of the governments of the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma and the tragic dissolution of their land holdings resulted in their political marginalization. They became an "administered" people. Excluded from the Dawes General Allotment Act of 1887 because of the economic and political power of large cattle ranchers who leased extensive tracts of land in Indian Territory from the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole Nations, eventually the Five Civilized Tribes succumbed to the allotment and assimilation policies of the federal government. The government intended to turn these people into hard working, productive citizens of the United States.[1]

Allotment and assimilation never became the panacea the Indian Bureau intended. Their failure forced the federal government to re-evaluate its Indian policy in the 1930s. Under the guidance of John Collier, the Indian Bureau ended allotment and "forcible assimilation." Instead, Collier intended for Indian tribes to regain control of their governments so Indians could attain some "measure of autonomy" and economic "self-sufficiency." Collier's Indian agenda included cultural, economic, educational, health, and political reform. The Indian Reorganization Act, 1934, became the foundation of his policy. The Five Civilized Tribes, however, opposed that legislation. Many allotted Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles were against "tribal ownership and segregation from the white community." They did not want to

return to "reservation life."[2] Eventually, the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act, 1937, was intended to address their specific needs, but it too failed to generate much enthusiasm among members of the Five Civilized Tribes, particularly Indians living in the isolated, rural settlements. Despite the good intentions of the Indian New Deal, it only partially achieved its stated objectives.

For the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma, the allotment process developed slowly over the course of 15 years. In 1893, Congress established the Dawes Commission to negotiate with the five tribes. Five years later, Congress passed the Curtis Act which abolished tribal courts and initiated the enrollment process. Between 1898 and 1902, the federal government reached allotment agreements with all the Five Civilized Tribes. In addition, the Five Tribes Act passed on April 26, 1906 limited the powers of the tribal governments and authorized the President of the United States to both appoint as well as to remove tribal chiefs or governors. Because more "traditional Indians" within the five tribes resisted allotment, Congress feared that the resistance might result in the election of a tribal leader who would refuse to sign allotment deeds. Moreover, the act granted considerable authority to the Secretary of the Interior over tribal schools, tribal revenues, the sale of tribal land and property, and the distribution of per capita payments. The members of the Five Civilized Tribes became citizens of Oklahoma when it achieved statehood on November 16, 1907. By 1908, the Commissioner to the Five Civilized Tribes completed the enrollment process.[3]

The allotment policy, and the other legislation enacted in the early 1900s, overturned the legal protections that the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and

Seminoles had enjoyed as sovereign Indian nations within the United States. Tribal governments remained intact, but their power had been greatly reduced. There were those among the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles who believed that Congress had undermined their political systems. Indians who mourned the loss of their tribal autonomy were more likely to view the government approved chiefs as figure-heads who did not necessarily represent the goals and objectives of all tribal members.[4]

In addition, depending upon their blood or ethnic classification, unique legal restrictions and stipulations applied to the allottees. Congress clarified these classifications when it enacted laws in both 1906 and 1908 which divided the allottees of the Five Civilized Tribes into three groups. The first of these, intermarried whites, freedmen, and those possessing less than one-half Indian blood, had no restrictions placed upon their allotments. They could sell, rent, or lease their holdings as they saw fit. The second group, allottees who had more than one-half but less than three-fourths Indian blood, was allowed to sell, rent, or lease surplus land holdings. However, those parcels of land chosen as their homestead sites remained inalienable. The final classification consisted of those members of the Five Civilized Tribes who possessed three-fourths or more Indian blood. They had restrictions placed on all their land holdings and they were limited in their ability to lease their land without the consent of the Secretary of the Interior. These acts, combined with further statutes enacted up to the early 1930s, basically sought to protect those with high percentages of Indian blood from state taxation and land alienation.[5]

During the first decades of the twentieth century, this allotment policy fragmented the Five Civilized Tribes economically, politically, and socially. But the extent of fragmentation was not as great as some historians have claimed. The victimization of Indians living in the eastern and central regions of Oklahoma varied in its degree and impact over time and place. Whites and Indians utilized robbery, murder, and the legal and illegal manipulation of the courts to take advantage of allotment, intent on separating unsuspecting allottees from their lands, but many Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles proved to be quite resilient. Far removed from the urban centers of Oklahoma, and ambivalent toward the legal and political machinations unfolding at both the state capital and in Washington, D.C., these predominantly restricted, rural Indians maintained their small communities as they always had, living and surviving neither as victims or victimizers.

Many rural Indians and their communities retained their autonomy despite the evangelism of white reformers who believed that the acquisition of private property and participation in the market economy exemplified an American ideal. In regard to the cultural complexities that distinguished many Indians from whites, these progressive-minded white activists were hostile at worst, ignorant and uninformed at best. They worked diligently along with state and federal politicians and the Indian Bureau to see that assimilation continued finding enthusiastic allies among the more culturally integrated citizens of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole nations.[6]

In many, but not all instances the leading businessmen, officials, and political leaders of the Five Civilized Tribes were racially and culturally more white than Indian.

Legally, the federal government defined those people as Native American. But in truth, Indians, such as the Cherokee Senator William Wirt Hastings, had more in common with and adhered to the values of the dominant Anglo-Saxon American society. But not all of the more integrated Indians, were mixed blood. Hampton Tucker, for example, a Choctaw tribal attorney, was a full blood. And yet Tucker, even by his own admission, was viewed by many "full-blood," rural Choctaws with a fair amount of suspicion. Blood quantum did not determine how Indians behaved. Other factors, such as where they lived or how faithfully they adhered to cultural traditions, were more significant.[7]

By the early 1900s, those Indians who were more comfortable living among whites were generations removed from their traditional ancestors. Predominantly urbanized, they were geographically separated from many of those Indians they supposedly represented and rarely, if ever, frequented the isolated rural communities of their tribal brethren. Instead, they were more likely to interact with Oklahoma whites and other integrated Indians like themselves as a result of their cultural and class similarities.

At the same time, some rural Indians viewed these integrated Indians with a good deal of suspicion. Men such as Clem Hogner, a full-blood Cherokee, said that "he considered mixed bloods white."[8] He believed that the more integrated members of his tribe had sold out the Cherokees. Although the opinions of people like Hogner were extreme, nevertheless, they contained a great deal of truth.

It would be wrong to conclude that Indians such as Hastings or Tucker were completely disconnected from their tribal members. They did not necessarily wish to betray their people, nor were they disinterested in the welfare of their nations, but what

they envisioned for tribal members did not always concur with what rural Indians desired. At the same time, rural Indian enclaves were not monolithic. Nor were all Indians either integrated completely into white society or antagonistic toward and alienated from white society. Many Indians were ambiguous in their behavior and their cultural orientation and were able to "walk in both worlds." Tucker referred to those Indians as "discreet Indians."[9]

Generally, however, rural Indians adhered to fundamental cultural, economic, political, and social precepts that had been maintained for generations. Those common denominators served as the foundations for Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole rural Indian settlements. Their cultural conservatism or obstinance is what separated them from their more integrated Indian brethren. Ultimately, it allowed them to maintain the cultural and social integrity of their communities and mitigate the impact of allotment as well as the Great Depression.[10]

From the late 1890s through the 1920s, allotment and the assimilation policies of the federal government attracted the attention of developers, investors, real estate salesmen, courts, grafters, politicians, and reformers alike. As land holdings decreased, the cultural, political and legal autonomy of the Five Civilized Tribes diminished as well. The legislation that Congress had enacted from 1898 to 1908 rendered the tribes legally and politically impotent. An act of May 27, 1908 proved especially harmful to the tribes. Pushed through Congress at the urging of the Oklahoma delegation, it gave the state's county probate courts jurisdiction over the estates of Indian minors and control over the estates of those members of the Five Civilized Tribes deemed "incompetent."The Act

also authorized the Secretary of the Interior to assign to local probate attorneys "prescribed duties relating to restricted lands."[11]

The 1908 legislation led to systematic plundering of the former tribal land holdings. The Indian Rights Association concluded that Oklahoma's Indian probate system had become a business in its own right. Oftentimes, lawyers and the legal guardians of so-called incompetents worked in collusion with one another. County probate judges assigned friends and relatives to serve as guardians to Indians that the courts had deemed unfit to manage their own affairs. Because the office of county judge was a political position, it left the courts and the legal process vulnerable to the influence of business and political interests. It was not unusual for judges to appoint devoted constituents as administrators, attorneys, and guardians of Indian estates. And in numerous instances, lawyers representing large mining and lumber companies also represented Indians whose lands these companies wished to acquire. This corruption of lawyers and judges as a result of financial kickbacks, nepotism, and political patronage continued well into the 1930s.[12]

With their land parceled out, and their political influence compromised, the legally redefined people of the Five Civilized Tribes attempted as best they could to fend off property hungry whites and Indians who wanted their land. Those Indians who lacked business skills or who were ignorant of the law, saw their land holdings diminish dramatically. In 1889, the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles owned nearly 20,000,000 acres. By 1935, that shrank to 1,500,000 acres of restricted land. Tribal leaders and representatives such as Choctaws Ben Dwight and Grady Lewis,

Chickasaws Douglas Johnston and G.G. McVay, and Seminoles Alice Davis and George Jones protested and sought to protect Indians from land alienation through the legal and political system that determined the course of their lives.[13] Other groups and individuals within the Five Civilized Tribes continued to suspect the federal government and its policies. They saw no point in negotiating with people they did not trust. They remained a cloistered, predominantly self-reliant people dependent upon the vitality of their cultural, political, and social institutions and traditions to address local problems. They often withdrew into the comfort and sanctuary of their rural communities rather than foster confrontation. In the 1930s, tribal affiliation, economic class, and cultural orientation dictated how various groups within the tribes responded both politically and legally to their situation.[14]

The more integrated members of all Five of the Civilized Tribes were the most likely to press their political and legal concerns through formal channels. The president of the United States either appointed or confirmed the chiefs of the Cherokees, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles from 1906 through the 1930s. However, if a chief satisfactorily represented his or her respective tribe, he was often reappointed on the recommendation of the Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Depending upon the tribe and the year, this position might remain vacant. For example, in 1932 the Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles had no federally recognized tribal officials, and again in 1937 the Cherokees had no officially sanctioned form of tribal government.[15]

In the case of the Chickasaws, a governor, instead of a chief, occupied the

executive position. Douglas H. Johnston held the position of Chickasaw governor prior to the disbanding of the tribal governments and continued to hold it up until his death in 1939. Among the Cherokees, these positions were sarcastically referred to as "chiefs for a day" because the president often appointed a Cherokee chief only when some piece of legislation or legal document needed signing. For example, Oliver Brewer was appointed chief of the Cherokees for one day in 1931 and W.W. Hastings was appointed Cherokee chief for one day in 1936. Nevertheless, these executives were quite comfortable negotiating with officials from the Indian Bureau as well as with politicians. Indian leaders made frequent trips to Washington, D.C., and Oklahoma City during this period in order to lobby and press for the concerns of their respective tribes.[16]

After allotment and prior to the 1930s, predominantly conservative groups within the Five Civilized Tribes protested their loss of legal and political sovereignty, but in a more radical fashion. The Creek, Chitto Harjo and his "Snake" followers, the Four Mothers Nation, and the various Cherokee Keetoowah organizations best defined conservative activism. These groups fought hard against allotment, guardianship, tax laws specifically targeting Indians, and the illegal encroachment of whites onto their traditional lands. Conservatives particularly objected to the taxation of allotments. They argued that they were wards of the federal government, not citizens of Oklahoma, and therefore not subject to Oklahoma land taxes. These more reactionary Indians refused to pay taxes and physically confronted whites who they believed were living illegally on Indian traditional lands. The "Snakes" also accosted fellow tribal members who had taken allotments or who were renting their land to non-Creeks. They posted warnings

throughout the Creek Nation for Indians to resist allotment as well as taxes. In the more extreme cases, they whipped Indians who defied their orders. The "Snake" movement gathered followers among the other four tribes as well. Groups such as the "Snakes" caused a great deal of consternation among the more integrated or less radical members of the Five Civilized Tribes.[17]

In spite of their radical defiance, authorities arrested Indians who failed to pay state taxes. In some instances, conservative Indians refused to claim allotments as a protest. An organization of Seminoles calling itself the Seminole Indian Protective Association lobbied for the extension of the deadline removing restrictions from full-blood lands. One group of Cherokee who considered themselves traditionalists attempted to form their own commonwealth. A small number of Cherokees and Creeks looked into the possibility of emigrating to Mexico and re-establishing tribal communities there. Some fiercely traditional groups, like the radical Snakes, favored a pan-Indian approach consistent with the Creek tradition of inclusiveness. They welcomed members of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Seminole to join their protest that was not above using violence to express its outrage. And in 1905, members of the Five Civilized Tribes ratified the State of Sequoyah Constitution aimed at creating a separate Indian state. Even though they simply continued a tradition of activism on the part of the Five Civilized Tribes that remained vital up through the 1930s, generally speaking, these groups proved ineffective in reversing or overturning government policy.[18]

Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles, however, refused to remain passive in the face of change. Tribal administrators, attorneys, leaders, and

lobbyists worked diligently for change. Men such as Choctaw tribal attorney Patrick J. Hurley, Mathew K. Sniffen of the Indian Rights Association, Edward Merrick, chief legal counsel of the Five Civilized Tribes Agency in Muskogee, Cherokee Oklahoma state senator E.M. Frye, Choctaw Chief Ben Dwight, and the Oklahoma Chickasaw United States Congressman Charles D. Carter all fought to overcome the corruption that surrounded the probate and real estate matters related to the Five Civilized Tribes. Their efforts led to improvements in the administration of the Five Civilized Tribes, but failed to redress all of the Indian's grievances.[19]

Tribal representatives fought to overturn or amend legislation that they believed was harmful to Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes. Between 1913 and 1920 legislation had authorized lifting the restrictions on surplus Indian land. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs wanted Indians to have the opportunity to function as independent farmers and businessmen and manage their own affairs. Although well intended in the eyes of the federal government, the legislation sped up the process of separating Indians from their surplus real estate. To eliminate restrictions, beginning in 1916 the Department of the Interior established competency commissions. Generally, these commissions consisted of two or three Indian Bureau officials. They interviewed individual Indians in the Five Civilized Tribes and filed reports on living conditions, education, and economic status. Once judged competent, an Indian's surplus lands could be leased or sold. Therefore, Oklahoma real estate agents, as well as developers and land speculators, gained access to lists of unrestricted Indian lands. This often resulted in whites purchasing land below market price from Indians untrained in the nuances of real estate transactions.[20]

In the years leading up to 1932 and the presidential administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the federal government passed legislation addressing the grievances of the Five Civilized Tribes. Under the Indian Appropriation Act of 1914, the Department of the Interior distributed tribal funds from land leases and sales to both restricted and unrestricted members of the tribes. The Act of Congress of June 7, 1924 authorized the tribes to sue the United States in the United States Court of Claims, regarding treaties and laws relating to their affairs.[21]

In theory, this legislation seemed to redress Indian grievances. But in reality, lawsuits filed on behalf of the Five Civilized Tribes languished for years in the courts. For example, in 1924 the Seminoles filed suit against the United States regarding the sale of the Emahaka Seminole Mission School property. The tribe claimed that the United States, in direct violation of previous "treaty obligations," illegally sold the 320 acres. The Seminoles argued, moreover, that the federal government had "mishandled" tribal trust funds and property. The case was still unresolved in 1938. One year later in 1925, a group organized by Chili Fish, June Factor, Charles Brown, and Harry Tiger calling itself the Seminole Indian Nation sought claims against the federal government for delinquent per capita payments. Ultimately, the tribes, as well as individual tribal members, received little in relation to the time they devoted and legal fees they incurred. Even when the courts awarded Indians money, unscrupulous lawyers took a high percentage of the final settlement. On a more positive note, in 1928 restrictions on the alienation of allotments of half-blood or more Indians due to expire in 1931 were extended to 1956. Moreover, legislation was passed that protected full-blood heirs against alienation of

their inherited lands.[22]

By the late1920s, officials in the Department of the Interior realized that federal Indian policy had not improved the economic conditions of the Five Civilized Tribes. Based on surveys conducted among the Five Tribes from 1926 to 1930, Interior Department officials understood that it was imperative to formulate a policy that better addressed the needs of Indians. These surveys attempted to ascertain living conditions, education level, health, and income. In essence, the government's insight into the conditions that prevailed among the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles had to be grounded on scientific analysis as opposed to conjecture, impression, or speculation.[23]

These and other surveys that assessed living conditions among various Native American groups within the United States resulted in the publication of the Meriam Report in 1928. It concluded that an inordinate number of people among the Five Civilized Tribes suffered from chronic and endemic conditions of disease, ignorance, malnutrition, and poverty and it led to an increase in federal appropriations for the Five Civilized Tribes, especially in the areas of education and health. But the report did not accurately portray those Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles who lived in the small rural communities. Indeed, it created gross stereotypes in the minds of the people who attempted to improve the living standards within these isolated Indian settlements during the 1930s. The government dealt with these people in an uninformed, paternalistic, and ethnocentric manner. This further clouded and confused Indian policy and the purpose and nature of its intent. [24]

Notwithstanding the Meriam Report, legally and politically, the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole tribes of Oklahoma achieved mixed results during the presidential administration of Herbert Hoover. Despite the recommendations of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Charles Rhodes— that allotment had had a negative impact on the Five Civilized Tribes and the system needed to be changed— his advice went unheeded. The allotment system continued, and the process of assimilation remained the federal government's top priority. A Committee of Indian Affairs report explained the need to establish an Indian employment agency so that Indians could participate in the "industrial life of the nation." For this to occur, Indians had to be taught the "proper mental conception of work." Another Senate committee recommended that the remaining asphalt, coal, gas, and oil deposits in the segregated mineral lands of the Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations be leased or sold to generate income for tribal funds. It was also understood that the position of Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes had to become a non-partisan position rather than one gained through the system of political "spoils."[25]

The federal government continued to take a paternalistic view of the Five Civilized Tribes. The Secretary of the Interior had responsibility over the money and securities accumulated from the sale and leasing of tribal lands. But the government hesitated to release these trust funds because Indian officials believed that Native Americans did not know how to budget money responsibly. The prevailing notion that most Indians were incompetent to manage their own lives continued to hold sway in 1931. As Jimmy Rogers, a Creek, noted, "a new legal maxim had been grafted onto the

law that an Indian becomes incompetent simultaneously with the acquisition of wealth."[26] As long as Indians remained suspicious of the federal government's intentions little progress would be achieved.

While the federal government maintained its policy of paternalism toward Native Americans, the state of Oklahoma offered little help or relief to the Indians. The state remained antagonistic toward the idea that government should take any responsibility for the welfare of its citizens. This attitude particularly prevailed at the local level. Politicians believed that counties should provide relief to the needy, but few counties were willing to fund services or aid and a weak tax base in the poorer eastern rural counties of the state left little money for health or welfare programs. In addition, the lack of commitment on the part of medical professionals to matters of Indian health simply added to the problems.[27]

The situation was partially rectified in 1930 whereby the states and federal government agreed that states were to assume more authority for the education, medical care, and relief for needy people. But by and large, Oklahoma politicians protested such policies as the extension of restrictions on Indian land. The state legislature argued that Oklahoma's autonomy was compromised enough from the intrusion of federal authority and that the Indian population suffered as a result. But its rhetoric of home rule rang hollow. State representatives, reflecting their predominantly white political constituency, railed against any type of federal legislation that protected Indian lands. Most business people in the state wanted access to those lands to reap the potential profits the lands held. As they saw it, federal intrusion simply kept them from their rightful spoils. Except

for some improvements in health and education, and the hiring of better qualified Indian Bureau personnel, overall, Indian policy suffered from inertia during this period.[28]

That was not the case during the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt. From 1933 to the close of the decade, tremendous changes in federal Indian policy occurred. Some historians view this decade as a watershed in the improvement of conditions among Native American peoples. Others argue that the 1930s and the Indian New Deal had little impact on Native Americans. Tribes either welcomed the legislation that, in theory, sought to restore some degree of their legal and political autonomy, or they remained suspicious toward the policies of the federal government. From the early 1930s to the period prior to WWII, the Five Civilized Tribes accepted or refused the legal and political protections offered them depending upon their conditions and circumstance.[29]

For the most part, individuals and groups of individuals within the Five Civilized Tribes reacted according to their cultural perspective. Class considerations also influenced their expectations, interpretations, and opinions of Indian policy. Some Indian leaders and their followers sought to work within the traditional channels of politics. As businessmen, Congressmen, lawyers, and lobbyists, they played the game of accommodation and diplomacy. As more integrated Indians, they reflected a more white rather than Indian perspective and continued to press for integration if not outright assimilation. And yet as politicians, they were also skilled in the art of conciliation. Their bi-culturalism served them well as they ably maneuvered between the Anglo and Indian societies they represented. While promoting their policies, they nonetheless took care not to alienate the Indian people they represented. Not all of them, however, were able to

achieve that middle ground of diplomacy. Simply by being lawyers, tribal leaders, or politicians precluded them from gaining the trust of the more conservative members of their respective tribes.[30]

On the other hand, the Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes who lived in their sparsely populated countryside enclaves, behaved in a manner that reflected their more conservative cultural perspective as well as their economic, legal, and political position. For the most part, they cared little and knew even less about the political issues debated on the floor of Congress or over meals at restaurants with linen table cloths and crystal glass. That was not their world. They were "turned off by the speeches of politicians." Secluded in the comfortable familiarity of their rural communities, they remained suspicious of outsiders and protective of their traditions.[31]

The politics of rural Indians were predominantly confined to local concerns and community issues. To a certain degree, they possessed an innate suspicion of those Indians who claimed to represent their interests. Depending upon the circumstance, they occasionally viewed their own tribal leaders with a skeptical eye. During the critical period of the 1930s, as the Great Depression lingered on and federal Indian policy underwent substantial change, rural Indians behaved in a pragmatic manner that befit their temperament and their heritage. They carefully chose what to accept or refuse in the way of federal legislation. This same pragmatism ruled their decisions in regard to what aspects of white society they allowed to penetrate their enclaves. No matter how hard the federal government and many of their own leaders tried to change them and "improve" their condition, oftentimes defining them as anachronisms in a modern world, they

continued to direct their own lives with a steadfast resilience dictated by the flexible parameters of their conservative cultural perspectives.[32]

In 1933, the year of Franklin Roosevelt's inauguration, attorneys representing the Five Civilized Tribes concerned themselves largely with probate cases. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs had restructured probate districts in Oklahoma so that Indians had better access to attorneys. This restructuring also created smaller districts so that lawyers had less territory to cover. In 1932, the Cherokee alone had 564 pending probate cases involving disputed heirships between various relatives contesting the estates of deceased kin. The probate office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs also kept busy trying to sort out the cases involving the estates of minors. In similar fashion, the Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles had close to 2,000 pending probate cases. Over the course of the next few years the number of probate cases increased as much as fifty per-cent among the Cherokees and the Choctaws.[33]

At the same time, the number of cases concerning disputes between lessors and lessees increased. This proved especially true in Seminole County, where oil companies had long intruded and trespassed on Indian lands building roads, irrigation ditches, and pipe lines through their fields. Heavy equipment damaged crops, and waste matter from oil drilling operations polluted both soil and water supplies. In addition, Seminoles sought legal recourse for overdue lease and rent payments. They did manage to get presidential approval of a per capita payment in June of 1932, but $35 was a small sum. Yet ultimately, even when Indians won judgments in their favor, unscrupulous attorneys charged exorbitant legal fees that swallowed up a high percentage of the awards. [34]

In Le Flore County, politically active Choctaws and tribal attorneys continued to contest what they perceived as the illegal selling of their timber lands. According to an Act of Congress on April 26, 1906, Choctaw land not allotted was to become part of a national forest reserve. The federal government, however, sold the lands to private lumber interests. Once lumber companies deforested the areas they acquired, they then sold them back to the federal government at a profit. This happened frequently in the early 1930s. At the same time, some Choctaw and Chickasaw cases involved disputes over their leased lands that had legal antecedents dating back even further. The two tribes believed that they had not been properly compensated for land ceded to the United States under treaties in 1855 and 1866. Even though Herbert Hoover vetoed a Senate bill in 1931 that would have allowed the two tribes to claim compensation for these lands, throughout the 1930s they sought legal recourse.[35]

In addition, Chickasaw and Choctaw representatives cited grievances against the federal government for failing, as stipulated in 1902 by a supplementary agreement to the original Atoka Agreement, to sell within three years coal lands the two tribes jointly owned. At the same time, Douglas Johnston and the Chickasaws kept up their fight in trying to remove people's names from the Dawes rolls that had been enrolled illegally. Achieving some success, their efforts opened up new lands for the Chickasaws to either settle or sell. As of 1930, the Choctaws alone had claims pending against the federal government amounting to more than $8,000,000. Moreover, the Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations had to fight the claims of several hundred applicants who wanted the rolls reopened so they might gain access to allotments. And finally, all of the Five Civilized

Tribes continued to press for the allocation of per capita payments and protested what they perceived to be the federal government's illegal expenditure of tribal funds. After lengthy Senate hearings on the issue in 1931 and 1932, and despite the protests of such people as Wilburn Cartwright of the Committee of Indian Affairs, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles J. Rhodes recommended that only wealthier Indians should be given unlimited access to these funds. The Indian Bureau still believed that the lives of Indians needed to be closely administered.[36]

The transition from a policy of outright paternalism to a policy of moderate inclusion began with the appointment of John Collier as the Commissioner of Indian affairs in early 1933. A Shakespeare-quoting, "cultural pluralist," Collier had been executive secretary of the American Indian Defense Association. As an outspoken critic of the assimilationist policies of the Office of Indian Affairs, Collier believed that Indians should once again have the decisive voice in their tribal matters. For this to occur required an overhaul of Indian Bureau policies. Guided by the Meriam Report, as well as the subsequent federal investigations into the conditions of Native Americans, Collier brought a "reformer's zeal" to his post.[37]

Similar to President Roosevelt's use of experts to help formulate his New Deal political agenda, Collier sought the advice and aid of anthropologists, lawyers, and social scientists. His program entailed three objectives for Indians: economic rehabilitation, political reorganization, and civil and cultural freedom. He intended to achieve this through the establishment of tribal economic cooperatives based heavily on Indian communal and kinship networks. He also planned to reacquire land for Native

Americans. He emphasized tribal land ownership to correct the abuses of the failed allotment system. All these objectives rested on the foundation of Collier's belief that "Indian societies... must be given status, responsibility, and power." Collier understood clearly, that past efforts to "Americanize" Indians had a debilitating impact upon their communal organization and their traditional institutions. He intended to correct that abuse and restore their fragmented ethnic identity. One way to achieve that was through the support of Indian cultural and religious values and practices. These basic tenets underscored the policies he intended to implement. They held him in good stead with some groups of Native Americans, alienated other Indian groups, and attracted critics from across both the ethnic and political spectrum. Collier relied heavily on federal legislation to realize his vision. [38]

The bill that eventually became the Wheeler-Howard Act of 1934 encapsulated Collier's ideas. It contained an ambitious agenda aimed at restoring a large degree of Indian autonomy. It emphasized the following goals: a return to Indian self-government; economic aid to help develop Indian communities; the promotion and appreciation of Indian culture; abolition of the allotment system and the purchase of new lands; and finally, the creation of a special court, sensitive to Indian traditions, with jurisdiction over cases involving Native Americans and their communities. These were lofty ideals, indeed, but the bill raised as many questions as it attempted to answer. And the din of protest increased as Collier's ideas incorporated into the first draft of the Wheeler Howard Act, more commonly known as the Indian Reorganization Act, became clearer.[39]

Many predominantly integrated members of the Five Civilized Tribes had not supported Collier's appointment in the first place. Known as "white Indians" by their less integrated Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole brethren, these mostly mixed-blood Indians resented what they perceived as Collier's campaign to return Native Americans to a state of tribalism. Assimilated and semi-assimilated Indians chafed at the reimposition of tribal controls over their lives. Men like Oklahoma Senator W.W. Hastings, himself a Cherokee, argued that the bill would undo the progress that Indians had made toward assimilation. He pointed to himself as a prime example. Men such as Hastings had assimilated to the degree that they really could not be called Indian, even though they were in the legal sense. His sympathies lay with the ethos of his predominantly urban, white, business-minded constituents, not with the rural full-blood communities that he knew little about. He viewed those enclaves as backward, inferior communities, and a hindrance to progress in Oklahoma. At the same time, Hastings believed that the IRA would give the Indian Bureau too much authority over Indian guardian appointees. Hastings also opposed the IRA because the Department of the Interior would replace local courts in presiding over Indian probate cases. Moreover, the Department of the Interior would have to approve all lawyers representing restricted Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes.[40]

Oklahoma Senator Elmer Thomas also opposed the IRA. Allied with Oklahoma businessmen and lawyers, Thomas had no intention of championing the act for much the same reasons that Hastings opposed it. Thomas feared that taking more lands out of the public domain and handing it over to the Five Civilized Tribes, rendering it non-taxable,

would diminish Oklahoma's tax base. He was adamantly against the Indian Bureau proposal to purchase white land holdings in allotted areas of Oklahoma in order to achieve this goal. Moreover, he maintained that under the Oklahoma constitution and state laws, members of the Five Civilized Tribes were full citizens. He asserted that the proposed bill would best serve Indians in the western part of Oklahoma who still lived on reservations.[41]

The fact that Thomas believed that most members of the Five Civilized Tribes had been assimilated spoke volumes about his lack of understanding in regard to the substantial number of small, Indian communities in the countryside of central and eastern Oklahoma. He said that the IRA was "mere moonshine" and that the Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes did not really have tribes. This disconcerting assumption proved all the more startling because Thomas became the head of the Indian Affairs Committee in the Senate in 1935. The only aspects of the IRA that Thomas favored were economic and welfare benefits. That men like Hastings and Thomas spoke out against the IRA made perfect sense. They owed part of their political allegiance to powerful corporate interests in Oklahoma that controlled Indian land as well as extensive mineral leases. Anything that compromised their operations and profits was intolerable.[42]

Criticisms came from other quarters as well. The Choctaw mining trustee, Hampton Tucker, wrote Collier explaining that the authority of Oklahoma courts over Indian probate matters should not be abrogated. Tucker asserted that Oklahoma courts better understood the Indians. O.V. Chandler, an integrated Cherokee, said that Collier wanted to drive the Indian back to the teepee. He viewed any measure that was designed

to restore tribal sovereignty as a retrogressive and communalism a hindrance to individual initiative. He claimed that the goal of the IRA was to "establish communism in the United States."[43]

Perhaps the most outspoken critic of both Collier and the IRA was Joseph Bruner. He was a successful, full-blood Creek businessman who owned a company in Sepulpa, Oklahoma called Jospeh Bruner Oil and Gas Investments. He helped found the National Indian Confederacy, a Oklahoma pan-Indian group. He also started the American Indian Federation, a national pan-Indian organization, in 1934. As early as 1933, Bruner informed Collier of the goals of the National Indian Confederacy and how it opposed the restoration of tribal sovereignty. The group advocated teaching Indians the responsibility of American citizenship. It also strove to address "problems unique to Indians" and help them preserve their "noblest...ideals." Bruner told Collier that his organization would "cooperate with the state and federal government" to help Indians "materially, spiritually, and educationally."[44]

Despite these proclamations, Bruner did not seem inclined to work with the federal government. Bruner found that Collier's emphasis on communal tribal organization bordered on communism. The outspoken Bruner labeled the IRA un-American and a "Jew Deal." He said that the IRA would continue to classify Indians as Indians to distinguish them from whites and that it would perpetuate racial prejudice in the minds of many people. Bruner maintained that their special status under the IRA would "prohibit" Indians from participating in "county, state, and federal governmental affairs." Instead, Bruner wanted Oklahoma Indians to be completely assimilated into

American society. He advocated a "final" cash payment to Indians in order to settle all claims the Indians had with the federal government. Lastly, he claimed that the American Civil Liberties Union controlled the IRA and that the bill was designed solely to perpetuate the Indian Bureau. Bruner remained highly critical of federal Indian policies throughout the New Deal.[45] Men such as Bruner represented the ambiguity in Indian behavior. He appeared to advocate policies that were not in the best interest of the small, rural, subsistence-oriented Indian communities of the Five Civilized Tribes. Although the National Indian Confederacy adopted English as its official language, Bruner was still comfortable talking in the *Msvoke* language of the Creek people. He still had ties to his town of *Lochopoka*. He was recognized as a *tastanagi* or officer of that town. Moreover, even though Bruner opposed the reorganization of Indian tribes and the communalism that tended to mark traditional tribalism, he continued to fight to preserve the "traditions of the Indian people" of Oklahoma. He also lobbied to have more Indians serve in the Indian Bureau. On one hand, it would be incorrect to label Bruner an integrated Indian. Even though Collier referred to him as a "white man's Indian," Bruner and his pan-Indian organizations fought for increased Indian autonomy.[46]

Bruner resented such things as federal control over full-blood Indian property. Rather than view that as a safeguard to protect full-bloods from unscrupulous Oklahoma courts and the probate system, Bruner understood it as another way in which Indian liberties were being compromised by an outside authority. In fact, Bruner claimed that Creek Chief Roly Canard was controlled by the Indian Bureau. Moreover, even though Bruner was against communally organized communities, rural Creeks, the majority of

whom were full blood, continued to rely upon their town and clan organization as the foundation of their economic, political, and social stability. They had no desire to become what Bruner ultimately envisioned for Indians—individuals, participating in and contributing to American society as productive citizens.[47]

Criticism of Collier and the proposed IRA also emerged from Indian reform organizations such as the Indian Rights Association, which thought that the legislation would "perpetuate" the segregation of Indians. At the same time, Indian Bureau employees resented the proposed overhaul of their methods and programs. They viewed men like Collier with "suspicion,"bent on undoing their years of loyalty and hard work. Finally, the objections of Senator Burton K. Wheeler, one of the bill's original sponsors, proved even more detrimental to Collier's program. Wheeler believed that setting up tribal governments and communally organized tribal communities went against the policy of assimilation that he favored. Like Elmer Thomas, Senator Wheeler thought that the Indians could best help themselves by adopting Anglo "ways and laws."[48]

Despite these criticisms of the bill, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes fully supported Collier. He endorsed the Wheeler-Howard Bill before the House Committee on Indian Affairs. Ickes understood that part of the opposition to policies aimed at restoring some degree of tribal autonomy came from white lawyers, business, and professional groups that had created a prosperous enterprise out of the allotment system. The Secretary believed legislation was needed to remedy this situation.[49]

In order to inform the members of the Five Civilized Tribes, Collier held meetings, or congresses as they were called, in Oklahoma in mid-March of 1934. The

conference held at Muskogee on March 22, 1934 drew a mixed response from the Five Civilized Tribes. The fact that interpreters had to be used at the meeting indicated that the meeting was attended by both integrated and less-integrated members of the Five Civilized Tribes. The Choctaw Indians who spoke on behalf of the tribe were sympathetic to some, but not all, of the provisions of the Wheeler-Howard Act. They welcomed the reacquisition of lands calling it a "high type of humane legislation." They also favored sections of the bill that addressed Indian education. But the Choctaw representatives opposed a return to communal lands and the establishment of chartered communities. Men such as Choctaw Chief Ben Dwight supported that position. Choctaws gathered at another meeting in 1934 at Goodland Indian School in Hugo, Oklahoma. The convention involved delegates from 10 Choctaw counties. It authorized the creation of an Advisory Council that endorsed the IRA. But the Advisory Council possessed no legislative powers and it did not speak for all of the Choctaws.[50]

The Cherokee Nighthawk Keetoowah Society also endorsed the proposed legislation, but it did so because it believed it would allow their organization to be legally recognized as a political body. The Nighthawks understood the legislation as something that would legitimize their communal organization. At the same time, they also understood why their more integrated brethren opposed the legislation. Sam Smith said it would penalize those Cherokees who had "assimilated into white culture and had accepted the obligations of white society."[51] Levi Gritts, Chief of the Keetoowah Society, said that he had made numerous trips to Washington attempting to get the Keetoowah Society included under the IRA. The Keetoowahs presented Collier with a resolution that

was signed by Chiefs Sam Smith, John Redbird, William Rogers, Lincoln Towie, John Johnson, Tom Smith, and Stake Smith. The group claimed to represent 6,000 Cherokees.[52]

Another Cherokee group that identified itself as the Cherokee Emigrant Indian Committee represented by Noah Bunch, Sam, Charley, and Leach Summerfield, Famous Deul, White Youngbird, Ned Blackfox, and George Duck favored the proposed Wheeler-Howard Act because they believed it would restore legal recognition to communal lands. The group wanted full restoration of the rights granted under treaties the federal government had forged with the Cherokees in 1835, 1836, and 1846. The Committee claimed that Cherokees should still be a sovereign people as determined by those treaties.[53]

The mixed response to the proposed IRA was indicative of the diverse body of political opinion that existed among various groups and individuals of the Five Civilized Tribes. The official Cherokee spokesperson at the meeting, Houston B. Teehee, stressed that the proposed legislation, as he saw it, did not change the goal of assimilation, but rather redirected the methods to achieve that end. He said that the bill was designed to improve the lives of Indians through self-determination and in that regard it would prove beneficial to the restricted class of Cherokees. John Moore, and other Creek representatives at the conference, voiced concern that the existing method of federal government supervision over Indians had proved inadequate. Moore, who represented an organization calling itself the Unrestricted Indian Organization of the Muskogee Creek Nation, maintained that the poverty among Creeks was the result of the "present method

of government supervision."[54] Moore stated that the general impression was that Creeks did not favor the legislation. He claimed that was not entirely true. Moore said that the Creeks were not generally opposed to the bill, but favored any legislation that benefitted all Creeks. However, he indicated that Creeks probably would be unable to reach a consensus on the bill until there existed one organization that represented both restricted and unrestricted Indians.[55]

Joseph Hayes, representing the Chickasaws, said that the tribe was willing to listen to Collier. In his opening statement, Hayes remarked that "as the sun darts its perpendicular rays, we extend our pure hands in peace."[56] A few months after the meeting, Douglas Johnston and an organization known as the Chickasaw Tribal Protective Association drafted a resolution that "endorsed and approved" the legislation. Formed at the Chickasaw tribal convention in Tishomingo in 1929, the Chickasaw Tribal Protective Association spoke for the concerns of full-blood Chickasaws. It claimed to speak for the full bloods because it said the full bloods were "timid and retiring" and would not press for their own concerns. The association urged that amendments be passed to extend the bill's "protections and benefits." The group expressed concerns that the "full bloods" required special attention as their needs were often overlooked. Chickasaw Governor Johnston also endorsed the bill. Similarly, Choctaw Chief Ben Dwight also endorsed the bill.[57]

In general, more assimilated members of the Five Civilized Tribes disapproved of the proposed legislation. They did not favor a return to tribal ownership or segregation from the white population. Although a number of them, such as Joseph Bruner, believed

that Indians should do everything in their power to integrate into white society, at the same time men like Bruner continued to maintain contact with the rural communities in which they were raised. They understood that the rural communities relied upon time-honored traditions so important to Indian identity and that no piece of legislation should compromise those traditions. And even though the few full-blood Indians present at Muskogee appeared to go along with the IRA because it seemed to address at least some of their communally oriented needs, their numbers were too few to provide a clear picture as to how the majority of them thought. One truth remained. There existed no consensus among the members of the Five Civilized Tribes. Historically, rural, predominantly full-blood Indians had been suspicious of too much intrusion on the part of the federal government. Most rural Indians undoubtedly knew little or cared less of Collier's plans and remained antagonistic, apathetic, or ambivalent toward the policies of the Indian Bureau and the proposed "deals" of the "Great Father."[58]

The fact that a large and diverse body of opinion on the IRA existed, simply mirrored the wide range of attitudes and ideas that had always surrounded debates on Indian policy. In turn, this reflected the understanding and lack of understanding of the complicated political organization and organizations of the Five Civilized Tribes on the part of the federal government and politicians. This also became evident during debates over the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of 1936 which will be discussed later. In addition, political discord and dissension over a number of issues such as slavery, education, and assimilation had marked the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole Nations since their arrival in Oklahoma. This internal difference of opinion centered

mostly around principles of class and culture.[59]

Within the Five Civilized Tribes communities, political dialogue and action, depended, for the most part, upon the degree to which certain individuals and groups adhered to native precepts and traditions. Problems occurred when culturally Indian people had disagreements with people who were legally Indian, but culturally white. Many of the rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes only considered Indians who adhered to traditions as "real Indians." Oftentimes, they believed that white-acting, urbanized, or mixed-blood Indians fell outside of that classification. Within the Five Civilized Tribes, the mixed-blood population historically had adopted more readily to white customs and manners of living. They had embraced market farming and business and had dominated tribal politics. Thus, less integrated Indians viewed their more assimilated brethren with suspicion. The suspicion manifested itself most profoundly when individuals or tribal governing bodies professed to speak for the entire tribe.[60]

In addition, participation by members of the Five Civilized Tribes in the political system of both the United States and within their own communities was oftentimes guided and influenced by complex, non-Western, Native American world views. This ideological complexity confused and exasperated both Indian officials as well as more integrated members of the Five Civilized Tribes. Moreover, it led to many misguided notions and assumptions on the part of men like John Collier, politicians, and Indian Bureau personnel in their efforts to "help" Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. What appeared to whites as irrational behavior on the part of Indians was highly rational in the minds of the Indians themselves.[61]

Similarly, behavior that whites deemed rational and logical, Native Americans saw as illogical and incongruous to their needs. This especially applied to the more traditional-minded, full-blood Indians who inhabited the rural communities. The biggest mistake that politicians and the Indian Bureau made was to assume that the lives and aspirations of these rural Indians were determined by twentieth-century mores and values. To some extent they were, since no culture is static. But the majority of rural Indians still organized their lives and their communities around ethics, ideals, institutions, and values that had been passed along through generations. This is not to argue that those traditions were not transformed over time, but rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes had tried to maintain their cultural integrity as best they could under ever changing circumstances. In some cases, their determination to perpetuate tribal traditions was remarkable. For example, researchers working among Oklahoma Creeks in the 1930s found that tribal towns still possessed the exact same names that were documented by such explorers as Hernando DeSoto some 400 years before.[62]

Perhaps the best indication of tribal and cultural resilience was the persistence of political organization. Similar to many Native Americans tribes, the political structure of the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles afforded a high degree of autonomy to tribal members. Political organization had always been inextricably linked with religious and social institutions. Native American communities were organic, with distinct parts and a whole. Similar to the broader American society of which they were a part, and resembling other societies in general, political participation within the Five Civilized Tribes involved a very small percentage of the total population. This minority

consisted of, though not exclusively, completely assimilated or semi-integrated Indians. For some of these tribal leaders, political expediency and the desire to help their people spurred their participation. Full-blood Indians such as the Cherokee Houston Tehee represented their people admirably and spoke eloquently on economic, education, health, and property issues that were important to their tribes. As leaders, representatives, and spokespersons of their respective tribes, these men had an obligation to look out for and to protect the general welfare of their people.[63]

For other Indian leaders, however, economic status or class necessitated their political involvement. Because of their economic, political, and social relationships with the broader or more dominant white society of Oklahoma, these men had a legitimate interest in the legislative processes that effected their lives. Their lives regularly intersected with the lives of whites. They shared common class and social concerns. Ultimately, the ability to function in and represent both worlds required a wisdom and diplomatic dexterity that few tribal leaders possessed.[64]

On the other hand, overt political involvement of rural Indians varied greatly depending upon time and circumstance. Oklahoma's apartheid system had politically marginalized them long before. As a result, many less integrated Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes possessed few political aspirations in the strictest sense. Instead, they relied more upon internal, time-honored cultural and social networks rather than overt political activism or participation that extended beyond their settlements. In areas that contained rural Indian enclaves, politics expressed itself on the local level as respected elders and leaders mediated and settled disputes that directly impacted the settlement.

Most Indians living in rural communities had no connection to or influence with the governor, senators, or state representatives. In that regard, they resembled their poor, rural, white counterparts and the broader population in general. They were, by definition, included in the democratic process, but they were far removed from the corridors of political power. They usually did not participate in tribal decisions, much less vote in general state or national elections. Both tribal meetings and meetings such as the one Collier organized at Muskogee were not consistently well attended by rural Indians. Rural, more tradition-minded Indians were as distanced from their tribal leaders as most Americans are distanced from their governors or their president.[65]

To compound the problems men like John Collier, politicians, and Indian Bureau personnel encountered in dealing with the Five Civilized Tribes and explaining the IRA, all the tribes possessed a layered, multi-faceted political structure that provided a high degree of autonomy at the local level. It served as a buffer against too much outside intrusion on the part of non-Indians. Combined with their cultural, economic, and social institutions, the political organization of the Five Civilized Tribes particularly helped rural Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole communities preserve their tribal integrity. For the most part, it provided stability and continuity. Moreover, it largely rendered the Indian New Deal irrelevant and impractical in terms of its overall impact on their isolated settlements.

Among the Five Civilized Tribes, political responsibilities were compartmentalized or divided between matters pertaining to the federal government and matters relating strictly to the internal affairs of the tribes. This compartmentalization

existed at the clan, community, and town level as well. In a sense, this served as a protective mechanism to keep outsiders from interfering with the inner dynamics of the local communities. This political construct helped to preserve the autonomy of the individual tribal enclaves. Thus, political leaders and tribal spokes persons for the Five Civilized Tribes assumed different responsibilities that fulfilled both internal and external tribal political concerns. Some tribal representatives who dealt directly with the federal Indian bureaucracy abused their roles as intermediaries. Occasionally, they claimed to speak for the whole membership of the tribe when, in reality, they were completely alienated from many of the people they supposedly represented. This misrepresentation too often adversely influenced the predominantly full blood Indians who lived in the countryside. As a result, conservative Indians retained a healthy suspicion of Indian leaders who assumed to speak to their needs. Historically, many of these leaders were mixed-bloods.[66]

For example, since 1839, beginning with John Ross, predominantly mixed-blood Cherokees had served as intermediaries between the federal government and the tribe. Even prior to their removal, mixed-blood Indians assumed positions of authority within the Cherokee tribe. Comfortable in dealing with white society as the result of shared values, these predominantly integrated leaders often involved themselves with politics at the state and national level. They generally held a paternalistic view toward full blood communities in the rural backwaters of northeastern Oklahoma. In one sense, they shared a common Indian identity. Proud of their Cherokee heritage and its rich traditions, many of these leaders both spoke and wrote their native tongue. Some continued, to a certain

degree, to participate in traditional Cherokee rituals and celebrations. But they represented a minority of the so called "mixed-bloods."[67]

Educated and middle-class, most mixed-blood and integrated Cherokees favored assimilation and railed against any return to a communal tribal structure. They perceived full blood settlements as anachronisms in need of transformation. In the 1920s and 1930s, they supported men such as Elmer Thomas and W.W. Hastings and opposed the IRA. In addition, many integrated Cherokees threw their support behind organizations such as the American Indian Federation and Joseph Bruner. Not surprisingly, most integrated Cherokees disagreed with petitions such as the one sent to Senator Thomas requesting an amendment to the Wheeler-Howard Bill allowing the Cherokees to re-organize their government. They viewed that as "back to the blanket" or "tepee" legislation.[68]

Throughout the 1930s, groups and individuals who served as the political spokespersons for the Cherokees were varied and diverse. Nearly all had been active prior to Collier's appointment as head of the Indian Bureau. Cherokee political expression resonated from ad-hoc political organizations, integrationist business groups, churches, and tradition-oriented, sometimes completely full-blood, institutions. Predominantly integrated Indians known as the Cherokee Executive Committee, as well as the Eastern and Western Cherokee Council, the Seven Clans Society, the Medicine Society, the Cherokee Emigrant Indians and the Cherokee Immigrant Indians conducted the affairs of the Cherokee Nation in the early 1930s. Moreover, Cherokee Baptist Churches were also the locus of political power. The Cherokees recognized Levi Gritts as

their Chief during that period. These groups represented the broad spectrum of tribal concerns and aspirations. Because of that, their political involvement and orientation often contradicted one another. This led to confusion on the part of government representatives who dealt with the Cherokees. In addition, issues of outright assimilation, partial integration, and anti-assimilation sentiments, as well as cultural and economic prerogatives, influenced Cherokee political ideologies. Yet all of the Cherokee groups had one thing in common: they claimed to represent the Cherokee people.[69]

More integrated Cherokees participated in pan-Indian groups like the Association of Indian Tribes whose motto was "for the best interest of the Indian." This organization reflected the ambiguous political nature of these more assimilated Indians. Although it worked to improve economic, education, and health conditions among Indians, primarily full bloods, at the same time it thought that the best solution to the so called "Indian problem" ultimately depended upon the assimilation of Indians into the broader Anglo-American society. In organizations such as this, many of the men also belonged to local Lions Clubs or the Rotary Club. Numerous mixed-blood Cherokees also filled the ranks of American Legion locals. Many were businessmen and lawyers active in the local affairs of their towns and cities.[70]

The Cherokee Baptist Association also believed that integration rather than isolation was in the best interest of rural, tradition-minded Cherokees. But many full-blood Cherokees believed that the Baptist Association represented the assimilationist policies of those Cherokees who opposed the IRA. The Baptist Association took a paternalistic view toward the people in the countryside. It maintained that hard work and

economic and moral uplift best provided them the opportunity to improve their lives. They favored individualism and the Puritan work ethic, not communalism and reciprocity. Rural Cherokees interpreted that policy as another means in which to compromise their autonomy and fragment their communities.[71]

Groups such as the Association of Indian Tribes and the Cherokee Baptist Association acted as the mediators between the federal government and the Cherokees. They dealt with the broader, complex economic and legal issues that surrounded federal Indian policy. Certainly, they cannot be criticized for their efforts on those accounts. They better understood the complexities of the legal and political process. Along with other tribal leaders and organizations, they negotiated for the Cherokees. But geographically, ideologically, and politically they were generally far removed from the small communities that existed in the isolated, rural sections of northeastern Oklahoma.[72]

At the community level in that region, the political process centered more on local concerns. Not surprisingly, Indians in those rural enclaves tended to be more involved in political affairs. Indeed, in the small, rural Indian settlements political, religious, and social dynamics often remained inseparable. What the Cherokees referred to as the "harmony ethic" held the communities together. Simply put, it meant that collective decisions rather than individual mandates took precedence in community affairs. Community politics functioned on the fundamental idea of group consensus. The foundation of that group consensus rested upon the virtues of humility and modesty. Political debates and discussions took place in a "circular" fashion. Each individual had an equal opportunity to contribute to the discourse.[73]

Cherokee rural communities relied heavily on the harmony ethic to strengthen group identity. It enabled those communities to cope with increased white population pressure, exploitative economic development, and well-intentioned, but ignorant and misinformed Indian Bureau bureaucrats and field agents bent on showing the Indians how to "live off the land." Along with their cultural, economic, religious, and social institutions, the harmony ethic allowed rural Cherokees to endure the hardships of the Great Depression. Because it stressed the importance of the group over the individual, individuals in these communities were more than willing to endure hardships and privations to retain their membership and identity in their "living community." Expressed another way, group expectations helped to maintain normalcy, continuity, and community.[74]

The rule of group or popular consensus did not mean that no leaders existed in the communities or that people in leadership roles never took action on their own. It simply meant that the communities recognized leaders based upon an accumulation of collective trust. Those people who, through their deeds, helped out the community over a long period of time earned the respect of others based on their actions. Usually elders, though not always, these leaders embodied the prized Cherokee virtues of patience and tolerance. They were respected for their diplomatic skills. As a result, they were often given wide latitude in taking the initiative on their own in matters that benefitted the whole community.[75]

The harmony ethic, however, did not entirely prevent internal discord. As in all communities, friction existed among Cherokees. But the harmony ethic provided an

outlet to resolve conflicts that threatened to upset communal balance. If a dissatisfied faction developed within a community and became a hindrance to the order of the community, the dissident group simply removed itself and began another settlement. That alternative "preserved" the harmony ethic and the sense of consensus in both groups. The fragmentation, and yet social and political resilience, of the *Keetowah* prior to and during the course of the 1930s proved that point. The *Keetoowah* best exemplified the harmony ethic and how fragmentation, although not welcome, did not compromise or render ineffective the political autonomy of various Cherokee groups that sought to maintain their political voice.[76]

Community among the Cherokees, as well as among the other Five Civilized Tribes, cannot be defined solely as a group of people enclosed within a geographic boundary. Community also entailed groups of individuals who shared common cultural, social, or political traits. That certainly applied to the *Keetoowah* Society. A predominantly full-blood organization, both in the legal and biological sense, the *Keetowah* Society had been active in Oklahoma, in one form or another, since the late 1830s. The group traced its heritage back to a Cherokee religious society of the 1700s. It organized to maintain Cherokee cultural, political, and social traditions in the face of white encroachment.[77]

In 1900, a new branch of the *Keetoowah* Society calling itself the Nighthawk *Keetoowah* Society formed around the leadership of Redbird Smith. It did so in response to those Cherokees who had endorsed allotment. More than any other *Keetoowah* group, Smith's Nighthawk group was passionately nativistic. Organizationally, it was based on

seven clans associated with a "fire." Each "fire" represented a political unit. A principal Chief, an assistant Chief, seven councilmen and seven medicine men comprised the main political body of the Nighthawks. In addition, a spokesperson represented the group in dealing with outsiders, and a women's leader imparted information to the women of the Society. This same leadership structure existed at the town level as well.[78]

In 1905, the original *Keetowah* Society received a charter from the United States Federal Court in Tahlequah and became known as the *Keetowah* Society, Incorporated. In the years leading up to the 1930s, it would increasingly become a prestigious mixed-blood organization of Cherokee businessmen involved in the regional politics of northeastern Oklahoma and less concerned with full-blood cultural issues.[79]

In 1928 another break occurred when, in response to what they perceived as the failed communal economic programs of the Nighthawks, a group splintered off to form the Cherokee Corporate Society. Led by James Peacheater and John Whirlwind, its membership consisted of the same people who belonged to the Long Valley Fire of the Nighthawk *Keetoowah* Society. Peacheater and Whirlwind wanted more political autonomy and the ability to pursue their own economic programs. They also argued that political representation within the Nighthawk *Keetoowah* Society was not evenly distributed among the seven traditional clans of the Cherokees. The men initiated the split because they believed that they could better implement their own economic programs that would be more beneficial to their community. Moreover, they claimed to represent all Cherokee full bloods. Although friction existed between the Cherokee Corporate Society and the Nighthawks, the harmony ethic ensured the continuity of both

groups. They tolerated and accepted the existence of one another even though fundamental disagreements defined their relationship.[80]

Similar to the Cherokees, Creeks also depended upon a multi-layered political structure. Historically, tradition-oriented Creeks had not recognized a single chief as the sole representative of all Creeks. Not a tribe, but rather a confederacy of tribes, autonomous towns or *talwas* formed the basis of Creek political organization. Moreover, the towns were divided into two moieties or dual divisions. The divisions were defined as Red and White. Both the Red and the White moiety had two Mother towns from which all other Creek towns were said to have originated. Similar to the Cherokees, all Creek towns descended from a shared "fire." The city of Okmulgee served as headquarters of the 44 Creek towns of Oklahoma. Town representatives met there monthly to discuss tribal affairs. Most towns were organized around churches. The churches functioned as business, political, religious, and social institutions. Clans consisting of extended kin groups existed within the towns. Both blood and fictive association defined the kin groups. That is, all people who shared the same clan name were considered relatives. Moreover, clans superseded the geographical boundaries of towns. Finally, the leadership of the towns consisted of an executive Chief and a group of advisors or counselors. In addition, a speaker for the town acted as the intermediary between the town and outsiders. The considerable amount of autonomy the towns and clans enjoyed made political communication confusing to Indian Bureau representatives, and at times made it all but impossible to ascertain just exactly what the Creeks desired or needed.[81]

The Creeks, like the Cherokees, also experienced political divisiveness within

their ranks. Again, the discord usually centered on those who favored assimilation and those who opposed it. Historically, the Lower Creeks and the Upper Creeks struggled for hegemony in Oklahoma Creek politics. The Lower Creeks had historically advocated assimilation. Prior to removal to Oklahoma, the Lower Creeks resided closest to whites in Georgia. After removal, they settled mostly north of Henryetta. They did not recognize the sovereignty of Creek tribal towns nor the notion of a Creek confederacy, but instead organized as the Creek Nation.[82]

Located in the southern part of the Creek counties in Oklahoma, the Upper Creeks had historically resisted assimilation. More culturally conservative than their counterpart, and comprising the majority of the Creek population, the Upper Creeks had grown far too cynical toward the federal government to embrace such things as the IRA or any other New Deal programs. They believed that the Indian Bureau intended to deprive the Creeks of their autonomy; reorient their communal lifestyle to a market economy, and thus break down their traditions. They had largely divorced themselves from tribal politics on the federal level and had left that task to the more integrated Creeks. The Upper Creeks also recognized the sovereignty of the tribal towns and a Creek confederacy. The more integrated, Lower Creeks, labeled tradition-minded or more culturally conservative Creeks as "anti-government."[83]

Because of this complex, multi-layered, political organization, the dialogue between the Indian Bureau and the Five Civilized Tribes frequently floundered. In many instances, the Indian Bureau was vaguely aware of the political sub-structure of Cherokee and Creek organizations, towns, and clans. It wanted to communicate with one, all

powerful Indian representative, and when this proved impossible Indian Bureau representatives grew frustrated. To compound matters, predominantly full blood, rural Indians were wary of outsiders and strangers and when queried by whites often refused to acknowledge the existence of clans and towns. They privatized their cultural traditions and rendered them invisible. Most Indian Bureau personnel believed that allotment had ended the communal and tribal way of life. That mistaken assumption misguided the policies they tried hard to implement. New Deal legislation and programs proved irrelevant or failed outright as a result of cultural miscommunication. This became even more evident later in the decade with the ratification of the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act.[84]

In June 1934, Collier claimed that all the Five Civilized Tribes, except the Seminoles, had "endorsed" the Wheeler Howard Bill. But as previously shown, this proved incorrect. Only a small percentage of the members of the Five Civilized Tribes had attended the Indian congresses in Oklahoma. Most of the groups that endorsed Collier's proposals spoke for the small rural communities, and even then, they favored only some aspects of the bill. They had many questions that a single meeting could not adequately answer.[85]

On the other hand, more integrated Indians, those who made up the majority of the population of each of the tribes, remained opposed to the bill. Joseph Bruner and his American Indian Federation also continued to label the bill as "communistic" and socialistic and an attempt to return Indians to a state of paganism. The organization garnered a good deal of support from Christian Indians in Oklahoma. Bruner continued

to argue that the bill gave too much authority to the Indian Bureau, thus increasing federal supervision over the Indian. The Indian Rights Association, holding true to its Christian ideals, objected to anything that sympathized with Indian traditional religious practices. Additionally, it opposed the bill on the grounds that IRA sought to perpetuate the segregation of Indians and hindered their assimilation.[86]

The opposition mounted by various mixed-blood organizations of the Five Civilized Tribes and the concerns of other Indian tribes around the country prevented the initial draft of the IRA from receiving the endorsement of the Senate and House Indian Affairs Committees. The subsequent drafts that finally gave birth to the IRA on June 18, 1934, omitted many of John Collier's reform measures. Yet even this weakened version of the original proposal was revolutionary in its scope. It put an end to Indian allotment and extended "indefinitely" the restrictions on Indian land.[87]

Unfortunately, the full intent of the bill had virtually no impact on the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma. Senator Elmer Thomas had managed, without first consulting the tribes, to exclude them from the majority of the provisions of the final draft, including the section on land allotment. Thomas had informed the Senate Indian Affairs Committee that Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes had "successfully been assimilated." He did not want any legislation passed that re-established tribal governments or promoted tribal culture. As a result, the Five Civilized Tribes were not allowed to organize tribal corporations and thus could not receive loans from a revolving credit fund. Moreover, the IRA prevented the Five Civilized Tribes from regaining some degree of tribal political sovereignty. The virtual exclusion from the IRA angered those

among the Five Civilized Tribes who favored the reacquisition of land. But most rural, full-blood Indians of the tribes remained pragmatic if not ambivalent. Those who kept themselves abreast of the situation, endorsed legislation that protected them from the further encroachment of whites and emphasized their traditions and culture, but they remained reticent in regard to government intrusion into their lives.[88]

Despite the efforts of John Collier, the progressive-minded IRA, and the subsequent Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of 1936, the Indian Bureau soon found that the good intentions of the government did not always coincide with the plans of the rural Indian communities of the Five Civilized Tribes. Similar, in this respect, to the political behavior exhibited by many Western states, the rural Indian communities accepted the federal government's help when they thought it assisted their plans, but just as quickly resented the federal government's intrusion into their affairs when that intrusiveness disrupted their communities and their lives. In theory, the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of 1936 sought to correct the exclusion of the Five Civilized Tribes from the IRA, but ultimately it fell far short of the goals its political architects had intended.[89]

Despite the fact that Senator Thomas fought hard to exclude the Five Civilized Tribes from the IRA, as a political pragmatist he felt obligated to the Indian population in his constituency. He did not want to alienate Indian support completely. He understood that something needed to be done to aid the Indians of Oklahoma, particularly the rural, full-blood communities of the Five Civilized Tribes. Influential members of the Five Civilized Tribes urged Thomas to reconsider legislation aimed at improving their particular situation. What exactly that entailed remained to be seen. Thus, Thomas and

John Collier convened a number of meetings with Oklahoma Indians in late 1934 to determine what legislation would prove most beneficial.[90]

As various Indians spoke at the meetings at both Muskogee and Miami, Oklahoma, the same arguments and opinions presented at the IRA meetings in early 1934 surfaced once again. Joseph Bruner and his American Indian Federation argued that the bill was simply another effort by the Indian Bureau to "rob Indians and hold them in bondage."[91] Nevertheless, Bruner endorsed the aspect of the bill that stipulated increased funding for Indian education. He also agreed with the provision that allowed for the purchase of lands for Indians. Rather than purchase lands for collective use, he preferred land be acquired for the benefit of individual Indians. This reflected the wishes of the more integrated Indians of the Five Civilized Tribe who had opposed the IRA. They wanted the ability to incorporate in order to qualify for loans from the revolving credit fund. And they desired credit in order to finance farming and small business operations. They disapproved of legislation that tribalized individual land holdings.[92]

Unlike its endorsement of the IRA, the Choctaw Advisory Council voted against endorsing the OIWA. A majority within the Council distrusted the Indian Bureau's ability to deal fairly with the tribe. They believed that the OIWA would give too much authority to the Bureau at the expense of the Choctaws. But the attorney for the Choctaw Nation, Grady Lewis, endorsed the bill. He argued that there were "wandering bands of homeless, starving Indians in eastern Oklahoma." He said that the bill would "rehabilitate" the Indians through "land purchase and credit facilities." Lewis said that land reform was the key if anything was to be accomplished among rural Choctaws. In a

letter to Senator Elmer Thomas, J.W. Nickoh, a rural Choctaw, agreed with Lewis, and said that he also favored the bill.[93]

In contrast, a group of Cherokees at another meeting reacted in opposite fashion. They viewed the people who proposed the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act as the same people who opposed plans put forth by the Nighthawk *Keetoowahs* to become more economically self-supporting. A strategy that rural Indians once recommended to improve their lives was rejected by the federal government, but now the federal government appeared to be proposing the exact same strategy. Cynicism defined their position. Moreover, some Cherokees believed that the Cherokees had never lost their tribal autonomy and saw no need for the OIWA. They believed that the federal government still had an obligation to live up to its original commitment to Cherokee political sovereignty. Cherokees at the meeting questioned the intentions of the federal government and viewed with suspicion this unexpected change in policy as outlined by the OIWA.[94]

There was no definitive explanation as to why some Indians favored the legislation and some opposed it. In contrast to predominantly, rural, restricted Indians who opposed the bill because of their distrust of the Indian Bureau, their urban, less tradition-oriented brethren viewed the OIWA from another perspective. For example, a more integrated Creek, W.R. Robison, who owned Robison Real Estate, Oil, and Gas Leases, opposed the OIWA not because he distrusted the Indian Bureau, but because he believed that Indians did not need the help of the federal government to become successful. Robison considered the OIWA a "step backward." Self-made men such as

Robison favored individual initiative and hard work. He believed in the integration of Indians into American society and thought that legislation such as the OIWA was antithetical to that goal.[95]

On the other hand, rural Indians preferred some type of aid that would help them maintain their communally organized settlements. The Restricted Creek Indian Association wanted the bill passed because they believed that it would gain them money owed on equalization claims or per capita payments. Organizations such as the Chickasaw Tribal Protective Association also urged Thomas and Collier to draft legislation to benefit full-blood communities for the same reasons it had endorsed the IRA. Working on the opinions and advice from these diverse groups within the Five Civilized Tribes, Thomas and Oklahoma Congressman Will Rogers drafted the bill that became the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of 1936.[96]

Thomas, as chair of the Indian Affairs Committee of the Senate, and Rogers, as chair of the House Indian Affairs Committee, were in a perfect position to draft an expansion of the IRA. They focused on legislation that addressed credit, education, health, and land issues that considered the non-reservation status of the Five Civilized Tribes. Working closely with John Collier, their original bill separated the Oklahoma Indians into two blood categories. Those people with one-half or more Indian blood would have their property held in trust. In addition, the legislation would take judicial power away from the Oklahoma courts and place legal matters involving estates, guardianship, heirship, and land issues under the administration of the Secretary of the Interior. People possessing less than one-half Indian blood would be permitted to manage

their own affairs. This was designed to appease the more integrated members of the five tribes and those Indians who favored assimilation.[97]

In order to reacquire some of the land that Indians had lost, the draft permitted the Secretary of the Interior to purchase additional lands. These lands would be exempt from both state jurisdiction and taxation. The proposed bill also committed the federal government to help Oklahoma Indians obtain a decent education, access to adequate health care facilities, as well acquire credit to finance their agricultural and business endeavors. Finally, the bill extended the provisions in the IRA to the Five Civilized Tribes. But ultimately, similar to the IRA, the OIWA was designed to assimilate Indians "through a gradual process." Thomas and Rogers introduced the bill to the Senate and the House in late February, 1935.[98]

The bill immediately attracted both criticism and praise. The same divisiveness and ambiguity that defined debate over the IRA underscored opinions on the OIWA. Relations between Oklahoma legislators and the federal government became strained as a result of the proposed transfer of jurisdiction in guardian and probate matters away from the courts of Oklahoma to the Indian Bureau. Oklahoma white businessmen and politicians also opposed the extension of restrictions and the purchase of land to help Indians. They wanted access to that land for economic development and they opposed any measure that increased restricted, non-taxable land.[99]

In the spring of 1935, the Oklahoma legislature passed a resolution that condemned the bill. Both the Holdenville and Tulsa Chamber of Commerce also spoke out. The Tulsa Chamber of Commerce said it "set up arbitrary rule of arbitrary

government" and violated the "uniform system....governing life, liberty, and property." Oklahoma attorneys and bar associations within the state reacted as well. Both the Okfuskee and Pittsburgh County Bar Associations passed resolutions against the OIWA. J.C. Pinson, of the Pinson Law Firm of Coweta, said that the bill would hurt the Indian and "turn the clock back thirty years and destroy whatever independence and self-reliance has been *inculcated* in him during the period." They argued that Oklahoma courts best understood the Indians within their county jurisdictions.[100]

In hearings before the Senate and House Indian Affairs Committee, lawyers such as Clark Nichols of Eufaula testified that guardians had been beneficial. He cited the Jackson Barnett case where guardians had prevented former Secretary of the Interior from "giving away" Barnett's estate. Nichols later claimed that Indians who testified in favor of the bill before the Committee had been paid off by the Indian Bureau. But Grady Lewis, the Choctaw national attorney, simply pointed out to the Committee what Indians had known for a long time: that corrupt judges behaving as demi-gods in collusion with lawyers operated within a quasi-legal system based on cronyism and political favoritism. He argued that Oklahoma probate courts "were a disgrace to the state and a stench in the nostrils of every decent person." Collier and Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes staunchly defended the bill. They tried to persuade Congress that it made no sense to have divided administrative and judicial responsibilities in Indian affairs. Ickes argued that the compartmentalization of authority had caused unnecessary conflict. [101]

As finally approved on June 26, 1936, the OIWA authorized the Secretary of the Interior to purchase land for Indian land management and marketing associations. The

act abolished allotment and emphasized instead the financial autonomy of the Indians. Its purpose was to eliminate the illegal alienation of Indian land and allow Indians more local control over their affairs. Oklahoma Indians were permitted to adopt constitutions and obtain federal charters for the purpose of incorporation. The act also authorized incorporated groups of ten or more Indians to borrow money from the $2,000,000 revolving credit fund administered by the Oklahoma Indian Credit Corporation. These funds were designed to help Indians establish land and marketing co-operatives. The act continued to permit Oklahoma courts to decide guardianship and probate cases, but Collier implemented changes in the probate system that put a limit on the fees that lawyers charged. He also pledged a more thorough monitoring of probate cases. Ultimately, despite his good intentions, his changes had little impact.[102]

To most rural, restricted Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes, the OIWA merely reflected many of the same plans that organizations like the Nighthawk *Keetoowahs* had demanded decades before. Cynical, and chronically distrustful of anything Washington proposed or Indian Bureau personnel administered, few took advantage of the legislation. Even though a spokesperson for the Creek had said that about 9,000 Creeks favored the bill, he greatly exaggerated the number. Another unnamed Creek claimed that only about 100 Creeks attended the meeting to vote on whether or not to endorse the OIWA. They mostly wanted access to the credit. He said that the rest of the Creeks were unaware of what happens in Washington and did not really care. Other Creeks echoed those sentiments maintaining that the OIWA was just another white man's ruse to trick the Indian. Cherokee Sam Smith, speaking on behalf of a group of *Keetoowahs*, also refused

to endorse the OIWA or accept any of its provisions.[103]

To obtain a better understanding of whether or not rural Indians might want to organized under the OIWA, the Indian Bureau proposed a series of meetings in spring,1937. At the request of James Curry, attorney for the Credit Division of the Department of the Interior, anthropologists such as Gordon McGregor, Morris Opler, David Rodnick, and Charles Wisdom, as well as Indian Bureau field agents such as Albert A. Exendine, contacted various Indian communities. The responses the meetings generated, again indicated the broad range of opinions that existed among rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes.[104]

At a meeting at Haikey Chapel in the northern section of Creek territory, representatives from the Indian Bureau met with C.B. Haikey, the chief or *miko*, and other members of *Lochapoka* Town. Amos Beaver, the Town's recording secretary, said that the heads of 26 families had already signed a document indicating their desire to organize under the OIWA as the Organization *Lochapoka*. Haikey stated that *Lochapoka* was primarily interested in obtaining credit for its members. Beaver indicated that *Kanchati* Town, to their east in Wagoner County, might also be interested in organizing under the act.[105]

In contrast, some Indians who attended the meetings remained suspicious, upset from being excluded from the IRA. Rural Creeks such as Archie Simpson, and Ernest and John Gauge, for example, were suspicious of any piece of legislation that the government proposed. They distrusted the federal government and believed that Indian Bureau programs were designed to take advantage of Indians. In a meeting with Bureau

anthropologist, Morris Opler, they admitted that they were not entirely hostile to the OIWA, but they did not want anything to do with its credit program for Indians. Their main priority was trying to force the government to rectify broken treaties and return land that they believed the government had stolen from Indians. The men claimed that they represented the "modern version" of the Four Mothers Society, which consisted of Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creeks who had opposed removal to Indian Territory. They also identified themselves with a nascent pan-Indian anti-government movement spearheaded by a Wisconsin Indian attorney, William Madison. Madison sought to persuade dissatisfied Indian groups across the nation to employ him in lawsuits against the federal government involving violated treaties and dispossessed land. Simpson and the Gauges, were self-avowed "Snake" Creeks, a group that had a historically poor relationship with the Indian Bureau.[106]

This same diversity of opinion existed among Choctaws. The Choctaw tribe, in general, "ignored" the act. Those who endorsed it wanted the credit to help their farming and business enterprises. They tended to be more integrated with whites and the market economy in their surrounding areas. Choctaws such as Francis Taaffe, a civil engineer with the city of Idabel favored the OIWA because in addition to his city job he also farmed. Victor Brown, a full-blood Choctaw who was employed as a field clerk for the Five Civilized Tribes Agency also saw the value in the OIWA credit program. On the other hand, most restricted Choctaws and Chickasaws were not participants in the market economy to any large extent. Economic development and profit margins were not a high priority. Many practiced subsistence farming and a kin and town network of communal

self-help. They relied on part-time work and the exchange of goods and services among themselves as well as with neighboring whites. Their tradition-wedded communities remained leery of change. Ben Dwight and Choctaw Chief William Durant had a difficult time locating rural Choctaws in McCurtain County that were interested in organizing under the OIWA. The men indicated that approximately 15 out of 135 full-blood families might be willing to accept or take advantage of the act.[107]

For a time, the Five Civilized Tribes considered the idea of collectively organizing under the OIWA. Along with other Oklahoma Indian tribes, they discussed the idea of forming a League of Nations, but they could not generate enough support for this proposal. Ultimately, of those groups that took advantage of the OIWA, their efforts achieved mixed results. Among the Choctaws, particularly in McCurtain County, some Indians organized cooperative associations. But the credit money the OIWA authorized was not immediately allocated and as late as autumn 1937 none had been made available. The Seminole experienced this same frustration. George Jones maintained that the few Seminole who organized credit associations ran out of patience and gave up on the idea. No Cherokee cooperative association ever obtained land under the act. In 1939, the Nighthawk *Keetowah* Society wanted to organize as a band, but Frederick L. Kirgis, Acting Solicitor for the Department of the Interior, denied its request. He argued that the group had never been a governing body of the Cherokee tribe and thus the OIWA prohibited them from gaining political recognition as a band.[108]

In 1939, another branch of the *Keetowah* attempted to organize under the OIWA. The *Keetoowah* Society, Inc., met with A.M. Landman, Superintendent of the Five

Civilized Tribes. Once again the government denied their request. Finally, all factions of the *Keetoowah*, except the Nighthawks, organized themselves into one group known as the United *Keetoowah* Cherokee Indians. Initially, they did not seek recognition under the OIWA, but President Harry Truman finally recognized them in1946.[109]

Organization fared slightly better among the Creeks. *Thlopthlocco* Town organized under the OIWA. Eighty members out of 216 voted for incorporation and one opposed it. Thus, only thirty-seven per-cent of the population participated. Voter apathy simply reflected rural Indian antipathy toward any Indian Bureau-influenced programs. Obtaining credit failed to outweigh the desire of rural Indian communities to remain free from the intrusion of the federal government. They were reluctant to organize because many believed they would eventually be forced onto a reservation. Restricted Indians, especially, viewed the credit feature as a "trap." They saw it as a scheme to get them into debt, and in order to pay off the debt they would have to relinquish their lands and possessions to the federal government. They argued that credit was unnecessary if the federal government returned all of their lands illegally acquired.[110]

Other obstacles hindered the organization of credit associations as well. The Indian Bureau wanted to administer these programs by way of counties. This, however, created problems. Among more tradition-oriented Indians, county boundaries held no significance. Towns, clans, and communities defined their relation to the land as well as their relation to one another. The same people might belong to the same town, but they lived in separate counties. Thus, when Indian Bureau personnel held meetings to discuss the establishment of credit associations based on counties, many Indians refused to show

up. Those Indians who lived in Okfuskee County, for example, might appear. But town members who lived in Hughes County refused to attend the meeting. They were not about to support a policy that divided their membership. They did not organize according to county, but related to one another through town membership. This frustrated Indian Bureau personnel because they had a difficulty understanding, or failed to understand and acknowledge, this concept.[111]

Despite John Collier's promise to listen to the concerns and wishes of Indians, the Indian Bureau refused to deviate from the county organizational plan. Ultimately, most Indians who met with Indian Bureau field agents were the more integrated members of the Five Civilized Tribes. Most rural, predominantly full-blood, restricted Indians remained staunchly anti-administration. Only ten per-cent of the 103,000 Indians eligible under the OIWA organized associations and cooperatives. Approximately 90,000 eligible Indians, mostly members of the Five Civilized Tribes, took no action at all.[112]

Even with the enactment of the IRA and the OIWA, the Five Civilized Tribes continued to press claims involving per capita payments, mineral leases, and probate matters up through the close of the 1930s. Most of these law suits had been initiated in the late 1920s although a few, such as Creek equalization claims, dated to the allotment period. Creeks believed that the federal government had illegally spent money earned from the sale of tribal lands. In addition, the Chickasaw and Choctaw tribes still sought remuneration from the Atoka Agreement of 1902. They had received no money from land sales since 1928 and contended that the federal government had used the money to pay attorney fees.[113]

The endemic corruption that existed in some Oklahoma counties and courts remained. For example, in 1938 Oklahoma Senator W.T. Anglin put pressure on an Indian Bureau field clerk named Glenn C. Palmer. Senator Anglin urged Palmer to persuade a Choctaw woman named Susey Walker Harjo to sign papers authorizing joint guardianship over her deceased mother's adopted son. Senator Anglin told Palmer that a man named Frank Allen was to control the child's inheritance, but Susey Harjo was to have personal custody of the child. Allen, a State Oil and Gas Conservation officer, and Senator Anglin were friends. Anglin also co-headed the law firm involved in the case. Dennis Petty, the probate attorney for the Indian Bureau, told Palmer that he needed to "play ball" because Senator Anglin had powerful friends around Muskogee. Certain"concessions" needed to be made to county courts and local officials or Palmer would come to "regret it." The case was eventually decided in favor of Harjo, but despite the ruling, Allen still took control of the money. Even when courts favored Indians, their mandates often went unheeded. By the close of the 1930s, the Five Civilized tribes had 43 cases pending in federal court involving some $850,000,000 worth of claims.[114]

Complaints growing from frustration with the Indian Bureau also continued to occupy the political and legal resources of the Five Civilized Tribes. In 1937, the Seminoles criticized John Collier and the Indian Bureau for disregarding their concerns. A Seminole spokesperson said that there was no point in going to meetings with Indian Bureau representatives because department officials and white onlookers "crowded Indians out." When Collier did visit, it was perfunctory and amounted to nothing more than "grandstanding." The Seminole Indian Tribal Council passed a resolution

condemning federal, county, and local authorities for inactivity. To many, the Indian Bureau was nothing more than a "honeycomb of graft." Chickasaws and Choctaws, as well, eventually passed a resolution condemning the federal government. They claimed that the tribes were treated like "reservation Indians incapable of handling their own affairs."[115]

Despite the best intentions of the Roosevelt administration and John Collier, the overall attitude of the federal government toward Indians remained paternalistic. Federal efforts were designed, in theory, to grant more autonomy to the Five Civilized Tribes, but the programs the Indian Bureau implemented tried to initiate more participation in the market economy among rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. Even though Collier, at heart, cared a great deal about the conditions of Native Americans, the Indian Bureau he headed and the personnel who represented it seldom visited the hollows and remote wooded areas where the majority of full-blood Indians lived. The federal government, as well as the more integrated members of the Five Civilized Tribes, continued to view these people as hapless. They often described them as reticent about standing up for their needs, "shy and withdrawn," their language implying that these more tradition-minded Indians were almost like children. Certainly, many rural, full-blood Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes were reserved, but their reticence was not timidity or helplessness, but rather an inherent cautiousness toward outsiders and their offerings of aid; a cautiousness underscored by their determination to preserve their cultures and lifestyles amidst the modernization of the 20th century. They did not want the help of the federal government or their more integrated tribal brethren if

it involved efforts or programs to establish them as profit-motivated farmers or businessmen. That way of life came complete with complications they had no desire to embrace.[116]

Although the OIWA was designed to economically and politically galvanize the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles, none of the Five Civilized Tribes adopted constitutions or restored their governments during the 1930s. The tribes remained politically and socially fragmented, divided along class and cultural lines with deep historical roots. Primarily, assimilated or more integrated Indians continued to represent the tribes in business and political affairs at the state and national level. But few of the Indians living in their rural settlements cared what happened in Oklahoma City or Washington, D.C. If they chose to involve themselves politically, that involvement remained where it had always been most vital— in the communities, at the grass-roots level—where people still had a voice in the matters that directly affected their daily lives. Politics meant maintaining the togetherness of the community, not attempting to impact or shape federal Indian policy. During the 1930s and the Great Depression that same devotion to their internal political affairs and institutions also applied to the economic life that defined the rural communities of the Five Civilized Tribes. Rather than depend on the "alphabet" programs of the New Deal, rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles more frequently relied on their communal networks of reciprocity and exchange, as well as their knowledge of the land, to ensure their survival.[117]

Endnotes

1. Duane Champagne, *Social Order and Political Change: Constitutional Governments Among the Cherokee, the Chickasaw, the Choctaw, and the Creek* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); Felix S. Cohen, *Handbook of Federal Indian Law* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1942); Angie Debo, *And Still The Waters Run: The Betrayal of the Five Civilized Tribes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940); Angie Debo, *The Road to Disappearance* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941); Angie Debo, *The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw* Republic (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989); Grant Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes: Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, Seminole* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934); Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).

2. James Wilson, *The Earth Shall Weep: A History of Native America* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1998), pp. 332-358; Prucha, *The Great Father*, pp. 943-958, 971-973.

3. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Central Classified Files, 1907-1939, Series B, Reel 2, microfilm copy, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Tim Holm, "The Crisis in Tribal Government," in *American Indian Policy in the Twentieth Century*, Vine Deloria, Jr., ed., (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), pp. 146-147; Cohen, *Handbook*, 425-446; Debo, *And Still the Waters Run*, pp. 31-91. The agreements reached with each of the Five Civilized Tribes varied primarily in regard to size of allotted homesteads and the status of the freedmen. In 1934, the Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes reported the following average allotments and homesteads, respectively, for Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes: Chickasaws– 320 and 160; Choctaws– 320 and 160; Creeks– 160 and 40; Seminoles– 120 and 40; and Cherokees– 110 and 40.

4. Cohen, *Handbook*, pp. 425-426; Debo, *And Still The Waters Run*, pp. 31-91.

5. Cohen, *Handbook*, pp. 425-426; Debo, *And Still The Waters Run*, pp. 31-91.

6. Wahrhaftig, Box 433, American Indian File, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Albert L. Wahrhaftig and Janet Lukens, "New Militants or Resurrected State?" in *The Cherokee Indians: A Troubled History*. Duane H. King, ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1979), pp. 224-231. For a good examination of the changing definitions of Indian identity and assimilation see Fergus M. Bordewich, *Killing the White Man's Indian: Reinventing Native Americans at the End of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Doubleday, 1996);

Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1982); Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978); and Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984); Hampton Tucker to Frank Parkinson 9 August 1928, Box 12, Hampton Tucker Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma. One runs the risk of creating stereotypes if specific behavior and character traits are attached to an ethnic or racial group. Both integrated and less integrated Indians found themselves continually negotiating between the world of their Native American heritage and the predominantly white Anglo-Saxon world that surrounded them. Many integrated Indian leaders, however, worked on the larger economic and political issues that impacted their tribes as a whole. They tended to be more wedded to economic improvement based on material acquisition. While most Indians living in the small communities of eastern Oklahoma concerned themselves with the more mundane, although not unimportant, issues of day to day survival. In addition, many of the economic programs that integrated Indian leaders championed, failed to generate much enthusiasm in most of the rural Indian communities. It is not that these Indians did not want to improve their living conditions or health, but rather they did not view economic improvement from the same cultural perspective. They were not bent on acquiring large farms to maximize profits nor were they intent on leaving their communities and moving to the cities. Upward mobility was not the driving force behind their lives. Their small, rural communities maintained their spiritual connection to the cultural traditions of their tribe. Any program or person who attempted to compromise that was viewed with suspicion.

7. Wahrhaftig, Box 433, American Indian File, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Wahrhaftig and Lukens, "New Militants or Resurrected State?", pp. 224-231; Bordewich, *Killing the White Man's Indian*; Dippie, *The Vanishing American*; Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian*; Hoxie, *A Final Promise*; Hampton Tucker to Frank Parkinson 9 August 1928, Box 12, Hampton Tucker Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

8. Interview 6976, Indian Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

9. Charles H. Victor to Hampton Tucker, n.d., Box 4, Hampton Tucker Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

10. Wahrhaftig, Box 433, American Indian File, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Wahrhaftig and Lukens, "New Militants," pp. 224-231; Interview 6976, Indian Pioneer Papers; Charles H. Victor to Tucker, n.d., Box 4, Hampton Tucker Collection,Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

11. Cohen, *Handbook*, pp. 425-446; Janice Haskett Hutchins, "Cherokee Country: Cultural Landscape Change, 1940-1993" (Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1995), pp. 213-214.

12. Debo, *And Still the Waters Run*, pp. 61-91, 159-180; Benay Blend, "Jackson Barnett and the Oklahoma Indian Probate System" (Master's thesis, University of Texas, Arlington, 1978), p. ix; Leonard A. Carlson, "Federal Indian Policy and Indian Land: Economic Interests and the Sale of Indian Allotments, 1900-1934," *Agricultural History* 57 (January 1983), pp. 33-45; Norman Graebner, "The Public Land Policy of the Five Civilized Tribes," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 23 (Summer 1945), pp. 107-118; Sharon O'Brien, *American Indian Tribal Governments* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989).

13. Department of the Interior, *Annual Report*, p. 342; H.R. 973, 74th Cong., 1st Sess., May 21, 1935; Blend, "Jackson Barnett," p. ix; Jordan, "Politics and Religion," p. 375.

14. Department of the Interior, *Annual Report*, p. 342; Blend, "Jackson Barnett," p. ix; Jordan, "Politics and Religion," p. 375.

15. Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, *Annual Report*, 1932, 1935, 1937, 1938, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Center.

16. Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, *Annual Report*, 1932, 1935, 1937, 1938, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Center; Georgia Rae Leeds, *The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), pp. 9-11.

17. McIntosh, "Chitto Harjo," pp. 163-170; Debo, *And Still the Waters Run*, pp. 53-58.

18. McIntosh, "Chitto Harjo," pp. 163-170; Debo, *And Still the Waters Run*, p. 280; Opler, "Creek Indian Towns," pp. 43-45; *Oklahoma State Department of Education Report*, "Oklahoma Indian People: Images of Yesterday," Box 17, Bower Broadus Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Michael Edward Welsh, "The Road to Assimilation: The Seminoles in Oklahoma" (Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 1983), p. 292; Daniel F. Littlefield, "Utopian Dreams of the Cherokee Full Bloods, 1890-1934," *Journal of the West* 10 (July 1971), pp. 405-408.

19. Debo, *And Still the Waters Run*, pp. 269-271, 327, 331, 358; Bureau of Indian Affairs, Central Classified Files, 1907-1939, Series B, Reel 2, microfilm copy, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Jordan, "Politics and

Religion," p. 183; H.R. 1015, 72nd Cong., 1st Sess., April 2, 1932; H.R. 2155, 75th Cong., 3rd Sess., April 10, 1938.

20. Debo, *And Still the Waters Run*, pp. 282-286; Prucha, *The Great Father*, pp. 305-308; Hoxie, *A Final Promise*, pp. 176-178.

21. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Central Classified Files, 1907-1939, Series B, Reel 2, microfilm copy, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Debo, *And Still the Waters Run*, pp. 270-271; Welsh, "The Road to Assimilation," pp. 292-293; Jordan, "Politics and Religion," p. 183; H.R. 1015, 72nd Cong., 1st Sess., April 2, 1932; H.R. 2155, 75th Cong., 3rd Sess., April 10, 1938.

22. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Central Classified Files, 1907-1939, Series B, Reel 2, microfilm copy, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Debo, *And Still the Waters Run*, pp. 270-271; Welsh, "The Road to Assimilation," pp. 292-293; Jordan, "Politics and Religion," p. 183; H.R. 1015, 72nd Cong., 1st Sess., April 2, 1932; H.R. 2155, 75th Cong., 3rd Sess., April 10, 1938.

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24. Donna L. Akers Whitt, "Race, Ethnicity, and Identity: Choctaw People of Mixed Heritage, 1828-1880" (Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1994), pp. 2-4, 12-13, 17-19; Burkhofer, *The White Man's Indian*; Vida Rose Lathrop Graham, "Patterns of Folk Beliefs About Indians Among Oklahoma Whites" (Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1986), pp. 2, 4, 5, 7-8, 13-14; Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report*, 1933 (Washington, D.C.), pp. 68-85; Debo, *And Still the Waters Run*, 354-356.

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26. S. Doc. 280, 71st Cong., 3rd Sess., February 20, 1931; Debo, *And Still the Waters Run*, pp. 352; H.R. 2764, 70th Cong., 2nd Sess., February 27, 1929; S.R. 455, 71st Cong., 2nd Sess., April 17, 1930; S.R. 627, 71st Cong., 2nd Sess., May 8, 1930; S.R. 529, 72nd Cong., 1st Sess., April 7, 1932; H.R. 1015, 72nd Cong., 1st Sess., 1932

April 7, 1932; H.R. 1427 72nd Cong., 1st Sess., May 25, 1932; Jimmy Rogers to Jack Nichols, April 29, 1935, Box 22, Elmer Thomas Collection, Legislative Series, Carl Albert Center, University of Oklahoma.

27. S.R. 449 71st Cong., 2nd Sess., April 17, 1930; H.R. 2188, 71st Cong., 3rd Sess., January 7, 1931; D. Clayton Brown, "Hard Times for Children: Disease and Sickness During the Great Depression," in *Hard Times in Oklahoma: The Depression Years*, Kenneth E. Hendrickson, ed. (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1983), p. 47.

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32. Opler, *Creek Indian Towns*; Jordan, "Politics and Religion;" Hampton Tucker to Frank Parkinson August 9,1928, Box 12, Hampton Tucker Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Welsh, "The Road to Assimilation."

33. Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, *Annual Report*, 1930, 1932, 1934, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Center; Jordan, "Politics and Religion," pp. 97, 183; Cohen, *Handbook*, 425-446.

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36. U.S. Department of the Interior, *Indian Field Service Report 1930*, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Central Classified Files, 1907-1939, Series B, Reel 2, microfilm copy, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Phillips, "Ouachita Timber Lands," pp. 36-37, 49-53; Box 50, Legislative Series, Elmer Thomas Collection, Carl Albert Center, University of Oklahoma; Douglas Johnston Collection, Box J11, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

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38. Philp, "Oklahoma Indian Reform," pp. 153-167; John Collier, *The Indians of the Americas* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1947), pp. 261-263; John Collier, *From Every Zenith: A Memoir* (Denver: Sage Books, 1963), pp. 293-299.

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Chapter 3

Let Us Help You Help Yourselves

The goals that the Indian Bureau set for itself in the 1930s in its efforts to improve the lives of Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes were straightforward and well intended. Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier wanted to expand and strengthen extension work, undertake more extensive relief efforts, and increase Indian employment opportunities. Part of the strategy was to employ more Indians in the Indian Bureau. Collier also wanted Indian Bureau employees to be better educated and more respectful of Indian culture. Lastly, as part of its economic policy, the federal government incorporated anthropologists so that it could design programs that best served the economic and cultural needs of rural Indian communities. Indian cooperatives, credit-associations, and small-scale, family-managed, Indian agricultural projects formed the heart of the Bureau's rehabilitation plan. The overall goal of the federal government was to help rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles to become self-supporting, productive citizens.[1]

While much of the nation prospered during the 1920s, the West experienced an economic downturn. In particular, rural and agricultural sectors exhibited signs of economic depression. The region did not recover quickly from declining farm prices after WWI. In Oklahoma, business and bank foreclosures occurred as early as the mid-1920s. As a young state, its political and financial institutions lacked the organizational

sophistication that come only as a result of long-term growth and maturity. Although certain places such as Seminole County enjoyed tremendous economic prosperity due to the discovery of oil in 1926, this was an anomaly in a predominantly agricultural state. The oil industry, moreover, experienced boom and bust cycles. Oftentimes, wells rapidly ran dry. As a consequence, even in an industry that experienced huge profits, employment remained unstable and erratic.[2]

Except for wheat-growing counties in the northwestern portion of the state, most of Oklahoma's rural areas suffered from a high degree of farm tenancy. Low crop prices, a consequence of over production, and the increasing cost of mechanized agriculture drew many farmers into a never-ending cycle of debt. Unusually high interest rates in Oklahoma also placed farmers at a disadvantage. For example, merchant credit sometimes exceeded 30 per cent per year and store credit ran as high as 80 per cent. By 1930, the first in a series of severe droughts compounded these problems. Even in southeastern counties, such as Le Flore and Pittsburgh, where coal served as the foundation of the economy, the 1920s proved disastrous. Natural gas displaced coal as a heating fuel in homes, and railroads also became less reliant upon it. Coal towns such as McAlester and Hartshorne exhibited unemployment and economic dislocation long before the stock market crash of 1929.[3]

Economic stagnation plagued other eastern Oklahoma counties as well. For example, almost all farms in Sequoyah County in the northeastern section of the state suffered from debt as early as 1926. Forty per cent of all farms in the state devoted their land to cotton. Over-planting of cotton not only ruined the soil, but prices for the crop

continued to decline throughout the 1920s. Flooding, the result of erosion and heavy rainfall, exacerbated the farmers' situation. Poor crop yields completed this recipe for disaster. Toward the end of the decade, bank and business closures had rendered prostrate the economy of Sequoyah County.[4]

The same thing occurred in Choctaw County. The city of Hugo required state financial assistance in the mid-1920s. Only one of its banks remained open. Farmers in Choctaw County had invested their time and resources in cotton, typical of Oklahoma farmers during that period. When cotton prices fell substantially, the problems attenuated with a mono-crop economy became evident. Despite a 137 per cent increase in the use of tractors in Oklahoma between the years 1925-1929, farm tenancy and an increasing out migration of people already defined the state and the eastern counties prior to the onset of the Great Depression.[5]

The level of hardship that accompanied the Great Depression varied among the states. States that possessed diversified economies and a more developed or mature governmental infrastructure suffered least. Unfortunately for Oklahoma, it exhibited neither of these prerequisites. In the 1920s, it still struggled to establish its own identity in an increasingly urban nation. Out-of-state, individual absentee owners, as well as corporations speculating on oil or mineral development, showed little or no interest in improving the land. Declining real estate values and delinquent property taxes reduced county and municipal revenue. As the economy took a turn for the worse in the late 1920s and the early 1930s, city governments provided little or no relief. Before 1931 counties in Oklahoma were solely responsible for relief funds. The state's eastern

counties spent far less per capita on relief than the western counties of Oklahoma during this period. And despite the fact that Oklahoma's state constitution mandated that counties maintain institutions for the poor, in eastern Oklahoma only Choctaw, Creek, and Pittsburgh Counties had poor farms or poor homes. A lack of personnel greatly hampered charity organizations such as the American Red Cross, hindering efforts to aid families living in the more rural, isolated areas particularly in the Five Civilized Tribes region. In addition, not all counties had local Red Cross chapters. Despite these limitations, the Red Cross still reached 145,000 needy Oklahomans in 1931. But its efforts proved exceptional. For the most part, the state's few formal welfare institutions benefitted only specific groups such as Civil War veterans, blind adults, and crippled children.[6]

To help alleviate Oklahoma's financial distress, in February 1931 the state legislature appropriated $600,000 for the relief of the most destitute and needy citizens. An Emergency Relief Board was created to distribute this money. Counties utilized nearly 50 per cent of these funds to buy seed for farmers. The other 50 per cent purchased clothing, food, and shelter. The state, moreover, budgeted funds to care for orphaned children and created an Old Age Assistance Program. Oklahoma also became the first state targeted for federal drought aid that distributed seed and feed to suffering farmers. County farm agents, in addition, encouraged people to live at home and plant gardens. Terracing and meat canning demonstrations were held. In places such as Johnston County, evidence of a growing "back-to-the-farm" movement already appeared. Other groups, such as the Parent Teacher Association, provided meals for hungry

families. The Red Cross loaned pressure cookers to help farm women preserve fruit. The newly created Oklahoma Tax Commission also managed the distribution of county tax money for the purpose of school, road, and highway development that, in turn, created jobs for indigent people. Inherent problems remained, however. Many relief efforts helped only the more prosperous counties. Poor counties simply did not generate enough tax revenues to fund substantial and long-term relief projects. Counties had trouble enough caring for their most desperately needy citizens, much less those who were simply unemployed. And in Oklahoma unemployment increased substantially, growing from 14,000 in 1930 to close to 300,000 by early 1933.[7]

From 1929 to 1932, the federal government remained wedded to the notion that states should assume the responsibility for relief. This attitude prevailed at the state and local levels as well. Nevertheless, the presidential administration of Herbert Hoover provided some direct relief. The Federal Farm Board made loans to financially strapped farmers. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation, created in 1931, extended loans to banks, corporations, and railroads. But Hoover still firmly believed in voluntarism. Typical of many Americans at the time, Hoover maintained that direct federal welfare programs created irresponsible citizens. He considered aid to the poor the responsibility of local charity organizations and community benevolent associations. As a result, he opposed congressional efforts to secure more funds for drought-afflicted farmers. Only begrudgingly did he finally sign the Emergency Relief and Construction Act of 1932.[8]

The Emergency Relief and Construction Act was designed to grant federal loans to the states to fund poor relief and works projects, but only a small percentage of funds

ever found their way to states like Oklahoma. Managed by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the loans came with such high interest rates that states hedged on applying for them. The several million dollars that Oklahoma received between October, 1932, and June, 1933, financed farm-to-market roads, flood control, and small irrigation and dam projects. Some of the money also went to needy families. Combined with state and local efforts, federal aid during Hoover's term in office, however, did little to soften the growing impact of the Great Depression on Oklahoma. This proved particularly true in regard to the eastern counties of the state where the majority of the Indians resided. Ill-prepared local institutions armed with inadequate resources struggled to alleviate a broadening unemployment and itinerant farm population. Already the most impoverished region of Oklahoma, the Great Depression simply exacerbated the problem faced by the Five Civilized Tribes. If one believed the dire results of such things as the *Meriam Report* and the *Survey of Conditions of the Indians in the United States*, the economic circumstances of the 1930s would almost certainly have devastating consequences upon the poorest of all people in eastern Oklahoma, the restricted, rural Indians of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole tribes.[9]

The Institute of Government Research released the *Meriam Report* in 1928. It documented the inability of the Indian Bureau to address adequately the needs of Native Americans under its control, but it also chronicled the impoverished and desperate conditions that prevailed among the Five Civilized Tribes in Oklahoma. The findings indicated chronic conditions of disease, illiteracy, malnutrition, and poverty, particularly in the isolated communities of the more conservative or tradition-oriented tribal

members. The report, along with the *Survey of Conditions of the Indians in the United States*, detailed how the systematic separation of restricted members of the Five Civilized Tribes from their lands had left them a demoralized people living in "squalid homes" and continually "menaced by famine."[10]

To compound problems, in 1930 and 1931 devastating crop failures occurred in Bryan, Choctaw, McIntosh, Muskogee, Pittsburgh, Seminole, and Wagoner Counties. Drought produced extensive blight in the region. By 1930, the highest degree of farm tenancy in the state existed in many of the counties where most members of the Five Civilized Tribes lived. Bryan, Choctaw, Johnston, Marshall, McCurtain, Muskogee, Okfuskee, Seminole, Sequoyah, and Wagoner Counties all possessed farm tenancy rates over 70 per cent. The same counties tended to have the highest farm tax delinquency rates in the state as well. In Sequoyah and Pontotoc Counties, for example, the rates ran as high as 80 per cent and were only about 10 per cent lower in Adair, Cherokee, and Delaware Counties. Taken at face value, these accounts indicated that rural Indians in these counties defied astronomical odds simply by staying alive. Far removed from modern America in the twentieth century, and the decade of the 1930s that saw the construction of the magnificent Empire State Building in New York City and the high-budgeted, bombastic musical productions of Busbee Berkeley produced in Hollywood, apparently the rural Indian communities of the Five Civilized Tribes were mired in a downward spiral of physical and spiritual decay. But contrary to both government reports and subsequent historians, nothing was further from the truth.[11]

Within the context of economic prosperity, measured according to annual income

and the value of real property, many rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles lived at or below the poverty level. Yet poverty is an artificial construct creating a set of biases and prejudices that define poor people as incapable; incapable both in an economic sense as well as in a human sense. A sociological term, it defines a fixed degree of affluence within an affluent society. As a superficial indicator, it unjustly differentiates people as either successes or failures in direct correlation to their income. The accumulation of money and objects, however, as an indication of one's status or place in society, is not a goal all people share.

Thus, the observations of Indian Bureau field personnel, census takers, agricultural extension agents, and health and social workers in the 1920s and 1930s were distorted as a result of their own cultural preconceptions. Their subjective judgments regarding the condition of clothing and housing or the amount of farm implements and animals, automobiles, telephones, and other amenities of modern life within the Indian communities they visited predisposed them to reach conclusions that often differed substantially from the way that Indians viewed themselves. Their culturally biased assessments frequently applied to Indian land use, but pertained also to their opinions in regard to the general living conditions among various members of the Five Civilized Tribes during the 1930s.[12]

The Indian Bureau field representative in Muskogee complained of the "loafing class of Indian citizens" who do not do anything to help themselves. The field representative in charge of Okfuskee, Okmulgee, and McIntosh Counties called the Indians "shiftless and lazy." An Indian Bureau social worker was distressed about the

poor diet of rural Cherokees.[13] And Senator W.W. Hastings told the Daily Oklahoman in 1934 that Indians living in Choctaw, Le Flore, and Pittsburgh Counties "were doing real bad."[14] Even as late as the 1940s, historian Angie Debo reported that rural Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole communities were suffering from "appalling social and economic degradation."[15] To many outside observers, the economic situation of rural Indians appeared to be dismal. The reality, however, was more complex.

The economic conditions and tribal holdings of the Five Civilized Tribes varied depending upon such things as royalties from asphalt, oil, gas, and timber. Most tribal lands had been sold prior to 1930. The Cherokee Nation possessed only 127 acres. The Chickasaw and Choctaw holdings consisted of 897 acres for boarding schools in addition to 34,348 acres of segregated timber lands. This included 11,866 acres of reserved asphalt lands. Two boarding schools, 32 town lots, and 226 acres of tribal land remained in the Creek Nation. The only land that the Seminoles still possessed was the 320 acres on which sat the Mekasukey Mission. Depending upon the tribe, the last per capita payments to individual tribal members also varied from tribe to tribe.[16]

The Choctaws had received payments in 1929 whereas the Creeks had not received any money since an initial $860 was distributed to each member at the time of allotment. The government proved extremely cautious in distributing tribal funds to individual members. Federal officials thought most Indians incapable of managing their own financial affairs. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Charles S. Rhodes, refused to disburse tribal money. He made quite clear, however, that he did not oppose giving money to more financially successful Indians. Like many Americans of the period,

federal Indian officials were quick to distinguish between more assimilated or modernized Indians, who they judged as upstanding citizens, and those culturally conservative or more tribally oriented Indians who they often considered incompetent.[17]

In the 1930s, the restricted, predominantly full-blood Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes continued to live as they had always lived. Preferring rural areas to more developed or urbanized locations, they found comfort in the isolation of the densely wooded hollows and hilly backwaters in the eastern counties of Oklahoma. In fact, many of the restricted members of the Five Civilized Tribes had deliberately chosen allotments that were not located on the best farm land. Nutrient rich bottom lands usually existed within or near more developed areas and often in closer proximity to whites. When possible, these Indians sought both cultural and spatial separation from people unlike themselves. As one Seminole woman succinctly stated, she did not like "civilization" and all of its "problems."[18]

More tradition-bound Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles lived in communities comprised of small clusters of families. The groups were related through kin, clan, town, and tribal membership. Though their land holdings had diminished substantially since they received their original allotments, nearly all restricted Indians owned some land. Even those who lived on the land of family, friends, and neighbors usually owned allotments in other areas of the region. Rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes lived in log cabins as well as modest wooden frame structures. The majority of homes contained two to four rooms.[19]

Despite their ruralness, few of these Indians engaged in farming for market. They

harvested only a small percentage of their farm land. In 1930, in nearly all of the Indian counties, the percentage of cropped farm land ranged from 30 to 60 per cent. The farms themselves varied from10 to 160 acres. Those figures included both white farmers and the more integrated, usually mixed-blood members of the Five Civilized Tribes. Indians that inhabited the small rural communities cultivated even less land. Instead, they maintained plots or gardens large enough to meet their needs throughout the year. Occasionally, they kept truck gardens to sell surplus vegetables either in nearby towns or in rural markets. Even when these Indians farmed, they cultivated only about twenty acres or less.[20]

When Indian Bureau field personnel surveyed these areas they judged the Indian homesteads against notions of how a farm should appear. Lacking barns, fenced pastureland, acreage under cultivation, draft animals, farm implements, and externally well-maintained houses, government personnel reported that the Indians lived in substandard conditions. Even the more integrated leaders and members of the Five Civilized Tribes indicated that their rural brethren lived in impoverished circumstances. Chief Roly Canard of the Creeks said that Creek allotments were "too small" to earn "a living." Canard, however, based his assessment on the belief that people who owned parcels of land wanted to farm for the market rather than to subsist. Indian Bureau observers and people like Canard based their conclusions on the appearance of dwellings and the amount of land devoted to market crops that generated profits. Naturally, to those more assimilated tribal members who filed reports from the comfortable confines of their suburban homes in cities like McAlester and Okmulgee, the more tradition-

oriented Indians living in the countryside appeared to be barely surviving. They echoed the sentiments of Ray Parrot, an Indian agent in Wewoka, who claimed that most Seminoles were living in "misery."[21]

Unlike their white neighbors or more modernized and integrated tribal brethren, subsistence oriented Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles tended not to own much farm machinery or livestock. Those Cherokees who inhabited the small communities in the region of Oklahoma called the "Ozark Country" or the "Ozark Uplift" owned around 58 acres per family. But the families utilized only a small percentage of this acreage. The land remained in its natural state and no indication was given that the families desired to be involved in a "system of extensive agriculture." Only one third of the families owned farm tools. About the same percentage owned cows, but nearly 75 per cent of Cherokee families possessed either chickens, hogs, or both. Roughly half the families owned a horse or a mule.[22]

The same conditions existed among the Choctaws although, on average, families occupied a higher acreage of land. Rural Choctaws in Le Flore, McCurtain, and Pushmataha Counties lived on roughly 108 acres per family. And yet, nearly 50 per cent of the families farmed less than 20 acres with 25 per cent of those families engaged in no farming. Choctaws such as Gibson Anderson and Lizzie Ott had no desire to engage in market farming. Unlike the white-owned farms in the region devoted to cotton, 70 per cent of Choctaw homesteads produced no cotton. The mean number of cotton produced on all Choctaw farms amounted to one bale. Slightly over 80 per cent of rural Choctaws owned no horses. Approximately 60 per cent possessed no cows. Similar to the

Cherokees, however, Choctaws were inclined to keep hogs with nearly half of the families in the region owning one or more hogs. Almost all of the rural Indian families of the Five Civilized Tribes owned chickens.[23]

Even among the Seminoles in Seminole County, that was easily the most developed of all of the counties among the Five Civilized Tribes, many rural Indians remained decidedly opposed to market farming. Despite the fact that they owned more farm tools, cows, and hogs, at rates slightly above 50 per cent, less than 40 per cent of conservative Seminoles farmed for a living. Nevertheless, Seminoles farmed more than their rural counterparts in the other Five Civilized Tribes. They primarily raised corn and cotton. A Mr. Chism, a field representative of the Five Civilized Tribes Agency in Wewoka, reported that he knew of many Seminoles who made their living from farming. County Extension Agent, Claude Sullivan, indicated that young Seminoles were also interested in farming for a living.[24]

For most Seminoles, farming amounted to little more than producing just enough food to eat and earn some extra income for staples such as coffee and flour as well as for farm supplies and clothing. Similar to their rural counterparts in the other four tribes, the Seminoles let most of their land lie fallow. If they utilized it at all, they preferred to lease or rent it to whites or they allowed other Seminoles to live on it as they pleased.[25]

Most rural Seminoles were similar to Billy Spencer, who combined small farming, sporadic, part-time labor, fishing, gathering, and hunting to provide a comfortable living for themselves. The Indians who inhabited the small rural settlements had no desire to improve their lives through full-time employment or market farming.

Their attitude toward work completely contradicted the reports coming out of Congress at the time that said that Indians were increasingly "ready to participate in the industrial life of the nation" because their education has given them the "proper mental conception of work."[26]

As a result of their desire to remain separated from both the agricultural marketplace as well as from white society, rural, small settlement Seminoles like their rural brethren in the other four tribes presented a number of problems to the various people who aspired to improve their economic "condition." Field agents from the Five Civilized Tribes Agency, social workers, agricultural extension agents, and New Deal programs of the federal government all focused their efforts on helping these people become more productive farmers. Even under John Collier's guidance, whose sympathies for Indian culture have been well documented, the Indian Bureau's primary goal remained the transformation of these peoples into self-sustaining, productive members of American society. Ultimately, that meant educating and preparing these Indians to become market-oriented farmers. That would enable them to participate in the agricultural economy of the regions in which they lived.[27]

This mission ultimately proved futile because it remained at odds with the cultural orientation of these tradition-wedded people. It did not mean that these Indians, however, were culturally static. Nor were these Indians opposed to improving their lives or embracing the amenities of modernity. But they chose carefully what aspects of twentieth-century American society they allowed into their communities. When confronted with the economic advice, expertise, and aid the federal government offered

they accepted and rejected this assistance on their own terms. Throughout the 1930s, the ambivalence rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes exhibited toward the Indian New Deal exasperated those employed to implement the federal government's beneficent vision. And at times, it frustrated the more integrated members of their own tribes, whose cultural perspectives had far more in common with white society than they cared to admit.[28]

As of 1932, the state of Oklahoma had no organized welfare program that addressed the specific needs of Indians. State officials did not view the Indians as having distinct problems that distinguished them from white society. There existed the pervasive belief that the federal government bore the responsibility of taking care of Native Americans. As a result, the federal government continued to administer Indian affairs during the 1930s. In Oklahoma, the Five Civilized Tribes Agency confined its welfare work largely to those Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles who possessed one half or more Indian blood. The agency had 38 employees in 1932 to administer the entire Five Civilized Tribes region. The work of the agency was managed through 13 field offices located at Ardmore, Durant, Holdenville, Hugo, Idabel, McAlester, Muskogee, Okmulgee, Pryor, Tahlequah, Talihina, Tulsa, and Wewoka. Throughout 1932 workers distributed Red Cross flour as well as used clothing. In addition, some of the more needy families received army mules along with hogs and horses. Working with Indian labor, the Agency built 148 houses and 43 barns and garages between 1930-1932 and Indian Service personnel helped dig 81 wells and cisterns during this period.[29]

The Agency also directed its efforts toward teaching Indians, as one agent said, "how to live off the land." This was ironic given the fact that Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes had lived off the land in eastern Oklahoma for nearly one hundred years. The goal of the Agency, however, was to make the Indian economically independent. To help this process along, it gave out seeds and fruit jars as incentives to produce and preserve food. Home demonstration agents and extension service personnel conducted home economics and garden planting classes. Brood sows and milk cows were also provided to indigent Indian families. All these programs operated under the basic assumption that Indians must work to improve their living conditions. The Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, Adrian M. Landman, said that "the advancement in the standard of his living, economic and social, must come by these means combined with schooling of the children and education of the adults in economic independence, health practice, and social elevation." As incentives the Agency offered prizes for the best Indian homes and gardens in the Five Civilized Tribes district. Individual improvement through self-help, as opposed to direct welfare relief, guided the Agency's agenda during the early 1930s. The goal was to create productive citizens rather than dependent wards.[30]

Also during 1932 and 1933, the federal government assumed welfare responsibilities through the agricultural programs it administered. The Department of the Interior distributed seed and food to Indians that it determined were "destitute." Indian families received dried beans, potatoes, and onions. The government also apportioned beet, carrot, cow pea, cucumber, mustard, pumpkin, and turnip seeds to Native

Americans. From 1930 to 1932, the United States Department of Agriculture, Oklahoma A & M College, and the Board of County Commissioners were the three principal agencies that conducted the majority of agricultural relief programs in the counties of Oklahoma. The ultimate goal, however, was not simply to aid these people during the difficult economic times, but rather to encourage Indians to devote their energies toward farming or ranching.[31]

Other groups also attempted to mitigate the impact of the Great Depression. Local organizations such as the Lions Club, the Mason's Lodge, the American Legion, church groups, and various women's clubs provided clothing, food, and shelter to families in need of relief. But they focused their efforts primarily on white families and only occasionally did they undertake welfare work among Indians. When they directed charity toward Native Americans, they usually focused on Indian families living within or near urban cities such as Okmulgee, Seminole, or Tulsa.[32]

Despite the combined efforts of the various government programs and the work of local institutions, relief efforts in Oklahoma remained meager. The amount of state aid that some of the key counties within the Five Civilized Tribes jurisdiction received in 1932 varied from a high of $5,188 in Adair, Bryan, Choctaw, Delaware, Johnston, Marshall, and Pushmataha Counties to $3,458 in Creek, Hughes, McIntosh, Muskogee, Okfuskee, and Seminole Counties. County aid, however, remained dependent upon property and sales taxes. This did not bode well for such counties as Pontotoc and Sequoyah, where the assessed acres delinquent in 1932 ranged from 70 to 80 per cent. Even if counties were inclined to provide aid to the needy, the funds did not exist.

Moreover, the little relief work undertaken centered largely on white families and not on the majority of Indians who lived in remote areas. Government personnel rarely ventured into those isolated communities and the Indians living there seldom sought aid from external sources. One Cherokee settlement outside Pryor, Oklahoma, had not had a visit from a government representative in ten years. This was not that unusual.[33]

The federal government's attitude toward welfare programs and relief work altered dramatically with the presidential inauguration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in March of 1933. The change in presidential administration also transformed the government's perspective toward Native Americans. From 1933 to the close of the decade, Washington took an active role in efforts to both revitalize the nation's economy and improve living conditions among Indians. Almost immediately upon entering office, the President and Congress enacted various legislation aimed primarily at economic recovery and relief. The legislation created the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the National Industrial Recovery Administration, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the Public Works Administration, the Civil Works Administration, and the Civilian Conservation Corps. Additional programs designed to ease the burdens of the Depression included the Soil Conservation Service and the Emergency Conservation Work Act. Other key agencies emerged in 1935 such as the Works Progress Administration and the National Youth Administration.[34]

All these programs were active in Oklahoma in the 1930s. But because Oklahoma was a poor state, it often had difficulty matching federal funding that programs such as the Federal Emergency Relief Administration required. On the other hand, the Civil

Works Administration had less stringent requirements for matching state funds. The federal government provided as much as 90 per cent of CWA funding to Oklahoma, substantially decreasing the fiscal responsibility of state and county sources. Although many of these programs provided Indians employment opportunities, overall, they had a limited impact on the rural Indian communities within the Five Civilized Tribes jurisdiction.[35]

From 1933 to 1934, the New Deal programs that provided the greatest employment opportunities for members of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole tribes were the PWA, the CWA, and the Indian Emergency Relief Conservation Work program. In 1934, the PWA allotted the Five Civilized Tribes Agency $100,000 for Indian road work. Not only did these projects bring income to needy Indians, but they built roads and bridges designed to benefit Indian communities. In most instances, counties furnished the heavy equipment and tools while the Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes maintained a roster of eligible Indians. Married men with dependents received preference, then single men with dependents. Indians who had worked on the CWA and the IECW were prohibited from employment on any PWA project. Qualified laborers were rotated so that as many Indians as possible benefitted.[36]

From spring to early autumn 1934, 40 different construction sites in eastern Oklahoma employed 1,040 Indians. Most of the work undertaken by the PWA in the eastern portion of Oklahoma occurred in Adair, Cherokee, and McCurtain Counties. The PWA predominantly provided work for Cherokees and Choctaws. The people managing

the New Deal agencies believed that road work supplied the greatest dividends in terms of employment as well as creating a vital transportation infrastructure that directly benefitted the state. But Indian Bureau officials also adhered to the ethnocentric notion that wage labor was designed to give the Indian "an opportunity to earn his living and thereby restore his self-respect and unconscious dignity." Indian Bureau personnel assumed that wage labor might correct some inherent character flaws that Indians possessed. In total, more than 2,700 Indians derived income under the PWA program in 1934.[37]

The CWA also involved itself in programs and projects that attempted to help the Five Civilized Tribes. It organized sewing rooms for women and built Indian community centers. The CWA engaged in home building and repair and encouraged subsistence farming enterprises. The construction of community centers, however, proved the most beneficial. These multi-purpose buildings served as social centers, schools, and club houses for Indian organizations. Indians also conducted tribal political meetings at the centers. The community buildings remained functional institutions long after the New Deal programs had ceased.[38]

The Five Civilized Tribes Agency, in addition, utilized funds from New Deal programs to bring relief to needy Indians. In 1933-1934 the Agency purchased 10,000 chickens and distributed 29,000 pounds of beef. Four thousand, five hundred hogs were slaughtered for home consumption and Indian families received 51,168 pounds of mutton processed from 1,788 Navajo sheep. Moreover, 330 Native American families received direct relief totaling $10,768. The Agency also organized noon-day lunch programs for

Indian children and 4-H Clubs in the Five Civilized Tribes district attracted 287 young boys and girls. Over the course of the next few years, Indian membership in the 4-H increased, but the club never attracted many young people from the Five Civilized Tribes. Even with 914 members in 1939, this represented roughly 13 per cent of an estimated population of 6,764 young boys and girls age 10-20. For adults, the Agency conducted agricultural work shops that introduced Indians to innovative techniques in both farming and animal husbandry. But these demonstrations attracted relatively few Indians. Only 1,237 Indians attended in 1934 out of a population of nearly 29,000 members of the Five Civilized Tribes possessing at least three-fourths or more Indian blood.[39]

From 1935 to the close of the decade, Indian Bureau personnel increased their efforts to aid members of the Five Civilized Tribes. In conjunction with New Deal programs such as the Resettlement Administration, they worked to help Indians become "self-supporting" so that Indians might "enjoy a few of the better things in life." What exactly constituted the "better things" undoubtedly differed depending upon one's cultural orientation. Nonetheless, in 1935 1,405 members of the five tribes were employed on farming projects in Latimer and Haskell Counties. These projects were designed to aid a limited number of very needy Indian families. Homes were built and land cultivated with the sole purpose of establishing economically viable Indian communities. Acreage was set aside at each location to grow truck crops destined for the market place. Initially, these experimental were located on the Choctaw-Chickasaw Segregated Coal Lands. In the next two years the scope of this project expanded to

include similar cooperatives in the other areas of the Five Civilized Tribes region.[40]

In conjunction with the Five Civilized Tribes Agency, the IECW employed Indians both as workers and supervisors in the construction of small dams, stock ponds, and terraces. At Jones Academy, 900 Indians built several large stock reservoirs. But most work focused on the construction of farm roads. The Indian Bureau viewed truck trails as a key to the future development of rural Indian communities allowing Indians to get their products to market. This theory ran counter to the non-market orientation of most conservative Indian communities. In addition, some Indians believed that road construction only encouraged more land development. Better transportation meant more white tourists and sportsmen. This proved true in subsequent years. Increased hunting pressure decreased fish and game. Roads, dams, and housing construction covered numerous traditional burial grounds Development brought rural Indians into greater contact with white society compromising the preference of these cloistered Indian communities to remain isolated so as to protect the cultural integrity of their enclaves.[41]

Other economic aid programs during this period involved the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. Under the auspices of the Indian Bureau, FERA within the Five Civilized Tribes area registered Indian families who qualified for relief. In 1935, they signed up 4,125 families. Direct relief was extended to 654 families because of disability, old age, poor health, and to those who did not have an immediate member of the family to support them. In addition, the FERA distributed 198,000 pounds of canned goat meat. Seventeen thousand, ninety three head of cattle purchased from white farmers were divided among needy Indians. At the same time, the Five Civilized Tribes Agency

worked with the Extension Service to help Indians, but it had only six farm agents and three farm aides to cover forty counties in eastern Oklahoma. Although the number of employees increased in the subsequent years, the Extension Service never generated much enthusiasm among the Indians it attempted to help.[42]

From 1935-1940 roughly 330 farming method demonstrations were held per year. The number of Indians in attendance, however, averaged about 12 per meeting. Some extension agents went so far as to take fake pictures to convince their superiors at the Five Civilized Tribes Agency and the Indian Bureau that their programs had an impact. They staged phony agricultural fairs where they displayed healthy-looking fruit and vegetables grown elsewhere as produce that conservative Indians had grown. Moreover, they paid mixed-blood Indian farmers and whites to pose for fraudulent photographs indicating the productivity of Indian farmers.[43]

Although not engaging in such elaborate hoaxes to coverup their lack of success, the efforts of the Home Economics unit of the Extension Service to teach Indian women the finer points of home management produced similar, dismal results. For example, of the 76 meetings held in the Choctaw Nation in 1939 only 744 women attended out of a female population of roughly 12,000. Designed to instruct women in the latest methods and trends in home economics, these "kitchen chautauquas" catered more to white farm women than Indian women. The Extension Service, moreover, was drastically underfunded which limited the amount of husbandry and agricultural projects it undertook.[44]

Lack of funding, however, did not hinder the work of the Civilian Conservation

Corps or the Works Progress Administration. These New Deal agencies supplied Indian men with numerous jobs. The CCC included national park, national forest, state park, soil erosion, and biological survey camps. It engaged in road building and maintenance, camp ground clean up, tree planting, grass and terrace sodding, small dam construction, surveying, park development, culvert and pond building, and the clearing of undergrowth for fire and truck trails. From 1933-1942, 88 CCC camps operated in Oklahoma. An average of 323 members per year from the Five Civilized Tribes participated in a special Indian division of the CCC.[45]

Created in 1937, the CCC-ID, as it was known, was the new name for the IECW program. Indians worked on soil conservation projects and cleared space for trails and roads primarily on restricted Indian lands. Fire suppression and fire fighting provided further income. The CCC-ID had both an adult and junior division. The junior division included young men from 17-25. The CCC-ID implemented the "stagger system" to give as much work as possible to those who qualified. Men who came from the most needy families received first priority. They "pulled" six month terms or rotating shifts in the CCC-ID camps. Social workers affiliated with the CCC-ID investigated the background of each applicant. The family size of a CCC-ID enrollee averaged 8-10 people, and many enrollees came from homes headed by widowed women.[46]

The Works Progress Administration, created in 1935, also provided Indians with jobs. Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles found employment constructing auditoriums, dipping vats, drainage works, roads, streets, and sewage and water conservation facilities. In 1935-1936, the WPA pumped nearly $34,000,000 into

work relief projects in Oklahoma and registered close to 500,000 people. Oklahoma became the first state in the nation to participate in soil conservation under the auspices of the WPA. It created nine soil conservation districts, including Choctaw, Le Flore, McIntosh, Pittsburgh, Pontotoc, Seminole, and Wagoner Counties in the eastern part of the state. However, on more than one occasion WPA conservation and irrigation development projects designed to improve farming conditions resulted in the flooding of tribal lands that contained valuable mineral deposits.[47]

In addition, the WPA sponsored Federal Art Project employed Native Americans from the Five Civilized Tribes as artists. Solomon McCombs, a Creek, and Creek-Pawnee painter Acee Blue Eagle worked on murals projects in the eastern part of Oklahoma. But this work was sporadic and only impacted a small number of Native Americans. Indeed, some Indian artists refused to paint because they could make more money working for such programs as the CWA. To benefit Indian women, the WPA organized sewing rooms and Household Service Demonstration Centers. The sewing rooms ranged in size from huge plants employing hundreds of women to small centers employing 10-12 women. This project allowed Indian women to earn supplemental income for their families and at the same time provided clothes for the needy. The household demonstration program trained Indian women as domestics for employment in urban households. Instruction was given in food preparation, ironing, washing, and other in-home duties. However, similar in scope to the PWA, the WPA concentrated much of its work in and around urban centers such as Tulsa or Okmulgee. As a result, it had little effect on the more isolated, rural Indian

areas.[48]

Despite New Deal efforts to provide work relief to Indians, the focus of some federal Indian programs were more ambitious in scope. The Indian Bureau established such a program in April of 1936. It was an extension of the experimental Indian farming projects begun in 1935. The Indian Relief and Rehabilitation program consisted of four main projects in the Cherokee Nation, three within the Chickasaw-Choctaw Nations, and one each in both the Creek and Seminole Nations. These projects were a collective group of homestead units designed as model farms to establish self-supporting families. In this instance, self-supporting did not mean subsistence producers, but rather people who cultivated surplus crops for market.[49]

The Indian Relief and Rehabilitation program provided employment to 2,042 Indians from 1936-1939. It expended roughly $86 per family in the form of salaries, wages, and relief. It was particularly active at Wilburton in Latimer County where it oversaw the construction of a smoke house, root cellar, black smith shop, and remodeled 15 four-room houses that the IECW had originally constructed. At the McCurtain cooperative farming venture, new buildings were designed and built specifically for canning and sewing. Homes and community buildings were constructed at the Delaware, Grand River, Candy Mink, and General sites in the Cherokee Nation. Each homestead consisted of a three-room house, screened porch, hog house and chicken coop, toilet, pump, water house, and fences around the property.[50]

The *Thlopthlocco* Creek Indian project located south of Okemah in Okfuskee County was identical in nature. It consisted of Indian homesteads as well as community

buildings and an auditorium designed to accommodate meetings. The main building included kitchen facilities and housed sewing and dyeing operations. The project for the Seminoles continued rehabilitation efforts that the Indian Bureau began in 1935. The Mekasukey Mission was remodeled, adding facilities for a community canning project. The Indian Relief and Rehabilitation program, in addition, distributed groceries to families who lived in the surrounding area. Workers also engaged in home repair on nearby Indian homes. Although members of the Five Civilized Tribes exhibited a willingness to work in relief programs designed by the New Deal agencies, very few Indians relocated to the homestead sites that the Five Civilized Tribes Agency developed. Highly structured, the communities compromised Indian autonomy Moreover, most conservative Indians exhibited no desire to leave the rural areas where they had been born and raised. Ultimately, these homestead sites served only the most destitute of Indian families.[51]

The New Deal programs the federal government implemented, and the efforts of the Five Civilized Tribes Agency to help implement these programs among the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles, remained antithetical to the aspirations and desires of the more culturally conservative members of the tribes. New Deal agricultural programs aimed at helping farmers and those people in the rural sector had only a minor impact on isolated, rural Indian communities. It cannot be denied, however, that distribution of seed, animals, meat, and vegetables greatly benefitted the Indians of Oklahoma. Even Indians who lived in the rural communities took such things as seed when it was offered, but they were disinclined from soliciting direct aid. They

acted pragmatically. For the most part, Indians welcomed these welfare commodities openly and graciously. Aside from that, however, the larger goals of the Indian Extension Service clashed openly with the prevailing ethos of rural Indian communities that emphasized a more communally oriented, subsistence lifestyle. Rural Indians welcomed food items and such things as seed, but they resisted outsiders telling them how to economically organize or structure their communities.[52]

The majority of federal efforts to improve the life of rural people focused on improving farming methods, with market-oriented farmers in mind. The latest use of scientific technology to improve soil and increase crop yield had little influence on the subsistence farming of the majority of tradition-oriented Indians in eastern Oklahoma. Such innovations as crop rotation, terracing, fertilizers, mechanization, and new marketing strategies required capital that most rural Indians did not possess. The fertilizers recommended were not commercially available in the more isolated parts of the state. The innovations were designed to work predominantly for larger farming operations. It was far easier and made much more sense to let certain acres lie fallow for a year or two or rotate crops on a farm of 500 acres, but it was virtually impossible, if not impractical, to undertake these methods on farms of 20 acres or less. In addition, many restricted members of the Five Civilized Tribes rented or leased significant portions of their lands. They cared little about the improvements undertaken on those lands and the poor white tenants who lived there could not afford the technology that government agriculturalists advocated. Finally, a high rate of mobility existed among tenant farmers and share croppers and that transience undermined devotion or commitment to place.[53]

The federal government, moreover, focused on large-scale, ambitious development projects such as the construction of the Grand River Dam, approved by President Roosevelt in September of 1937. The project received a $20,000,000 PWA allocation and created a reservoir 50 miles long and 7 miles wide. This ambitious project did greatly benefit the state of Oklahoma. It was designed to provide cheap electricity, flood control, encourage manufacturing, and create recreation facilities. Most rural Indians viewed projects such as the Grand River Dam simply as another encroachment into their homelands. The anthropologist, Alice Marriott, reported that economic development projects disrupted rural Indian communities. Indian Relief and Rehabilitation project manager, H.C. Miller, indicated that rural Indians resented rehabilitation programs, not because they did not want to improve their lives, but because it meant the increased presence of whites. Geographer Leslies Hewes echoed these sentiments. Hewes spent most of the 1930s visiting rural Cherokee communities in northeastern Oklahoma. Based on the countless interviews he conducted, Hewes concluded that more tradition-oriented Cherokees opposed any type of economic development because it compromised community cohesion.[54]

Cherokees in the region, for example, had been protesting the Grand River Dam plan as far back as 1930. They did not understand it in terms of progress and long- range economic development. Instead, the dam meant an increase in tourists, sportsmen, and real estate developers. It impacted the wild game in the area and drastically restructured the environment. Eventually, thousands of acres of traditional Indian lands were buried under water; lands that contained sacred places such as burial grounds. Despite efforts of

the federal government to help Indians help themselves, Indians who inhabited rural communities in the Five Civilized Tribes region continued to resist federal overtures to "improve" their lives. Comprehensive government programs proved too intrusive and created complications that these Indians wished to avoid.[55]

A prime example of the federal government's good intentions gone awry, and the stubborn resolve of predominantly full-blood Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes to protect their autonomy and maintain their cultural integrity, was exemplified by the Indian response to the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. Organized under an act of Congress in the autumn of 1936, the purpose of the legislation was to preserve the arts and crafts of Native Americans while simultaneously funneling needed income into rural Indian communities. A separate division within the Department of the Interior, the Board existed from 1937-1941. Its primary goal was to initiate and manage the various art projects. Ultimately, it was to "work itself out of a job" allowing Indians to manage the program themselves. Indian spinning and weaving became its main focus among the Five Civilized Tribes.[56]

Intended primarily for the predominantly full-blood women of rural Indian communities, the weaving programs attempted to organize economic cooperatives. The program encouraged more integrated and mixed-blood Indians to participate as well. More integrated Indians among the Five Civilized Tribes became involved as instructors, although some engaged in weaving. Spinning and weaving projects were set up among the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. The Cherokee Weaver's Association in Cherokee County operated out of the Sequoyah Orphan Training School.

This school had experimented with bead work, leather, pottery, and weaving for sale as early as 1934. The Choctaw Spinner's Cooperative, established in McCurtain County, operated out of the Wheelock Academy. A Chickasaw Weaving Association was set up at Tishomingo and Creek centers were located at Henryetta and Okmulgee. The cities of Coweta, Seminole, and Wewoka all housed Arts and Crafts Board projects among the Seminole. In addition to loom weaving, some Cherokee, Creek and Seminole men and women produced hand-made baskets. Other arts and crafts included wood carvings, leather articles such as belts, pottery, and silver work. [57]

Under the supervision of the Five Civilized Tribes Agency, Cherokee and Choctaw women exhibited great enthusiasm for the spinning and weaving projects. About 107 Choctaw women in McCurtain County participated in spinning. They came from small, rural Choctaw communities such as Bokchito, Goodwater, Kullichito, Mountain Fork, and Ponki Bok. After profits from sales had been re-invested to purchase raw wool, spinners earned roughly $1.30 for a week's work. Payment was based on the apprentice system with skilled women earning more. Individual spinners and weavers worked, on average, approximately two hours per day, two days per week. In a number of instances, the spinning became a family endeavor with four to five members of a family involved in the process. The Five Civilized Tribes Agency undertook the marketing and sales of finished products. The Agency concentrated its efforts outside the state of Oklahoma. People such as Alice Marriott and Louis West believed that Indian-made "items" had become "too familiar" to people in Oklahoma. Dyed and spun yarn and other arts and crafts were sold in Chicago, Dallas, San Francisco, and New York City as

well as in Colorado and Michigan.[58]

A number of problems arose, however, as a result of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board program. Despite the enthusiasm of some women, their participation in the program proved sporadic. They were willing to work, and relished the opportunity to earn money, but they chose to do so on their own terms. Throughout the spinning program, Indian Bureau personnel complained that the women were unreliable. Indian women chafed at the rigid schedules and production quotas that project co-ordinators such as Mabel Morrow imposed. Morrow comprised a list of rules and regulations. All Indian women who participated in the Choctaw Weaver's Association signed the agreement. The document emphasized efficiency, industriousness, and punctuality. These rules of protocol, designed to increase production and profit remained inimical to the more relaxed conservative Indian views of time and work. Not surprisingly, Morrow complained that the Choctaw women failed to show up for work and when they did they worked too slowly to suit the supervisor. At one project site in McCurtain County the Indian women abandoned the program entirely. They left work one day and never returned. Some supervisors assumed that Indians should plan their entire day around spinning and weaving. Mass production and marketing underscored the program.[59]

To compound these problems, many of the Choctaw and Cherokee women who participated in the arts and crafts program distrusted Indian Bureau officials. They complained that payments for their work often arrived late. To protest this practice, women in the Choctaw Spinner's Association deliberately decreased their output. Some Indians believed that consignment shops that sold their arts and crafts items failed to

report the correct amount of sales, cheating them out of profits. A few Cherokee women refused to turn over finished goods until they first received cash payment. Some Cherokee and Seminole women took it upon themselves to market and sell their products. They organized arts and crafts shops outside the authority of the Indian Bureau. Indian women also used arts and crafts as items of exchange with whites for such things as groceries and errands run on behalf of the Indian women such as taking them to visit friends.[60]

Cherokee and Choctaw women believed that the government exploited them in other ways. For example, in some cases, government officials attempted to persuade Choctaw Indians to produce artifacts that the Choctaws did not traditionally make. Some Indian Bureau personnel encouraged this practice claiming that is what Indians were supposed to do. Whites demanded baskets and pottery items be made into certain shapes and with specific designs even if the designs had no factual basis in either Cherokee or Choctaw tribal history.[61]

Moreover, Indians were encouraged to enter their art work in the various expositions and fairs in Oklahoma. Indians complained that often unknowledgeable whites judged the quality of the work; that Indians themselves never served as judges. One example of this was the 1938 American Indian Cavalcade in Tulsa. Alice Marriott complained to Mabel Morrow that it represented everything that more tradition-minded Indians abhorred. It was "big, pretentious, expensive" and filled with "boring" commercial displays and "presentations." Expositions such as these were designed for tourists rather than Indians.[62]

To further compound problems, Arts and Crafts personnel wanted Indians to hold competitions among themselves with awards to those who produced the finest products. The notion that a person should attempt to "show up" or "out do" another person made many conservative Indians uncomfortable. They believed that it showed a lack of modesty and respect. Finally, black market items remained a problem throughout the period. For example, Mexican-made pottery was frequently marketed and sold as authentic Choctaw pottery. Whites also manufactured "facsimiles" and "knock-offs," hoping to capitalize on the demand for Native American artifacts.[63]

More integrated members of the Five Civilized Tribes also pressured their more tradition-oriented brethren to produce "real" Indian items. Predominantly mixed-blood, integrated Indians viewed the New Deal program as a means to promote the tourist industry in eastern Oklahoma. This made sense because the more integrated Indians stood to gain the most financially. They had long ago established economic ties with the surrounding white community and were comfortable advocating economic development in the region. Many mixed-blood Indians in the area had long been involved in banking, real estate, and development companies. Along with Arts and Crafts Board officials, these Indians encouraged productivity to meet the demands within and without Oklahoma. This proved problematic as upscale department stores in places such as New York and Dallas placed increasingly larger orders for Indian items. Indian craftsmen and craftswomen were unable to produce enough artifacts to meet these demands. Moreover, increased production meant more contact with the outside, white community. The more that whites demanded Indian artifacts, the more whites intruded into the secluded

environment of rural Indian enclaves in search of unique souvenirs.[64]

As a result of the publicity, one of the significant problems during this period involved the increasing number of tourists who wanted to see Indian artisans. Predominantly modest and reserved, many rural Indians dropped out of the Indian Arts and Crafts program because of whites "gawking" at them while they worked.[65] Even the *Meriam Report* warned against forcing conservative Indians to mass-produce artifacts because large-scale production and the creativity required in the artistic process were fundamentally at odds with each other. Art required patience and flexible intuitiveness that mass production disallowed. All these problems worked to undermine the success of the Indian Arts and Crafts program during the late 1930s.[66]

What began as a federally sponsored, volunteer, self-help program under the Indian New Deal became an exploitive undertaking that prescribed rules, regulations, and restrictions all designed to increase productivity and profit. The weaving and spinning projects lasted only as long as there was outside, government organization. When that support and pressure eventually ended so too did the Arts and Crafts program. It was not because Indians were too incompetent to manage it, but rather they had no desire to develop it as a business venture. That objective remained at odds with the preservation of their rural communities. Thus, the Indian Arts and Crafts Board underscored the inherent inconsistencies of New Deal Indian policy. People such as John Collier wanted to protect Indian cultural integrity and yet oftentimes New Deal programs incorporated methods that were contradictory to that goal.[67]

For many of these same reasons, the credit and loan programs initiated by the

Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of 1937 failed to arouse much enthusiasm among rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. The Indian Bureau was so positive that Indians would take advantage of the OIWA that they printed up application forms, "elaborate credit manuals," brochures, and pamphlets explaining how to manage small businesses. But Indian interest in self-starting business ventures simply did not exist.

Under the OIWA, federal charters were extended to the Creek Towns in 1937, but only three tribal towns accepted the offer. The Alabama-Quarssartes were amenable to a charter because of their "linguistic and ethnic differences" and their "desire to remain distinctive" from the rest of the *Mvskoke* Creeks. *Kialegee* and *Thlopthlocco* Towns also received a charter because Town leaders were interested in improving market farming opportunities for Town members. These two Creek Towns were willing to organize credit associations because they appeared more eager to embrace the market economy than other Creek Towns. *Thlopthlocco* Town, for example, was the Town of Creek Chief Roly Canard who had long been receptive to working with the federal government in trying to help his tribe.[68]

However, it must not be construed that these Creek Towns wished to integrate into white society. They wanted the economic benefits that the credit program might produce, but Indian Bureau representatives noted that the cultural and social unity of the Towns remained strong. On the other hand Creeks, such as the Yuchis, distrusted federal government programs because they were still bitter as a result of the land and resource losses they suffered since allotment. Indian Bureau anthropologists reported that those

Creeks who were "most comfortable around whites" exhibited a willingness to embrace the OIWA credit program while less-integrated Creeks refused to even meet with Indian Bureau representatives.[69]

Choctaws also showed this same lack of interest. For example, among 1,032 Choctaws in McCurtain County who qualified for loans, only 13 loans totaling $6,500 had been issued from 1937 to 1940. These loans were given to those Choctaws who had formed the McCurtain County Credit Association. Men such as Thomas Willie, Herman Mambe, William Murphy, and Jonah Frasier all worked diligently and repaid their loans. Only two loans were delinquent as of 1940, but Choctaw participation in the credit program remained limited.[70]

Moreover, Choctaws who participated in this program did not typically represent most rural Choctaws. Although many of them were full-bloods, they were certainly not indicative of most full-blood, Choctaw Indians. That is not a criticism of them, but indicates that their behavior was not the norm in comparison to their less integrated brethren inhabiting the countryside settlements. Unlike their less integrated brethren, the Choctaw men and women who became involved in the credit association were more likely to be small, market farmers. In that regard, they were no different than many white farmers in the region. Choctaws such as Matthew and Eva John, William and Ella Murphy, and Simeon and Rachel Byington, for example, did not belong to any Choctaw clan nor were they attempting to maintain a communal or subsistence lifestyle in an isolated settlement. Like their more integrated Choctaws, they lived either in or within a 60 mile radius of the town of Idabel and they preferred to organize a credit association

based upon the needs of Indian farmers throughout McCurtain County. They did not want to organize communally based upon a clan or rural settlement to which they owed no allegiance. Moreover, a number of the farmers also held jobs such as bank officer, state representative, and civil engineer. For example, Noah Wilson was a sheriff and Thomas Byington was a minister. As of September, 1940, the McCurtain County Credit Association had a membership of 22, but not one of the 13 original members was still actively involved in the loan program.[71]

In 1938, in Choctaw and Pushmataha Counties, the Five Civilized Tribes Agency tried to implement a "revolving cattle program." Indians could apply for loans through two Indian Credit Associations that operated in each of the counties. Choctaws who qualified for loans received a heifer and bull for the purpose of breeding the cattle. Initially, ten head of cattle were distributed among 5 Indians in both of the counties. The Indians were then supposed to pay off their loans by giving the Agency either a heifer or bull from the offspring of their cattle. In theory, the Agency would provide these new born cattle to other Indians and the process would repeat itself. With approximately 1,900 rural Choctaws in the area, one can only guess how long the entire plan would have taken to implement. Needless to say, few Choctaws expressed interest in the program and there are no indications that it ever achieved any kind of success.[72]

Cherokees exhibited the same apathy. In 1937, Eli Pumpkin, a full-blood Cherokee living in Cherokee County, formed a tomato growing cooperative with 10 other Cherokee men. They obtained their start-up loan from the Cherokee County Indian Credit Association. Their 18 acres of tomatoes generated minor profits the first year.

Eleven Indians, however, out of a population of some 4,300 Cherokees, represented a small percentage.[73]

In 1937, Herbert Kinnard from the Extension Service went to Stilwell, Oklahoma to organize a strawberry cooperative. Kinnard found that the small Cherokee community there owned only one horse. Kinnard helped 10 Cherokees obtain an initial loan of $2,800 dollars in 1938. Cultivating 28 acres, the Lyons Indian Cooperative, as it came to be known, sold its first crop of strawberries and boysenberries in the spring of 1939 for $1200. A portion of the profits was divided equally among the members and the remainder went toward repayment of the loan. Eventually, the Lyons Indian Cooperative expanded to 80 acres and began growing beans in addition to the berries. Despite its initial success, however, lack of interest led to the dissolution of the cooperative by 1946. Most rural Cherokees resisted producing for profit. Kinnard concluded that the program had a limited impact on the Cherokees. Only two growing cooperatives formed in the Five Civilized Tribes area under the OIWA. Only 18 "small groups," organized some type of cooperative association among all of the five tribes.[74]

Twenty-seven credit associations, operating on federal loans of $363,000, had been organized as of 1938. Frequently, Indians used OIWA loans for living expenses instead of investment capital to create market-oriented farms. They made no long-term plans for expanding operations. Through July, 1938, only 15 loans had been extended to Creeks in Okfuskee, Okmulgee, and McIntosh Counties despite the fact that these counties contained approximately 4,000 Creek Indians of one half or more Indian blood. The lack of enthusiasm among Indians for loans prompted one unnamed Indian Bureau

official to exclaim that the Indians were "shiftless and lazy."[75] The number of those Indians expressing interest in loans had not increased much at the end of 1939. Only 22 families out of all of the Five Civilized Tribes had applied for and received loans at the end of that year. The OIWA also provided college loans for young Native Americans, but few took advantage of the program.[76]

Throughout the 1930s, the Five Civilized Tribes Agency worked to improve the life of the Indians under its authority. The Agency's impact remained limited, however, primarily because of its continued insistence on reshaping rural Indians into farmers and semi-skilled laborers. Even the Indians Arts and Crafts Board emphasized productivity and profits. The Five Civilized Tribes Agency's efforts, combined with New Deal programs such as the CCC, the IECW, and the WPA, allowed some Indians to supplement their subsistence life-styles with added income. Still, many of the rural, predominantly full-blood Indians that the Agency sought to help remained ambivalent in response to its initiatives.[77]

Moreover, some Indian Bureau and Five Civilized Tribes Agency agents were untrained in the skills that they were supposed to teach Indians. There were also an inadequate number of extension agents. In 1936, 9 extension workers covered 40 counties in the Five Civilized Tribes region. To compound matters, some Indian Bureau personnel viewed Indians as ignorant drunks or irresponsible and not wanting to improve their lives. Instead of exhibiting compassion for the people they were supposed to aid, some agents treated Indians with disdain.[78] The Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes reported in 1939 that there were "some outstanding misfits" among the "field

personnel."[79] An unnamed field agent working with a Chickasaw community in conjunction with the Civil Works Administration called the rural Chickasaws he was assigned to help "backward" with "no desire to adjust themselves to modern conditions."[80] The historian B.T. Quinten wrote that some field agents believed that "Indians created their own problems" and thought that lending Indians any type of aid made them "self-reliant on relief" rather than self-motivated and independent.[81] A man named O.V. Chandler wrote to Senators W.B. Pine and Elmer Thomas chiding the Indian Bureau and its field agents for neglecting rural Indian settlements. The anthropologist Morris Opler, who worked among the Creeks in the 1930s, reported that "specialists" were sent into Creek communities armed "with all these grand ideas" but they "never did much,"and "disappeared as quickly as they came."[82]

Nevertheless, the primary goal of the Indian Bureau remained the improvement of submarginal lands, extension work with individual farmers, and the establishment of small groups of Indians as "economic units." Despite some "misfits" in the Indian Bureau, not all Indian Bureau personnel viewed Indians in a derogatory manner. There were a number of highly qualified, motivated individuals who worked diligently trying to improve the lives of rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. John T. Montgomery, Supervisor of Extension Work for the Indian Bureau, along with Director of Extension, D.P. Trent, and Assistant Director of Extension, E.E. Scholl, cooperated with the state of Oklahoma to effect a more organized Indian agricultural program. The Indian Bureau also received full cooperation from Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College. C.P. Blackwell, Dean of the School of Agriculture, horticulture

professor Earl Burk, soil professor H.J. Harper, agronomy professor H.F. Murphy, agricultural economics professor O.D. Duncan, animal husbandry professor W.A. Craft, and Norma Brumbaugh, Oklahoma State Demonstration Agent, all worked diligently with the Indian Bureau in teaching rural Indians the most current and innovative farming techniques. They worked closely with Indians in "designing programs" that Indians believed would benefit them best. In fact, the Indian Bureau used 125 Indians as "swine demonstrators" believing that they better related to the people the Bureau was trying to help.[83]

Victor Brown, a full-blood Choctaw who was the field clerk of the Five Civilized Tribes Agency in Idabel, full-blood Choctaw Darius Wilson, social worker Mrs. Folson Slater, nurse Helen Lapham, and Indian Extension Agent R.M. Georgia, labored tirelessly trying to improve the lives of rural Choctaws in McCurtain County. George Nelson of Pittsburgh County, who in addition to being an attorney, was also an Indian Extension Agent, worked with Pittsburgh County Social Services Director, Helen Von Macklin, in efforts to obtain both agricultural and economic aid to rural Choctaws. Nelson's fluency in Choctaw allowed him to better understand the people he served. In Seminole County, Seminoles such as Wesley Tanyan, Louis Fish, and Charles Ground, along with Indian Bureau field agents Ray Parrett and Claude Sullivan helped rural Seminoles find work relief and provided much needed agricultural advice to Seminole farmers.[84]

Although the Indian Bureau attempted to help rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes, in its effort to implement rehabilitation programs it placed a high degree of emphasis on organization and planning. In particular, the work the Bureau undertook

trying to establish of Indian "economic units" was regimented and highly structured. Formality and strict scheduling clashed with the Indian's concept of time and his informal attitudes toward work. As a result, most rural Indians in the Five Civilized Tribes viewed their participation in these economic rehabilitation programs with ambivalence. When work opportunities came their way, they often took advantage of them to make extra money. But their willingness was sporadic at best. They did not respond enthusiastically to overtures from Indian Bureau personnel who tried to improve their lives. Ruth Smith, a Home Demonstration Agent in Cherokee County, commented that the "full bloods do not care for our work." Smith said that they lived in "isolated areas away from civilization" and did not seem open to "anything new."[85]

Most tradition-minded or more culturally conservative Indians worked when it suited their needs. Their involvement continued to be a secondary alternative. When relief employment did not interfere with the daily routines of their existence they participated in federal work programs. Social gatherings, fishing, hunting, subsistence farming, and dependence upon family and tribal relationships for economic support continued to take precedence in their lives. It was this network made up of those fellow tribal members who shared their cultural and economic perspective that the rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes relied upon both for nurture and support. Their tribal governments attempted to help them, but these predominantly mixed-blood, integrated-Indian governing bodies had been historically removed and out of touch with many of the full-blood Indians residing in isolated, rural communities.[86]

Although the semi-formal governments of the Five Civilized Tribes exhibited

concern for the tribal members under their authority, they were in no position to provide extensive economic support. They functioned as a mediating body between the Five Civilized Tribes and the federal government. They continued to file lawsuits against the government regarding broken treaties and land disputes. They also lobbied for federal funds for Indian home improvement projects. Their efforts succeeded in obtaining $250,000 in allocations in 1937. Tribal leaders, in addition, made sure that the Five Civilized Tribes Agency managed their revenue from oil, gas, and mineral leases in a conscientious manner. Support from tribal leaders and councils, however, varied. Those more active in tribal affairs, often worked through the Indian churches, Lions Clubs, and American Legion posts to undertake charitable work among those they considered less fortunate than themselves. For example, Deacon Tony Harjo, a Seminole, organized church relief work among impoverished Seminoles. Most of the benevolent activities, however, aided those Indians who lived in more easily accessible areas. Nevertheless, tribal leaders attempted to aid tribal members when possible.[87]

The Seminoles had a relief committee that worked directly with the Five Civilized Tribes Agency office in Wewoka to determine the most needy Indian families in the district. Once located, the committee worked with New Deal work programs like the WPA, and such organizations as the Red Cross to try to find employment, food, and clothing for those who qualified. Another Seminole organization, the Seminole Indian Protective Association, led by full-blood Seminoles such as Caesar Burgess, Con Charty, Tillman W. Harjo, and Putkeh Harjo also aided fellow Seminoles in need of assistance.[88]

Choctaw leaders attempted to establish a welfare board staffed with Choctaws to

undertake work in the rural Choctaw communities. Choctaw leaders reasoned that fellow Choctaws understood better the living conditions among their fellow tribes people. Among the Creeks, the tribal government working through the tribal towns helped out Creeks in need of assistance. Wealthier and more prominent Creek leaders directed funds into communities to aid both the sick and the destitute. For example, Punshee Fuld used his wealth to help fellow Creeks around Henryetta. Under the guidance of the town councils, work groups organized to help the infirm or sick and those unable to work their gardens or land. In one instance, a man's house had burned down. The Creek town council in Laplako organized and funded the effort to rebuild it.[89]

A number of prominent, primarily integrated members from the Cherokees, Choctaws, and Creeks belonged to an inter-tribal organization known as the Association of Indian Tribes. This predominantly mixed-blood Indian group lobbied the Department of the Interior to hire Indians into supervisory positions with the Indian Bureau. The association also attempted to educate rural Indians in probate matters, real estate transactions, and income management. It was particularly outspoken of the Five Civilized Tribes Agency. The Association accused the Agency of neglecting full-blood Indians on purpose in order to "keep them in the dark" and "lead them on like dumb, driven cattle."[90]

In addition, men such as Douglas H. Johnston, the chief of the Chickasaws, spent a considerable amount of time convincing the federal government not to re-open the tribal rolls. Johnston asserted that many people claiming to be Chickasaws wanted this to occur in order to secure allotments. His efforts proved successful as the government

never re-opened the rolls.[91]

On the other hand, some tribal leaders, such as chief William Durant of the Choctaws, appeared to be out of touch with many of the Indians in the countryside. In 1937, he claimed that clans no longer remained among the Choctaw. He said that few distinctions existed among tribal members. The chief insinuated that the Choctaws had been assimilated. In this regard, Durant appeared to agree with such men as John Collier, who in an address to Indians at Bacone College stated that "we want the Indians to become socially assimilated." Indians living in the rural areas in the 1930s contradicted these sentiments.[92]

The Superintendent of Indian Affairs Report in 1932 classified approximately ten percent of the Indians in the Five Civilized Tribes as "wealthy." Statistics indicated that the rest of the tribal members suffered from poverty. This report, however, failed to tell the complete story. Although many of the Indians who inhabited the small rural communities lacked money, they did not measure success or failure based upon the accumulation of capital and material items. Their livelihood did not depend exclusively upon full-time or even part-time employment. In fact, wage labor represented only one of many methods they utilized to provide for themselves. Instead, rural Indians combined various strategies and relied upon a number of available resources to see them through the decade.[93]

Throughout the 1930s, many rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes depended upon one another for their survival. Even more than the relatively integrated, urban members of their tribes, rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles

relied on extended kin relationships to ensure their physical and cultural continuity. Unlike many rural whites in Oklahoma who struggled through the economic hardships of the Great Depression, rural Indians utilized their historically dynamic systems of reciprocity and communalism to live as they had always lived— comfortably self-reliant. Sharing was a sign of respect and openness with one's food and material items was expected. Those who possessed less or who were not as well off were not held accountable if they did not have much to offer. To complement their resource pooling, rural Indians combined temporary employment, barter and exchange, cottage industries, fishing, hunting, and home gardens to sustain themselves.[94]

Contrary to the exaggerated and misinformed reports of the United States Congress, the Indian Bureau, state social workers, and the Five Civilized Tribes Agency of Oklahoma, rural Indians in the Five Civilized Tribes region were not on the brink of utter starvation. Indeed, this would have been news to most of the more tradition-oriented Indians living in the isolated enclaves in the eastern part of the state. Because they had always lived at a subsistence level, and predominantly within their means, the 1930s did not see Indians abandon their small communities and set off in search of work or new opportunities. Few, if any, of these Indians mimicked or resembled the mythic "Joad" family in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. They remained in the areas that previous generations had occupied since their initial removal to Oklahoma in the 1830s.[95]

This is not to say that some people did not struggle during this period. Indeed, people went hungry, suffered the effects of malnutrition, and found mere survival difficult. Those rural Indians not attached to clan or communal organized settlements

were more likely to have no support network to help them through difficult times. They were the ones who required relief from the federal government. But evidence indicates that these people were not indicative of the majority of rural Indians in the Five Civilized Tribes area. Historically, the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles who inhabited the isolated, rural enclaves had exhibited a high degree of resiliency and the 1930s, the Great Depression not withstanding, did little to damage that dynamic.[96]

Because a majority of the rural, restricted members of the Five Civilized Tribes still retained their restricted lands, they leased or rented portions of those allotments. Land retention rates among full-blood restricted Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes remained high throughout the 1930s. Approximately 26,000 Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles possessing one half or more Indian blood owned land. Prior to 1936, law permitted the restricted Indians to negotiate their own leases. After that date, the law required the Indian Bureau to oversee the contracts. The Indian Bureau believed that when Indians drew up the lease or rental agreements whites obtained land far below market value. In many instances, this meant that whites paid approximately one-fourth to one-half of the "proper rental." Indians, however, continued to draw up informal agreements even after the law went into effect. They resented the intrusion of the government and avoided that inconvenience whenever possible.[97]

Many rural, full-blood Indians distrusted Indian Bureau personnel and believed that the Indian Bureau misappropriated or unfairly withheld income from agricultural leases. As one unidentified Indian said, "it takes almost a written court order to obtain our money."[98] A gentleman named E. W. Smith in a letter to Elmer Thomas echoed those

sentiments telling Thomas that it was virtually impossible for Indians "to get their restricted funds." Because of that, some restricted Indians preferred negotiating their own informal, verbal contracts. Although they charged whites less money, both knowingly and at times unknowingly, they avoided the complications whenever the federal government managed the process.[99]

The renting or leasing of small parcels of land was particularly prevalent among the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creeks. Many restricted, full-blood Indians utilized this strategy because they retained their lands at a far higher rate than their more integrated Indian brethren. In some counties, restricted Indians retained up to 70 per cent of their original allotments. Most rural Indians were similar to Cain Archibald, a Choctaw, who lived near Hanna, Oklahoma. Except for a few acres he had sold off, he had retained nearly all of his land. Another Choctaw, Tandy Anderson, had also held onto his entire allotment. At the same time, allotment retention rates for predominantly mixed-blood Indians hovered around 24 per cent. They were likelier to sell their land and relocate to urban areas. Predominantly integrated Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes often worked regular jobs and those jobs were found in the towns and cities, not in the underdeveloped countryside. Moreover, integrated Indians exhibited less attachment to place and, like their rural white counterparts, made in-state migrations in search of work during the Great Depression.[100]

In contrast, the Indians who inhabited the small rural settlements remained in their areas of birth and derived much needed income from land leases and rentals. On average, these rural Indians leased or rented land that varied in size from 5 to 40 acres.

They negotiated contracts that ranged from three months to five years. Both rural Indian men and women engaged in this practice. As payment, Indians received either money or a percentage of the renter's crops. Whites comprised virtually all the tenants or sharecroppers who made use of Indian land. For example, white cattlemen and stockmen leased most of the surplus pasture land owned by rural Cherokees in Delaware and Mayes Counties. This resulted from the fact that most rural Cherokees living in the isolated areas of northeastern Oklahoma preferred wood cutting to farming. Rural Choctaws in McCurtain County also leased out a high percentage of their non-homestead, restricted acreage. Many Choctaws preferred cash rentals over crop leases. Conditions in the counties in which they lived made maintaining their own gardens a relatively easy task. Therefore they preferred money as opposed to produce.[101]

Depending upon the quality of the land and the acreage, the amount of money derived from these leases ranged anywhere from $25 to $500 per year. Rural Indians fortunate enough to own land that contained desirable mineral or oil deposits took advantage of their valuable acreage. Georgia Cooper and Lizzie Ott, both Choctaw women, had negotiated leases with Gulf Oil Corporation and Gypsy Oil Company respectively. The leases took in approximately $150 per month. Another Choctaw woman, Agnes Reed, negotiated a five year timber lease. On the other hand, crop agreements often stipulated that sharecroppers turn over 25 to 50 per cent of their crops or feed. Grain rent was common, for example, among the Cherokee in the "Ozark Country." They usually took a percentage of the sharecropper's corn. Lessees also paid in milk and beef. Some Indians asked that payments be divided between cash and crops. For

example, a Choctaw man named Gibson Anderson took both cash and crops for payment.[102]

Surprisingly, many rural Indians who leased or rented land were women. Nancy Hotubbee, a Choctaw, leased a parcel of land to a white man named J.E. Long. Melissa Colber Carney, a Creek woman, leased 110 acres to J.H. Reid in Pittsburgh County. Other Choctaw women such as Emeline Baier Stallaby, Nellie Poston, and Agnes Carney all acquired income in this manner.[103]

Leasing or renting proved particularly desirable to those rural Indians who owned quality lowland. A full-blood Cherokee named Redbird Johnson, for example, rented out, for cash, some prime bottomland that included his modern home. This allowed him to move further back into the woods where he lived in a small log cabin. Overall, tenancy rates in most of the eastern counties of Oklahoma ran as high as 80 per cent and seldom dropped below 53 per cent throughout the 1930s. The strategy of having white tenants and sharecroppers utilize portions of their lands enabled rural, restricted Indians to acquire food and maintain a minimal cash flow while relieving them of farming responsibilities. [104]

Some rural Indians also earned income through part-time work. As mentioned previously, they took advantage of the New Deal welfare and rehabilitation programs. Indians, however, never relied on these relief programs to the extent of whites. Many white men depended on them as a necessity for survival. Most young men among the Seminole, for example, preferred not to work for the CCC even though that New Deal agency was quite active in Seminole County. Those who worked seldom completed their

enrollment. This also held true for Seminole participation in the WPA. When they chose to work and were able to secure it, rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes more commonly engaged in part-time labor. Cherokees, for example, found work loading railroad ties into box cars. The men also spent a considerable amount of time chopping down trees and fashioning them into ties. Women and children participated in this process, as well, helping men strip the bark off trees. Indeed, the Cherokees made the best ties, and railroad companies provided a steady outlet for their finished product. In addition, the hewn timber was used as utility poles. Cherokees also derived income from other home industries such as the manufacture of clapboard shingles, and stave bolts and staves used for wooden barrels and kegs.[105]

Some Cherokees in Sequoyah County found part-time work in the sorghum mills, helping process cane into syrup. Rural Creek Indians in Okmulgee County occasionally secured work as unskilled laborers in the clay, glass, and stone industries. Chickasaws hired on as part-time help in the cotton compress, ginning, and seed mills. They also worked in the brick, cement, and oil industries around Ada, Oklahoma. This is not to say that Indians found jobs whenever they desired. The depression impacted all industries in Oklahoma, and employment proved sporadic and unreliable at best. When opportunities existed, oftentimes whites filled the positions. Moreover, even when Indians wanted to work, racism and discrimination prohibited and discouraged their hiring. Full-blood Indians, in particular, also found their avenues to employment blocked because of their lack of training and inability to speak English.[106]

Rural Indians also found temporary labor as farm hands in those counties where

extensive agriculture dominated the economy. This held true for many full-blood Choctaws in southeastern Oklahoma. Instead of being paid wages, Choctaws received groceries as compensation. Some rural Cherokees who lived in the northeastern counties made seasonal migrations out of Oklahoma. Cherokee men traveled together in groups either in cars or busses that farmers provided. These Indians worked in the broom corn fields in places such as Campo, Colorado in the southeastern part of the state. Although some Hispanics and whites found employment there, Indians were the main source of labor. In Oklahoma, some rural Cherokee women secured seasonal work in tomato canneries.[107]

Overall, however, Indians were far less likely to work than their white counterparts. At the end of the 1930s, about 62 per cent of Indians in the Five Civilized Tribes were employed in comparison to 76 per cent of Oklahoma whites in the Five Tribes region. This number, however, included all Indians in these tribes. Mixed blood, more integrated members of the Five Civilized Tribes were far more likely to seek and find employment than their restricted, full-blood brethren. In some counties, such as Adair, the percentage of employed Indians was extremely low. Out of some 3,787 Cherokee in the that county in 1940 only 609 males had jobs. In Delaware County, only 465 Cherokee men had jobs out of a total Cherokee population of 2,913. It is not surprising that these counties contained predominantly full-blood Indian populations. The statistics indicate that most full blood, tradition-minded Indians possessed little desire to gain employment.[108]

Most Indians in all of the Five Civilized Tribes who lived in the scattered, rural

communities of central and eastern Oklahoma viewed business and permanent wage labor as part of the white world and to be avoided whenever possible. They never relied on either part or full time labor for their economic livelihood. They engaged in it when it was convenient and available, but never on a regular basis. Their desire for personal autonomy and cultural separation from whites precluded their gainful employment. Even publications such as the *Bacone Indian*, whose motto was "Representing Progressive American Indian Youth," failed to convince more culturally conservative Indians to adopt white ways. In one strident editorial, the paper chided those Indians who accepted their position and place in American society stating that "if you are satisfied with what you are the best remedy is to commit suicide."[109] Despite this rather threatening admonition, rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles continued to view part-time wage labor as one strategy out of many to help them through the Great Depression.

Instead of wage labor, the majority of rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles survived off the land. Because most less-integrated Indians lived in the countryside, this was not a difficult task. They occupied land that had been in their families for several generations. Even though drought conditions impacted Oklahoma during the Great Depression, the impact was greatest in the western part of the state. And although lack of rainfall affected eastern Oklahoma in some years, there is no evidence that it prohibited rural Indians from maintaining their small subsistence gardens or completely depleted their water supplies. Even when conditions proved difficult for growing, rural Indians simply relied more on gathering, fishing, and hunting to see them

through the difficult times. They had learned to survive off the land for generations and that knowledge served them well throughout the Great Depression.[110]

Oral interviews that the WPA conducted in the 1930s, and interviews that researchers conducted in subsequent years, revealed the tenacity that rural, full-blood Indians exhibited in their devotion and obligation to "place." The interviews illustrated that numerous Indians had remained in the vicinity in which they had been born. James Baker, a Choctaw full blood, had never left his allotment. Winnie Benjamin, another Choctaw full blood said she had remained exactly where she had been born. Charlie Bird and Martin Blackwood said the same thing. Blackwood lived one hundred yards from where he had been born. Indeed, many of the Indians who inhabited rural communities had never ventured out of the counties where their homes were located. This familiarity with the land and their environment enabled the majority of rural Indians to support a subsistence lifestyle with a minimum amount of effort. Rural Seminoles confirmed this fact.[111]

Some Seminoles, for example, earned a sizeable amount of money from oil royalties, but they represented only 15 per cent of the Seminoles living in Seminole County. Accounts of oil-rich Indians purchasing cars and then leaving them at the side of the road when they broke down because they could easily purchase another car have been greatly exaggerated. There were certainly examples of Seminoles who squandered significant sums of money such as the case of a full-blood Seminole woman named Suzie Walker and her Creek husband Ben Harjo. Oil was discovered on Walker's land in 1927 and by the early 1930s she was earning $15,000 per month in oil royalties. The

Indian Bureau budgeted the couple $500 per month, but Walker increasingly demanded more. The couple purchased a Dodge sedan, Dodge truck, Pierce Arrow, and the Indian Bureau approved the purchase of a V-8 De Luxe Ford. Walker had requested a radio for the car, but John Collier disapproved, claiming it would distract Walker and make her a dangerous driver. Eventually, Walker financed a barn storming baseball team promoted by Jim Thorpe. By 1933, the family was $6,000 in debt.[112]

Unlike Walker, the majority of Seminoles were similar to Elmer Lusty and Billy Spencer. They continued to work small parcels of land. Their efforts provided enough to feed their families throughout the year. They supplemented that with royalties from oil and gas production, wood cutting, and part-time work. Some Seminoles also sold a portion of their crops at market. The small percentage who farmed exclusively for market raised corn and cotton. Approximately 45 per cent owned cows. But because most Seminoles had little interest in raising cattle for beef, they used the cows to produce dairy products such as milk and cream.[113]

Among the Five Civilized Tribes, Seminoles were more likely to participate in the market economy. They were not completely antagonistic to such things as federal soil programs and were willing to work with County Extension Agents like Claude Sullivan to increase their harvest. Overall, more tradition-oriented Seminoles lived comfortably and seldom occupied houses with less than two rooms. These Indians contradicted the rather apocalyptic observation of a Seminole County judge Guy Cutlip who said that the "red man's fires" were in "ashes" and that the Seminoles had lost their culture and had become "modernized."[114] They might have participated in the market economy more than

members of the other Five Civilized Tribes, but that did not make them "modernized" as Cutlip concluded. Seminoles continued to exhibit a deep sense of devotion to their clan and cultural traditions and subsistence agriculture rather than market farming defined the majority of the rural population.

Despite the fact that Seminole County was one of the most modern in Oklahoma, as a result of the development and revenue generated by the oil boom of the late 1920s, most Seminoles lived simply and traditionally. Within Seminole County, only one in nine lived in cities with a population of 2500. Almost all Seminole families maintained gardens and many of the families canned or preserved fruits and vegetables. Their main source of protein came from chickens, although over 50 per cent of the families owned pigs. A number of Seminoles also raised ducks, geese, rabbits, and turkeys both for home consumption and market. The Seminole smoked and cured pork. Barbecued bones were stored and used throughout the winter in soups and stocks. Women collected "possum" or wild grapes which they dried then boiled down for use in dumplings. Men supplemented subsistence farming with hunting as well as fishing. As result of the oil industry, however, wild game was not as plentiful as it had been in previous decades, but still provided enough food to complement what the Seminoles grew and raised themselves. Many of the hunting trips were communal in nature, supplying not simply individuals with wild game, but the whole community.[115]

This is not to argue that all rural Seminoles remained content in the 1930s. Poor soil conditions in Seminole County made it difficult for some Indians to carve out a living. As early as 1934, men such as Peter Miller of the *Hitchita* band, Peter Tiger of the

Mekasukey band, Edward Harjo of the *Sasakwa* band, and John Morgan of the *Thlawathla* band expressed interest in emigrating to Mexico. This was not the first time that Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes desired to re-settle in Mexico. A group of Seminoles, along with some Creeks and Kickapoos, had received a land grant of 34,000 acres from the Mexican government in 1844. A group of blacks who claimed to be Seminoles settled there in 1866.[116] In the 1890s and early 1900s, Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creeks looked into the possibility of selling their land in Oklahoma and purchasing land in either Mexico or South America so they "might resume again their tribal life and their communal tenure."[117] In the 1930s, approximately 600 blacks and 200 Kickapoos still lived on the land originally granted to the Seminoles in 1844.[118]

Apparently, most rural Seminoles did not support emigration. Ray Parrett of the Indian Bureau stated that few Seminoles would move to Mexico. Seminole leaders such as Second Chief, Chili Fish, President of the Seminole Tribal Council, Fulkah Harjo, and Council member, Jacob King, drafted a telegram to John Collier stating that "hardly anyone would want to leave and go to Mexico."[119] Eventually, Harjo, Miller, Morgan, and Tiger met with Mexican President Lazaro Cardenas, who told the delegation that the Mexican government would help finance and equip any Seminoles who decided to move to Mexico. But the plan never generated much enthusiasm. Despite the group's claim that 3,000 Seminoles were willing to leave Oklahoma, approximately only 50 Seminoles wanted to emigrate, and the plan was abandoned by early 1938. Like other Oklahomans, rural Seminoles had deep ties to the land of their ancestors, and had no intentions of moving to a foreign country. They continued to rely upon their rural, subsistence-oriented

settlements for emotional and financial support.[120]

This same preference for subsistence living defined most rural Cherokee Indians as well. Like many of their rural counterparts in the other four tribes, they prided themselves on their independence even if that meant being "poor" as measured by white standards of affluence. Independence in Cherokee culture meant the ability of an individual to have the autonomy to do as one pleased. Although they lived among rural whites in places such as Adair, Cherokee, Mayes, and Sequoyah counties, rural Cherokees maintained their cultural integrity and isolation by speaking only Cherokee and remaining cloistered in their communities. They interacted with whites only for purposes of trading and bartering or leasing or renting their land to white tenant farmers. Many Cherokees were similar to Clem Hogner who not only was distrustful of whites, but also of mixed-blood Cherokees. In fact, Hogner considered mixed-blood Cherokees white.[121]

Most rural Cherokees who lived in the small communities relied on extended family and tribal relationships for both sustenance and survival. Jennie Bell said that sharing between one another was common within communities and between clans. Visiting among one another and utilizing the resources of neighbors was extremely common. Communal dinners such as wild onion feeds and hog fries brought together clans and settlements. Adam Bean indicated that the lending and exchange of draft animals and farm implements occurred regularly. People understood that a person wishing to borrow something needed the item more than the person who owned it. Occasionally, they traded houses with each other simply for a change of scenery.[122]

Subsistence labor among rural Cherokees was not exclusively broken down along gender lines. Nannie Loren Baker said that both women and men worked the fields, chopped wood, raised gardens, and tended to animals. Cherokee women received no special consideration on account of their sex. They were not expected to do any more or any less arduous labor than men. Occasionally, to bring in added income, Cherokee women hired themselves out as domestics and cooks as well as field workers to neighboring whites. Primarily, men undertook the fishing and hunting in the area. An extensive stream system in northeastern Oklahoma provided an adequate supply of bass, catfish, crappie, and perch as well as crawfish and frogs. The wooded areas held numerous wild game such as deer, rabbit, raccoon, quail, squirrel and turkey. Abundant wood also provided fuel for cooking and heating. Women and children collected dandelions, poke greens, hickory nuts, and walnuts. Most families ground their own cornmeal. Beans, berries, chicken, corn, cow peas, onions, potatoes, pork, squash, wild mushrooms, and other food items rounded out the diet. This ensured that most Cherokees did not suffer from malnutrition. One Indian woman said that her father went into town one or two times a year to obtain flour and coffee. Occasionally, Indians were able to purchase supplies from local stores that other Indians owned. They more readily obtained credit at these country markets.[123]

To maintain their subsistence lifestyle, Cherokee communities also employed other strategies. The *gadugi* or work company played a key role. Comprised of both men and women, the *gadugi* functioned as a communal, self-help institution. Groups of men and women banded together to help out individuals in the community. This entailed

mostly farm work and house repair. The *gadugi* organized as often as necessary and served all members in the community. It tended to undertake work on a rotating basis, moving from one farm or homestead to the next in order to help out the occupants. For special projects, it also rented its labor out. The *gadugi*, moreover, served as an informal lending agency. People received money to cover funeral expenses, hospitalization, and transportation among other things. The institution provided, in addition, aid to the sick and infirm.[124] The ability to live off the land and the communal nature of rural Indian settlements allowed Indians to weather even the most difficult of times. Even those Indians who owned no land could turn to others in their tribe for assistance. For example, an elderly Creek woman had raised 7 children of her own in addition to 63 other children. These were children she had taken in and provided with a place to stay. She said that she "turned them out" when they reached the age of 19 or 20.[125]

Maud Johnson Anderson indicated that communalism was also prevalent among the Chickasaws. She said that there were "a lot of communal meals" and people lent both money and food to one another.[126] Walter Wise, an extremely wealthy Seminole, donated large sums of money to Indians churches, communities, and families. He paid for education and medical needs as well. A Seminole minister made caskets free of charge for Indian funerals. Cherokees who had retained their allotments allowed other Cherokees to live on their lands free of rent. This informal system of squatting provided less fortunate Indians with a few acres on which to grow gardens and raise animals.[127]

The practice of allowing friends to use land was prevalent throughout the Five Civilized Tribes. Rural Indians considered this practice acceptable. Most tradition-

minded Indians remained ambivalent regarding the collection of rent when it involved fellow Indians. Not overly possessive of material things, and certainly not considering land as a commodity to be exploited, small-settlement Indians were more than willing to help other Indians in need. One Cherokee woman had 6 homes on her 60 acre allotment. The families living there did so free of charge. It was not unusual, moreover, to find landless Indians living on Indian church grounds or around the community centers.[128]

The degree to which rural Indians depended upon one another and their communities for both livelihood and emotional sustenance cannot be overstated. Unlike whites and their more integrated, tribal-brethren, the commitment that rural, less integrated Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles showed toward subsistence and communally-oriented living was bolstered by their shared family, clan, Town, and tribal cultural heritage. In the 1930s, they were simply trying to maintain a way passed along to them by previous generations. Did this mean that no change in lifestyle occurred in relation to the past or that all rural Indians of the Five Civilized tribes adhered to a communal construct? The answer to that is no. Rural Indians creatively adapted in relation to their circumstances and continued to combine a number of economic strategies to maintain their livelihood. Those Indians who inhabited the small, rural settlements attempted to preserve what was culturally important to them and accommodated the market economy and federal aid in ways that did not completely destroy the social integrity of their enclaves. They neither rejected nor embraced completely the economic programs of the Indian Bureau. They remained pragmatic, determined, and resourceful in the face of increasing pressure from both the economic

hardships of the Great Depression as well as from the further encroachment of white society.[129]

Moreover, contrary to the dire government reports, that many members of the Five Civilized tribes lived in deplorable and famine-ravaged conditions, most rural Indians themselves failed to corroborate those accounts. Some suffered through hard times, but the popular image of a spiritually broken, starving Indian was a caricature rather than a reality. Rural Indians in all of the Five Civilized Tribes said that people depended on one another as always and the 1930s proved no different. Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles who lived in the isolated communities of central and eastern Oklahoma retained their social and economic vitality as they had successfully done for decades, despite the consequences of the Great Depression and the efforts of the federal government to help the Indians help themselves.[130]

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87. Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, *Annual Report*, 1939, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Center; *Wewoka Times Democrat* 5 March 1930; 17 March 1937; 23 June 1937; 27 June 1937; 28 June 1937; 30 June 1937; 2 July 1937; 9 July 1937; 25 July 1937; 17 August 1937; 5 September 1937; 12 September 1937. Some Seminoles had grown dissatisfied with the encroachment of oil development and whites in Seminole County. They appeared to be extremely antagonistic toward the Seminole Executive Council. Men such as Peter Tiger of the Mekasukey band, John Morgan of the Thlawathla band, and Edward Harjo of the Eufaula band advocated moving to Mexico. They claimed that Seminoles had land set aside for them as established by a grant negotiated with the Mexican government in 1844 This emigration movement never generated much enthusiasm among the Seminole. Only around 50 people exhibited any interest in the possibility of such a move. To my knowledge, this plan never matriculated; Opler, "Creek Indian Towns," p. 61; Box 12, Legislative Series, Elmer Thomas Collection, Carl Albert Center, University of Oklahoma;

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93. Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, *Annual Report*, 1932, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Center.

94. Despite the pessimistic assessments of government reports, Indian Bureau personnel, and the more integrated tribal members of the Five Civilized Tribes, to argue that the rural, mostly restricted members of the Cherokee, Chickasaw,

Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole tribes were on the brink of starvation is to exaggerate their condition. An overwhelming amount of evidence exists that contradicts this assessment. It might have appealed to the paternalistic instincts of those who were attempting to "help" these so-called, poor, hapless Indians, but the Indians themselves did not view themselves in this manner. Indeed, ambivalence, bemusement, resentment, and suspicion, better describes the reactions rural Indians had to not only government personnel, but to many of the more integrated members of their own tribes. Fink, "A Cherokee Notion," pp. 10, 36; Hewes, "Geography," pp. 1-3, 105b, 114, 120, 142; Hutchins, "Cherokee Country," p. 219; Box 3, George Nelson Collection; Folder 2, Madeline Czarina Conlan Collection; Box 5, "The Place of the Indian in Modern Society," American Indian Institute Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; *Indians At Work* 15 August 1936; 1 September 1936.

95. Fink, "A Cherokee Notion," pp. 10, 36; Hewes, "Geography," pp. 1-3, 105b, 114, 120, 142; Hutchins, "Cherokee Country," p. 219; Box 3, George Nelson Collection; Folder 2, Madeline Czarina Conlan Collection; Box 5, "The Place of the Indian in Modern Society," American Indian Institute Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (New York: Viking Press, 1939); *Indians At Work* 15 August 1936; 1 September 1936.

96. Fink, "A Cherokee Notion," pp. 10, 36; Hewes, "Geography," pp. 1-3, 105b, 114, 120, 142; Hutchins, "Cherokee Country," p. 219; Box 3, George Nelson Collection; Folder 2, Madeline Czarina Conlan Collection; Box 5, "The Place of the Indian in Modern Society," American Indian Institute Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; *Indians At Work* 15 August 1936; 1 September 1936.

97. Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, *Annual Report*, 1939; National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Center; E.W. Smith to Elmer Thomas May 5, 1932, Box 7, Legislative Series, Carl Albert Center, University of Oklahoma; "Why a Program," n.d., Box 236, E.E. Dale Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma. These land statistics were compiled in the late 1940s. Logic would have it that land ownership among restricted Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes was even higher during the 1930s as they would not have lost their land and then regained it a decade later. Felix S. Cohen, *Handbook of Federal Indian Law* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1942), pp. 425-446.

98. Family Health Survey Forms, 1938-1951; Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, *Annual Report*, 1939; National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Center.

99. Family Health Survey Forms, 1938-1951; Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, *Annual Report*, 1939; National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Center; E.W. Smith to Elmer Thomas May 5, 1932, Box 7, Legislative Series, Carl Albert Center, University of Oklahoma; "Why a Program," n.d., Box 236, E.E. Dale Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Felix S. Cohen, *Handbook of Federal Indian Law* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1942), pp. 425-446.

100. Interview 12059; Indian Pioneer Papers; Box 3, George Nelson Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, *Annual Report*, 1939-1940, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Center; Hewes, "Geography," pp. 172, 224-227, plate 25; Hutchins, "Cherokee Country," p. 219; Jordan, "Politics and Religion," p. 211; Southeastern Oklahoma Development Association, *A Social and Economic Survey*, pp. 36-40, 46, 48, 51, 56; Oklahoma State Planning Board, Preliminary Report, 1936, p. 37b; Merrill, "The Social and Economic Status of the Choctaw," pp. 48-69; Hall, "The Social and Economic Status of the Cherokee," pp. 41-97.

101. Box 433, American Indian File; Box 3, George Nelson Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, *Annual Report*, 1939-1940, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Center; Hewes, "Geography," pp. 172, 224-227, plate 25; Hutchins, "Cherokee Country," p. 219; Jordan, "Politics and Religion," p. 211; Southeastern Oklahoma Development Association, *A Social and Economic Survey*, pp. 36-40, 46, 48, 51, 56; Oklahoma State Planning Board, Preliminary Report, 1936, p. 37b; Merrill, "The Social and Economic Status of the Choctaw," pp. 48-69; Hall, "The Social and Economic Status of the Cherokee," pp. 41-97.

102. Box 3, George Nelson Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, *Annual Report*, 1939-1940, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Center; Hewes, "Geography," pp. 172, 224-227, plate 25; Jordan, "Politics and Religion," p. 211; Southeastern Oklahoma Development Association, *A Social and Economic Survey*, pp. 36-40, 46, 48, 51, 56; Oklahoma State Planning Board, Preliminary Report, 1936, p. 37b; Merrill, "The Social and Economic Status of the Choctaw," pp. 48-69; Hall, "The Social and Economic Status of the Cherokee," pp. 41-97.

103. Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, *Annual Report*, 1934; National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Center.

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Jordan, "Politics and Religion," p. 211; Southeastern Oklahoma Development Association, *A Social and Economic Survey*, pp. 36-40, 46, 48, 51, 56; Oklahoma State Planning Board, Preliminary Report, 1936, p. 37b; Merrill, "The Social and Economic Status of the Choctaw," pp. 48-69; Hall, "The Social and Economic Status of the Cherokee," pp. 41-97.

105. Moore, "The Social and Economic Status of the Seminole," pp. 62-106; Richard W. Chuculate, "Participation in Community Activities According to the Degree of Indian Blood of a Group of Indians Residing in Bunch Township, Adair County, Oklahoma," (Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1957), pp. 3-4, 112-150; Hewes, "Geography," p. plate 34.

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111. Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, *Annual Report*, 1932, 1939, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Center; Interview 13615; Interview 7366; Interview 6371; Interview 6172, Indian Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

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116. *Wewoka Times Democrat* 23 June 1937; 27 June 1937.

117. Debo, *And Still the Waters Run*, p. 58.

118. *Wewoka Times Democrat* 30 June 1937.

119. *Wewoka Times Democrat* 27 June 1937; 28 June 1937.

120. *Wewoka Times Democrat* 23 June 1937; 28 June 1937; 30 June 1937; 9 July 1937; 11 October 1937.

121. Hall, "The Socio-Economic Status," pp. 41-97; Debo, *Report*, p. 14; Oral interviews, T51, T536, T547, Doris Duke Collection; Interview 13206; Interview 6976; Interview 5898, Indian Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

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123. Interview 12850, Indian Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Hall, "The Status of the Cherokees," pp. 61-61; Chuculate, "Participation," pp. 4, 112, 153; Dorothy Milligan, *The Indian Way: The Cherokees* (Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1976), pp. 76-95; Mankiller and Wallis, *Mankiller*, pp. 34-36; Oral interviews, T210, T211, T251, Doris Duke Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

124. Witthoft, "Observations," pp. 204-205; Box 25.2, Angie Debo Papers, Oklahoma State University; Hewes, "The Land of the Cherokee," Leslie Hewes Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma. Sharlotte Neely, *Snowbird Cherokees: People of Persistence* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991), p. 35. Community and interdependence are cogently discussed in Conrad M. Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball, *Culture and Community* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1965; Karen Blu, *The Lumbee Problem: The Making of an American Indian People* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1984; Derek Gregory, Ron Martin, and Graham Smith, eds., *Human Geography: Society, Space, and Social Science* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994; Joan Weibel Orlando, *Indian Country: L.A.: Maintaining Ethnic Community in Complex Society* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991). Raymond D. Fogelson and Paul Kutsche, "Cherokee Economic Cooperatives: The Gadugi," in Symposium on Cherokee and Iroquois Culture, Bureau of American Ethnology, bulletin 180, no. 11, (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1961); Howard Tyner, "The Keetowah Society in Cherokee History," (Master's thesis, University of Tulsa, 1949), pp. 128-129.

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126. Interview 10407, Indian Pioneer Papers; Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

127. Dorothy Milligan, *The Indian Way: Creeks and Seminoles* (Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1976), p. 44; Mulligan, *The Indian Way: The Cherokees*, pp. 76, 81, 95; *Wewoka Times Democrat* 10 January 1936; 3 September 1937; Debo, *Survey*, pp. 1-9, 19, Box 229 E.E. Dale Collection; Interview T44; Interview T280; Interview T536; Interview T547, Doris Duke Collection; Interview 5207; Interview 5898; Interview 6366; Interview 6813; Interview 7465; Interview 10407; Interview 12850; Interview 13125, Indian Pioneer Papers; Box 11, Hampton Tucker Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

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129. Loretta Fowler, *Shared Symbols, Contested Meanings: Gros Ventre Culture and History, 1778-1984* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987); *Wewoka Times Democrat* 10 January 1936; 3 September 1937; Debo, *Survey*, pp. 1-9, 19, Box 229 E.E. Dale Collection; Interview T44; Interview T280; Interview T536; Interview T547, Doris Duke Collection; Interview 5207; Interview 5898; Interview 6366; Interview 6813; Interview 7465; Interview 12850; Interview 13125, Indian Pioneer Papers; Box 11, Hampton Tucker Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

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Chapter 4

A Trained Mind

As the Indian Bureau and the federal government sought to relieve the financial problems of the Five Civilized Tribes, they also directed their attention to Indian education. People who spearheaded Indian education reform in the 1930s, such as John Collier, W. Carson Ryan, Jr., and Willard W. Beatty, believed that many of the economic and social problems that burdened rural Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole Indian communities in Oklahoma resulted from lack of education. The Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, Adrian M. Landman, reasoned that a "sound body and a trained mind"offered these "disadvantaged" people an opportunity to improve their standard of living. The primary goal of Tepia F. Slater, an educational social worker for the Five Civilized Tribes Agency, was to rescue those people who had "grown up in the steps of their forefathers, in an environment which seems to have been lost in the wilderness, insofar as modern day genius, culture, and progress is concerned." Federal officials believed that education would prepare these predominantly rural, full-blood Indians to pursue farming and other occupations associated with the agricultural region in which they lived.[1]

Beginning with the appointment of Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier in 1933, the Indian Bureau pursued several strategies in its effort to better educate Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes. The Bureau particularly wanted to improve and increase educational opportunities for those Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and

Seminole children who lived in the more isolated, rural communities and settlements. Its goals were straightforward and, in a number of ways, innovative. First, it intended to make Indian education an "integrated part of the education program of Oklahoma."[2] That plan included more state-supported supervision and training for rural school teachers. It also entailed regular meetings between education field agents and teachers. Secondly, the Bureau hoped to increase the number of schools in rural areas so that all Indian children had access to schools. It did not, however, plan on dismantling the Indian boarding school system. Instead, Collier wanted to continue improvements undertaken during the previous administration of Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles J. Rhoads. That meant better food, hiring more qualified teachers, and gear boarding school curriculum even more toward vocational training. Moreover, Collier intended the boarding schools to serve only those children most in need and to play a more pivotal role in promoting Indian culture.[3]

In addition to these goals, the Indian Bureau intended to implement a "comprehensive student accounting system" that would allow educators to monitor Indians students into adulthood. By tracking the lives of former students, the Bureau believed that it could better evaluate both the positive and negative aspects of its Indian educational program and make improvements based upon those assessments. Lastly, Indian educators such as Ryan and Beatty, wanted to increase the number of Indian teachers working in Indian communities and allow Indians themselves to help implement and administer educational programs that best addressed their community and cultural needs. The Indian Bureau believed this would best be achieved through community-

based, Indian day schools that catered to both adults and children in the outlying rural areas.[4]

Although well intended, the ambitious program of education reform that the Indian Bureau embarked on in the 1930s encountered all sorts of problems. Similar to the difficulties experienced in the area of politics and economic reform, the continued inability of the Indian Service to foster change in isolated, predominantly full-blood Indian communities resulted from a cross-cultural misunderstanding between whites and these mostly culturally conservative Indians. Historically, government-designed programs of education and self-improvement had achieved higher rates of success among the more urbanized and integrated members of the Five Civilized Tribes. Many of those people lived in or near cities and towns where schools were either located or more readily accessible. In many respects, more integrated Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes in Oklahoma differed little from their white counterparts and utilized city, county, state, and federal services made available for their benefit. Rather than disassociate themselves from Anglo-American culture, these more assimilated Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes historically had embraced white society.[5]

The historical response of the more tradition-oriented Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles who inhabited the small rural settlements was the opposite. Many full bloods, in particular, remained resolute in their determination to disallow white cultural institutions such as schools to compromise the fundamental nature of their communities. Nonetheless, at the beginning of the 1930s, the Indians Bureau gave no indication that it had learned from its past failures in its effort to educate

the predominantly non-English speaking, restricted Indian, rural population. Although the Bureau revised its strategies, and refocused its efforts throughout the years of the Great Depression, it continued to misunderstand the people it tried to serve. This is not to argue that it did not make significant improvements in comparison to previous decades, but its attempts to help rural Indians were hampered by its inability to understand the Indians' background and circumstance. Although the Indian Bureau employed many fine people who were empathetic to Indian culture, people who were earnest in their desire to help Indians improve their lives, a degree of ethnocentrism continued to cloud its policies. And lastly, though the Indian Bureau hired more Indian teachers in hopes that they would better relate to Indian students, even that strategy was not as successful as hoped. It proved problematic, particularly when Indian teachers were not from the same tribe as the children they taught or the Indian teachers themselves viewed less-integrated Indian children as backward.[6]

Under John Collier's guidance, the Indian Bureau truly believed that it had the best interest of the Indians in mind, but it continually attempted to foster education reform upon people who, if not outright opposed to its efforts, were ambivalent at best. In the 1930s, the Bureau was not motivated by some calculated agenda designed to rob Indians of their culture, but many rural Indians viewed education as potentially disruptive of their communities for reasons that I will discuss later in this chapter. As a result, by 1940, federal Indian education programs designed to improve the lives of the Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes remained ambiguous and misdirected, achieving the inevitable mixed results.[7]

Since the dissolution of the governments of the Five Civilized Tribes in 1906, the federal government adhered to a two-dimensional approach to Indian education. The formal tribal schools fell under the jurisdiction of the Indian Bureau. In the decades leading up to the 1930s, the educational system of the Five Civilized Tribes underwent an extensive revision. In the case of the Cherokees, for example, their school system ended in 1913 when the federal government purchased the one remaining tribally run school. The government operated it as a school for restricted orphan children from all of the Five Civilized Tribes. The Creeks continued to finance two tribal schools until 1928 when the federal government assumed their economic support. The last Seminole school, Mekasukey, closed in 1930. Lastly, the federal government took over the financial responsibility of the remaining Chickasaw and Choctaw tribal schools in 1932.[8]

With the dissolution of the tribal schools, some children from the Five Civilized Tribes attended non-reservation boarding schools such as Chilocco located in Kay County. In the case of the Choctaws, tribal money helped pay for the tuition of those children who attended denominational and non-denominational schools under contract with the federal government. Those schools included Murray State School of Agriculture, Oklahoma Presbyterian College, Goodland Indian Orphanage, St. Agnes Mission, and St. Elizabeth's Boarding School. The Indian Bureau attempted to place the majority of the school-age children of the Five Civilized Tribes into the public schools of Oklahoma. To compensate the school districts for the cost of educating Indian children, the federal government paid tuition for those children possessing one-fourth or more Indian blood. This was done because restricted Indians did not pay taxes on their allotted lands. School

districts that possessed substantial Indian populations required financial assistance for the education of Indian children.[9]

From the latter part of the 19th century up to the *Meriam Report* in 1928, the approach that the federal government took in regard to Indian education remained wedded to the fundamental principle of acculturation or assimilation. It was modeled primarily on the Carlisle Indian School that Richard Henry Pratt had established in 1879. The goal of Indian education was to provide the means necessary for Native Americans to become "self-supporting producers instead of idle consumers and mischief makers."[10] Schools emphasized "practical work" to ensure that Indian youth succeeded in the labor market. Agriculture, home economics, and industrial education classes dominated school curriculum. Non-reservation boarding schools were at the vanguard of this movement to create industrious, "God-fearing Indian men and women."[11] Character development and the inculcation of moral values were fundamental to the education process.

When non-reservation schools came under attack in the early 1900s by such men as Commissioner of Indian Affairs William A. Jones and Francis E. Leupp, the Indian Bureau shifted its focus to public school education, reservation boarding schools, and day schools. Reformers such as Leupp believed that it was more practical to "carry civilization to the Indian" as opposed to carrying the Indian to civilization. Despite this shift in focus, however, the ultimate goal remained the same— to civilize the Indian. The purpose of public education for Indian children was clearly expressed by Commissioner of Indian Affairs Robert G. Valentine in 1912. He stated that the "acquiring of a practical

knowledge of conversational English and in the opportunities that are there afforded the Indians to learn and appreciate the better ways of the white man, the public schools are the trysting place in the winning of the race." Valentine believed public school education to be the "final step" for Indian education. And in one sense, men such as Valentine and others like him had reason to be optimistic. Indian enrollment in public schools in such places as Oklahoma increased yearly throughout the 1910s and 1920s.[12]

Despite the increase of Indians in public schools, enrollment statistics alone do not necessarily determine success in regard to Indian education. Enrollment, for example, indicated the number of children who signed up for school, but failed to measure the attendance rates of those children. Moreover, census figures from 1920 revealed that illiteracy rates remained high within the full-blood communities of the Five Civilized Tribes. Illiteracy rates among Creek full bloods ten years of age and older ran nearly 40 per cent. The rate among full-blood Seminoles was even higher, approaching 50 per cent. In addition, much of the education that Indians received at the boarding schools continued to be at the primary and elementary levels. The attainment of a high school education remained unrealistic for the majority of Native Americans. Indeed, only about 1 in 6 white Americans of school age attended public high schools in the 1920s. The rates among Indians was roughly 1 in 20.[13]

For those Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes living in remote, rural areas, access to a public elementary school much less a high school was very rare. It was apparent that the goals of Indian education were not being satisfactorily achieved within these communities. Yet educators remained positive in the 1920s, satisfied that their program

enabled Indians "to make greater progress than any other pagan race in a like period." The publication of the *Meriam Report* in 1928 revealed the gross inaccuracy of this conclusion.[14]

Under the direction of Dr. Lewis Meriam, the *Meriam Report* chronicled the failures of the federal government's Indian policy, including its approach to Indian education. The education section prepared by W. Carson Ryan, Jr., detailed numerous shortcomings, ranging from poorly trained teachers to the lack of "human empathy" exhibited toward Indians. Boarding schools, in particular, received poor evaluations. The report documented chronic problems in regard to nutrition and medical facilities. Ryan concluded that nutritional "provisions for the care of Indian children in boarding schools" remained substandard and "grossly inadequate." At a time when nutritionists recommended approximately thirty-five cents per day to provide sufficient food for a growing child, the average spent on Indian children in boarding schools was eleven cents.[15]

Coupled with substandard medical care, the conditions that Indian children endured in the boarding schools appeared inhumane. Run in a military fashion, even down to required military uniforms, the regimentation left the children with little time to themselves. When not in the classroom, they were required to serve as the labor force necessary to the daily operations of the boarding schools. The *Meriam Report* noted that the long hours the children worked possibly violated child labor laws. Reformers such as John Collier and the American Indian Defense Association used the report to pressure the government to revise its Indian education policy. Collier endorsed an independent Senate

investigation to examine further conditions among Native Americans in the United States. These investigations, which began in November1928 and continued until August1943, were published as a forty-one part report titled "*Survey of Conditions of the Indians in the United States.*" The reports bolstered belief among education reformers that significant changes were about to occur. In the spring of 1929, Charles J. Rhoads, former President of the Indian Rights Association, assumed the office of Commissioner of Indian Affairs to achieve this transformation. He was assisted by J. Henry Scattergood.[16]

This administration had its share of critics, but it represented a new era in Indian educational reform. The foundations it established provided the basis for John Collier's subsequent New Deal education policies. The primary goal of the Rhoads-Scattergood administration was to redirect Indian education to serve the cultural needs of Indian children. It placed emphasis on building a "true community school system," and encouraging further enrollment of Indian children in public schools. As a result of the administration's efforts, conditions in the boarding schools improved dramatically.[17]

The new educational strategy that the Indian Bureau initiated was admirable in terms of being sympathetic to Native American culture, but the fundamental approach to Indian education remained largely unchanged. Despite the significant improvements, substantial problems persisted. Foremost among those, was the perennial dilemma of determining mixed-blood and full-blood Indians. People such as W. Carson Ryan Jr., along with Willard W. Beatty, one of the two key architects of New Deal Indian educational reform during this period, viewed the Five Civilized Tribes as predominantly

mixed-blood, "largely acculturated" Indians. Even the substantial full-blood, non-integrated population of the Five Civilized Tribes were not considered to be "real Indians." The notion persisted that the Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes were somehow fundamentally different from other Indians in the country. The unspoken myth persisted that "real Indians" were those such as the Lakota Sioux or the Cheyenne; Indians imbedded in the country's collective, popular imagination who rode on horses and wore elaborate feathered headdresses or beaded and bone breast plates. In terms of those Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles who inhabited the rural communities of central and eastern Oklahoma, they did not fit the popular stereotype of how an Indian should appear. Thus, many whites mistakenly assumed that they had integrated into the mainstream of white culture and society.[18]

Despite Ryan's professed sensitivity to Indian culture, his goal was to offer vocational training to Native Americans in order to mold them into "model citizens." For the majority of the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles this meant teaching them rudimentary trade skills or equipping them with a fundamental knowledge of farming. And though development of community schools in predominantly Indian areas occupied a central place in Ryan's, as well as Collier's program, they would never replace the public school as the primary vehicle for Indian education. Despite the lip service given to cultural relativism, assimilation and acculturation remained the ultimate goal of the Indian Bureau throughout the 1930s; goals that ran counter to the cultural predisposition of many rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes.[19]

How regularly and how long Indian children attended school depended upon

several factors. Indian children whose upbringing mimicked that of their surrounding white neighbors, were far more likely to attend school. Those children raised in more culturally traditional Indian families remained ambivalent, at best, toward public education. At times, rural Indian parents were openly hostile toward the education of their children. More often, however, parents left it up to their children to decide whether or not they wanted to attend school. Some parents encouraged their sons and daughters to obtain an education. For example, a Chickasaw woman, Mickeo Stick, said that even though her grandmother who raised her spoke no English, she encouraged Mickeo to learn English. Nevertheless, even though Indian parents wanted their children to be successful, education was not something they forced upon their offspring. Indian children were not pressured to conform to any sort of standards that white society imposed. The resulting unwillingness of Indian children to obtain a formal education frustrated educators throughout the 1930s. Administrators and teachers proved no more successful in getting rural Indian children to attend school at the close of the decade than they had at the beginning of the decade.[20]

In the 1930s, the majority of Indians who lived in or around the small countryside settlements possessed little or no education. It was not unusual to encounter Indians who could not read or write English. Although that applied to many rural people of all races and ethnic groups in eastern Oklahoma during that period, it was even more pronounced among Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. The attitudes that adult Indians possessed in regard to education were passed along to their children. For example, in a Cherokee Nation survey conducted in 1930 among the rural population, it

was found that of the 2,569 families interviewed approximately one third of the respondents were unable to speak or read English. Sixteen hundred Cherokee children had never been in school or attended school sporadically. Of 752 Chickasaw families surveyed, 352 children had never been in school.[21]

A government survey conducted two years later in 1932, revealed that the total number of restricted Indian children enrolled in the twelfth grade from the Five Civilized Tribes ranged from a high of 23 among the Choctaws to a low of 6 among the Seminoles. The Cherokees had 20 restricted Indian children in the twelfth grade while there were 11 Creeks enrolled in the final year of high school. Even among non-restricted Indians, the figures were low. In 1932, there were 544 non-restricted Indian children enrolled in the 12th grade. These were startling statistics given the fact that around this time there were supposedly some 23,000 school-age Indian children in the Five Civilized Tribes.[22]

Indian Bureau reports also indicated that even when restricted Indian children attended school, the majority lagged behind in relation to the grade relative to their age group. In numerous instances, children fell behind five to seven years. It was not uncommon for a twelve year old child to attend first or second grade. In 1934 among the Seminoles, for example, out of a school-age population of 705, nearly 50 per cent of the children were in grades at least three years or more behind their respective age group. Throughout the 1930s, Indian children lagged far behind white counterparts in terms of both grades completed and grades attended in correlation to their particular age group.[23]

To encourage and increase school attendance of the Indian children of the Five Civilized Tribes, the federal government paid tuition to public schools in Oklahoma. This

funding went to rural public schools and schools in towns having less than five hundred people. In 1932, federal tuition applied to children having any degree of Indian blood. The Indian Bureau spent $320,471 for the public school education of children of the Five Civilized Tribes. This rankled both city and state officials in Oklahoma as well as white tax payers. Because the tuition was paid out for Indian children possessing any degree of Indian blood, critics argued that taxpayers and school districts shouldered too much of the financial responsibility. Oklahoma educators complained that the tuition payments were not enough to compensate school districts for the education of Indian children. To compound matters, public schools that operated in areas that contained a substantial number of restricted Indians derived no tax revenues from Indian land. Restricted Indian land was nontaxable. White tax payers argued that it was unfair to pay taxes for the education of Indian children whose parents paid no taxes.[24]

In addition, tuition payments were based upon enrollment and subsequent attendance. Because Indian children were far less likely to attend school than whites, it meant that schools received no tuition payments when Indian children were absent for extended periods of time or quit attending altogether. In 1931 in Adair County, for example, schools were in session an average of 172 days. The average number of days that Indian children attended school was ninety-four. The same situation existed in Cherokee County. Schools were in session 156.6 days of the year while Indian children attended, on average, 85.3 days. Seminole County had the worst Indian school attendance of all the counties of the Five Civilized Tribes. Seminole Indian children attended school, on average, 78 days of the year while the schools were in session for 178

days. Almost all schools located near Indian settlements lost money as the amount paid out by the government did not cover the cost of education. Critics argued that white students unfairly suffered as a consequence of living in districts with large Indian populations.[25]

Despite the fact that Oklahoma governor William Murray got legislative approval in 1933 that increased supplemental appropriations to fund public schools in Oklahoma, whites continued complaining that they had to bear the financial burden of maintaining public schools in predominantly Indian areas. To ease the financial burden, Congress passed the Johnson-O'Malley Act in 1934 that increased federal funding to states for the education of Indian children. The act required the states rather than individual school districts to sign contracts with the Indian Bureau, the agency responsible for Indian tuition reimbursement. And yet increases in aid to education did not solve the problem.[26]

In comparison to other schools and school districts around the state, many rural public schools in the Five Civilized Tribes region suffered from poor facilities, a lack of supplies, and under-trained teachers. Some schools were unable to maintain school for the full nine-month term. The overall quality of the education was far below that found in the more developed, financially healthier counties and school districts of Oklahoma. Willard Beatty, complained that it was impossible to keep track of federal funding once it reached the states. He suggested that some school districts mismanaged funds targeted for impoverished, rural schools. Beatty asserted that the Indian Bureau was unable to maintain an accurate account of how Oklahoma school districts spent money designated for Indian education.[27]

The financial burden that rural school districts faced was exacerbated by several other factors. School districts in Oklahoma derived their funding based upon the estimated wealth of each county and each district. Counties and districts generated tax revenue from land and property values, personal income, gross production, beverage and sales taxes, and public service properties such as railroads, telephone companies, pipe lines, and power and light companies. The underdeveloped, rural counties where many Indians lived generated the least tax revenue. Personal income and property values were far lower than in other counties of the state. Public utilities were few and gross production was limited. Indeed, many school districts in eastern Oklahoma possessed no public wealth. When non-taxable Indian lands were factored into the equation, it was not surprising that schools suffered and whites grew frustrated. Lastly, the economic problems that rural school districts faced were magnified considerably during the 1930s and the Great Depression.[28]

On the other hand, rural school districts took advantage of the federal government's tuition payments for Indian children. Because tuition payments were based strictly upon enrollment and attendance numbers, school districts often exaggerated those numbers for their own benefit. School districts inflated Indian children enrollment numbers and attendance rates to increase federal funding. The more Indians they enrolled, the more money they gained. But as previously noted, enrollment did not mean attendance. Although school districts were conscientious about enrolling Indian children, they made little effort to ensure that Indian children remained in school. Nonetheless, schools continued to embellish the attendance rates of Indians in order to gain from the

government's largesse. This practice of overstating enrollment and attendance went largely unreported to agencies such as the Indian Bureau that often relied on statistics to measure improvements and success. Whether inflated or completely inaccurate, the federal government used enrollment reports to highlight the accomplishments of various New Deal Indian education programs. High enrollment rates were good for publicity. They demonstrated to the public that the effort to civilize Indians was progressing smoothly. That, however, was not entirely accurate.[29]

In 1934, school enumeration statistics indicated that 21,882 school-age children among the Five Civilized Tribes were enrolled in either public schools, special Indian day schools, or government boarding schools. Only 720 children attended the boarding schools. Their numbers were spread fairly evenly among Carter Seminary, Euchee and Eufaula Boarding Schools, and Jones and Wheelock Academies. Chilocco School accounted for an additional 525 children. The Five Civilized Tribes Agency operated 10 Indian day schools during that same year. The special day schools, located in rural communities, served approximately 256 children among the Five Civilized Tribes. The Cherokees had the highest number of children in those schools with 153 in attendance. The Seminoles had no children in day schools, while the Creeks had only 9 children enrolled.[30]

Records revealed in 1934 that the majority of children among the Five Civilized Tribes attended public schools. But statistics do not tell the whole story. In the rural areas of the Five Civilized Tribes region, Indian children attended public schools sporadically. This was true for rural white children as well, but their absence rates were not nearly as

high as those of Indian children. Even the number of restricted Indian children who expressed interest in the special Indian day schools remained small. Over the course of the 1930s, this ambivalence and outright disinterest in education continued.[31]

In 1938, for example, only 11,513 children among the Five Civilized Tribes attended some type of school. Federal statistics illustrated that attendance had fallen dramatically since the enumeration of 21,882 Indian children in 1934. A shocking 48 percent decrease took place over the course of four years. This astounding decline, however, was the result of several factors. Indian census records among the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles, be they population or school enumeration statistics, proved highly unreliable. For example, 21,882 was the precise number derived in the 1936 school census conducted among the Five Civilized Tribes. It seems highly improbable that the numbers would remain exactly the same. Field agents often failed to undertake a comprehensive census either because of laziness or incompetence. They refused to travel to isolated areas where many rural, less integrated Indians lived. Although those individuals certainly remained in the minority, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs Annual Reports published in the 1930s, make numerous references regarding lazy and incompetent field agents.[32]

Moreover, unless an individual was familiar with the territory, some of the settlements were difficult to locate. In addition, many Indians refused to speak to representatives from the government or, when they did, they provided erroneous information. The Indians who inhabited the rural enclaves were very suspicious of outsiders and reticent about revealing too much about themselves. In order to satisfy

strangers, they oftentimes told people what they believed those people wanted to hear. Their disingenuousness was not the result of maliciousness on their part, but rather a strategy they used to compel outsiders to leave them alone. Researchers who did field work among the Five Civilized Tribes in the 1930s such as the anthropologist Morris Opler and the geographer Leslie Hewes corroborated the fact that some rural Indians held information back or responded less than honestly in order to be polite. The practice of keeping certain things hidden from outsiders was still being noted by researchers decades after the 1930s.[33]

One seriously doubts if such a drastic drop in enrollment took place. Nonetheless, attendance decreased during the 1930s. Faulty enumeration and the incompetent work of education field workers muddled the census of Indian school children. But the precipitous decline in enrollment also resulted from the fact that enumerations in the early 1930s counted all children possessing any degree of Indian blood as Indian. Later enumerations focused on Indian children possessing more than one-fourth Indian blood. When blood quantum was taken into consideration, the numbers dropped considerably. Although blood quantum certainly does not determine behavior, the majority of those children possessing less than one-fourth Indian blood could hardly be considered "culturally" Indian. Most of those children were culturally white. That is, their parents had long ago assimilated into the culture of their white Oklahoma neighbors. Many tradition-minded Indians, most of whom were of the restricted class, were highly suspicious of the majority of mixed-blood Indians and were inclined to consider the mixed-bloods more white than Indian.[34]

At the same time, most Indian children who resided in isolated, rural areas, possessed at least one-half or more Indian blood. The majority of those children were raised by parents who clung to the traditions of their tribal cultures. Thus, for Indian children living in these cloistered communities, the enrollment and attendance rates declined even more throughout the 1930s. For example, among Cherokee children possessing one-half or more Indian blood, 83 attended 9th grade in 1934-1935. In comparison, 813 Cherokee children possessing one-sixteenth or less of Indian blood attended 9th grade that same year.[35]

Two years later, in 1937, A.M. Landman, the Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, reported that at least half of the children of the Five Civilized Tribes attended sporadically or were out of school completely. The Superintendent's report in 1938, indicated that 6,875 Indian children possessing one-fourth or more Indian blood attended public schools in Oklahoma. But 1939 reports determined that enrollment had declined even further. For example, in Craig, Delaware, and Mayes Counties, 1500 Cherokee children were enrolled in public schools. This was down from 3,130 enrolled in 1935. In Adair, Cherokee, and Sequoyah Counties enrollment of Cherokee children had decreased from 4,087 in 1935 to 2, 744 in 1939. In the district that contained Okfuskee and Okmulgee Counties, enrollment of Creek children had dropped from 1270 in 1934 to 823 students in 1939. Choctaw County reported 329 children in school in 1939 compared to the 577 Choctaw children who attended public school in 1935. Pushmataha County, however, showed an increase in enrollment. In that county, Indian children attending public schools went from 313 in 1935 to 344 in 1939. Overall, however, that county was

an anomaly. Even taking into account faulty enumerations practices, it was apparent that education rates among rural Indian children dropped as the decade progressed.[36]

One might argue that Indian children stayed home in increasing numbers because of the economic circumstances created by the Great Depression. The same case could be made for Indians as it was for rural, white children–that they were needed around the farm because their farming parents were compelled to work harder during tough times in order to achieve the same results accomplished under less onerous conditions. But the fact was that the majority of rural, less integrated Indians did not farm for a living. Even when they did farm, they did not practice extensive, market farming. Because of that, rural Indians did not devote their time or energy to farming to the same degree as white farmers in the Five Civilized Tribes region.

Perhaps more problematic, is that the data indicated that Indian interest in education had deteriorated over time despite the efforts of the federal government. This was during a decade when the Indian Bureau believed that it had successfully reoriented its education program to better serve Native Americans. Moreover, the drop in Indian enrollment revealed that continued attempts to assimilate the Indians, contrary to John Collier's emphasis on empathy for Indian culture, remained the primary reason that rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes resisted Anglo-influenced education. Too few schools, inadequate school facilities, and insensitive and undertrained teachers either hindered or disallowed completely the education of rural Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole children. Combined with cultural predispositions on the part of both whites and Indians, these factors conspired to undermine Indian education.

Indeed, the cultural predispositions and differences proved difficult, if not impossible, to overcome. This dilemma was demonstrated most clearly in the public school and boarding school experiences of many Indian children.[37]

The most obvious reason for low public school attendance rates among rural Indian children of the Five Civilized Tribes resulted from the fact that in many rural areas, public schools either did not exist or were situated considerable distances from Indian homes. A 1930 survey conducted among restricted Indian families of the five tribes found that a high percentage of the families lived over one mile from a public school. For example, among 3,687 school-age Choctaw children, 40 per cent lived from one to seven miles from a public school. Frank Melvin, a Choctaw, remembered having to ride a horse 8 miles to high school. A study undertaken among 100 Creek families in the mid-1930s uncovered similar demographics. It revealed that the majority of the families lived approximately 2 miles or more from a public school. In fact, nearly one half of the families lived from 5 to 15 miles from a school. Among 2,572 school-age Cherokee children, slightly over 60 per cent of the children lived from one to five miles from a school. It was reported that approximately 1,600 of those Cherokee children either never attended or attended school only occasionally.[38]

Although one mile is not a considerable distance, these underdeveloped regions lacked adequate roads and transportation such as school busses. Moreover, numerous families lived further than one mile from schools. The majority of rural Indian families did not own horses or wagons much less automobiles. In many of the areas where these families lived, late fall, winter, and early spring weather conditions made it virtually

impossible for people on foot to travel long distances. Rains caused flooding and rendered some streams and creeks impassible. Cold temperatures also conspired to keep children home.[39]

To compound education efforts, most of the one and two-room schools had inadequate facilities. Many were in need of repair and lacked books. Nine of the rural school districts in Pittsburgh County, where numerous Choctaw children resided, had no library books. Sewage and water systems were below standard. In addition, the rural school districts where the majority of less integrated Indian children lived possessed poorly trained teachers. During certain years in Oklahoma, as many as 75 per cent of those who took the 8th grade teacher certification test, failed. LeFlore, another county with a substantial Choctaw population, had few accredited rural schools. In the entire county in 1938, only 12 per cent of the teachers held bachelor's degrees. In Bryan County in 1937, the average number of college hours for rural teachers fell 35 hours short of the hours required for a bachelor's degree. In terms of education expenditure, Leflore County ranked 68 out of the 77 counties in Oklahoma. In fact, throughout the 1930s, thirteen counties in the Five Civilized Tribes region had the "lowest wealth per pupil" in Oklahoma.[40]

A study undertaken in 1933 showed that the poorest districts in Seminole County were those that contained the largest concentrations of Seminole Indians. In 1936, Pontotoc County ranked 52nd in Oklahoma in its ability to support public education. This county faired fourth best among the Five Civilized Tribes area. And yet even in that county, five out of the eight school districts containing the highest percentage of

Chickasaw children ranked in the bottom third of expenditures per pupil. Not only did distance keep Indian children out of school, but the schools that serviced the areas in which they lived were substandard in terms of facilities, teacher training, and funding.[41]

Other factors, however, played an even larger role in alienating Indian children from the educational process. Public school teaching methods differed dramatically from learning techniques that more traditional Indian parents utilized. Less integrated Indian families followed an entirely different form of "cognitive learning." In rural, tradition-oriented communities of the Five Civilized Tribes, young children learned from observation. A Cherokee full-blood woman said that instead of being "taught" children "caught" knowledge.[42] They learned from examining and then copying the behavior and skills of their parents, older siblings, relatives, and other members of the community. A high degree of latitude was extended to children– freedom to discover their "sense of self" and to learn from their mistakes. They "assimilated" information on their own time to help them comprehend how they "fit into the world." If they had difficulty understanding something, they were not reprimanded, ridiculed or punished, but rather allowed to try again.[43]

Rural Indian parents emphasized "positive reinforcement" and "kindness." Guidance that adults provided often came in the form of an opinion about the best way to undertake a specific task. Instructions were not communicated as outright orders. Lessons were conveyed through analogies or parables. Even when children did something wrong, they were praised for trying. At worst, they were playfully teased by other Indian children. There existed no "punishment-reward dynamic" between parents and children.

Learning was a slow process, not something to be rushed. As a result of this educational approach, rural Indian children gained self-confidence at a very early age.[44]

This method of learning differed from that practiced in public schools. The demands on students in public schools to be punctual and orderly clashed with the more flexible and less rigid approach to time and living that many of the rural Indians embraced. The Indian children had problems adjusting to bells, clocks, and schedules. Moreover, they were expected to speak English and many of them either spoke it poorly or not at all. A study undertaken in 1932 involving Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole full-blood children concluded that the Seminoles, in particular, were "very loyal to their tongue." This held true, however, for most rural Indian children. In fact, Indians found that some English words had no counterparts in their native languages. The definitions made no sense. Their inability to understand English and the meanings of certain words often drew the criticism of teachers and the mockery of fellow white students. Explicit disapproval or blatant disparagement clashed with the Indian concept of restraint. Overt criticism and ridicule were frowned upon within the tribal cultures and the communities where the children lived. Instead of condemnation of others, rural Indians sought "balance" through the good will extended to one another. Among the Cherokees, for example, the "harmony ethic" determined group and individual behavior. That is, people avoided conflict to preserve group harmony. When teachers demanded students stand up in class and show their proficiency, this violated the "privacy" of the Cherokee student. Indian children believed that the teacher was purposely attempting to humiliate them in front of their classmates.[45]

Frank Melvin, a Choctaw, recalled that it was "proper to be quiet in the presence of others." He remembered that his teacher frightened him when she expected him to recite answers out loud and that he was afraid of the "ridicule" of his fellow students.[46] This style of learning focused too much attention on the individual and shamed the Indian children. Within the rural Indian communities, an ostentatious or conspicuous display of one's skills were not looked upon kindly. It was considered ill-mannered to blurt out answers to questions or continually to ask questions. The direct staring of teachers and white students compounded the problem because among rural Indians staring was considered rude.[47]

Moreover, teachers who became angry at the failure of the Indian students to learn things quickly, again breached the code of what was considered proper conduct. "Antagonistic" teachers concluded that the Indian children were "dumb" or being "stubborn" on purpose. The Supervisor of Indian Education for the Civilized Tribes reported that this was a persistent problem. It alienated Indian children. All of these factors placed an inordinate amount of pressure on the Indian student. Withdrawal from the group because of the dissatisfaction with the group's behavior became the response of Indian children.[48]

In addition to foreign or unnatural methods of learning, Indian students also faced discrimination. Some administrators, teachers, and fellow students believed that Indian children were dirty and carried diseases. They believed that Indian poverty resulted from mental deficiency. School districts found it difficult to employ "suitable" teachers who were unprejudiced toward Indians. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs stressed the need

to "do away" with teachers who relied on "crude methods of discipline."[49] White students oftentimes avoided Indians in both the class room and on the playground. Indian students also faced ridicule from white students because of their advanced age. Children from the Five Civilized Tribes, on average, were from three to four years behind the grades for their specific age groups. It was not uncommon to find twelve, thirteen, and fourteen year old Indian children in the third grade. In some extreme cases, children as old as 14 were still in the first grade. Jasper Smith, a Cherokee, recalled that he was 16 when he was in the third grade. These factors combined to alienate Indian students from white students. One study involving Choctaw children showed that as Indian children advanced through the grades the amount of derision on the part of whites increased until by the fifth or sixth grade it appeared to be firmly entrenched.[50]

As a result of maltreatment by both teachers and white students, Indian parents did not hesitate to pull their children out of public schools. This was certainly the case among rural Creek families in the late 1930s. Retention rates for Creek children were poor. Because of cultural and language problems, Creek parents felt disconnected from the public schools. They did not attend school functions and placed no pressure on their children to remain in school. In fact, many Indian parents believed that they were "losing their child" if they continued in school.[51]

At the same time, rural Indian children understood that the longer they remained in school, the likelier they were to acquire the cultural traits and habits of whites which would alienate them from their parents. For example, they oftentimes felt ashamed that they were learning to speak English because they understood that their parents did not

speak English. They thought that would humiliate their mothers and fathers. The more years they spent in school increased the chance that they would separate themselves from their home settlements. Jimmie Harjo, a Seminole and a member of Nuyaka Town, said that schools were just another means by which whites attempted to separate Seminoles from their "culture and traditional ways." He said that he had been admonished by his elders to be suspicious of whites. Harjo believed that schools sought to "break the community ties and sense of Seminole togetherness."[52] Because of these factors, Indian children felt obligated to respect the wishes of their parents and to preserve the harmony of the community.[53]

As a result of these inherent problems, a high percentage of Indian children from rural Indian communities quit attending school. The drop-out rate increased as the students grew older. For example, out of 1,480 school-age Cherokee children in 1935, Only 186 attended school beyond the fourth grade. Only 77 of those possessing three-fourths Indian blood or more attended school beyond the sixth grade. In fact, out of 29 Cherokee children attending sixth-grade in 1935, 10 of them were from 15-19 years of age. There were only 6 Cherokee children in Adair County in 1935 who were attending high school. In Cherokee County, the average number of days that school was session in 1932 was one hundred fifty six. Indian children attended school, on average, only 85 days.[54]

Full-blood Choctaw children in McCurtain County exhibited this same reluctance to attend school, missing almost half of the days that school was in session. Creek full-blood children also attended public schools only fifty percent of the time in McIntosh

County. Seminole children were also far less likely than their white counterparts to attend public school on a regular basis. A 1939 study reported that out of 151 school age children, only 95 attended school. Out of the 95, only 12 had gone beyond the 8th grade. This mimicked their parents, of whom only 13 percent had finished high school. Rural Indian children simply did not attend public schools in great numbers or for extended periods of time.[55]

Administrators and teachers, however, made very little effort to improve the attendance of Indian children. Even in districts that had "attendance officers" the percentage of rural Indian children not in school remained high. This was problematic because school attendance was important in terms of the goals of the Indian Bureau. Regular and prolonged attendance was necessary to assimilate more tradition-oriented Indian children. Because education is one of the chief vehicles for engendering social change, Indian grade attainment and the attitudes that rural Indians held toward education reflected how thoroughly they embraced assimilation. Evidence indicated that the rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes were antagonistic to the education process. The more that white-controlled school districts and white teachers attempted to acculturate Indians through, what the Indians perceived as, coercion, the more the Indians resisted. Assimilation was not something rural Indians desired. Although other factors such as availability of schools and how much parents required the help of children around the home or farm impacted the degree to which rural children, regardless of race, attended school, I believe cultural factors far outweighed any other influences in the rural Indian communities.[56]

Evidence of rural Indian resistance toward education was revealed in two more recent studies. In 1971, a research project showed that few, if any, more tradition-oriented Cherokee children spoke English at the time they entered first grade. A study undertaken in 1983 found that the median educational level among restricted, predominantly full-blood Cherokees in 1930 was three years. Forty years later, the median education level had only risen to five and one half years! It was apparent that public school education in the 1930s was not realizing the goals that people like John Collier had envisioned when he took charge of the Indian Bureau in the first part of the decade. Social assimilation of rural Cherokees, Chickasaw, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles was not occurring. More tradition-minded members of the Five Civilized Tribes viewed education as another means by which outsiders sought to fragment the social and cultural integrity of their Indian communities.[57]

The problem of cultural differences between whites and Indians, and the more general problems surrounding Indian education in Oklahoma in the 1930s, was demonstrated further in the boarding school experiences of the children of Indian families in the Five Civilized Tribes region. The boarding schools that served children of the Five Civilized Tribes functioned as both schools and orphanages. They educated predominantly Indian students possessing one half or more Indian blood. From 1930 onward, all the tribes in question had their own boarding schools, except for the Seminole. Although the schools catered to specific tribes, some also admitted children from the other Five Civilized Tribes. The schools consisted of Carter Seminary, originally known as Bloomfield Academy, Chilocco Indian Agricultural School, the

Euchee Indian Boarding School, Eufaula Indian Boarding School, Jones Academy, the Sequoyah Orphan Training School, and Wheelock Academy. The tribes owned five of the boarding schools, but the federal government assumed the cost of maintenance. The government owned outright, however, Chilocco and the Sequoyah Orphan Training School. Carter, Eufaula, and Wheelock were restricted to girls while Euchee administered exclusively to boys.[58]

In 1934, approximately 1,950 children from the Five Civilized Tribes attended these schools with Chilocco housing the most students. The Cherokee had the highest enrollment with 852 students. In comparison, only 21 Seminole children attended the boarding schools. Sequoyah served mostly the Cherokee. Carter provided education to the highest number of Chickasaw. The majority of Choctaw children in boarding schools went to either Jones or Wheelock, while Euchee and Eufaula enrolled predominantly Creek children. Despite the efforts of the government to reduce the number of children in Indian boarding schools in the aftermath of the *Meriam Report*, enrollment for 1934 exceeded enrollment in 1928 by approximately five hundred. [59]

Five other government-administered boarding schools within Oklahoma that catered to Native Americans. These included the Cheyenne and Arapaho, the Fort Sill, the Pawnee, the Riverside, and the Seneca boarding schools. A very small number of children from the Five Civilized Tribes attended the schools. In 1934, the total number of children enrolled in all five of the schools consisted of 178 Cherokees, 1 Chickasaw, 1 Choctaw, 10 Creeks, and 1 Seminole. In addition, various religious groups maintained denominational contract schools that housed Indian students. These schools received

tuition payments from the federal government for the education of Indians. They included St. Elizabeth's Boarding School, St. Agnes Academy, St. Agnes Mission, St. Joseph's Boarding School, Old Goodland Indian Industrial School, Murray State College, Oklahoma Presbyterian College for Girls, Nuyaka Boarding School, and Bacone College. The Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church also maintained the Folsom Training School which had a co-ed enrollment. This school was started in 1921, but it closed down in 1933. Children from all five of the Civilized Tribes attended this school.[60]

Indian children qualified for boarding schools based on various criteria. Many were admitted because they lacked adequate educational facilities in their respective communities. Schools were non-existent, too far from their homes, or had proved to be unfriendly environments for Indian children. Some children qualified because they were orphans, or from what authorities considered to be dysfunctional households, or because their parents were invalids or chronically ill parents. Other children attended the boarding schools in hopes of continuing a family tradition. They followed in the footsteps of relatives who had been boarding school graduates. Charlie, a Cherokee, and Edward, a Creek, both expressed this reason for attending Chilocco. Some impoverished parents sent their children to these institutions because of their inability to feed or clothe them adequately.[61]

A number of parents preferred boarding schools over public schools because they catered strictly to Indians. Parents believed that the schools provided a better, less stressful learning environment, free from the bullying and caustic remarks of white

children. Other parents, still bitter about the dissolution of their tribal governments, believed that it was the federal government's obligation to pay for the education of their children.[62]

Lastly, some children were forced to attend the boarding schools because educators determined that these children had suffered from neglect. Social workers and education field agents reported that some Indians were unfit or unqualified to be parents. They recommended that it was in the best interest of the children to be removed from such environments. Yet one has to be careful how the word neglect is defined or utilized. In some situations, for example, it certainly pertained especially when applied to such things as habitual alcohol abuse. But in other cases neglect to government officials often meant that parents did not force their children to attend school, thus they were unfit parents. In other instances it meant that parents did not force their children to speak English or that the families still adhered to traditional Indian customs that government personnel found backward and detrimental to the development of the children. No matter the reason, the enrollment in the boarding schools throughout the 1930s often exceeded capacity although the number of full blood children declined as the decade progressed.[63]

Despite the fact that the Indian Bureau sought to incorporate a more culturally-sensitive curriculum into the boarding schools during the 1930s, the boarding schools continued to emphasize a practical education for Indian students; an education that would allow Indian children to function in white society. As John Collier stated in1934, he wanted Indians "to become socially assimilated."[64] A graduate of Goodland reaffirmed this goal stating that education was essential "to help the Indian boys and girls

to a higher plane of living."[65] To help them achieve this successful transformation from uncivilized Indian to rural, middle class citizen, the course of study for boys focused primarily on agricultural and vocational skills while home economics and domestic science curriculum dominated much of the education of girls. Educators believed that this pragmatic approach best served boarding-school students of the Five Civilized Tribes. The schools sought to graduate young farmers, semi-skilled or skilled laborers, and rural home makers inculcated with Christian values and the Puritan work ethic.[66]

The strict discipline, regimentation, and rigid codes of behavior that defined boarding schools in the 1920s continued to characterize these institutions in the 1930s. Students were not accorded a large degree of personal freedom. They were closely monitored from the time they got up in the morning until they went to bed in the evening. One critic went so far as to describe the boarding school experience "as an institutional training ground for the subservience of the colonized."[67] Health and nutrition, on the other hand, improved substantially over previous years. Students enjoyed a more balanced diet, but what fruits and vegetables the students consumed, they largely grew themselves. An effort was also made during the 1930s to staff the boarding schools with better trained and more qualified teachers. Despite, however, the pledge of educators to emphasize a curriculum more "sensitive to Native cultural heritage" this was more lip-service than reality. The two men who headed the Indian Bureau education program in the 1930s, W. Carson Ryan, Jr. and Willard W. Beatty, were certainly better than their predecessors because of their empathy for Indian culture, but according to numerous students who attended the schools, basic problems remained. They recalled, in particular,

the hurt they felt when their Indian traits and qualities were disparaged.[68]

Despite Ryan and Beatty's empathy, many educators still viewed Indians as heathens. Christian values continued to be forced upon oftentimes reluctant Native American children. Full-blood Creek children, in particular, chafed at being compelled to embrace Christianity. Protestant hymns reinforced negative stereotypes. One such hymn contained the verse "let the Indian and the Negro, let the rude barbarian hear, of the glories of the kingdom." These value-laden songs remained an integral part of the boarding school experience. Some teachers became infuriated if children hesitated in singing along. To some of the more religious personnel employed at the boarding schools, progressive education advocates such as John Collier remained in "league with the Devil." They believed that men like Collier encouraged Indians to continue their traditional religious practices. Religious reformers considered these practices barbaric and blasphemous.[69]

Molding Indian children into morally upright, Christianized citizens continued to occupy the attention of school administrators. In conjunction with this, proper speaking and manners were constantly stressed. Indian children caught speaking their native languages were punished. Educators sought to replace superstition and Native American shibboleths with a more logical and rational understanding of the modern world. Even some Indian leaders themselves, such as the Choctaw leader Ben Dwight, believed that it was necessary for Indian children to assimilate into white society. And yet assimilation remained at odds with the goals of Indian Bureau educators such as Beatty who stated that Indian education should be "concerned with perfecting the native way of life." The

immersion of Indian students in Christian doctrine combined with the daily work routines at the boarding schools were contrary, however, to this ambiguous ideal.[70]

In most of the boarding schools, the "half day policy" or the "three quarter plan" remained in effect. In theory, students' days were supposed to be divided evenly between classroom activities and work experience or vocational training. This meant that students attended classes in the morning then spent the other part of the day learning vocations and working in the fields. Chilocco allotted time for art, music, and physical education as well. But in practice, students spent an inordinate amount of time either engaged in vocational work or laboring to maintain the school facilities. Students toiled long hours planting and harvesting crops, running dairies, canning and preserving food, laundering clothes, and cleaning school facilities. Discipline and character building underscored the regimen.[71]

School authorities utilized a high degree of surveillance to ensure that students followed protocol. An extreme example of this regimentation was revealed by the fact that at some schools the menstrual cycles of girls were meticulously documented. Boarding school personnel constantly emphasized cleanliness and orderliness, stressing that a "man's or woman's work was never done." Vocational work was geared to teach the Indians the value of time and to complete tasks in an accurate and efficacious manner. The 1934 Chilocco school report stated that Indians needed to be taught "social efficiency" in order to overcome their natural timidity and shyness.[72]

For girls at the boarding schools, emphasis was placed on proper dress and comportment. Winona, a Cherokee woman, recalled that matrons harped on girls to

maintain a well-groomed appearance. Much of the classroom work entailed domestic training. These domestic standards were based upon what supposedly constituted a comfortable, respectable, middle-class home. For women at Eufaula Boarding School, their training included cooking, canning, interior decoration, sewing and "all household arts that will better fit us to care for our homes, our bodies, and our health." Carter Seminary also tried to prepare Indian women to become good homemakers. The goal was to have the homes of Indian women "typify, as nearly as possible, the ideal American home."[73]

The boarding schools wanted to reshape the Indian homes using the Indian women as the progenitors of Anglo values based upon the time-honored "cult of domesticity." For those young women who came from more tradition-oriented, rural Indian communities this goal appeared absurd. Dora Flickinger stated that each year of study entailed more advanced training in the domestic arts which ultimately included how to behave as hostesses, have tea parties, design invitations, and construct Christmas ornaments. Practical work in school nurseries tending to the children of employees was designed to teach the young Indian women how to be dutiful mothers. Female students sold poultry and worked in the Faculty Club as well. Girls also gained experience living in a "model home" near Chilocco. They lived there day and night for brief periods in order to gain practical experience in running a modern home. In addition, students worked in the homes of school employees. They derived not only extra income from this work experience, but were educated on the finer points of homemaking. The ultimate goal of the education of the young women was to "help them achieve an appreciation,

creation, and interpretation of beauty, and the development of good taste."[74]

And yet this domestic instruction encompassed a great deal of irony. Most of these women would not go on to become middle-class house wives. In fact, much of this instruction prepared Indian girls to work as domestic servants either in the boarding schools themselves or in the homes of white people. The strict regimentation and focus of this domestic education caused many Indian women from more traditional backgrounds to quit. They resented the fact that the boarding schools tried to eradicate the values that had been instilled in them by their "parents, grandparents, and tribal culture." It appeared that many boarding school personnel viewed the Indian women in terms of gross stereotypes that cast the women as "the unclean, work-burdened, sexually promiscuous squaw drudge." As one matron told June Lee, a Seminole woman, "she did not like to see lazy Indians."[75]

At the same time, the image of the lazy Indian contrasted with the other historical stereotype of the "Indian princess." These so-called Indian princesses were portrayed as "super civilized Indian" women. Examples of the "princess" model in Oklahoma during this period were Princess Tsianina, a Cherokee-Creek mezzo soprano who had gained some fame for singing opera and "Indian songs" and Princess Pakanli, the "Chickasaw Nightingale" who sang on the radio throughout the 1930s. The young women at the boarding schools found themselves trapped between these two prevailing female Indian caricatures with the exemplar of the white, middle class, female homemaker as the model to be achieved. [76]

For the young Indian men who attended the boarding schools, regimentation also

defined their daily schedules. Similar to the women, the boys received instruction aimed at preparing them to become industrious, productive, and responsible citizens. Given the rural nature of much of Oklahoma, male students spent much of their time learning skills that prepared them to become market-oriented farmers or wage laborers. As Patrick Hurley stated in 1931, Indians needed to become "good patriots" and acquire the "acquisitiveness of the white race." He said the Indians needed to understand the importance of property. [77]

At Chilocco, in addition to math, reading, and writing, young boys worked in the print shop, stock and dairy barns, the poultry plant, and in the wheat and corn fields. Other vocational training included baking, barbering, carpentry, cooking, dry cleaning, electrical work, masonry, painting, plumbing, power plant operation, printing, and steam fitting. Young men also learned how to run a dormitory and manage a dining room. In addition, at some schools, young men had the option of taking homemaking classes. Complimenting this instruction were lessons in proper table manners, correct eating habits, and what was euphemistically called "self-improvement." The men also attended an occasional music appreciation hour to learn what constituted "fine" music. Undoubtedly, this did not include any form of Native American music. Auto and farm mechanics rounded out the vocational curriculum. At Euchee, young Creek males spent much of their non-classroom hours learning farm skills. They were taught how to set fence posts, oil and mend harnesses, nail horseshoes, and plant and prune trees. They also tended a large flock of leghorn chickens. As the Great Depression worsened, Chilocco dropped such subjects as math and American history and concentrated on even

more vocational training. And the standard academic courses that remained were designed to be integrated with predominantly agricultural training.[78]

Both boys and girls at the boarding schools were involved in a number of extra-curricular activities. There existed art, extemporaneous speaking, glee, home economic, and 4-H clubs in addition to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Students participated in honor and literary societies and sang and played in choirs and orchestras. At schools such as Chilocco, religious organizations provided outlets for students. Baptists, Catholics, Methodists, and Presbyterians all had organized clubs such as the Baptist Young Peoples' Union and the Methodist Epworth League. Euchee Boarding School had a program whereby the young Indian men participated in nearby Sapulpa High School musical programs. These extra-curricular activities complemented classroom curriculum and vocational training all aimed at molding Indian youth into model Americans.[79]

Efforts were even made to bring the boarding school experience to remote Indian communities. In 1934 and 1935, boarding school teachers volunteered to teach summer school in seventeen different Indian settlements. They were conducted in order to "make better contact between boarding schools and the Indian pupils in their home environment." Some of these ad hoc summer schools conducted normal classes offering instruction in traditional subjects such as reading, math, and writing. Others focused more on vocational training and the teaching of arts and crafts. At some schools, the instructors themselves were Indians, which resulted in more children and adults attending.[80]

Much of what took place depended upon the initiative of the individual teachers.

One woman teacher devoted her time solely to adult Indian women. The women spent their days mending old clothing as well as making new garments out of discarded army surplus clothing. Another teacher supervised the construction of a community house. And yet another summer school project involved no learning at all. Children spent their summer repairing the dilapidated buildings and landscaping the grounds of a rural school. Other projects included re-shingling houses, repairing furniture, constructing chicken coops, and hosting communal lunches. Teachers and education field agents with the cooperation of doctors and nurses also conducted classes on health and hygiene. Although in some instances these summer programs benefitted the communities and individuals they attempted to aid, overall the projects offered only temporary help. In addition, many of the teachers who supervised the summer schools had little knowledge of the communities in which they worked. Unacquainted with local conditions, their efforts oftentimes suffered from a lack of planning. Finally, the summer school program attracted very few people.[81]

At Chilocco, the Indian Bureau established a model farm program in 1934. The Bureau secured a $50,000 grant from the Subsistence Homestead Division of the National Recovery Administration. Elna Smith of the Washington Office of the Indian Bureau and L.E. Correll, the Superintendent of Chilocco, contacted former graduates who needed financial assistance. Only married applicants qualified and they had to have taken at least three years of "practical agriculture." The men built the homes and buildings themselves and tended to some 8,000 acres of crop land.[82]

The model farm project eased the burden the Great Depression caused for

participants, but so few people participated in comparison to the overall populations of the Five Civilized Tribes. On average, there were 15 Indian families ranging in size from 2 to 6 people living on the Chilocco homesteads. The oldest person in 1935 was 31. The goal of the program was to teach people how to run a farm. It was then hoped that these people would return to their home communities and give others a chance to live on the homesteads. *Indians At Work* reported that "women were keeping their homes spotlessly clean" and that "the men had not been able to start a farm before because of a lack of money but now their White Father loans them the money to obtain what they need." The subsistence project was intended to provide Indians an opportunity to prove themselves to be "ambitious" and "productive citizens."[83]

Overall, the fundamental problems that plagued boarding schools at the beginning of the 1930s persisted at the end of the decade. Administrators still complained that Indians lacked "American" values. They criticized the laziness of the students. Moreover, the schools staffed far too many undereducated and inadequately trained teachers. Oftentimes, instructors taught classes at which they had no expertise. The difficulty employing Native American teachers also presented problems. There were simply not enough qualified Indian instructors. As a result, boarding schools oftentimes employed white teachers who exhibited little understanding of the Native American backgrounds of their students.[84]

This is not to argue that boarding schools were staffed by uncaring, cruel administrators and teachers. Superintendent Lawrence E. Correll transformed Chilocco Boarding School into a model school in the 1930s. He worked closely with the Civilian

Conservation Corps improving the school's agricultural department. He hired better trained teachers, who were actually educated in the areas in which they taught. Of the numerous children that one researcher interviewed decades after their experience at Chilocco, nearly all the former students had fond memories of Correll. Louis, a Cherokee, stated that Correll always had time for students and appeared to be a fair and decent man. Marian, a Creek woman, said that Correll was committed to helping Indian students learn strong study habits. Another Creek, Curtis, reiterated these impressions of Correll. Curtis recalled that the Superintendent stressed not only practical education, but also character development.[85]

In terms of their overall experience at boarding schools such as Chilocco, students held mixed opinions. Cora, a Cherokee woman, stated that nearly everyone she came in contact with was kind to her. Flora, a Creek woman, corroborated Cora's recollection, recalling that she was an assistant to one of the matrons and that she had pleasant experiences with Chilocco teachers and other employees. On the other hand, Winona, a Cherokee woman, said that matrons were extremely strict, particularly the head matron, a Miss McCormick. Juanita, another Cherokee woman, remembered that the boy's counterpart to Miss McCormick, Harry S. Kellar, was a harsh disciplinarian. However, John, a Chickasaw, said that Kellar was no worse or better than the other staff. The boarding school experience varied among different Indian children. It was not so much that irresponsible or harsh people were employed by the boarding schools, but the fundamental mission or goal of Indian boarding schools remained at times, misdirected and muddled. Although significant progress had been made in the 1930s, problems

persisted.[86]

Poor management still plagued some boarding schools. Supervisors believed that no well-planned program existed that integrated the goals of the schools with the needs of the pupils and the families from which they came. Even at Chilocco, which was the model boarding school in Oklahoma, these fundamental problems remained. For example, classes that taught students how to do beadwork and make Indian dolls and moccasins seemed absurd and insulting particularly when many of the tribes and communities from which the Indian children came had no history of producing such items. Activities such as those were not preparing students for life beyond school.[87]

At the close of the 1930s, boarding schools such as Chilocco continued to emphasize skills designed to help Indians "exploit" the natural resources of their home communities and maintain model homes based upon some idyllic middle class standard. Exploitation of resources in order to maximize profits, however, did not fit into the thinking of most of the rural Indian youth or their tribal brethren. Many students returned to their communities, but did not go on to become market-oriented farmers and middle-class homemakers. Economies of reciprocity and exchange and the largely communal social organization of their agrarian enclaves discouraged that type of behavior. Undoubtedly, Indian boys learned skills that benefitted them in the rural areas in which they lived. For example, practical knowledge on the proper use of tools, made sense. But being taught such things as terracing, crop rotation, or how to operate farm machinery better suited those people who planned on cultivating larger plots of land rather than the small number of acres that most rural Indians cropped. At the same time, many of the

homemaking activities that Indian girls learned were also impractical. Indian women oftentimes engaged in subsistence activities that took them outside the home. This included tending to animals and gardens and gathering edible wild plants, berries, and nuts. Their days were not consumed with vacuuming carpets or dusting furniture let alone hosting tea or pinochle parties.[88]

Moreover, boarding school administrators claimed to be helping students retain their traditional cultures, but again, this goal appeared misguided. Offering students a class on Indian history served little purpose in helping them retain their traditional cultures. Rural Indian children who were raised in homes that exhibited a strong adherence to family cultural traditions needed no instruction from Anglo-administered boarding schools in order to understand their past. Although more empathy existed for Indian culture in the 1930s than in previous decades, there is no evidence that indicates that boarding schools provided Indian children with an education that celebrated Indian culture or integrated that culture into the curriculum. If critics existed within the administration who believed that boarding schools were continuing to do Indian children a great disservice, their voices have not emerged from the historical documents. Men such as Superintendent Correll were a vast improvement over the administrators who came before, but they themselves were not Indian, and therefore did not fully understand many of the cultural backgrounds from which the children came.[89]

Lastly, despite their attendance at the boarding schools, Indians maintained close ties to their heritage through the values instilled in them by their parents, relatives, and tribal communities. Boarding schools failed to achieve their goals of re-shaping Native

American young people into hard working, middle-class consumers. So few children from the Five Civilized Tribes attended the boarding schools in the 1930s that they had a minimal, overall impact.[90]

The Indian Bureau attempted to rectify the many problems associated with Indian education in Oklahoma by establishing a network of special Indian day schools in the early 1930s. Indian Bureau officials in charge of Indian education in the Five Civilized Tribes region, such as W. Carson Ryan, Jr. and Willard W. Beatty, were increasingly aware of the difficulties that less integrated Indian children encountered in the public schools and boarding schools of Oklahoma. They believed that small, local schools established within or nearby Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole rural settlements might better serve the needs of both the children and the communities. The plan was to benefit the small communities through education at the grassroots level. The Five Civilized Tribes Agency subsequently hoped to establish farm and home economics clubs in conjunction with the schools that would economically invigorate restricted Indian enclaves. The federal government financed the first special Indian day schools through the Civil Works Administration and the Public Works Administration. Eventually, three of the day schools were integrated into the Oklahoma public school system.[91]

When the program began, the Indian Bureau reported that the special Indian day schools were one of the "most valuable units of the Indian educational system in Oklahoma." People such as Beatty understood that success of the schools depended upon teachers who possessed an understanding of the cultural and social dynamics of the

communities they served. To best address this issue, the Indian Bureau hired Indian instead of white teachers. Among those hired included Cherokee, Choctaw, Kiowa, Klamath, and Creek men and women. In 1934, the Indian day school teachers averaged nearly 3 ½ years of college. This compared favorably with the training of other teachers in better school districts in the state. Moreover, it exceeded the educational level of teachers in the dependent school districts of Oklahoma whose teachers averaged only two years of college during the same period.[92]

In addition, the Indian Bureau intended the schools to function as more than educational facilities. Officials believed that education meant more than simply learning to read and write. Traditional curriculum was supplemented with home economics and vocational training. The Indian Bureau maintained that "educational efforts should not stop at the door of the school house, but continue beyond to instruct people in farm extension, home economics, sanitation, and health."Adhering to this philosophy, special Indian day school teachers, as well as Education Field Agents, performed multiple duties.[93]

In conjunction with their classroom responsibilities, teachers visited Indian homes to check on living conditions. They helped families obtain clothing and food. Field Agents transported Indians in need of health care to medical facilities. Agents also attempted to find work for people in addition to registering Indians who qualified for relief and welfare benefits. Teachers and students established community gardens at all of the schools. Canning, preserving, quilting, and sewing projects were also incorporated. At schools such as Kallihoma, soil conservation and co-op sheep raising were also

introduced. Much of the classroom instruction that children received focused on basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills combined with "pre-vocational, homemaking, health, and cultural activities." Teachers also organized Sunday Schools and 4-H Clubs. Educators believed that a practical curriculum combined with manual training best enabled Indians to improve the living conditions in their communities. Beatty stated that Indian education should be concerned with preserving Indian culture "in the face of inevitable contacts with the outside world." Apparently, the inherent contradiction of that statement eluded men such as Beatty. Ultimately, the special Indian day schools achieved mixed results.[94]

Located near the town of Ada, in Pontotoc County, Kallihoma was the prototype Indian day school upon which the others were eventually modeled. It was established in 1932 following an investigation by the county school superintendent and a federal education field agent. They reported that 17 Chickasaw children in the community of Kallihoma had no access to public schools. In early spring 1932, an elderly Chickasaw woman donated her house as a classroom. She also provided, free of charge, two acres of land. A full-blood Choctaw was hired as a teacher. This makeshift schoolhouse was only temporary. Wealthy Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles raised $1300 and purchased an old hotel in the town of Colgate. Choctaws disassembled the hotel and transported the lumber to Kallihoma.[95]

With blueprints furnished by a state architect, the men of Kallihoma built a new school house, teacherage, community center, shop and domestic science building, and garage. In addition, an area was set aside for a community garden. Eventually a stone

reservoir built on a nearby hill supplied the water. Not only did Kallihoma provide children with an education, but the school served the community in other ways. There were sewing machines, steam pressure cookers for canning and preserving, as well as a piano, Victrola, and radio. A 4-H club was established that raised chickens, cows, and hogs. Kallihoma day school officially opened in September of 1932. It remained the model special Indian day school for the duration of the decade. In the fall of 1933, a full-blood Klamath Indian man and his full-blood Cherokee wife were hired as the first permanent teachers.[96]

By 1934, ten special Indian day schools were in operation in various rural Indian communities of the Five Civilized Tribes. Most of the schools had grades one through eight. The majority of them existed in Cherokee areas. This resulted from the fact that many restricted Cherokees tended to live in the most rugged, isolated areas with little or no access to public schools. Rural Chickasaws and Choctaws also had access to the schools, but only one served Creek children and none existed in the Seminole region.[97]

Enrollment was never large at any of these schools. In 1935, a total of 165 children attended. Enrollment increased to 308 students the following year. The eleven schools in operation in 1936 consisted of Mulberry in Adair County; Rocky Ford in Cherokee County; Oak Hill in Delaware County; Ballou in Mayes County; Sourjohn in Muskogee County; Mt. Zion in McCurtain County; Bascome in Pittsburgh County; Hickory Hill and Kallihoma in Pontotoc County; and Morris Vann and Red Bird Smith in Sequoyah County. By1937, fifteen special Indian day schools existed in the Five Civilized Tribes region. Ten out of the fifteen schools were located in Cherokee areas.

Both the Chickasaws and the Choctaws had access to two schools each, while the Creeks had one school at Yardeka.[98]

In 1939, enumeration records indicated that 486 Indian children attended special day schools. Although enrollment had increased during the 1930s, the number was small in comparison to the overall population of school age children in the Five Civilized Tribes region. The Choctaw, alone, supposedly had 3,535 school age children enumerated that year. In McCurtain County, where the majority of rural, restricted Choctaws lived, there existed only one Indian day school. Mt. Zion, in the community of Battiest, enumerated 27 children in 1939 with an average daily attendance of 17. This is a county that contained approximately 702 school age Choctaw children in its school districts. Moreover, the special Indian day schools also accommodated rural white children living near Indian settlements. Out of the 486 children attending special day schools in 1939, there were 267 Cherokee, 48 Chickasaw, 40 Choctaw, 46 Creek, and 77 white children. Again, the Indian day schools only impacted a small percentage of children.[99]

Although the Indian Bureau intended these schools to benefit the communities they served, evidence indicates that the schools exerted little influence on the children or the isolated Indian settlements. Indians utilized them when it best suited their needs, but that did not entail involving themselves in the various activities and projects on a daily basis. Many Indians remained ambivalent. They retained a healthy suspicion of anything the government offered or provided. Their distrust was mixed with pragmatism. For example, when the schools provided hot lunches, the attendance of children increased.

When they were not offered, attendance declined. It was apparent that free food, not a formal education, was the chief priority of some Indian families. In addition, teachers that ran the schools differed in their approaches to how best provide for the children and the communities. Schools did not follow a coherent blueprint that would have provided a uniform set of standards applicable to all of the schools. This is not to argue that the schools had no worthwhile purpose, but they were not the panacea that the Indian Bureau anticipated.[100]

A number of problems hindered the overall impact of the day schools. First and foremost was the fact that the teachers often did not come from the communities where they taught. In some ways, that problem could not be avoided. There simply did not exist qualified teachers who also lived in the isolated, rural Indian communities. Perhaps more problematic, was the fact that number of the teachers also lived miles from the schools where they worked. Indian communities derived their sense of unity partially from the familiarity between individuals. Unfamiliarity, breeds distrust. Even though initially some teachers desired to live near the Indians with whom they worked, the teachers failed to adjust to the rustic conditions that defined the Indian settlements. They refused to live in areas where the amenities of modern life were absent. Other teachers wanted to live near the schools, but simply could not find adequate housing.[101]

Moreover, although the hiring of only Indian teachers had been an admirable plan, all Indians are not alike. Some of the teachers were not even from the same tribe as the majority of the children in their classrooms. They did not speak the same language. Teachers and students shared no cultural or social traditions or common historical

experience. This lack of connection to the communities they tried to benefit hindered the effectiveness of the teachers. Aside from their role as educator, they had no vested interest in the settlements. At the same time, rural Indians viewed them as outsiders or interlopers. The barriers of suspicion that these circumstances and factors created were never surmounted.[102]

The cultural and social disconnection of the teachers from the communities they tried to help can be seen in the following examples. In 1935, at the Bascome Choctaw special day school, the teacher, Louis Rhodd, was of Ponca and Pottawatomie heritage. At the Chickasaw school, Kallihoma, Jack Norton was a Klamath Indian. Nora Benton was a Choctaw woman who taught at Hickory Hill, a Chickasaw school. And even though half of the teachers in 1935 possessed three fourths or more Indian blood, it did not mean that all of them were culturally Indian. Gussie Woolbright, a three-fourths Cherokee teacher at Mulberry school in Adair County, would not even allow the children to speak their native tongue while playing outside. In McCurtain County, at Mt. Zion, a Choctaw School, Ruth Hopkins, a Choctaw herself, said that the "permanent mission" of the school was to bring "enlightenment to a community" which had previously been "untouched by that kind of thing."[103] Apparently, to her, the rural Indians who lived near Mt. Zion were either lacking or completely devoid of anything resembling wisdom prior to her arrival. Hopkins, similar to other educators, believed that the only way to achieve "enlightenment" was through a formal education. At Bascome Choctaw day school, Rhodd voiced frustration over his failed attempts to get his students to "think in English."[104]

In addition, at all of the schools, teachers emphasized religious studies. Again, they wanted the children to speak English even though at the churches the children attended with their parents services were conducted primarily in their native languages. Moreover, not all of the children came from homes that adhered to Baptist or Methodist notions of God. Instead, their parents retained their beliefs in polytheism and the spiritual power embodied in the natural world. The magazine, *Indians At Work*, stated that many of the teachers at Indian day schools were simply not prepared to understand culturally the Indians they attempted to aid. All of these factors combined to compromise the influence of the day schools.[105]

This is not to argue that all teachers were unprepared or unsympathetic. Frances McIntosh, a Creek woman, who taught at Morris Vann School in Sequoyah County, devoted a significant portion of her time visiting Cherokee homes in the surrounding area. She tried to get medical aid to sick children, ran errands for parents, and, in general, looked out for the welfare of the Indians who lived close to the school. Two Cherokee women teachers employed at Mulberry School in Adair County, Jenny Smith and Betty Sapp, also reported that their duties included more than just teaching. They said that they tried to help Cherokee families in any manner possible. They tried to meet more than simply the educational needs of the Cherokees who lived in the area around their school.[106]

The absence of an orderly plan of management also hindered the effectiveness of the day schools. As late as 1939, the Indian Bureau still lacked a "uniform" program. The curriculum of each school was determined largely by the individual teachers and their

assistants. Some teachers emphasized the learning of manual skills over reading and writing. They spent an inordinate amount of time trying to interest children in animal husbandry. Few children exhibited enthusiasm or became involved. At Kenwood School in Delaware County, Violet Horn reported that her teaching assistant was "rather pleased with himself" when he finally "persuaded" a young Cherokee girl to "participate in an egg incubation demonstration."[107]

At Ballou School in Mayes County, Carleton Gray and his wife were frustrated over their inability to attract children to the 4-H Club. They complained that there existed little enthusiasm among the students. The students showed no desire to become future farmers or ranchers. The teachers also attempted to get children involved in selling walnuts in order to purchase equipment for the school. At Morris Vann School in Sequoyah County, Ioleta Hunt devoted considerable time each day instructing students on "proper table manners" and how to correctly "set a service" for meals. At Red Bird Smith School, Walter Rattler emphasized art and health habits. At Mulberry School in Adair County, Gussie Woolbright stressed punctuality and personal hygiene. In Pontotoc County, at Kallihoma School, the boys learned how to make "bows and arrows" while the girls spent a good portion of each day learning how to cook. The disjointed approach of teachers undermined the overall effectiveness of the day school program. All of the teachers reported in 1935 that it was difficult to get students to attend the schools.[108]

Despite the efforts of the Indian Bureau to make these schools the focal points of the Indian communities, teachers indicated that adult participation was lacking. Indeed, reports showed that teachers and education field agents appeared to spend most of their

time visiting homes, not to check on the welfare of rural Indians, but trying to convince Indians to use the facilities. And finally, the most important indicators as to the effectiveness of the day schools were the promotion rates of the students. In this respect, the schools achieved poor results. For example, in 1933, at the Ballou school in Mayes County, 40 out of 54 students were retained rather than promoted a grade. At the Underwood school in Delaware County, 27 out of 40 students were retained. This pattern repeated itself at Kallihoma, Hickory Hill, and the other schools as well. At Cave Spring School in Cherokee County, of the 30 students who were enumerated in 1937, none were above the first or second grade in learning ability.[109]

For people such as Beatty, who had envisioned helping Indian pupils "adapt more successfully to their *necessary* contacts with white society and white economic practices," the special day schools fell short of their intended purpose. Indians who lived in the small rural communities remained disinterested. Although Indians utilized the schools to a certain extent, they did not become the focal point of rural Indian settlements. Despite the fact that the Indian Bureau claimed that the day schools were begun to strengthen the cultural environment of the Indian communities, the approach they took continued to undermine that goal.[110]

This fact was emphasized most clearly in 1937, when the Indian Bureau attempted to organize economic cooperatives at the day schools under the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act. This effort was soundly rejected by the Indians who lived in the vicinity of the schools. The cooperatives would have entailed a commitment to producing food for market, something the Indians had no desire to pursue. The organization and

structure required of such a program would have clashed with the Indians more lax approach to time and their belief that personal happiness was directly associated with personal independence. The ambivalence of rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles to government programs such as these frustrated educators and extension agents associated with the special Indian day schools.[111]

Despite the goals of the Indian Bureau in the 1930s to manage Indian education with more empathy for Indian culture, Indian Bureau bureaucrats in charge of the education program for the Five Civilized Tribes remained far removed from the rural Indian communities they sought to benefit. Stating that you were empathetic and sensitive to Indian culture was one thing, putting that into practice was another. People such as Willard W. Beatty, John Collier, W. Carson Ryan, Jr., and Adrian M. Landman seldom, if ever, visited remote Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, or Seminole settlements to get first-hand knowledge of what the problems that existed. It perhaps, would have allowed them to foment newer and better strategies or revise old strategies. Throughout the 1930s, the responsibility of educating rural Indians in the Five Civilized Tribes' region rested with dysfunctional and dated Indian boarding schools, ill-equipped and poorly staffed public schools, and with the Education Field Agents and social workers that the Five Civilized Tribes Agency employed. Although education administrators such as Lawrence E. Correll and Beatty, and devoted, caring teachers such as Betty Sapp and Jenny Smith, were more understanding of the educational needs of rural Indians than many of their predecessors, they were unable to overcome in a decade all of the problems of Indian education that were the result of decades of ill-advised

policies.

In the early and mid-1930s, both special Indian day schools and summer schools were developed to better accommodate isolated, rural Indian enclaves. As well meaning as the special Indian day school program was, it never quite realized the expectations of its proponents. Although day schools represented a more practical approach to educating rural Indians, the schools failed to generate or maintain a significant amount of interest among children or adults. Many tradition-minded Indians viewed the schools as yet another attempt by outsiders to assimilate them into mainstream, white society. Despite positive reports, oftentimes exaggerated for the sake of publicity, efforts to educate rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes progressed in fits and throes throughout the 1930s. A combination of mismanagement and continued ethnocentrism on the part of white educators, coupled with the ambivalence of culturally conservative Indians to formal education, compromised the efforts of the Indian Bureau.

This same dynamic spilled over into the field of health as doctors, nurses, and social workers sought to improve the physical well being of Indians living in rural enclaves. As with those people who attempted to improve the economic and educational levels of these Indians, medical personnel encountered similar problems, largely the result of cross-cultural misunderstanding between whites and Indians. In this case, modern medicine and science clashed with Native American views regarding medicine and physical well being. To compound problems, inadequate facilities hampered efforts to improve health, particularly among the less integrated members of the Five Civilized Tribes during the 1930s.

ENDNOTES

1. Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes *Annual Reports*, 1930-1940, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Records Center.

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13. *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Population, 1920* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1922); Debo, *And Still the Waters Run*, pp. 277, 278. Prucha, *Great Father*, pp. 824-825, 836.

14. *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Population, 1920* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1922); Debo, *And Still the Waters Run*, pp. 277, 278. Prucha, *Great Father*, pp. 824-825, 836; Lewis Meriam, *The Problem of Indian Administration in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: The Institute of Government Research, 1928).

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16. Meriam, *The Problem of Indian Administration*, p.11; Prucha, *Great Father*, pp. 810-813, 923; Szasz, *Education*, pp. 17-21, 24-25; *"Survey of Conditions of the Indians of the United States,"* Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Indian Affairs, United States Senate, 70th Congress to 78th Congress (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1929-1944). President Herbert Hoover had chosen Rhoads to head the Office of Indian Affairs, but Rhoads had initially refused the offer. Hoover then chose Scattergood, but he also hesitated in accepting the position. Ultimately, the two men served jointly, although Scattergood's title was assistant commissioner.

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Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Biennial Reports*, 1932-1940, Oklahoma Department of Libraries; Hargrove, "A Study of the Social and Economic Record," pp. 26, 54; Wolf, "Federal Aid for the Education of Indian Children," pp. 27-30, 34, 37, 61-63.

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27. Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, *Annual Report*, 1932, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Records Center; Hargrove, "A Study of the Social and Economic Record," pp. 26, 54; Bradfield, "A History of Chilocco Indian School," pp. 108-111; Clara Bernice Petty "Distinguishing Characteristics of Homemaking Programs in Oklahoma Indian Schools" (Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1940), pp. 20-21; Box 7, Legislative Series, Elmer Thomas Collection, Carl Albert Center, University of Oklahoma; Philp, ed., *Indian Self Rule*, p. 21.

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Ft. Worth Regional Records Center; William R. Chunestudy, "The Stomp Dance in the Keetoowah Society of the Western Cherokees: Ceremony and Context" (Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1994), p. 29; Hampton Tucker to Frank Parkinson, 19 October 1928, Hampton Tucker Collection; Interview 6976, Indian Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; *Third Annual Report of the Supervisor of Indian Education to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1934*, Box 9, Subject Files, Elmer Thomas Collection, Carl Albert Center, University of Oklahoma.

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Tribes were in or out of school because officials had become "completely out of touch." He said the government had been tracking the Indians for "the past 400 years"and that the best they could do was approximate them and divide them into "640 different varieties and degrees of Indians" until any kind of accuracy was impossible. Ill-prepared reports, the hesitancy of many Indians to give honest answers to white people, and lazy Office of Indian Affairs employees who fabricated reports all combined to make the task of an accurate governmental assessment of anything relating to Native Americans virtually impossible. Box 7, Legislative Series, Elmer Thomas Collection, Carl Albert Center, University of Oklahoma; Supervisor of Indian Education for Oklahoma, *Fourth Annual Report*, 1935, Box 231, E.E. Dale Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

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Chapter 5

Living Just Like In A Machine

Surveys measuring the well-being of the Five Civilized Tribes during the 1930s concluded that health conditions were not good. One of the primary reasons was the lack of adequate medical facilities. This was particularly true for those Indians living in the scattered, isolated rural communities of central and eastern Oklahoma. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs stated in 1930 that there were not enough doctors and nurses in the Five Civilized Tribes region, particularly in the more remote areas. Throughout the 1930s, Indian Bureau emphasized the importance of increasing the number of medical facilities, physicians, and field nurses. Adrian M. Landman, Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, reported in both 1931 and 1934 that only two hospitals existed in the entire Five Civilized Tribes region. They were the thirty-four bed general Indian hospital at Claremore and the Choctaw-Chickasaw Tuberculosis Sanatorium at Talihina, with a capacity of 60 beds. The sanatorium, however, admitted only tuberculosis patients. Landman concluded that those were not sufficient to "treat the needs of the tribes." According to the 1934 report, the two hospitals serviced approximately 28,000 restricted Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaw, Creeks, and Seminoles. The Indian Bureau attempted to contract with a Muskogee hospital for 50 beds to be utilized exclusively by members of the Five Civilized Tribes, but failed to obtain the necessary funding.[1]

There also existed hospitals for students at Chilocco, Euchee, and Eufaula Indian

schools. The reports of 1931 and 1934 further emphasized that the state of Oklahoma had not "set up any sort of machinery to care for the welfare of Indians." They disclosed that the majority of the counties in the Five Civilized Tribes region were so poor that no county health relief was provided. For example, even though the Oklahoma state legislature had passed a bill that established a Bureau of Maternal and Child Health in 1923, by the early 1930s there were still 38 counties that lacked an organized, public health or maternal and child health program. The majority of these counties were located in the Five Civilized Tribes region, where most people depended upon their own "personal resources for medical attention." Many Indians requiring hospitalization had to be transported long distances to the Shawnee Indian Hospital at Lawton, the Pawnee Hospital at Pawnee, as well as to other hospitals scattered throughout the state.[2]

Health conditions in the Five Civilized Tribes region were poor in comparison to other parts of the state. Maternal death rates for Indian mothers, for example, were nearly triple that of whites between 1930-1934. The maternal death rates for whites during this period were 5.8 deaths per 1000 live births while for Indians the maternal death rate was 14.4 deaths per 1000 live births. Indian maternal death rates, however, decreased in the years leading up to1940 where the rate had been reduced to 10.2 deaths per l000 live births.[3]

Infant mortality rates were also considerably higher among all ethnic and racial groups in some of the counties that encompassed the Five Civilized Tribes region. Between 1932-1936, Adair, Delaware, Marshall, Muskogee, Pittsburgh, and Seminole Counties averaged between 76-86 per infant deaths per 100,000 people. Muskogee

County reported the highest average infant death rate during this period at 86 infant deaths per 100,000 people. Extrapolating those rates backward, it reveals that there were 5 infant deaths per 6,000 people per year which does not necessarily reflect an epidemic, but does indicate the poor health conditions in that part of the state. On the other hand, death rates for Indians, in general, decreased from 1930 to 1934. Concomitantly, Indian birth rates increased during the same years. This point is not made to dismiss the gravity of the health situation in the Five Civilized Tribes regions, but to indicate that Indians experienced some improvement in health in the early 1930s, but their overall condition remained poor.[4]

Health statistics indicate that certain areas inhabited by the Five Civilized Tribes were rife with disease and illness. Between 1930 and 1932, Hughes, McIntosh, and Pittsburgh Counties reported a high number of cases of diphtheria, small pox, and typhoid fever in comparison to other counties of the state. In Pittsburgh County in 1932, for example, 51 cases of small pox among Indians were reported over a seven month period. Atoka County had "a problem" with small pox and other "communicable diseases" in the early 1930s. Dr. J.S. Fulton reported that in the area near Tushka, Oklahoma approximately 10-20 Indian homes per month had to be quarantined.[5]

Some counties in the Five Civilized Tribes region fared worse than others, particularly in respect to certain diseases. Death rates from specific diseases were also high in comparison to other counties in the state. Adair County, for example, had death rates from tuberculosis nearly double that of Mayes County. From 1930-1934, Adair averaged 17.4 deaths per year from tuberculosis while 9.2 per year was the average rate

of death for Mayes County. Adair County was home to approximately 4,900 Cherokee Indians. Those statistics reveal that roughly 1 out of every 306 Indians who lived in Adair County died from tuberculosis from 1930-1934. That percentage indicates a tubercular epidemic.[6]

Some health experts claimed that the manner in which rural Indians lived made them highly susceptible to diseases such as tuberculosis. Dirt floors, poor ventilation, contaminated water supplies, their reluctance to include milk in their diet, and their propensity to visit freely among themselves all combined to make them victims. Between 1930-34 in Hughes County, which was the home to numerous Creek Indians, an average of 15.8 Indians out of a population of 1,463 Creek Indians died from tuberculosis annually. Those statistics indicated that tubercular deaths impacted approximately 1.5 percent of the total Creek population in that county. In Pontotoc County, where approximately 764 Chickasaws lived, tuberculosis caused the death of 13.6 Indians annually. Again, rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes suffered a high rate of tuberculosis in the 1930s.[7]

Malaria was also a problem among rural Indians. Two southeastern counties of the state, home to approximately 3,199 Choctaw Indians, had the following death rates from malaria between 1930-34. McCurtain County, for example, averaged 50.6 deaths per 100,000 per year from malaria while 50.4 deaths per 100,000 was the annual average for Pushmataha County. Those rates were extreme in comparison to Sequoyah County in the northeastern portion of the state that averaged only 1.4 deaths per year during the same period. The numbers were also high when compared to the state average. Overall,

state counties averaged 4.3 deaths per 100,000 people from malaria per year between 1930-34. 101 deaths per year in McCurtain and Pushmataha Counties out of a total population of 3,199 Indians amounts to approximately 1.5 percent of the total population. Those statistics indicated that approximately 12.6 Indians per 399 were dying from malaria in both of the counties. Again, that data is evidence of a malarial epidemic.[8]

At the same time, diseases such as trachoma, long associated with Indians, did not appear to be prevalent or problematic in the early 1930s, at least among Oklahoma Choctaws. A questionnaire that Choctaw attorney Hampton Tucker distributed reinforced this fact. Only one respondent out of eight, Reverend Griggs of Durant, indicated that trachoma was prevalent among the Choctaws in his area. The others, scattered throughout southeastern Oklahoma, reported that trachoma was not a problem. In fact, James Culberson informed Tucker that, at least in the area where he lived, it appeared to him that more whites than Indians had contracted trachoma.[9]

Deaths caused by typhoid were also high among Indians, particularly in the northeastern Cherokee Counties. From 1930-34, among all races and ethnic groups, Oklahoma averaged 10.5 typhoid-related deaths per 100,000 people. During the same period, Five Civilized Tribes counties such as Adair, Cherokee, Delaware, McIntosh, and Pontotoc averaged between 20-25 deaths per 100,000 people from typhoid fever. That was double the state average. Overall, disease related deaths were higher for rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes than the white population of Oklahoma in the 1930s. It was clear that rural Indians suffered from much poorer health than their white counterparts in Oklahoma throughout the 1930s.[10]

A key factor that contributed to part of the health problem for Indians in the Five Civilized Tribes region, resulted from either a complete lack of medical facilities and personnel or the inability of many Indians to pay for medical services. But this was not a predicament unique to Indians during the Great Depression in Oklahoma. C. A. Thompson said that Oklahoma Baptist Hospital in Muskogee had to shut down entire floors and cease its nurse training program in 1933 because of a lack of income. He said that a "high percentage" of the hospital's patients were unable to pay. Conditions were bad for many Oklahomans in need of medical help. But an inadequate and insufficient health infrastructure was most glaring in the Five Civilized Tribes region.[11]

In 1934, the Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes reported that the field medical service in the Indian populated counties of eastern Oklahoma was "practically nil." The report stated that it was "imperative that a field organization of doctors and nurses" be established in order to provide "proper medical attention" for those Indians living in the more isolated areas of the region. That year, there was only one "half time" field nurse. She resided at Wheelock Academy. Instead, social workers, education field agents, and clerks attempted to undertake the work of trained medical personnel. They spent the majority of their time driving Indians to doctor's offices and hospitals in the area. In 1934 alone, they transported 900 Indians and traveled over 75,000 miles. Not surprisingly, many complained that this work kept them from their assigned duties. Education field agents, in particular, expressed frustration at having to drive Indians to hospital facilities. Glenn Palmer, C. L. Crutcher, and James Swartz Hugo, the education field agents who worked in Bryan, Choctaw, LeFlore, Marshall, Pontotoc, and

Pushmataha Counties, all complained about the inordinate amount of time spent driving Indians to doctors and hospitals.[12]

An Indian group, the Association of Indian Tribes, included members of the Cherokee, Choctaw, and Creek tribes. It also helped transport Indians to medical facilities. That organization tried to develop better "transportation networks" to help Indians get to hospitals and to ease the burden of over-extended education agents. Another Indian organization, the Ohoyohoma Club, a Choctaw women's club contributed as well. Most of their work, however, amounted to financial donations to the Goodland Indian Orphanage and the sanatorium at Talihina. Contributions to the sanatorium were earmarked for cancer, polio, and x-ray research and development. Needless to say, there existed no well-planned program to provide health care for rural Indian populations.[13]

The Johnson-O'Malley Act, passed in 1934, alleviated the problem to some extent. It gave the Indian Bureau authority to contract with state and county governments in order to establish health programs for Indians. Despite this legislation, however, health care facilities and medical personnel remained inadequate to address the health needs of the rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes. And virtually no medical facilities existed to benefit Indians living in the more isolated communities. For example, Galela Walkingstick of Stilwell, in Adair County, said the reason for many health problems among Cherokees resulted from the fact that the majority of them live "so far from medical facilities."[14] A nurse at Wheelock Academy reiterated this fact. She told a reporter from the publication *Indians at Work* that those Indians who lived around Wheelock were 300 miles from the nearest general hospital and that they lived 150 miles

from the tuberculosis sanatorium at Talihina. She went on to say that only about five per cent of the Indian families in the area around the academy were able to afford even the "simplest medical or nursing care."[15]

During the 1930s, the federal government stepped up its efforts to improve Indian health in Oklahoma. The Indian Bureau worked with such agencies as the Civilian Conservation Corps to provide adequate health care for those Indians the CCC employed. However, relatively few rural Indians worked on CCC projects. A 1935 Congressional investigation reiterated the fact that health services for Indians were completely lacking in nearly all the Five Civilized Tribes region. The problem was particularly acute in the remote areas that numerous Cherokees inhabited in the northeastern portion of the state.[16]

Those concerned about Indian health concluded that the only people having access to adequate health care facilities were young children in the various Indian boarding schools. In 1935, a ten-day clinical survey in Adair County of 1,083 Indians, 52 per cent of whom were full blood, revealed that 80 per cent of those examined required dental treatment. Doctors reported that 35.6 per cent of the Indians had infected tonsils and that nearly all patients over the age of 50 tested positive for tuberculosis. The following year Works Progress Administration funds were appropriated to begin the construction of a second Indian hospital at Tahlequah in Cherokee County. Forty additional beds were also added to the Claremore Indian Hospital.[17]

In early 1936, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs reported that the Bureau of Indian Affairs had entered into a "cooperative relationship" with the Oklahoma State

Board of Health to develop a five county, full-time health district in the northeastern part of the state. The report stated that this would "give some 25,000 Indians...adequate health service."[18] Around the same time, Choctaw governor, William Durant, and twelve other Choctaw delegates met with Dr. Wilson E. Van Cleave, the head of the Choctaw-Chickasaw Tuberculosis Sanatorium at Talihina. The group concurred that the hospital needed to be remodeled, enabling it to perform surgery as well as handle general medical and obstetrical cases.[19]

The facility also suffered from years of neglect. Although the sanatorium contained a main hospital building, dairy barn, nurses dorm, commissary, and garage, other facilities and equipment were either absent or in disrepair. Its refrigeration system was faulty and lacked an adequate storage area, limiting the preservation of butter, fruit, meat, milk, and vegetables. The hospital also suffered from a defective boiler system. And perhaps most important, Dr. Van Cleave said it was absolutely necessary to construct a special wing for tubercular patients so that they could be isolated. He said that the spreading of tuberculosis had been an ongoing problem.[20]

The Choctaw delegation lobbied hard in Washington to get money for renovations. As a result of their efforts, Congress appropriated $1,000,000 to expand the sanatorium. The capacity of the hospital was increased from 60 to 75 beds to accommodate non-tubercular patients. By the fall of 1938, the capacity of the hospital had increased to 225 beds. Speaking to a group of Indians at Muskogee in October1937, John Collier stated that "in the Five Civilized Tribes area we are making a decisive start toward an intelligent health program."[21]

Almost one year later, in August1938, the W.W. Hastings Hospital opened in Tahlequah. Occupying a portion of the grounds that were formerly part of the Cherokee Female Seminary, the 75 bed facility was designed to serve all the Five Civilized Tribes. Only those adults who possessed one half or more Indian blood and those children who possessed one fourth or more Indian blood qualified for medical treatment. The same year, Dr. "Doc" Welch Chamblin financed the construction of a private hospital in the town of Muldrow in Sequoyah County. The 50 bed hospital served both whites and Indians until it closed in 1944.[22]

These accomplishments were significant, but not everyone was impressed. Dr. Van Cleave, understanding perhaps better than anyone the inadequacy of Indian health care facilities, called support for the new hospitals the "annual gratuitous Congressional appropriation known as Relief of Distress and Prevention of Diseases Among Indians."[23] Dr. Van Cleave thought that much more needed to be done, and could be done. He complained that city managers, civic organizations, and chambers of commerce were only interested in developing medical facilities in their own cities. He criticized them for failing to expand and improve the resources in the surrounding rural areas. Dr.Van Cleave believed that the construction of an occasional new hospital, although significant, tended to mask the absence of adequate health care facilities in the more isolated Indian areas of eastern Oklahoma. To men like Dr.Van Cleave, new hospitals generated good publicity for the Indian Bureau, John Collier, and city fathers, but he understood that hospitals alone would not solve all the health problems of rural Indians.[24]

Various federal agencies also focused on disease eradication through the

implementation of environmental improvement projects. The United States Public Health Service, in conjunction with the Oklahoma State Department of Health, drained malarial districts to eliminate mosquitoes. Malaria was a significant problem in the southeastern portion of the state, the result of a high annual rainfall combined with a mild, humid climate. The health department was particularly critical of the Weyerhauser Lumber Company, long active in the region. It reported that Weyerhauser showed little concern for malaria control. Its operations defoliated significant acres of land that subsequently filled with pockets of standing water and provided attractive breeding habitats for mosquitoes.[25]

To address the malarial problem, the Works Progress Administration Malaria Control Project spent nearly $2,000,000 in 1934-1935 in 25 counties in eastern and southeastern Oklahoma. The WPA remained active in the southeastern portion of the state, initiating another series of malaria control programs in 1939 in LeFlore and Pittsburgh Counties. The Oklahoma Bureau of Rural Sanitation also undertook projects to improve disposal and sewage facilities in the eastern region of the state. Along with the Oklahoma State Department of Health, the Bureau utilized relief labor to clean up problem areas. Since 1933, the Bureau had "supervised the construction of 109,000 sanitary outhouses primarily in rural communities."[26]

In addition to the malaria abatement program, in1935 the Indian Bureau sponsored a mental hygiene clinic to diagnose mental and physical maladies of a select group of 540 Indian school children. The study was to determine appropriate care for these "problem children." Dr. Forrest N. Anderson and Joseph C. McCaskill of the Los

Angeles Child Guidance Clinic, along with psychiatrists and psychologists from the University of Oklahoma and Northeastern State Teachers College, conducted neurological and physical examinations as well as psychological evaluations to determine the mental and physical health of the children. Physicians also wanted to determine the causes of the children's "reported" incorrigibility.[27]

The study revealed that 15 per cent of the children suffered some type of "physical or health handicap" and that another 15 per cent had "emotional or mental handicaps." What steps health care workers were going to take in the Five Civilized Tribes region to rectify these problems remained to be seen. Moreover, many of the "so called" behavioral problems were not problems at all, but rather children from rural, more tradition-oriented Indian backgrounds chafing at the regimentation and rules imposed on them by well-meaning white educators.[28]

Federal legislation also attempted to aid the dependent and infirm. The Social Security Act, passed in 1935, designated the U.S. Children's Bureau as the agency responsible for maternal and child health funds. It distributed money to each state to provide health services, such as delivery care, for indigent mothers. The goal was to work with state departments of health to provide quality medical care for mothers and children in isolated, rural communities. Although not specifically designed for Indian mothers and their children, the maternal health care program operated in areas with significant Indian populations.[29]

A "health unit," as well as health demonstration programs, were established in Adair, Cherokee, Delaware, Mayes, and Sequoyah Counties beginning in 1938. Under

the direction of Dr. Isadore Dyer, the unit worked closely with home demonstration agents in the region as well as with the 4-H and local farm women clubs. It was further aided in its efforts by the Farm Security Administration. City Kiwanis, Lion, and Rotary Clubs also contributed funds which supplemented the work of the health unit. The five county health unit personnel consisted of a medical director, obstetrical consultant, health officer, two sanitation consultants, 11 nurses, a social worker, and laboratory technician.[30]

Working with the Indian Bureau, the health unit conducted clinics each week that examined people for diphtheria, syphilis, and typhoid fever. In addition, tuberculosis diagnostic clinics were held in each county every two months. "Maternity conferences" were also conducted each week for both expectant and new mothers. The maternal health care program was further indication that some progress was being made in bringing much needed medical services to people living in outlying areas. Evidence indicates, however, that the project benefitted the impoverished white farm women of the area to a far greater degree than Indian mothers and their infants. Moreover, it targeted rural farm communities surrounding urban areas and was not designed specifically for the remoter, rural Indian settlements.[31]

A similar health unit was established in 1938 that serviced Bryan, Johnston, and Marshall Counties. This administered to the largely Chickasaw and Choctaw Indian populations of the area. One of the first priorities of the health unit was to contact as many Indian families as possible. Field nurses such as Ida E. Bahl, Josephine Lawrence, and Laura Clark visited nearly 1500 homes in 1938 and recorded 276 family histories.

The nurses also instructed families in first aid, child care, and general hygiene. When possible, they vaccinated Indians against diphtheria, small pox, and tuberculosis. The health unit reported that the "full blood" Indians" appeared to be "gaining a bit more confidence in doctors" and concluded by stating that "antagonism has decreased."[32]

Despite these combined efforts, however, fundamental problems still plagued Indian health care in the late 1930s. The state of Oklahoma continued to assume minimal responsibility for the health needs of its Indian population. Reports indicated the absence of sufficient health care facilities operated specifically for Indians in eastern Oklahoma. Toward the close of the decade, the Five Civilized Tribes region had few properly trained medical personnel working in the more remote, rural areas. Even though changes began to occur in 1938, in 1937 there still were only two Indian Bureau field nurses for the entire region. The anthropologist, Alice Marriott, told a friend in 1937 that no doctors worked among the Indians in the "back country" around Muskogee . She said that instead of taking pictures of Indian artisans at work, which the WPA wanted for publicity, she was going to photograph " a nice tear jerker of Lucy and the infants, with a suitably forlorn background." Marriott hoped that the published pictures "might compel a doctor or two to work up there."[33]

In efforts to remedy the situation, the Five Civilized Tribes Agency appropriated funds in 1938 that enabled it to hire a supervising physician and nurse as well as seven contract physicians and seven field nurses. In addition, nurses employed at Wheelock Academy and Carter Seminary devoted half their time to health care work in the "neighboring communities." But the Five Civilized Tribes region still lacked adequate

medical personnel. Real estate appraisers, farm extension agents, school social workers, and "field aids and assistants" continued to function as health care providers. As in previous years, they spent the majority of their time driving Indians back and forth to hospitals and medical clinics. In 1939, field personnel averaged four car loads of patients and nearly 200 miles a week transporting Indians to health facilities. For example, Peter Hudson, the land appraiser for the Hugo District, which included Choctaw County, traveled 11,000 miles in 1939 transporting 66 Indians to medical facilities and visiting 42 other homes containing sick Indians. Men such as Hudson were invaluable. He spoke fluent Choctaw and thus related more easily to the people he helped. But the fact that Hudson was a land appraiser and not medically trained indicated one aspect of the overall medical problem in the Five Civilized Tribes region.[34]

The Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes reported that no "field health personnel" existed for the approximately 4,000 Indians in Okfuskee, Okmulgee, McIntosh Counties. This also held true for Pushmataha County which was home to approximately 1,063 Indians. The report stated that counties were either unwilling or reluctant to provide medical care for Indians. Indian Bureau workers also complained that they transported Indians who had only minor ailments. In addition, they indicated that Indians sometimes refused to enter hospitals once they arrived. One frustrated field agent, T.R. Roach, complained that "on occasion he took Indians on what amounted to joy rides to visit friends."[35] To make matters worse, what written records existed were "poorly kept." The Superintendent's report concluded that what little information field agents had on Indians in a particular district amounted largely to what individual agents

could remember. Indian health care appeared as disorganized and muddled in the second half of the1930s as it did in the beginning.[36]

This is not to conclude, however, that nothing was accomplished to address the medical needs of Indians. As noted previously, the Indian Bureau and the Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes achieved some progress during the course of the decade. The Indian Bureau hired additional medical personnel. Contract physicians were also added. Federal funding financed the remodeling of older hospitals and contributed to the construction of a new hospital. And the political lobbying of Indian leaders, both within Oklahoma and in Washington, D.C., prompted the state's disease eradication programs. But numerous, fundamental problems, continued to undermine health care for the Five Civilized Tribes in the 1930s. Absent or inadequate medical facilities, lack of trained personnel, the inability the Indian Bureau to establish a coherent program to provide for the medical needs of the largely isolated, rural Indian population, and the continued reluctance of the state of Oklahoma to assume responsibility for its Indian citizens, all combined to cloud the health care program.[37]

Additional problems also hampered the efforts of the Indian Bureau and the medical personnel who worked among the Five Civilized Tribes. Cultural differences that existed between Indians and whites complicated matters. In particular, the more tradition-oriented, rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes viewed disease, health, health care, medicine, and sickness from a decidedly different perspective than the predominantly white medical personnel that sought to cure their illness. At best, the differences made the Indian response to medical care ambiguous. At worst, those

fundamental differences proved difficult to overcome.

Despite the poor health conditions that existed among rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes, many were hesitant in seeking out and utilizing modern medical care. On the surface, their stubbornness appeared illogical as well as harmful. Part of their intransigence can be attributed to the inadequate medical care in their respective areas. But that factor alone does not explain their unwillingness to seek out the advantages that modern medicine provided. Even when medical care was readily available, they remained reluctant to accept the overtures of doctors and medical personnel. They did not completely reject the well intentioned efforts of the Indian Bureau to alleviate the maladies that afflicted their communities, but rural Indians were cautious in allowing too much white cultural intrusion to penetrate their settlements. Similar to their acceptance or rejection of economic and educational aid, rural Indians integrated modern medicine on their own terms, whenever possible, in order to protect the cultural integrity of their communities. They considered the benefits of that strategy to far outweigh the health risks that it posed.[38]

For many rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles, health and well being were inextricably connected to the religious and social order of their community and world. The rich mosaic of their historical experience, their living environment, and the resources at their disposal all combined to define their approach to health. They practiced what medical historians refer to as "folk medicine." That did not imply, however, that they possessed a primitive or "simplistic medical system." Their folk medicine relied on a complex fusion of beliefs, cures, rituals, and treatments. It was

not a random or illogical collection of superstitions and worthless remedies, but a coherent and logical system. It demonstrated precise understanding of the medicinal qualities of plants and wildlife. Conjurations and religious ceremonies were also incorporated, and a person's belief in the healing qualities of certain antidotes was as important as the medicines themselves. Throughout the 1930s, doctors and nurses attempting to administer to rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles had a difficult time penetrating and supplanting that reliable, time-proven system.[39]

As doctors, nurses, and social workers worked among rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes they encountered problems. It proved difficult, in many cases, to convince Indians to go to hospitals for operations. A Dr. Goodwin worked tirelessly in the early 1930s trying to convince rural Indians to undergo such operations as tonsillectomies as well as obtain vaccinations against infectious diseases. He had some success, performing 42 tonsillectomies in the Five Civilized Tribes area in 1932. But Dr. Goodwin's moderate success was not the norm. A health survey conducted among Choctaws in the late1930s, stated that rural Choctaws, many of whom were full bloods, were either "uncooperative with health doctors" or were "cooperative when it was absolutely necessary."[40] Another report indicated that most tradition-oriented Choctaws only opted for surgery under the most dire circumstances. Even then, they were suspicious of procedures like tonsillectomies. Many of those who underwent surgery did so as the result of car, train, or wagon wrecks or because of such emergencies as ruptured appendixes.[41]

Although the Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes reported that "full bloods" showed "some interest" in hospitals, a 1939 report indicated that most Indians who lived in the outlying, rural communities were uncomfortable with the sterile and impersonal confines of urban medical facilities. The same thing could have been said about rural whites. But their uncomfortableness stemmed not from a cultural aversion to white medical facilities, but rather from their uneasiness with something new. Overall, tradition-minded Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes exhibited a "general antipathy toward government hospitals and doctors." Unlike rural whites, their antipathy was a strategy used to protect or preserve their medical traditions and, as a consequence, the cultural integrity of their communities. Their wariness was not the natural trepidation that people exhibit toward something not previously experienced.[42]

Medical personnel also had a difficult time persuading rural Indians to remain in hospitals once they had been admitted. One Choctaw man who abruptly left a hospital explained his stay there as "living just like in a machine."[43] More tradition-minded Cherokees believed that one only went to a hospital if one was going to die, therefore, "why go at all." Because of their strong familial and community ties, rural Indians feared never seeing their family and friends again if they entered a city hospital.[44]

Moreover, the Indians who inhabited the small, countryside settlements seldom, if ever, traveled far from their places of birth. They exhibited a lifelong devotion to their home communities that was nothing short of remarkable. They grew anxious over the thought of leaving behind their rural settlements. Those settlements represented freedom, independence, and tradition, and traveling a substantial distance to an

unfamiliar, urban area compromised that sense of autonomy and made them feel uncomfortable. Bear Heart, a Creek Indian who grew up outside of Okemah, recalled few Creeks who went to physicians. Indian Bureau nurses and social workers indicated that most rural Indian women continued to give birth at home. They reported that it was difficult to get the women to attend clinics for general physical exams, pelvic exams, urinalysis, and Wassermann tests.[45]

Some Indians had also had bad experiences with doctors and hospitals. They warned people in their communities of poor conditions and mistreatment. Mary Green Johnson, a Seminole, said that the doctors in clinics rushed Indians in and out of their offices. She emphasized that Indians were dismissed "abruptly" unless the Indian "was married to a white person."[46] A Cherokee man named Mr. Frank related a story about a friend of his who had gone to the Talihina Sanatarium for treatment, but was turned away. Relatives then took him to the hospital at Claremore, but they refused him as well. Eventually, the man died at home. Another Seminole man by the last name of Harjo said that even patients who were admitted to places such as Talihina oftentimes complained about the conditions. He had heard people say that the doctors appeared to be young students learning about medicine. The Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes reported that health workers had a hard time convincing Indians to get vaccinations. Apparently, vaccinations for small pox had infected the arms of some Indians making other Indians wary. All of the stories, whether true or not, combined to dissuade rural Indians from utilizing white medical facilities.[47]

Another significant problem arose because of the ephemeral nature of field

clinics. Oftentimes, field clinics set up for the benefit of Indians "were usually only established for short periods of time." They offered Indians no long term benefits and thus Indians saw no reason for their utilization. In addition, doctors and nurses who staffed the clinics had no connection to the communities they attempted to aid. Contact between Indians and medical personnel was impersonal. The trust between doctor and patient oftentimes did not exist. Some Indians complained that just when they felt comfortable around one doctor that doctor left and another one took his place. Not only did this inhibit Indians, but one Seminole woman said that different doctors prescribed different treatments and medicines. She claimed that this only confused Indians. It is not to say that those who tried to bring medical aid to Indians in rural areas were incompetent or uncaring. People such as Elinor Gregg of the Indian Health Service worked tirelessly on behalf of the Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes. Health care providers were simply too few and too spread out to adequately cover the areas in which they were assigned.[48]

Language problems also hindered the process. The language barrier often muddled issues "related to sickness and health." Medical personnel had a difficult time explaining diagnoses, medicine, and procedures to Indians. In turn, Indians had a difficult time understanding some of the medical terminology. Indeed, some of the English words failed to translate into the Indian languages. Cherokees, for example, had no word for germ or microbe. Many rural Indians described almost any malady as a fever. They focused more on what caused their illness as opposed to its general symptoms. To compound matters, interpreters were not always available to resolve the situation.[49]

Perhaps more importantly, more tradition-oriented Indians viewed the medical aid that the Indian Bureau and white doctors offered as just another means to assimilate them into mainstream, American society. In that respect, the government's Indian health care program involved more than simply attempting to cure the sick. It had paternalistic, ethnocentric undertones. Non-Indian doctors opposed "traditional healing practices." White doctors viewed those practices as obstacles to the superior medical treatment they believed they offered. In many respects, that claim was true. At the same time, historians have argued that in the process of curing sick Indians, white doctors hoped to convince Indians of the "superiority of Anglo-American culture." In the case of the rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes, as with Indians elsewhere, their efforts oftentimes fell on deaf ears.[50]

Ultimately, a stubborn adherence to their own culture, perhaps more than any other factor, precluded rural Indians from visiting white doctors or entering hospitals on a regular basis. Adherence to their traditions, and the rural and remote areas where less integrated members of the Five Civilized Tribes most often lived, isolated them both culturally and geographically, in many respects, from modernity. It made Indians less inclined to seek medical treatment beyond their communities. This isolation reinforced the use of their own "trustworthy means of health care." Lower class people or ethnic groups who live in remote, socially cloistered settlements or areas often rely heavily upon an "extensive lay system" of medicine and treatments. The body of information that comprises folk medicine is maintained and perpetuated as it is handed down from one generation to the next. This criteria certainly applied to the more tradition-minded

Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes. Even when they welcomed modern medical practices, most rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles remained devoted to their own set of beliefs about health; beliefs that contrasted significantly "with the scientific philosophy of western medicine."[51]

Similar to other Native Americans, ideas that less integrated Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles embraced regarding health evolved within the context of their cultural and social traditions. Holistic in nature, health was not only associated with one's physical well being, but health also encompassed one's mental and spiritual well being. Indeed, one's physical and spiritual health were indistinguishable. There existed no gap between the secular and the sacred. Indians interpreted health as "an ongoing state" that illnesses occasionally altered or violated. Those illnesses were defined as either major or minor in nature. For example, such things as fractures and nightmares might fall into the category of major maladies while something such as diarrhea would be a minor discomfort.[52]

Moreover, some sicknesses were considered Indian sicknesses and others were designated "white illnesses." Misfortune brought on by a curse would be defined as an Indian illness while typhoid was a white man's disease. As a result of their animistic and pantheistic belief system, rural Indians divided sickness into two separate "spheres." On one hand, they believed that disease and illness arose from natural causes. To treat those maladies, Indian healers relied upon time-proven mixtures extracted from tree bark, herbs, leaves, roots, seeds, and other natural products. This pharmacopeia produced substances to cure or ease such things as arthritis, diabetes, headaches, high blood

pressure, skin rashes, and snake bites.[53]

At the same time, Indians interpreted some sickness as the wrath of Gods or spirits. This type of illness was the consequence of broken rules or social violations. They believed that one became sick for specific reasons; that people instigated diseases through their actions. For example, tradition-minded Cherokees maintained that some maladies were inflicted as revenge for a person's improper behavior. Spirits such as the "Purple Man," acting alone or at the behest of other individuals, punished disobedient people for their inappropriate conduct. To restore balance and social order, healers were summoned or sought out to perform ceremonies, conjurations, fasts, and prayers. These ceremonial cures and treatments dealt more with an individual's emotional, psychological, or spiritual state of health rather than a physical ailment. Because spirituality and physical health were inextricably linked, Indian healers occupied a significant place in the rural Indian communities of the Five Civilized Tribes.[54]

Rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes utilized both male and female healers. Among the Choctaws, healers or doctors were known as *alikchis*. Medicine men and women administered to the group as well as to individuals. Although the doctors might not belong to an Indian church, a Creek man, Jimmie Barnett, indicated that they were "considered like preachers."[55] Moreover, those people who became healers did not do so on their own accord. John Wesely Edward, a Choctaw *alikchi*, said that one "is called."[56] In some instances, individuals carried on the tradition of healing that had been in their families for generations. Elderly *alikchis* determined who might be worthy of learning "medicine." Candidates were chosen for their character. The selection process was not

rapid, but required a careful evaluation of an individual over a lengthy period of time. Usually, a medicine man or woman chose several people to carry on the tradition. This ensured that the knowledge of medicine survived.[57]

Men and women who qualified to become *alikchis* had to meet certain criteria. Individuals who were lazy, irresponsible, or who were unable to get along with others were not selected . Medicine men and women had to possess an even temperament and an insight into human psychology. In addition, intangible, spiritual qualities were necessary. A keen intellect and a sharp memory were also required. *Alikchis*, moreover, needed to have a thorough understanding of a complex and vast body of botanical information. They functioned as both healer and naturalist. Lastly, candidates had to learn the incantations, songs, and rituals that accompanied healing ceremonies and procedures. The "accumulated wisdom" was imparted "a little bit" at a time.[58]

Young men and women fortunate enough to be selected underwent an arduous apprenticeship. Prior to being sent to a medicine man for training, individuals were put through a series of tests to measure their character and self-discipline. For example, a Creek Indian, Bear Heart, recalled being tested by a Seminole medicine man named *Nokus Ele* or Bear Paw. *Nokus Ele* instructed him to lie on an ant hill to gauge his self discipline. But more so, it involved a test of his faith. Bear Heart said that none of the ants bit him. It taught him patience in the face of adversity and that one had to believe in one's "own life."[59]

If apprentices passed trials of character, then his or her education began in earnest. Under the tutelage of a medicine person, or persons, trainees spent months in the

field. They learned the names and medicinal qualities of the wide variety of plants that grew in the areas in which they lived. Apprentices also learned how to preserve and care for the plants that they gathered. Training spanned the four seasons, as it was necessary to understand how the appearance and medicinal qualities of plants changed over time. As a result of this extensive field work, Indian healers possessed a "vast empirical knowledge of botany, second to none."[60]

Bear Heart, under the tutelage of his mentors, Daniel Beaver and Dave Lewis, also partook in numerous fasts. During those periods, that oftentimes lasted several days, he asked for spiritual guidance. His mentors taught him that the fasts would allow him to "receive his medicine." By that, they meant that the medicine that healers dispensed had spiritual qualities in addition to physical properties. A healer needed to believe in his or her medicine in order for those who received it to believe in its healing abilities. Bear Heart said that this spiritual component was one of the most important lessons he learned.[61]

Indian doctors employed a myriad of medicines to heal and cure various ailments. They were known to be meticulous record keepers retaining information on herbs, sacred formulas and chants, and the proper mixtures of medicine for numerous maladies. At least among the Cherokees, there appeared to have been healers who specialized in the treatment of certain medical problems. One Cherokee man said that the body was divided into twelve areas, and each was "an area of specialization."[62] Some doctors only dealt with specific areas while others administered to certain maladies. The man said that his father-in-law's area of expertise was the healing of poisonous snake bites. He

maintained that Cherokees who needed medical attention went to a medicine person that specialized in the particular illness from which they suffered.[63]

In all of the Five Civilized Tribes, medicine men and women acquired their medicine from the surrounding countryside in which they lived. Several key factors were integral to this process. Healers took great precaution in gathering various natural components. Indians believed that the "curative powers" of a medicine depended heavily upon the care given to its collection. Tradition held that one should always travel east in search of medicine. Always collect ingredients, for example, from the east side of trees. Indians doctors usually practiced their medicine while facing east to "get the full effect of the sun." Moreover, similar to behavioral standards expected from white physicians, medicine men and women followed prescribed procedures making sure that they followed traditional rules and guidelines that did not violate the ethics of their vocation.[64]

Jasper Smith, a Cherokee medicine man, confirmed that part of a medicine's effectiveness depended upon a person's belief. People had to have faith in a medicine's curative powers. Any Cherokee could visit Smith. In fact, some whites who lived near rural Indian settlements also utilized Indian doctors. Smith's patients were advised to visit him early in the morning during the period of a new moon. He took them to a creek where they were instructed to wash their faces. Smith then threw water over their heads seven times, a sacred number among the Cherokees. It represented the number of clans in the tribe, the correlating fires of the clans, and paid respect to the original seven-sided Cherokee council house.[65]

The ceremonial use of water was supposed to insure his patients of good health. It

also acted as a deterrent to evil spirits. Sometimes Smith warmed his hands over a fire and rubbed their bodies, imparting the sacrosanct qualities of the fire. Poultices prepared from natural ingredients were applied to either ease or heal wounds, headaches, and other various ailments. Smith explained that some cures took as long as several months. In addition, medicine cleansed the souls and helped "heal the grief" of bereaved people mourning the death of loved ones. It was also used to purify homes where people had died to ensure that the "spirit of the dead" did not return as a ghost. [66]

People also sought Smith out when they needed help in solving personal problems. In this regard, medicine men and women served as psychiatrists and counselors. A Cherokee woman corroborated Smith's assertion. She said that her father, White Tobacco Sam, often treated people for anxiety and depression. She explained that sometimes he mixed his medicine alone while at other times he made his medicine in front of the people who had requested his services.[67]

Occasionally, Indian doctors were asked to lift curses that people believed had been placed upon them by evil individuals. Claude Gilbert, a Choctaw *alikchi* who began learning medicine when he was sixteen years old, remarked that half of his duties involved dealing with "superstition and witchcraft." Gilbert confirmed the fact that most rural, less-integrated Choctaws believed that other people could place curses on them in order to make them sick. They went to medicine men because they believed that *alikchis* possessed stronger medicine or "magic" known among the Choctaws as *Kowi Amkash.*[68]

Smith, like other traditional Indian doctors of the Five Civilized Tribes, also utilized tobacco smoke. Smoke was thought to be the "messenger of the Spirit." Indian

doctors blew smoke through cane tubes into their medicine mixtures to ensure the sacredness of the medicine. Lastly, Smith never charged people, although most of those who solicited his services offered some form of compensation. Indians believed that if something was not offered, then the medicine would not work. Creeks called this "exchange for medicine ways." The term in their language was *helis a gaga* or "goes with medicine."[69]

A Choctaw medicine man, John Wesley Edwards, adhered to many of the same practices. He began practicing medicine in the 1920s. He followed in the footsteps of his father, grandfather, and great grandfather who had all been medicine men. Edwards said that he treated someone every day of the week. Not only did individuals visit him at his home, but he also prepared medicines and had them delivered to those people unable to see him personally. Some medicine men and women, in addition to their homes, had their own special dwellings used specifically for the practice of their medicine. As an *alikchi*, Edwards treated all sorts of troubles ranging from kidney ailments to strokes. Similar to Smith, part of Edwards practice entailed treating people for curses, emotional problems, family troubles, and "personal difficulties."[70]

Unlike his Cherokee counterpart, however, Edwards charged some people for his services. He said there existed no "set rule." The ability of a person to pay largely determined the form of compensation. The difficulty it took to gather the ingredients for a particular medicine and the type of cure a person needed also dictated the cost. People understood their responsibility to provide a gift commensurate with the type of medicine provided. Sometimes people paid with such items as poultry. Tobacco also sufficed as

payment. Indeed, some healers used the gift tobacco in certain medicines. Occasionally, payment was demanded in full at the time of the visit. Other times, Edwards allowed people to pay over extended periods of time. He stressed that he had never refused his services to any individual.[71]

Medicine women were also quite active. Mrs. Mose Burris, a Chickasaw, said that her grandmother and another Chickasaw woman named Vicey Walker served people near the town of Ada, Oklahoma. She recalled seeing the women blow into their medicine mixtures with bamboo sticks while they chanted and sang songs; a practice more commonly, though not exclusively, associated with Creek and Seminole doctors. The women also served as midwives. Mrs. Burris stated that she had eight of her children at home. The two medicine women were experts at utilizing various herbs and plant substances to medicate ailments and they often traveled long distances searching for quality ingredients. For example, the tea produced from distilled cherry bark was an excellent cough syrup. People drank broomweed tea for colds and flu symptoms. Steeping the blossoms and stalks of the bitterweed plant furnished a tea that helped reduce fevers. Chiggerweed tea eased headaches. Mrs. Burris stated that her grandmother used iceweed tea to lower high blood pressure. Similar to other Indian doctors, the women used assorted herb poultices. For example, boiled mullein leaves wrapped in the inner bark of a cotton wood tree and applied to injuries helped reduce swelling. Lastly, Mrs. Burris asserted that when people were too ill to visit one of the women, the women doctors traveled to the sick person's home.[72]

A Seminole man, Raymond Johnson, confirmed this as well. He said that his

mother, who was a medicine woman, traveled frequently to do her doctoring and oftentimes spent the night at the homes of sick people. Friends and relatives also visited the ill. Families cooked pots of *poshofa* and the Chickasaws danced and sang a special song for the sick called *Tagbahaka*. The infirm drank the medicine that the Indian doctor provided. The remaining portion of the medicine was then used to bathe the bodies of those who were ill. As with other rural, less-integrated Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes, the Chickasaws combined herbal remedies with ceremonies and rituals as part of the healing process.[73]

Creek and Seminole women also practiced medicine. One Indian man stressed that there existed as many women as men doctors among the Creeks. Some Creek and Seminole women doctors utilized smoke as a curative or balm. Small structures were built around a platform. The medicine woman started a small fire and those seeking relief sat around the fire and inhaled the smoke. The woman chanted as smoke filled the enclosed area. Sometimes steam from stones was inhaled. Traditional Creeks and Seminoles believed that this procedure cured fevers. Creeks also believed that children should not be present when a medicine person practiced his or her medicine on an adult. They maintained that a sickness could jump out of an adult and into a child.[74]

Similar to other Indian doctors, Creek and Seminole medicine women attached great importance to the healing powers of water. Water was thought to carry a person's troubles away in its current. The medicine women took sick people and those with personal problems down to running streams. They washed their patients in the water and also blew into the water with their highly polished bamboo medicine sticks. Herbs were

also cast into the streams. Occasionally, the women doctors had their patients stand in the middle of a creek and drink emetic medicine. The purpose of this practice was to have the patient vomit his or her troubles away. Its significance was largely therapeutic. As one Creek woman maintained, one of the functions of the medicines and the rituals was to relieve or reduce a person's anxiety. In that regard, their aim was psychological as well as medical. Frank Melvin, a Seminole, said that he had a "profound respect" for the Creek and Seminole doctors in their ability as psychiatrists even though they possessed no formal training.[75]

As their traditional medicinal practices aided them in their lifetimes, practices and rituals associated with the deaths of family members, relatives, and friends comforted and provided solace to rural Indians and their communities. As in life, so too in death did the Indians continued to be connected to their places of birth. More tradition-oriented Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles often buried family members in plots that were adjacent to their homes. In this way, both the living and the dead remained close to those they loved.[76]

Some Creeks, on the other hand, buried their dead near or adjacent to the homes the deceased had occupied, but the surviving family members, out of respect, then moved to another house. Cemeteries were also located on many of the church grounds located in or near rural Indian settlements. The cemeteries were available to any members of the church that required a resting place for their dead. Rural Indian communities also possessed private, secluded cemeteries or burial grounds. They were oftentimes so well hidden that only members of the community knew their location. These included both

community cemeteries and family cemeteries.[77]

Although funeral rites varied among Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes, all were marked by rituals that lasted for several days or more. For example, less-integrated Creeks and Seminoles remained with their deceased from the time of death until burial. Among the Seminole, family members and relatives gathered at their church for a two day period of mourning prior to the funeral. The first night a large dinner was served consisting of "traditional Seminole foods." An "all night religious service" was held the following night. Creek and Seminole dead were usually buried in small family plots. Small wooden structures known as "grave houses" were constructed over the graves. More tradition-minded Cherokees also erected these houses over their graves. After the burial, Creek and Seminole mourners returned to the home of the deceased where his or her family prepared an elaborate meal. A small amount of food from each dish was placed upon the grave. Relatives and friends of the deceased remained in the family home for four days and nights because many rural Creeks and Seminoles believed that that was the amount of time it took the spirit to leave the house and "reach the afterworld." People took medicine during those four days to protect themselves from "harm or disease" associated with the dead person's ghost.[78]

More orthodox or traditional rural Choctaws held what was known as a funeral "cry." After a thirty day period of mourning, during which immediate family members of the deceased focused all of their energies on grieving for the dead, they then gathered with the rest of the settlement at the grave site. The people all cried together for the deceased. Individuals then delivered eulogies, followed by an elaborate feast that was

noted for its festive mood.[79]

Among all less integrated, rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles, cemeteries and grave sites remained sacred places that surviving family members and friends visited on a regular basis. Communal dinners, social gatherings that marked special festivals or occasions, and reunions were held on cemetery grounds. Often flowers were scattered among the graves in homage to the deceased. Moreover, many Indians visited the graves to tell their ancestors their personal problems.[80]

Similar to the Creeks and Seminoles, Cherokees gathered at the home of the deceased, but they did so to perform specific rituals and undertake particular duties. They burned cedar in the home and a medicine man or woman splashed medicine in the four corners of the dwelling. Medicine was also sprinkled throughout the yard. The home and yard were sanctified with medicine to prevent the deceased from returning as ghost. Men and women of the community also cleaned the entire house and yard. Finally, at the new moon, family members of the deceased performed the Cherokee ritual of "Going to the Water." They washed themselves with medicine for four consecutive mornings. Similar to Creeks and Seminoles, Cherokees believed it took four days for the spirit of the dead to reach the afterworld and thus the medicine offered them protection from the transient spirit of the deceased. [81]

While medicine provided cures and relief to individuals both in life and at death, it also played a symbolic, as well as tangible role in the ceremonial gatherings of rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. Whether it was the Green Corn Dance of the Creeks and Seminoles, or the Stomp Dances of the Cherokees, the

taking of medicine was an integral element. Indian men who chose to attend the Green Corn Dance, for example, fasted and took medicine. The taking of medicine indicated, among other things, that a man respected his wife. It was also supposed to protect a man's wife from misfortune or illness.[82]

One also partook in medicine to maintain one's physical and spiritual health. It was believed that medicine had the ability to purify the spirits of individuals. Nancy Grayson Barnett, a Creek woman, emphasized that protocol was strictly followed at the Green Corn Dance. If an individual failed to follow the rules, then it was "considered a bad omen"and that person's medicine would "be broken."[83] The taking of medicine, however, was not required at these ceremonies. Raymond Johnson, a Seminole, said that the taking of medicine was a personal choice. Nonetheless, most Indians who lived in the small, rural communities believed in the medicine tradition.[84]

Indians who attended the ceremonies were not supposed to eat anything prior to the taking of medicine. At Stomp Dances, Cherokee men and women, for example, stood within the dance square or circle. Usually around noon, they formed four lines, two of women and two of men, west of the "medicine pot." The medicine container was positioned north of the fire. Among the Cherokee, the medicine was a mixture of huckleberry root or snakeroot, flint weed or red willow wood, and cedar and pine leaves. Medicine men boiled the mixture and then allowed it to cool. They blew into it four times, forming bubbles, with one common bamboo or cane tube. A medicine man served the warm liquid. People drank from a common dipper or ladle. Individuals could also wash their faces with the medicine. Men drank enough of the emetic medicine to ensure

vomiting. This functioned as a cleansing process. Later, other members of families could partake in the medicine if they so desired. The daughter of the Cherokee medicine man, White Tobacco Sam, said that, as a rule, all of the medicine was "used up." None was supposed to be taken home. She also indicated that tobacco was used in the Cherokee ceremonies.[85]

Indians who followed more faithfully tribal traditions believed that tobacco could be "used as an instrument of prayer." The tobacco was kept in a box located on the east side of the fire. Lined with deerskin, the box contained a mixture of homegrown and store- bought tobacco. Each family who attended the Stomp Dance could take a portion home with them if they desired. As a type of medicine, tobacco offered protection and good health. Symbolically, all forms of Indian medicine linked Indian families to the broader, rural community. Whether as individuals or participating within the context of the group, rural Indians relied upon a holistic, time-proven system of medicine that benefitted them physically and spiritually, and at the same time helped them sustain their communities, culture, and traditions.[86]

Although many rural Cherokees, Chickasaw, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles used Indian medicine men or women exclusively, to conclude that less integrated Indians never sought out the services of white doctors and hospitals would be incorrect. A study undertaken in the late 1930s found that 30 per cent of 100 rural, restricted Choctaw families, many of whom were full bloods, used both white and Indian doctors. The other 70 per cent relied solely upon Indian medicine men and women. A similar study that focused on 97 Cherokee families revealed that 40 families used white doctors, 27

families used Indian doctors, and 30 families used both.[87]

Moreover, to maintain that an Indian's age or generation determined his or her thinking in regard to medicine would also be misleading. Some older Indian people visited white doctors, while younger Indian men and women continued to practice the medicine of their ancestors. Others went to white doctors as a last resort to attempt to cure terminal illnesses. On the other hand, some Indians frequented medical clinics for predominantly minor ailments, but continued to use Indian doctors for what they defined as more significant illnesses and personal problems. There was also a tendency of Indians who lived closer to urban areas to take advantage of medical facilities and doctors. Dr. Rufus H. Sherrill said that Choctaws who lived around Broken Bow sometimes requested his services, particularly for child births. But again, those were not Indians living far out in the countryside.[88]

Overall, more tradition-minded Indians were pragmatic in terms of health care. Their cultural response to medicine was dynamic as opposed to static. Oftentimes, they combined Indian medicine with white medicine when they believed it to be reasonable or accessible. This does not mean, however, that white doctors and government health programs achieved a high degree of success working among rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes in the 1930s. Nor does it indicate that Indians were making a slow, but inevitable transition from traditional medicine to modern medicine.[89]

Throughout the decade, less-integrated rural Indians continued to be suspicious of any kind of medical help that whites offered. Many of the same problems that hampered Indian Bureau health care programs in 1930 persisted in 1940. The Indian Bureau still

struggled as it attempted to maintain and modernize health care facilities in the Five Civilized Tribes region. Although medical personnel had been added in many of the Indian populated counties, by 1940 their numbers were still inadequate in terms of the population they served. Only Pushmataha, Mayes, McCurtain, and Seminole Counties had contract physicians. The number of field nurses had been increased, but fell short of the amount needed in an area that size. It was extremely difficult to attract doctors and nurses willing to live in rural communities that lacked many of the amenities of modern life. Many of those who worked among the Indians did not do so only briefly. Their sense of altruism vanished when confronted with the realities of rural living. Although some women trained as nurses lived near Indian communities, the majority tended to be older women in frail health themselves or who were only willing to work part time.[90]

Supervising physicians at the few Indian hospitals that existed, also indicated that they had difficulty staffing their institutions. Reports indicated that some doctors who worked among Indians shirked their responsibilities. The contract physician in Seminole County, for example, was supposed to make house calls to Indian homes in case of an emergency. However, there is no evidence to indicate that the physician fulfilled that duty. And lastly, even when Indians attempted to take matters into their own hands, their efforts came up short. Apparently, most Seminoles had wanted to build an Indian hospital on the site of the old Mekasukey School grounds. Instead, the Seminole Council decided to build a community center.[91]

Although permanent institutions such as the Talihina Tuberculosis Sanatorium attracted numerous patients up until 1940, it specialized primarily in the treatment of

pulmonary tuberculosis. It contained 225 beds for the care of that particular disease. Its general medical ward of approximately 75 beds ran at full capacity that year, but its tubercular ward averaged 15 empty beds. It also had a children's ward that contained 68 beds. It averaged 61 children at the close of the decade. However, this was an anomaly because the sanatarium focused almost exclusively on one disease. It did not conclusively prove that Indians were either eager or had sufficient reason to take advantage of white medical facilities. Moreover, the sanitarium was located hundreds of miles from all of the tribes except for the Chickasaws and Choctaws. Indeed, Dr. Wilson Van Cleave said that Choctaws comprised the majority of patients. If Indians from the other Five Civilized Tribes needed to use it, they had to travel a substantial distance. What remained insufficient was a sophisticated network of health facilities and qualified medical personnel that could attend to the more immediate health care needs of the majority of restricted Indians who lived in the outlying, rural communities.[92]

H.V. Sanders, the senior physician for the Field Health Division of the Five Civilized Tribes, complained that he continued to have difficulty "getting nurses and field agents to submit proper, intelligent reports." He asserted that it was "almost impossible" to get contract physicians to "report the conditions of patients at discharge." And yet Sanders said that he had made earnest efforts to work closely with "every organization" that was interested in Indians.[93] He indicated that field medical personnel also attended symposiums on Indian health, Indian Service meetings, and staff conferences at the various hospitals. In addition, they distributed health manuals and journals. The degree of their effectiveness, however, is debatable. Sanders was shocked

by the fact that nurses did not even know where many of the Indians lived in their respective districts.[94]

Moreover, only a small percentage of Indians made use of the clinics and facilities that did exist. Weekly clinics were conducted in various areas of southeastern Oklahoma, such as the Idabel District, that supposedly attracted "a throng of Indians." A closer inspection of the district report, however, revealed that 588 persons were treated at the Idabel clinic in 1939 out of a population of approximately 2,300 Indians. That meant that roughly 11 Indians per week took advantage of the medical clinic. The number was not substantial in relation to the overall population. It certainly did not demonstrate that Indians were rushing to obtain diphtheria, small pox, and typhoid vaccinations.[95]

Statistics from January 1938 to June1939 indicated that Indians were reluctant to visit other clinics in the region as well. The Field Health Division reported that in the eighteen month period Indians visited clinics 8,962 times. That averaged out to approximately 16.5 Indians per day who visited the clinics in the entire Five Civilized Tribes region. The rural areas, alone, were home to roughly 32,323 Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. It was clearly apparent that despite the government's efforts, the majority of Indians living in isolated, rural communities, remained far removed from medical facilities and exhibited a stubborn antipathy toward white doctors. At the beginning of the 1940s, by its own admission, the Indian Bureau's health care programs continued to be woefully inadequate. Although they had improved since the beginning of the decade, fundamental problems continued to undermine their overall effectiveness.[96]

Surprisingly, however, field reports at the close of the decade from the majority of the Five Civilized Tribes districts indicated that health conditions ranged from fair to good. Areas that suffered poor health conditions were extraordinary not ordinary. Both the Muskogee District and the McAlester District reported no problems in their respective areas. They stated that no significant diseases or epidemics were prevalent. This was a far cry from the conditions that plagued the regions at the start of the decade. The McAlester report emphasized that tuberculosis was not a concern. The Holdenville District Office stressed that Indian health was very good despite the fact that most Indians did not use local doctors. Field nurses working in Bryan, Johnston, and Marshall Counties reported in 1939 that they recorded only 42 cases of active tuberculosis out of a population of approximately 3,223 Chickasaw and Choctaw Indians. In the Idabel District, encompassing McCurtain County, only "several cases of tuberculosis" were recorded the same year. Dr. Sanders wrote that it was a "complete mystery to him" why Indians did not suffer more enteric diseases given the prevalence of "poor drinking water and unsanitary toilet facilities."[97]

A study undertaken of 100 Cherokee families, recorded that few elderly people had experienced any kind of debilitating diseases in their lifetimes. By all accounts, health among rural Indians in the Five Civilized Tribes region was not an overwhelming concern. It was true that they suffered from poorer health than white Oklahomans, but rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles who clung tenaciously to the traditional remedies and cures of their "folk medicine," appeared to be, for the most part, mentally and physically sound at the close of the decade. Although the Indian

Bureau had made substantial progress, the efforts of the federal government to improve health among the rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes continued to be compromised by such things as under staffing and a lack of adequate and accessible medical facilities. Moreover, rural, less integrated Indians who adhered to family and tribal traditions did not completely reject modern medicine and the attempts of the Indian Bureau to aid their condition, nor did they wholeheartedly discard their own forms of traditional treatment. Rather, they continued to adhere to Indian remedies and cures and only when it suited their needs did they seek out the services offered by white doctors and hospitals. In doing so, they addressed their health needs as they saw fit and ensured that their indigenous medical practices would endure.[98]

ENDNOTES

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6. Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, *Annual Report*, 1930, National Archives, RG 75, Ft. Worth Regional Records Center; A. C. Messick to Dr. J.S. Fulton, 31 May 1930, Dr. J.S. Fulton Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Yeargain, "A Study," p. 71; State of Oklahoma, *Public Health Report*, 28 November 1931; 27 February 1932; 4 April 1932; 16 April 1932; 30 April 1932; 28 May 1932; 18 June 1932; Oklahoma State Planning Board, *Preliminary Report*, 1936, pp. 131, 257, 261-262.

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April 1933, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma. Fulton stressed that the majority of doctors in McCurtain County, for example, had ceased paying their dues to the Oklahoma State Medical Association. Doctors, such as Fulton, were nearly as poor as the people they treated.

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21. *Indians at Work* 1 November 1937.

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23. "Biographical Sketch," Wilson E. Van Cleave Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

24. *Oklahoma: A Guide*, p. 327; Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report*, 1935,1936 (Washington, D.C.); *Indians at Work* 1 November 1937; *Talihina American* 29 April 1938; *Muskogee Times Democrat* 1 August 1938 ; Wiedman, "Diabetes Mellitus," p. 47; Choctaw-Chickasaw Sanatorium, *Annual Reports of Medical Activity*, 1926-1934, Dr. Wilson E. Van Cleave Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

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52. Gesler, *Cultural Geography*, pp. 12-13,16-18, 21, 58, 118-119; Trennert, *White Man's Medicine*, pp. 6-7. According to Trennert, only a small portion of the vast amount of Native American medical knowledge is currently known to non-Indians. He said only the "ice berg's tip" has been revealed.

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Conclusion

Beginning in the late 1920s, the Indian Bureau tried to improve the lives of rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. Under the guidance of John Collier, it continued its efforts during the New Deal. When Collier was appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1933, he came armed with an agenda that was moral in its intent and sweeping in its scope. He intended to correct years of mismanagement that plagued the Indian Bureau. His vision was grounded in the belief that America was a multi-cultural society. Indeed, the Indian New Deal implemented a profound shift in Indian policy. It attempted, at least, to correct decades of federal and state abuse of Indians. Moreover, it laid the foundations for Indian self-determination and recouped land losses suffered since the nineteenth century. Indian culture was to be respected; not an antiquated curiosity to be eradicated, but an intrinsic element of the American landscape, accepted on its own terms.[1]

Many of Collier's honorable visions, however, went unrealized. Despite his empathy for Indian culture, during the 1930s the federal government continued to impose its reform agenda on Indians. Collier intended to end the meddling of the federal government in Indian affairs, and to give Indians more of a voice in their own fate, but ironically, Collier's autocratic tendencies often accomplished just the opposite. He helped Indians, but "on his own terms and with his own goals."[2] Although not as stridently ethnocentric as in the preceding decades, the paternalism that guided Indian policy in the late nineteenth century continued to permeate the Indian New Deal

throughout the 1930s.[3] Paternalism was, by its very nature, both humanistic and oppressive. In one respect, beneficence and empathy guided Indian policy during the Great Depression. The Indian Bureau designed programs that allowed rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes to help themselves and to charter their own destinies. The federal government encouraged Indian involvement at the community level. The goal was to help rural Indians "adjust to modern life" while allowing them to "protect... their own way of living as much as possible."[4]

Paternalism also meant patronization. Although the Indian Bureau hired and trained personnel who better understood Indian culture, it still employed people who took a condescending view toward Indians. For example, there continued to exist in the Indian Bureau "a traditional disdain for Indian languages."[5] In 1939, the Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, Adrian M. Landman, reported the ongoing problem of negligent and insensitive field agents.[6]

At the same time, federal officials, as well as more integrated tribal members, insisted that rural Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes obtain educations, acquire good jobs, purchase homes, and become productive citizens. One would certainly be hard pressed to argue against that advice. Indian Bureau administrators and tribal leaders genuinely believed that education and economic uplift were the keys to Indian self-improvement. And rural Indians themselves wanted to improve their lives, but not at the expense of fragmenting the communal ethos of their settlements. There is little evidence that the Indians who inhabited the small, countryside communities desired to elevate themselves to white, middle-class standards of propriety–standards that have always been

the mythological benchmark of respectability in American society. As a consequence, their rural way of life was looked down upon as something backward, undesirable, and inferior.[7]

To compound the situation, the Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes and Indian Bureau personnel continued to believe that the restricted, predominantly full-blood Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes who inhabited the small, rural communities and settlements of central and eastern Oklahoma were a dispirited, indigent people, ravaged by disease, drunkenness, hunger, and poverty and that the Great Depression only exacerbated conditions causing further social dissolution. As a result, some Indian Bureau field agents, as well as some tribal leaders and spokespersons, viewed rural Indians as mentally or physically incapable of taking caring of themselves. Presuming to have the best interest of the Indians in mind, policy makers believed the manner in which rural Indians lived was the source of their problems and that the Indians were lazy and indolent.[8] Not only was the lifestyle of rural Indians under attack, but their moral character as well. Both needed to be transformed.

Politically, the Five Civilized Tribes never officially reorganized during the 1930s. Oklahoma senators Elmer Thomas and W.W. Hastings lobbied to exclude them from the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. Allotted Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes supported that decision, but for different reasons. Some feared that they would lose their individual allotments if land once again became tribally owned. Other allotted Indians simply distrusted any policy put forth by the federal government because of a long history of broken treaties and Indian Bureau mismanagement. Nor did any of the Five

Civilized Tribes politically re-organize under the 1936 Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act. The OIWA also allowed ten or more Indians to receive charters as cooperative credit associations permitting them to receive loans from the federal government. Few rural Indians took advantage of that opportunity. Tribal political leaders, most of whom were predominantly integrated Indians, were still viewed with a considerable amount of suspicion by much of the rural Indian population. Most rural Indians did not participate in politics at the tribal level. For them, politics remained at the settlement level, where respected men and women of the community ascended to positions of authority through their personal reputations. Those individuals served as tribal representatives at meetings with other tribal leaders, the Indian Bureau, or whites in the surrounding areas.[9]

Although the New Deal reformed Indian education in the 1930s, Oklahoma public schools and government boarding schools still discouraged Indian language and culture. Students were still punished if they were caught speaking their indigenous languages. Boarding schools integrated more classes on Indian culture into their curriculum, but their main purpose remained the vocational and home economic training of Indian boys and girls Chilocco Boarding School's innovative Indian Homestead Program allowed Indian families to acquire practical homemaking, farming, and trade skills, but few Indians participated in the project. The overall influence of schools such as Chilocco on rural Indian communities was negligible.

Similarly, Indian special day schools, designed to serve rural Indian communities, achieved mixed results. Unlike most rural schools in the Five Civilized Tribes area, many of the Indian day schools were staffed with Indian teachers. The day schools not only

provided elementary education, but promoted community arts, crafts, garden, and canning and preserving projects. The Indian Bureau intended for the schools to become the focal points of Indian communities. However, few rural Indians utilized the schools. Attendance rates for children were sporadic, at best, and adults only rarely took advantage of school facilities. Despite the efforts of the Indian Bureau to become more actively involved at the grass roots level, there is no indication that rural Indians welcomed this intrusion.

In terms of health care in the Five Civilized Tribes region of Oklahoma, apathy and mismanagement within the Five Civilized Tribes Agency counterbalanced the few significant changes undertaken. Hospital beds and medical staff increased, but health care facilities continued to be medically inadequate and understaffed. There were too few doctors, nurses, and social workers to attend to rural Indians. Because many rural Indians were hesitant about traveling long distances to medical facilities, it was imperative that medical care be brought directly to their communities. Doctors and nurses were willing to do this in some cases, but not at the expense of neglecting their own practices and clinics. Field clinics provided much needed inoculations and health check-ups, but they served only a small percentage of the rural Indian population. Under staffing and the hesitancy of many rural Indians to embrace completely modern medicine undermined the overall effectiveness of the federal government's Indian health care program.

Despite that fact, even though Indian health was poor in comparison to whites in the 1930s, it continued to improve throughout the decade. There is no doubt that the

Indian Bureau played a pivotal role. But rural Indians continued to combine their own folk medicine with modern medicine. Degrees of integration determined how much Indians were willing to accept or reject modern medicine. Although some rural Indians rejected modern medicine completely, and used only Indian doctors, the majority of rural Indians utilized both white and Indian doctors. In this respect, they showed their willingness to embrace some aspects of modernity while at the same time maintaining their own cultural traditions. Their improving health throughout the 1930s, indicates that this strategy of adaptability served them well.

At the same time, they were less willing to accommodate Indian Bureau economic policies. Although John Collier cannot be labeled an assimilationist, nevertheless, economic policies implemented during his tenure were contrary to the communalism practiced in rural Indian communities of the Five Civilized Tribes. For example, the Indian Bureau tried to help rural Indians become market farmers. Extension agents introduced modern techniques of agronomy to people who had no desire to cultivate fields for profit. Although Seminoles embraced the agricultural programs more readily than did the other Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes, even then, only a small percentage of rural Seminoles could be considered market farmers. As a result, extension, home demonstration, and 4-H meetings were poorly attended by rural Indians. Frustrated, extension agents could not understand why most rural Indians were letting good land lie fallow. Their frustration echoed that of Europeans who first set foot on the North American continent and could not understand why Indians did not fence off and farm the land.

The Indian Arts and Crafts program, created in 1935, also fell short of expectations. Designed to bring relief to rural Indian communities, it emphasized Indian economic self-help while at the same time promoting "their artistic heritage."[10] The purpose was to organize such things as spinning, pottery, and woodcarving cooperatives in rural Indian communities of the Five Civilized Tribes and then market the handcrafted items to the general public. Even though the Arts and Crafts program was designed to provide more autonomy to rural Indians by allowing them to work in their own communities, it never generated much interest. Oftentimes, Indians were compelled to manufacture items that were not part of their tribal artistic heritage. Fixed work hours and production quotas also made many rural Indians uncomfortable. Though the Arts and Crafts program was designed with the best interest of the Indians in mind, its formality and alienated many of those it intended to help.

Even Indian credit associations failed to arouse much interest among rural Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. Established under the 1936 Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act, the credit associations were to be managed by Indians themselves. They were designed to provide low interest loans to Indian businessmen and farmers. Rural Choctaws in McCurtain County expressed the most interest, but just 13 loans had been extended by 1940. Only a "small percentage" of Indian families were "rehabilitated" under the OIWA.[11]

Most rural Indians neither wanted nor needed Indian Bureau economic programs. Their communities that had been established in the 1830s and 1840s continued to serve them well in the 1930s. Rural Indians preferred to depend on informal networks of

reciprocity and exchange. They relied upon home production, fishing, hunting, and communal beneficence for nurture and sustenance. Their social structure better enabled them to endure the strains of the Great Depression than others in Oklahoma. Rural Indians had more community support than their rural white counterparts. A shared sense of ethnicity and history, and their settlements organized on extended-kin, clan, Town, and tribal relationships bolstered their commitment to one another. Traditions, although molded and reshaped by time, proved to be quite resilient and reinforced their sense of identity and place.

During the 1930s, the Indian Bureau was never able to overcome the inherent ambiguity of its policies. That is not to argue, however, that no positive changes occurred. Collier reversed decades of land loss and established community economic self-help programs and community schools. An increasing number of Indians were employed in the Five Civilized Tribes area, particularly in the fields of agriculture and education. Indians influenced various New Deal policies that directly impacted their lives. New and remodeled medical facilities improved health care. But ultimately, even good intentions and hard work did not achieve the desired results. The Indian New Deal had little impact on rural Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole communities.

Despite the impression that less integrated Indians among the Five Civilized Tribes needed the beneficence of whites and their more integrated tribal brethren to cope with an increasingly complex, modern society, rural Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole Indians and their communities remained remarkably vital in the

1930s. Their culture had not dissipated or withered, but had accommodated itself to change. Human resilience, not social dissolution, best defined less integrated Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes as they endured on their own terms, to the best of their ability, amidst twentieth-century America.

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