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CLYDE WARRIOR'S "RED POWER": A FRESH AIR OF NEW INDIAN IDEALISM

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CLYDE WARRIOR'S "RED POWER":
A FRESH AIR OF NEW INDIAN IDEALISM

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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Dedicated to my wife Yvonne Tiger,

our two children, Jordan and Lula,

my three parents, Glyn, Carol (deceased) and Sue Jones,

and my in-laws, Marcy and Sandy Tiger

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Abstract

Clyde Warrior's "Red Power": A Fresh Air of New Indian Idealism is an ethnobiography of one of the most outspoken young activist of the early Red Power movement. Based on primary source research and the oral history of some of his closest friends and family, the chapters detail the complexity of community, tradition, cultural immersion, and identity, and how these issues combined to inform and influence Warrior. Largely remembered as someone who predicted Red Power and paved the way for a future generation of militancy, Warrior actually shaped Red Power and laid the foundations for the more militant generation that followed.

Warrior's traditional upbringing defined his identity and was the thread that weaved all aspects of his life together. *Clyde Warrior's "Red Power": A Fresh Air of New Indian Idealism* begins with a brief of the Ponca before following with a description of how Warrior was raised within tribal traditions. The following chapters discuss Warrior's growing involvement and influence in American Indian activism as he introduces direct action and, together with Mel Thom, coins the phrase Red Power that would become symbolic of Indian's fight for civil and treaty rights in the 1960s and 1970s. Within the text is an analysis of the creation and perpetuation of the erroneous myth of early Red Power activism, and powwow culture, as pan-Indian constructs.

Warrior was a man of paradoxes. He grew up surrounded by intense, sometimes violent, racism and yet, as an adult, mixed comfortably in non-Native circles. He was a cultural carrier who crossed Native and non-Native worlds yet also managed to keep them apart. His traditional upbringing defined his identity yet not non-traditional cultural forms such as powwow equally shaped his worldview. He despaired of

bureaucratic oversight of Indian nations and people, yet called for reform rather than abolition. He fought on behalf of all American Indians yet eschewed the concept of Pan-Indianism. He successfully demanded change to the system but did not live to see that change implemented. He was the most militant activist of his generation yet knew that the following generation would make him seem ineffectual by comparison. Brash, outspoken and irreverent publicly and to elected officials, he was always respectful and humble in the presence of traditional elders.

Clyde Warrior's "Red Power": A Fresh Air of New Indian Idealism underscores the need for scholars to revise conventional discussions of American Indian activism and move away from the ubiquitous prisms of Indian/White political relations. As much as Red Power was a fight for tribal self-determination and the rejection of federal oversight, in it's earliest incarnation that fight was not defined by federal policies of the past and present. It was a fight *for* the protection and retention of tradition, culture, community, and identity. It was defined by distinct cultural traditions and motifs, by tribal identity and traditions of inter-tribal co-operation and support. Clyde Warrior epitomized those traditions and motifs of tribalism, inter-tribalism, leadership and support. To many of his cohorts, Clyde Warrior *was* Red Power.

INTRODUCTION

"MORE THAN WORDS"

In October 1969, Stan Steiner wrote to Della Warrior in tribute of her late husband Clyde. He suggested that, "someday when the time, the mood is right, one of us should put his words together in a book, or write a book in his words." Neither of them ever completed the task, and so this dissertation stands as the first attempt to complete Steiner's wish. That nobody else has attempted to do so is surprising, given Warrior's position as one of the most eloquent and forthright speakers of the Red Power Movement. Generally, however, scholars have focused upon just two of Warrior's essays and speeches: *Which One Are You? Five Types of American Indian* and *We Are Not Free.* Scholars have used these essays to highlight Warrior's outspokenness, as he 'attacked' Indians and whites alike in his campaign for tribal self-determination. Such a narrow sampling of Warrior's words does him an injustice, however. He was much more plainspoken than outspoken. He was an adept and insightful social observer who had the ability to inspire Indian people's hope and anger in equal measure as they fought for tribal social, political, and cultural autonomy. This study is more than just a collection of Warrior's words however. *Clyde Warrior's 'Red Power': A Fresh Air of New Indian Idealism* shows how his upbringing, culture, community, and identity framed and defined the worldview from which his words and activism were formed.[1]

[1] Letter from Stan Steiner to Della Warrior, dated October 24, 1969, Box 3, Folder 32, National Indian Youth Council Papers, University of New Mexico, Center for Southwest Research (Hereafter known as the NIYC Papers). The scholars referred

Warrior was born on August 31, 1938 in Ponca City, Oklahoma. The Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma was one of the poorest Indian nations in the country. The Ponca people were also fiercely nationalistic. A large number of the tribe were resolutely traditional in the face of increasing encroachment from local white businesses and townspeople. Despite the professed reformist policies of the federal government at that time, with policies in place to preserve tribal cultures, languages and traditions, they were also too proud to ask the federal government for financial or political aid. In the brief history of Ponca interaction with the American government the people had created a protective barrier born of deep mistrust. Because of this mistrust, many Ponca were cynical of the government's new policies, viewing the turnaround as inconsistent and temporary, "one time you couldn't do this and then came a time to do this. Do away with your Indian ways, then they turn around and said, we want you to study your Indian ways." The Ponca attempted, instead, to preserve their community without the interference of a "foreign" people. This resulted in almost total isolation from the white world for many Ponca's, wherein the only white people they would encounter were schoolteachers, tourists, or "insurance collectors" coming to collect their dues. It was into this atmosphere of communal isolationism, fierce nationalism, and devout traditionalism that Warrior was born.[2]

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to here are too numerous to mention, but include Alvin Josephy, Troy Johnson, Joan Nagel, Duane Champaign, all of whom position Red Power as beginning after Warrior's death.

[2] Pensoneau, Steve, Personal interview, Ponca City February 20, 2010. Interview between Leonard Maker and Sylvester Warrior, dated November 14, 1968, Doris Duke Collections, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma. (Hereafter, Doris Duke Collections)

These motifs formed the bedrock of Warrior's worldview. To the Ponca, the real world began and ended with the physical boundaries of the White Eagle tribal complex, named after the Principal Chief who had led the tribe to Indian Territory during their forced removal in 1878. Warrior utilized this worldview to push for recognition of tribal rights of self-determination, first as president of regional Indian youth councils and later as founder member and, ultimately, president of the National Indian Youth Council. To Warrior, self-determination was not simply a political agenda. Self-determination was the right to speak one's own language, create and preserve one's own community programs, to practice traditions unique to one's own community without fear of reprisal or censure. Towards the end of his life, he also identified one of the most crucial aspects of self-determination as the right to educate a community's children in a culturally relevant manner that embraced and celebrated that community's worldview. Warrior crossed educational, racial and social boundaries to push for the tribal peoples of North America, recognizing and championing the unique history, tradition, and identity of each of these nations. It was this dedication to the preservation of distinct tribal cultures that led Hank Adams to describe Warrior as a "cultural carrier," forging intertribal unions that were previously unheard of and forcing federal administrators to acknowledge and pass laws to protect the right and validity of each of these tribes to preserve their own community's future.[3]

Warrior's activism also needs to be acknowledged in the wider context of the social movements sweeping America and the world in the 1950s and 1960s. This

[3] Ibid.

was a time of extreme change in America as minorities began to demand respect, autonomy and equality. For American Indians such demands meant self-determination and freedom from federal control. Warrior and his cohorts may have chosen a different route that the mass protests, demonstrations, riots, and violence which scarred the nation's psyche, but they were very much a part of a rebellion that saw America's youth demand a new style of leadership and new rules for living. For African Americans the rights they demanded were based upon promises broken after emancipation from slavery at the end of the Civil War, For white Americans the rights they demanded were based upon promises of freedom of speech made in the Constitution of America but never fully honored. For American Indians the rights they sought were as the original sovereign inhabitants of the continent, who had been officially recognized as such by every governing power they encountered since the first European landing. They were rights that had been promised, and broken, in every treaty with every tribe since 1492.

The discussion of treaty rights and the universal abrogation of these rights by the federal government leads to another issue that will be addressed in *Clyde Warrior's 'Red Power': A Fresh Air of New Indian Idealism*. In the historiography of American Indian ethnobiography, the dominant theme has tended to be centered on Indian/White relations and the subject's role in these relations. Even those texts that discuss tribal culture, such as Gary Anderson's *Lone Wolf* and R. David Edmund's *The Shawnee Prophet* do so within the constraints of how that culture related to, or was affected by, Indian/White relations. As Gary Anderson noted in the introduction to *Lone Wolf,* the majority of these texts have also been written

about famous leaders who had previously captured "the publics' imagination" or those who had "demonstrated prominence or success in war." Biographies of twentieth century American Indians have followed the same trend, focusing on figures such as Arthur C Parker, D'Arcy McNickle, and Carlos Montezuma. It is rare that such biographies are written about unsung heroes, or forgotten voices. Warrior could be categorized as just such a forgotten voice of the Red Power Movement. Until very recently, scholars positioned the movement's origins as the 1969 occupation of Alcatraz Island by the Indians of All Nations.

In the more widely read discussions of Red Power, Warrior is a marginalized figure, dead before the real action begins, with a chapter here or a paragraph there discussing his prescience in foretelling the backlash against the system from young, angry Indians. None have really acknowledged the influence he had upon these Indians or that they were building upon foundations that Warrior and his cohorts had laid. Recent texts by Daniel M Cobb and Bradley Shreve have moved to correct this omission and Warrior and the NIYC are more readily recognized in their texts than in previous scholars' efforts. Both texts reposition Red Power as beginning with the activism of the NIYC rather than the later American Indian Movement. There are still issues within these texts that need to be addressed however.

Cobb's *Native Activism in Cold War America* portrays Warrior and his cohorts as being so heavily influenced by established leaders and intellects as D'Arcy McNickle and Robert Thomas, and ultimately sidelined by a National Congress of American Indians revitalized by the leadership of Vine Deloria Jr., that

there is little recognition of their own intellectual agency in their rhetoric or campaigns. Fellow NIYC founder member Shirley Hill Witt remembers a different reality, however. She describes how Thomas and Warrior "bounced ideas a lot off each other." Warrior would then always move beyond the intellectual scope of Thomas's thinking, and he take "the next step. He would take Bob Thomas's ideas and he move with them, he'd run with them." At no point though, would he "just regurgitate what Bob Thomas had told him, which seems to be an impression that some people have put out there."[4]

Cobb also positions this rhetoric as part of the global decolonization campaigns of indigenous people during the Cold War. Such sentiments did exist among American Indian leaders during the Cold War, but it was such leaders as the aforementioned McNickle and Thomas who sought to make connections across continents. Warrior and the NIYC were focused much closer to home. The global indigenous movement sought to remove all attachments to their colonial overlords, such as the Kenyan's seeking independence and separation from the British Empire. Warrior and his cohorts were educated enough, and canny enough, to realize the power of using Cold War rhetoric and motifs but this was done in an effort to help and protect their own communities. As much as Warrior used motifs of decolonization to deliver his message in as forthright manner as possible, he was a cultural pluralist who recognized himself as Ponca and American. He wished to free his community from the yoke of federal oversight and control but, as

[4] Hill Witt, Shirley, Skype interview, September 29, 2010.

comfortable and secure as he was in his tribal identity, he never once demanded freedom of his people from American citizenship.

Shreve's *Red Power Rising* is much closer to the spirit of events as they happened for Warrior and the NIYC. His text allows the young activists greater autonomy of purpose and intellect. He shows how the men and women of the NIYC strove to change the face of American Indian activism, and change the pace and tone of the rhetoric used. Warrior is more prominent in Shreve's text than any other monograph of the Red Power era. He recognizes the influence of figures such as McNickle and Thomas but grants the young activists of the NIYC their own voice and agency. *Red Power Rising* is the first text since Stan Steiner's *New Indians* to capture the vibrancy and urgency of the early Red Power advocates as they introduced direct action as a form of protest.

Too often in studies of American Indian activism, however, words such as *tradition* and *culture* are used without explanation or example when identifying the backgrounds and worldviews of the activists under discussion. Texts such as Cobb's *Native Activism in Cold War* America, Robert Warrior's *Like A Hurricane,* and Alvin Josephy's reprinted *Red Power* offer compelling accounts of the political issues at stake for Red Power activists, but each omits tradition and culture beyond fleeting mentions. There are certainly issues of cross-cultural respect and sensitivity that need to be recognized when dealing with cultures other than one's own, but this does not justify omitting these cultures in their entirety. This omission is problematic on several levels. It leaves the reader to attach a presupposed assumption on what constitutes tradition or culture for American Indians. It ignores

the many different traditions, cultures, and identities found within Indian Country. It also places the rhetoric and actions of the activists within a singularly reactive position against federal government policy. In short, there is ample discussion of what the activists are fighting *against* but there is no explanation of what exactly the activists are fighting *for* beyond political and economic self-determination. This only tells half the story of American Indian activism.

Any history or ethnobiography of American Indians needs to be told through the prism of cultural relevancy. A discussion of Warrior's cultural framework and his social identity is absolutely necessary to place his words and their meanings in a proper context. While *Clyde Warrior's Red Power: A Fresh Air of New Indian Idealism* frames Ponca tribal history within the context of Indian/White relations, the remainder of the work attempts to portray Warrior's tribal culture, and his participation in it, within the more faithful framework of the internal social structures of the tribe. In his essay discussing *Ethics in Writing American Indian History,* Donald Fixico insisted that cultural relevancy should be foremost in the mind of the author as "culture is an important concept in correctly addressing Native American history." Any such history should use "introspective analysis of how Indians perceive history with regard to tribal language, values, kinship relations, infrastructure, societal norms, tribal beliefs, and worldview." Each of these issues are covered within this dissertation. For example, with regard to kinships relations, the term "sister" has been used to denote the relationships between Warrior and Charmain Billy, Elizabeth Primeaux and Darlene Harjo, as brother and sister are the relational values through which they identified each other. In western societal

norms, they are actually Warrior's first cousins. Fixico also warned that the "ethical scholar" must ensure that they remain respectful of "sensitive knowledge about tribal ways and not publish information about certain rituals." Foremost in the dissertation is the commitment to offering the utmost respect in the portrayal of tribal ceremonials and traditions. All cultural information enclosed within is done so with the express permission of informants. Any request that information was to remain "off the record" has been honored.[5]

Cultural relevancy is not an issue that rest solely within the realms of tradition and culture. Identity is another major factor of this concept, and identity was a major theme of Warrior's activism. Unfortunately, identity is another issue that is lost amidst analysis of the political machinations of Red Power. As the majority of these same texts avoid serious discussion of tradition or culture they also place all activism within the framework of pan-Indianism, or more recently pan-tribalism. Again, explanation or definition is rarely forthcoming, and the reader is left to attach his or her own meaning or interpretation to pan-Indianism. Often, scholars go so far as to conflate pan-Indianism and inter-tribalism as examples of the same cultural motivations, as Shreve does in *Red Power Rising.*

The two concepts are diametrically opposed. Inter-tribalism recognizes and embraces distinct tribal identities while acknowledging shared symbols and traditions within those identities. It is an alliance of tribes with a common cause, each ally or partner secure in the knowledge of their own tribal identity and

[5] Fixico, Donald, "Ethics in Writing American Indian History," *Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians,* Mihesuah, Devon, A., (ed) Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1998

heritage. Pan-Indianism is the rejection of tribal identity for a generic Indian-ness that acknowledges no distinction or diversity. Although most scholars more commonly use pan-Indianism as a sliding scale of different layers of identity and self-expression, the 'suppression' of tribal identity for Indian-ness is still the assumed outcome. Rather than Ponca, or Otoe, or Paiute, the individual is simply "Indian." Warrior and his cohorts were vehemently opposed to this concept of rejecting one's tribal identity, upbringing and culture. As NIYC officer Charlie Cambridge, or "Little Clyde" as his friends knew him, argued in 1969, "the creation of a generic, or 'pan' Indian "is the same thing that the Bureau of Indian Affairs has been trying to do for centuries." The misconception of Warrior and his cohorts as championing pan-Indianism will be addressed within the dissertation, together with an analysis of the origins and diffusion of pan-Indianism as a theory.[6]

Clyde Warriors Red Power: A Fresh Air of New Indian Idealism also addresses Warrior's legacy. For too many years, his alcoholism and early death have overshadowed his achievements, and the overriding analysis has focused upon the tragedy of his early death. His death from liver failure shortly before his twenty-ninth birthday was indeed tragic, but this should not detract from the ferocity of his speeches, or the veracity of his words. Recognition is due for a man who helped create, and shape the direction of, a movement that changed the face of American Indian activism in the twentieth century. While he did not act alone, and this recognition needs to be shared with fellow NIYC officers such as Mel Thom, Shirley Hill Witt, Karen Rickard, and Herb Blatchford, Warrior carried an aura that

[6] Cambridge, Charlie, Telephone Interview, dated February 25, 2010.

drew people to him. He used this aura, born of his absolute assurance of self-identity to drive and cajole people towards his aims. These aims included culturally relevant education for American Indian schoolchildren, the right of tribal communities to devise and adapt their own social, cultural and economic development programs. He sought self-determination and campaigned long and hard for his voice to be heard. By the time he died, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs was listening, and tribal self-determination policies were being discussed in the White House. Many Indians of Warrior's generation still tell his widow Della how much his words "inspired them." Warrior's influence in the shape of these polices or educational advances for American Indian schoolchildren should no longer be ignored.

Returning to the issue of Warrior words. *Clyde Warrior's 'Red Power': A Fresh Air of New Indian Idealism* attempts to allow Warrior to speak with his own voice as often as possible. This has, on occasion, been a difficult task because access to Warrior's private papers, and thus his innermost thoughts, was unavailable during the research process. In his letter to Della about putting Warrior's words together, Steiner feared that if they didn't, then "a fool will do it, and make a fool out of him." I sincerely hope that, if he were still with us, this dissertation would allay Steiner's fears.[7]

[7] Steiner to Della Warrior letter, October 29, 1969, NIYC Papers

CHAPTER 1

"A PONCA HISTORY"

In Indian Country, the questions "who are you?" and "where are you from?" require a more complex answer than merely one's name and place of birth. The enquirer usually expects to hear one's name, clan, tribe, (if a fellow Indian) parental, and grandparental history. In the pre-reservation era, when renowned chiefs or warriors carried great power, and afforded family members great respect, such an introduction was a diplomatic necessity. Then and now, lineage, community and history are intrinsically linked to identity, and self-awareness. When addressing youth councils, or testifying before Congress, Clyde Warrior usually introduced himself as "a full blood Ponca Indian from Oklahoma." In more formal cultural or ceremonial settings, he deferred to traditional protocol.[8]

Clyde Merton Warrior was born into the Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma on August 31st, 1939. His parents were Gloria Collins and Lamont Warrior. His maternal grandparents were William Collins Sr. and Metha Collins. His paternal grandparents were Rolla and Maude Warrior. Although, clan membership was patrilineal in the Ponca, and his father was Thí xí'da (Blood) Clan, and a direct descendant of Chief Standing Buffalo (Ta-tan-ka-na-jim), Warrior claimed membership of his grandfather's Wa'xé hé hé'bé (Half Breed) Clan. William Collins Sr. was a direct descendant of Chief Big Elk (Ompa Donga). He also was ¼ Irish on his mother's side, which made Warrior 1/16 Irish, or 15/16 Indian, as near

[8] Warrior, Clyde, "Poverty, Community, and Power," *New University Thought,* Vol. 4, No. 2, Summer 1965

to full blood as most American Indians, even in traditional communities like the Ponca, could claim by the twentieth century. Warrior was descended from hereditary chiefs on both sides of his lineage. His Ponca name, gifted to him by his maternal grandfather, was mahí'N ska (White Knife).[9]

Warrior's maternal grandparents, in keeping with a Ponca tradition still widely practiced at the time, raised him from birth. He was fully immersed into his Ponca language, traditions and customs, which included learning the history of his tribe. His immersion in tribal history and culture ensured that as he entered adulthood he had an incredibly strong sense of self, with many friends and colleagues commenting on how easily he mixed with the world around him, white and Indian. His tribe's history had instilled a fierce nationalism within the Ponca people that Warrior inherited, and wore naturally. The strength of Ponca nationalism was fierce even among other tribes in Indian Country, and was a quality that many of his friends and colleagues remarked upon in Warrior's adult life as an Indian civil rights activist. An awareness of Ponca history is essential to understanding who Warrior was and why he led the fight for Indian rights as fiercely as he did.

White Eagle, Oklahoma, has been the Ponca homeland since 1878 after the United States government had forcibly removed the people from their traditional homelands along the Niobrara River in Nebraska. These homelands had progressively decreased in size since the Ponca's first treaty with the United States in 1817. The Ponca did not encounter whites until 1789, when they began trading

[9] Billy, Charmain, and Darlene Harjo, Personal Interviews, Ponca City August 25th, 2010 & November 11, 2011.

with fur trader Jean Baptiste Monier, a Spanish national of French descent. Less than a century later they were forcibly, and forcefully, removed from their homelands.

The Ponca were originally one of five groups of the Dhegiha division of the Siouan family, which included the Omaha, Osage, Kansa, and Quapaw tribes, with the Ponca and Omaha, who were originally one tribe, sharing an almost identical language. Archeologists place their original homelands as deep in the Mississippi Valley before migration from the 1500s onwards led them to Nebraska via the Black Hills. The tribe settled in Nebraska around 1790. Tribal religion was based upon the belief in a single creator Wakánda, who imbued plants, objects, and people, with Xúbe, or supernatural power. This was a variation of a common Plains tribe belief that mankind is an equal, rather than superior, recipient of the creator's power as is every other living thing, including the earth itself. Xúbe was stored in medicine packets and sacred bundles, with the packets being worn or carried about the person, and the larger bundles being ceremonially stored in a dry, safe place.[10]

The tribe was divided into a clan system, with hereditary clan chiefs, and a second set of lesser chiefs beneath them, agreeing upon a Principal Chief who was the nominal head of the tribe. Records vary as to the exact number of clans within the tribe, but the most commonly recognized number, used by the tribe in contemporary times, even though the system is in decline, is seven. Besides the clan system the tribe had several martial and spiritual societies, the most prestigious of

[10] Howard, James, H, *The Ponca People,* University of Nebraska Press, 1995. (reprinted from a 1965 Smithsonian Institute Imprint) pg. 128

which was the Hethuska warrior society. There were also several women's societies within the tribe, one of which performed the scalp dances, or Wí-watšì, with which to honor their warriors. Despite the presence of martial societies within the tribe, they were essentially a peaceful nation, forced to action only in reaction to incursions, and never at odds with European nations.

Although the Ponca encountered Lewis and Clark on their tour of the Louisiana Purchase in 1804, official interaction with the United States only began in 1817 with the first of four treaties of "peace and friendship" between the tribe and the federal government. The first two treaties, in 1817 and 1825, which referred to them as the 'Poncarar" and "Poncar" respectively, established that the Ponca were under the protection of the federal government, against unscrupulous traders and raids and attacks from nearby Lakota, who retained the right to regulate all trade between the two nations, neighboring whites and other Indian tribes. The third and fourth treaties, in 1858 and 1865, saw the tribe cede all land except ninety six thousand acres, their traditional burial grounds and cornfields, and small islands within the Niobrara River. In return, the tribe was supposed to receive a mill "suitable for grinding grain and sawing timber," and "one or more manual labor schools for the education of the Ponca youth in letters, agriculture, the mechanical arts and housewifery." At no point during any of these negotiations was the Ponca Tribe at war, or in dispute, with the United States.[11]

[11] "Treaty With The Ponca, 1817," June 25, 1817, 7 Stat., 155, Dec. 26 1977. "Treaty With The Ponca," 1825, June 9, 1825. 7 Stat., 247. Proclamation, Feb 6, 1826. "Treaty With The Ponca, 1858," Mar 12. 1858, 12 Stats., 997, Ratified Mar. 8, 1859, Proclaimed Apr. 11, 1859. "Treaty With The Ponca, 1865, Mar. 10, 1865,

The1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie between the federal government and the various bands of the Sioux Nation would change this peaceful co-existence between the United States and the Ponca, however. The treaty was designed, unsuccessfully, to bring to an end the almost continually running hostilities between the Sioux Nations and the United States that had begun in 1854. Article II of the treaty assigned lands to the various nations of the Sioux from the Missouri River to the Niobrara River and beyond, including the Ponca land that had been agreed to in the 1865 Ponca treaty. Due to the tenuous, and ultimately temporary, peace between the Sioux and the federal government, as well as the Dakota's long held desire for the Ponca land, there was no attempt to renegotiate the Fort Laramie Treaty when the error was discovered. Initially, attempts were made by the Indian Bureau to allow the Ponca to remain where they there, albeit as tenants of the Sioux.[12]

The treaty, however, also stipulated that "no other persons" beyond those mentioned in the treaty were allowed to "settle upon, or reside in the territory described in this article" and the Sioux used this stipulation as justification for expansion onto the Ponca settlements. Lakota and Dakota raids against the Ponca, who were now considered trespassers on their own lands, increased to the point that the Ponca Indian agent repeatedly wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs requesting guns, ammunition, and military protection for the tribe. By this time it was apparent to the Indian Bureau, and Ponca chiefs, that the tribe would need to be

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14 Stat., 675, Ratified Mar. 2, 1867, Proclaimed Mar. 28, 1867. Kappler, J. Charles, *Indian Affairs Laws and Treaties,* Vol. II, Treaties, 1904.

[12] "Treaty With The Sioux, —Brule, Oglala, Miniconjou, Yanktonai, Hunkpapa, Blackfeet, Cuthead, Two Kettle Sans Arcs, and Santee, —And Arapaho, 1868. Apr. 29, 1868, 15 Stats., 635, Ratified, Feb. 16, 1869, Proclaimed, Feb. 24, 1869. Kaplan.

relocated for the safety of the Ponca people. An agreement, and sale price of two and had dollars per acre, was reached between the Ponca and their willing neighboring kin, the Omaha, to relocate and purchase land in 1873, but this move was vetoed by the Nebraska Senate.[13]

When the Secretary of the Interior rejected the fairly straightforward proposal of relocating the Ponca to the Omaha reservation a new solution was needed. When the Indian Agent had raised the prospect of removing to Indian Territory to the chiefs in February 1875, they had demanded the right to view prospective reservation land before committing themselves. The chiefs still believed that the Omaha option was the more likely outcome, not having been informed of the Nebraska Senate decision. In September 1875, fifty Poncas, including the tribe's hereditary chiefs and Principal Chief White Eagle, signed, what they believed was an agreement securing the tribe's move to the Omaha reservation. In reality the contract they signed expressed a desire to move to Indian Territory. The proposed move to Indian Territory was one that the chiefs had indicated would only be considered as a last resort, if they could not share Omaha land, and could then find surroundings deemed suitable for relocation. Eventually, on August 1st, 1876, during the protracted negotiations over when and where the Ponca were being moved to, General Philip H Sheridan finally authorized the shipment of twenty rifles, and a substantial amount of ammunition, to the Ponca agent for the tribe to defend themselves against the Lakota and Dakota raids. Sheridan had assumed that the

[13] A more detailed account of the Ponca's protracted journey to Indian Territory can be found in Valerie Mathes and Richard Lowitt's *The Standing Bear Controversy*, Stephen Dando-Collins' *Standing Bear Is A Person,* and Joe Starita's *I Am A Man.*

matter would have been resolved sooner, but admitted that the longer it took to relocate the Ponca, the more they needed to be able to defend themselves from the Sioux.[14]

In February 1877, a month after the end of the Great Sioux War with the United States, which had been raging since March 1876, Indian Inspector Edward C. Kemble led ten Ponca Chiefs, including White Eagle, and Clyde Warrior's great grandfathers Standing Buffalo and Big Elk, to Indian Territory to find a new home for the tribe. The three areas chosen by the government as potentially viable new homes for the Ponca were the Osage, Kaw or Quapaw Reservations, with the chiefs being instructed to choose between the three. The delegation was poorly organized and by the time they reached the Osage Reservation in the north of Indian Territory, they discovered that the Osage leaders were in Washington D.C. on a delegation to negotiate with newly inaugurated President Rutherford B. Hayes over their poor living conditions. The Ponca chiefs refused to make a selection after being vastly underwhelmed by the aridity and the lack of proximity to a river of the land being proposed for them in either the Osage or Kaw reservations, and demanded to return home. They were taken to Arkansas City while Kemble awaited instructions from the Commissioner of Affairs.

After being advised by Kemble to remain where they were, the eight of the ten chiefs physically able to do so, decided to walk back to Nebraska rather than be left waiting upon the whims of the Commissioner. Kemble decided to survey the Quapaw Reservation without the chiefs and deemed it superior to the land they had

viewed and recommended to the Commissioner that the Ponca accept it. He had also sent the Ponca Indian Agent to Nebraska on the first available train to intercept the chiefs before they finished their journey. When they finally reached the Omaha Reservation at the end of March 1877 the chiefs sent a telegram requesting a hearing with President Hayes. When no response was forthcoming the chiefs decided to plead their case in the court of public opinion. Chief Standing Bear delivered letter to the *Sioux City Daily Journal* while Big Elk informed the *Niobrara Journal* editors that the chiefs had been lied to and had never consented to removal but had merely agreed to "look" at the proposed land in Indian Territory.

The chiefs' accounts of their journey increased opposition to removal from Ponca on the reservation and also from local white settlers and townspeople. The government's haste to remove a tribe that had never relinquished title to their land, and were infinitely preferable neighbors than the more hostile Sioux, perturbed many settlers in the region. Nonetheless, Kemble had successfully convinced the mixed blood members of the tribe, with the help of Cere and Lone Chief, the two elderly chiefs who had been left behind in Arkansas, that the move was beneficial. In the midst of overwhelming support for a stay of execution and a revision of the options available to the Poncas, a train of 48 wagons, carrying provisions and machinery, crossed the Niobrara River to start the long journey south. Kemble estimated that he had "over half the tribe" ready to make the journey with him, yet by April 16, when the Indians followed the wagon train to Indian Territory, pressure

from the full bloods within the tribe had reduced the numbers in the travelling party to just 180.

After facing much hardship on the journey, including torrential rains and flooded rivers, the party finally arrived at the Quapaw Reservation in Indian Territory on June 12. Back home, the Indian Agent had requested the help of the U.S. Army to remove the remaining tribe members and on May 19, the final 523 Poncas were forcibly removed from their homelands. The party arrived at their destination on July 9, having suffered similar hardships as their predecessors, including heavy winds and rain. Nine Ponca died before reaching their new 'home,' one of who was the daughter of Chief Standing Bear. She was given a Christian burial at Milford, Nebraska. Aside from the nine tribal members, the Ponca lost many of their provisions, animals, and farming equipment on the journey and so were ill equipped to rebuild their community in Indian Territory. They had also never been compensated for the land signed over to the Sioux and so had no money to replace the lost equipment or provisions. Added to this was a failure to properly adjust to a new environment, which was markedly hotter and more humid than the one they had left behind. Worse still, the Quapaw refused to make room for them on their lands, despite being informed by Kemble that Hayes had gifted it to the Ponca and being requested that they move to the Osage Reservation.

Five months after arriving in Indian Territory, the Ponca chiefs finally got the hearing with President Hayes that they had requested in March. On November 9, 1877 White Eagle, and nine other chiefs, again including Big Elk and Standing Buffalo, met with the president in the White House and requested permission to

return home. Hayes, with no hint of irony, refused the request on the grounds that removal was for their own safety from the aggressive Sioux. He did agree, however, to allow them chiefs to choose a new tract of land away from the Quapaw reservation. After surveying various locations, the chiefs finally decided upon a tract of land below where the Chikaskia River and Salt Fork Rivers merged and ran into the Arkansas River in north central Indian Territory, one hundred and fifty five miles due west of the Quapaw Reservation. By April 1878, almost three hundred Poncas had relocated to the Salt Fork River, with the rest following when funds became available for their removal in July of the same year. While the Ponca eventually embraced this area as their home, the forced removal remained a painful memory that indelibly defined the tribe's perception of the federal government. It was a focal point of much of Warrior's historical rhetoric during his years as an advocate for tribal self-determination.

Once the majority of the Ponca were reunited, except those few families who had fled Indian Territory to quietly return north, a feast was planned to commemorate the establishment of the tribe's new homeland. Following a Plains Indian tradition, the Ponca Hethuska Society, the tribe's preeminent warrior society, invited their neighboring tribes to the 'celebration.' The tribes who accepted the invitation, the Omaha, Kaw, Osage, Pawnee, and Otoe-Missouria, all shared similar Plains Indian traditions of introduction and neighborly acceptance. Each of these tribes were also considered the most 'tribal,' and traditional, of the Indians in western Indian Territory. None of the traditionally Eastern Woodland tribes, such as the Cherokee, Creek, or Choctaw, attended. Classified as 'civilized' tribes," they

possessed markedly different cultural traditions than Plains tribes. This event became an annual 'homecoming' tradition that evolved in the modern Ponca intertribal powwow, at which Warrior honed his skills as a dancer. The powwow is held every August at White Eagle, and is the longest running intertribal powwow in Oklahoma. White Eagle is the name the Ponca adopted for their homelands after Congressionally approved funding allowed the tribes to purchase the land outright in 1881. This approval was granted after events sparked by the attempt of one of the clan chiefs to return home to Nebraska. The events would also have far greater repercussions for the legal status of American Indians within the nation. [15]

In December 1878, Chief Standing Bear's son, Bear Shield, died of malaria. Having already lost his daughter Prairie Flower on the tribe's forced journey from Nebraska, he vowed to bury his son in the traditional Ponca burial grounds back in Nebraska. On January 2nd, 1879, Standing Bear, with his wife, and thirty men, women, and children of his band, began the return journey home. By this time, due to the violence of marauding bands of 'itinerant' Indians across the country, the government prohibited any Indians from 'escaping' from reservations. Such violence was greatly exaggerated by newspapers and government alike. The reality was that a group of sixty-four Northern Cheyenne prisoners had escaped from Fort

[15] Zotigh, Dennis, *Moving History: The Evolution of the Powwow,* self-published essay. In author's possession. Ponca oral history differs on the date of origin of the first dance. Certain sections of the tribe place the date as 1876, insisting that members of the tribes were placed here by that time. The official website marks the date of origin as 1878, the first year the tribe settled at White Eagle. Zotigh places it as occurring "around 1879," although Plains Indian protocol required that a tribe must host a feast as soon as possible to bless a new area, which places the dance as occurring in 1878 as some tribal oral tradition, and the official tribal website, states, when the tribe first settled at the Arkansas and Salt Fork Rivers.

Reno in Indian Territory and raided nearby farms for food and horses. They were quickly recaptured and confined at Fort Robinson. As a result of the exaggerated reports of Indian violence, however, whereas previous Ponca families who had left the area were allowed to return to Nebraska unmolested, the Secretary of the Interior ordered the arrest and return of Standing Bear and his band. Subsequently, upon their arrival at the Omaha Reservation, Lieutenant William L Carpenter was sent to make the arrest and begin the journey back to Indian Territory. Upon seeing the Ponca's visibly weakened state from their three month trek across the country, Carpenter took the compassionate decision to take them to nearby Fort Omaha and his to commanding officer General George Crook, rather than force them back on the road.[16]

The day after Standing Bear's arrest, the missionary assigned to the Omaha Reservation, Reverend J. Owen Dorsey, an Episcopal priest, sent a letter describing the Ponca ordeal to his friend A.B. Meacham. Meacham was a prominent Indian reformer and publisher of *Council Fire,* a monthly journal he styled after the famed abolitionist journal *Liberator.* Meacham had connections to Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz, and Commissioner Of Indian Affairs Ezra A. Hayt, and Dorsey hoped that he would be able to use these connections to influence the decision over Ponca removal and Standing Bear's arrest. Schurz and Hayt insisted, however, that their hands were tied, and that the Ponca's would be taken back to Indian Territory. Hayt, though, did acknowledge the "blunder" in removing the Ponca in the first place, and in February 1879, drafted "A Bill for the Relief of the Ponca Tribe of Indians in the

[16] Dando-Collins, *Standing Bear Is A Person,* pg. 49, Perseus Books, USA, 2004

Indian Territory" requesting that they be given $140,000.00 to purchase their new home. Schurz ignored the bill, and did not propose it to Congress. At the same time, General Crook had taken it upon himself to alert the local media of the Ponca situation.[17]

Crook was an army officer from a long tradition of "Indian fighters," who had grown to respect his 'enemy' more than he respected federal Indian policy. He viewed the treatment of the Poncas as inhumane and was generally dismayed that it was "an odd feature of our judicial system that the only people in this country who have no rights under the law are the original owners of the soil." He enlisted the help of *Omaha Daily Herald* editor, Thomas Henry Tibbles, to organize support for the Poncas from local residents who still resented to removal of their more peaceful neighbors to appease the aggressive Sioux who now occupied their land. By February, 1879, due to the efforts of Dorsey, Meacham, and Tibbles, religious ministers of all denominations in Omaha had taken up the Ponca cause. Supported by the national Episcopal Church, and led by Reverend Robert H. Clarkson, the Episcopal Bishop of Nebraska, the ministers founded the Omaha Ponca Relief Committee. The Committee's first order of business was to telegram Schurz demanding that the Ponca removal order be rescinded and the tribe allowed to return home.[18]

While the ministers attempted to convince the Secretary of the Interior of his moral obligation to help the Ponca, Tibbles had lobbied local lawyers in an attempt

[17] Mathes, Valerie, Lowitt, Richard, *The Standing Bear Controversy,* pp. 46 - 51
[18] Ibid. pg. 51.

to find legal representation for Standing Bear to fight his arrest and incarceration at Fort Omaha. Andrew Jackson Poppleton was eventually retained as legal counsel free of charge and at the suggestion of General Crook, a writ of *habeas corpus,* or illegal imprisonment, was issued in the Federal Circuit Court of Nebraska on April 4th, 1879. Crook was well that as Commanding Officer of Fort Omaha, the petition would be made against him as the representative of the Untied States. The case of *Ma-chu-nah-zha v. George Crook* listed Standing Bear and twenty six other Poncas who were "unlawfully imprisoned, detained, confined and in custody, and…restrained of their liberty" under "the alleged authority of the United States."[19]

The actual court case of *United States ex rel. Standing Bear v. Crook* began on May 1st, 1879 and immediately made national headlines, including the front pages of the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune.*. A large part of the legal argument on Standing Bear's behalf focused on the contention that he no longer retained allegiance to the Ponca tribal government and should therefore be considered a citizen of the United States under the Fourteenth Amendment. The government's legal team argued that as an Indian, Standing Bear was not a person within the context of the law and that *habeas corpus* did not apply. Prior to the case, Standing Bear had admitted that, "he was not liked and respected by all Ponca chiefs." He acknowledged that the tribe was now split into two distinct camps, traditionalists who strove to retain the tribe's customs, and assimilationists, of which he was one, who wished to educate their children in non-Native schools, and become more self-sufficient along BIA guidelines, at the expense of their cultural

[19] Ibid. pg. 57

traditions. These divisions between traditionalists and assimilationists, and rifts over allegiance to the Ponca Nation or the United States, became so deeply rooted that they persisted over many generations and the tribe was still divided when Warrior turned to activism in the 1960s.[20]

On May 12, 1879 after impassioned please form both sides, including a heart wrenching testimony from Standing Bear about the experience of removal, the hardship endured by the Poncas in Indian Territory, and his simple wish to bury his son, Judge Elmer Dundy rendered his verdict. He declared that the writ of *habeas corpus* was legitimate as "Indians…are 'persons,' such as are described by and included under the laws." The judge's ruling. This was a monumental moment in the relationship between American Indians and the United States as it redefined their status, not as wards to be protected, but as people who, despite not being afforded the luxury of citizenship, were entitled to many of the rights it afforded. The ruling also declared any attempt to force the Poncas to return to Indian Territory as illegal, defending the Indian's rights to abandon their tribe if they wished to do so.

Secretary Schurz abandoned the government's appeal against the decision in 1880 after deciding that the appeal argument would not stand legal scrutiny. The issue was also complicated by Dundy's ruling that personhood was applicable to Indians "only if they abandoned their tribe as an instrument for social, economic, and political advancements." Allowing such distinctions to remain in place ensured that the majority of Indians remained excluded from the ruling. The ruling also

[20] Ibid. pg. 58

maintained the provision of the fourteenth amendment to the Constitution, under which "Indians not taxed," i.e. living on reservations, were exempt from citizenship. Any challenge to Dundy's ruling could potentially lead to further civil rights gains, and possibly, full citizenship for Indians. Schurz deemed this small loss more equitable than the alternative. Dundy's decision changed forever the legal rights of American Indians, irrevocably taking them one small step closer to citizenship. Fifty-five years later, Felix S. Cohen, special assistant to the attorney general, and whose legal essays were highly influential in the self-determination movement, described this "right of expatriation" as a "significant human right." The decision had equally significant, and much more immediate, changes among the Ponca people. The tribe was now split between those left behind in Indian Territory and those allowed to remain in Nebraska. Furthermore, Dundy's caveat exempted reservation, or tribal, Indians from personhood. This further exacerbated the differences between traditional Indians and assimilationists, far beyond the Ponca Nation, that Warrior commented upon so many years later.[21]

On a national scale the Standing Bear case eventually led to the devastating loss of millions of acres of land for American Indians, through the General Allotment Act of 1887. Under the act, reservations were dividing into 160-acre plots of private with all unassigned lands reverting to government control for white settlement. Warrior later labeled the division of Ponca land by the government as illegal, his assessment stemming from Senate rulings taken after Dundy's decision. The most immediate concern for Standing Bear and his people, however, was that

[21] Ibid. pg. 71. Cohen, Felix, S. *Handbook of Federal Indian Law,* pg. 178

the Dundy decision left them homeless, free to leave Indian Country but unable, under law, to reside on another tribe's reservation. The Omaha Ponca Relief Committee organized a tour of the major cities of the Eastern Seaboard in order to raise money and also awareness of the Ponca case. The tour had the dual affect of galvanizing sympathizers to the point of creating Indian Reform groups, who collectively called themselves 'Friends of the American Indians,' and creating so much political pressure that a Senate Select Committee into Ponca Removal was created in February 1880.

The Senate Hearings pitted Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz against Massachusetts Senator Henry Dawes, who ultimately sponsored the General Allotment Act. Dawes had already overseen significant changes in the federal government's relationship with American Indians as the author of the 1871 Congressional ruling that made the treaty making process obsolete. Now a member of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, he represented a significant number of affluent constituents enrolled in Indian Reform groups. As such, a fair hearing for the Poncas and censure for the people directly responsible for the ineptitude of their removal were his priorities.

The conflict between Schurz and Dawes degenerated into a personal feud played out to a national audience. Schurz's defended his role in the affair by insisting that by the time he became Secretary of the Interior the plans for removal were too far advanced. Dawes flatly rejected this argument. This was especially so in light of the fact that it was several years after the Treaty of Fort Laramie before the Ponca were made aware of the clerical error that wiped out their homelands. The

Senate hearings ended with the majority endorsing the idea of returning the Ponca to their original homelands while Secretary Schurz, and a single dissenting Senator, Samuel J. Kirkwood of Iowa, objecting. Schurz claimed that such a move would cause "uneasiness and discontent" among the other relocated tribes in Indian Territory, while Kirkwood argued that such a move would "break faith" with the Lakota who had signed the Fort Laramie Treaty.[22]

By the time the Committee reconvened in December 1880, Ponca Chief Standing Buffalo, Clyde Warrior's paternal great-grandfather, had written two letters to Secretary Schurz rescinding the tribe's claim to their Nebraska homelands. In May 1880 he informed Schurz that after three years of waiting to return home, the Ponca were "tired" and had "abandoned all hope." Instead of returning to the Niobrara, the chief now claimed compensation for "damages committed by the Sioux" would enable them to remain in Indian Territory. In a second letter in October, he informed Schurz that "the land was good" and they just "wanted the white people to leave them alone." In the December hearings, White Eagle testified that all of the tribe's "principal men" had agreed to the contents of the letter before they were sent. As for Standing Bear and the other absent Poncas, he told Dawes that, "we hope to take them back, but they walk according to their own hearts."[23]

While President Hayes formed the four man Crook Commission, headed by General George Crook, to independently assess the implications of returning the Ponca 'home' or leaving them in Indian Territory, Standing Bear and his people

[22] idem, *Standing Bear is A Person* pg. 124
[23] Ibid. pg. 137

were taking matters into their own hands. In December 1880, in the same District Court of Nebraska that the Standing Bear case had been heard, Judge Elmer Dundy presided over *Ponca Tribe of Indians v. Makh-pi-ah-lu-tah or Red Cloud in his own behalf of the Sioux Nations.* Standing Bear's lawyers, Andrew Jackson Poppleton and John Lee Webster submitted a petition on behalf of "the remnant of this tribe of Indians" to reaffirm title "to the fee and occupancy of their old reservation." Swayed by the fact that Red Cloud and his people had agreed to desist all aggression towards the Ponca and leave the lands alone, Dundy ruled that the Ponca was entitled to regain possession of their land and could recover "all lands of the disputed reservation" for themselves. At the end of the month, however, the Ponca residing in the Indian Territory presented President Hayes with a declaration relinquishing "all their right and interest" in the Nebraska lands, asserting their desire to remain in Indian Territory and requesting only that the tribe be compensated for their former homelands.[24]

What had started with a chief trying to return home to bury his son had resulted in two distinct tribal factions separated by cultural ideology and geography. The paradox was also quite startling. Standing Bear was the proclaimed assimilationist ready to abandon his cultural traditions, yet desperate to return to his traditional homelands. The traditionalists, however, while fiercely protective of their cultural heritage, had relinquished their claim on their traditional homelands in favor of forging a new path in Indian Territory. The situation left the Crook Commission in a delicate situation, as they sought to placate both sides, as well as reformers,

[24] Ibid. pg. 131, 137

Senators, and the President. After hearing testimony from all sides, the Crook Commission report was placed before the Senate Committee when it reconvened in January 1881. By March 1881, the report's recommendations were passed into law. $165,000.00 was allotted to the Poncas in Indian Territory "to secure to them lands in severalty on either the old or new reservations," and was used by the tribe to formally purchase the land in Indian Territory from the Cherokee.

In August of the same year, new Secretary of the Interior Samuel Kirkwood met a delegation of twelve Lakota chiefs who signed over twenty five thousand acres of land to several members from Standing Bears band, which had grown to around 28 families of roughly 175 Poncas. Rather than allow the Ponca to create a communal tribal landholding, this twenty five thousand acres was immediately divided into privately owned 640-acre plots for each male head of family or unmarried male over the age of twenty-one. Women, and men under twenty-one received 80 acres each. The land would be tax exempt for twenty years and then subject to the same taxes and laws as their neighboring white citizens. The Crook Commission had averted controversy by making both tribal factions happy, and providing each with the homelands they desired. Culturally it left a divide between the two factions, who formally became two distinct tribes, the Northern Ponca and the Ponca Nation of Indian Territory (later Oklahoma). The two tribes remained culturally and politically separate until 1994, with the Northern Ponca recognizing and thanking the Southern Ponca for retaining and protecting the tribe's traditions.[25]

[25] Ibid. pg. 166

With the Ponca Removal controversy now seemingly resolved, the reformers who had been so galvanized by Standing Bear's story leant their support to Senator Dawes as he worked to break up the reservation system of tribal landholdings in favor of a system of individual land holdings similar to that of the Northern Ponca. The 1887 General Allotment Act was not as 'generous' to individuals as the Ponca settlement had been with each head of family and adult male receiving 160 acres rather than 640. The original ruling applied to all tribes except those in Indian Territory thanks to the 'protected status' of the treaties with the Five Tribes of Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole, under Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act of 1830. In 1889, the Jerome Commission set out to allot the tribal lands of the Cherokee and the smaller western tribes region, such as the Southern Ponca.

By 1892, the Commission had achieved relative success in convincing the majority of tribes to accept allotment. Their most intransigent opponents were the Ponca. The tribal leaders consistently refused to turn out to meetings in sufficient numbers to produce a legally recognized 'Council' and the remaining chiefs from the forced removal of two decades earlier were particularly unhelpful. Warrior's great grandfather, Standing Buffalo, insisted that he was now too old to hold any influence over the tribe. A fellow chief, Horse Chief, reminded the Commissioners that, unlike many tribes in the region, the Ponca actually owned their land and it was "theirs to do with as they wished." White Eagle's son declared that the tribe would not sell their land to the government even if they were offered seven dollars an acre. White Eagle himself declared that he had taken an allotment but could not condone

the sale of surplus land unless the entire tribe took allotments and consented to a sale.[26]

Negotiations with the Ponca continued into summer 1893. By this time White Eagle assured the Commissioners that any surplus land after allotment would need to be retained to provide for the next generation of Poncas "yet to be born," and closed down any suggestion that there may be room for negotiations over the surplus land sale. Standing Buffalo, backing his chief, raised the ghost of removal and the land lost in Nebraska, telling Commissioner Jerome that "now I am down here like a fox that has no hole." In a move that, decades later, Warrior would condemn as being highly illegal, Jerome responded by informing them that despite the legal sale of the land, the government had "retained title" and could do as it wished with the land, and that the Commission would remain on the reservation until the Poncas agreed to sell it.[27]

At the final meeting between the Commissioners and the Ponca, on June 6, 1893, Warrior's great grandfather Standing Buffalo insisted that, while white ways may be superior, the Ponca could not adopt them. He also suspected, quite correctly, that if the Ponca did take allotment, and lease out their lands, their white tenants would cheat them. The Commissioners returned to Washington without a signed agreement. Although many of the tribe had taken personal allotments, they had not agreed to sell the surplus lands. While the loss of the Ponca lands was a defeat for the government, it had bought more than enough from the other tribes in the area to

[26] Hagan, William, T., *Taking Indian Lands, The Cherokee (Jerome) Commission: 1889 – 1893,* Norman, USA, University of Oklahoma Press, 2003, pp. 223-224
[27] Ibid. pg. 226

open the land up to white settlers. In September 1893, settlers lined up to claim new 160-acre homesteads in the area known as the Cherokee Outlet, a vast tract of land that surrounded the Poncas to the north, south and east.

Four settlers met in Arkansas City to discuss the idea of building a city in the area rather than claim individual settlements. Bird McGuire, Mr. Dalton, Captain Style, and B.S. Barnes formed the Ponca City Townsite Company. Barnes decided upon the site for the new city after discovering a natural spring that ran alongside an old "Indian trail" that ran out of White Eagle. The company created a lottery system, whereby each homesteader paid two dollars for either a business or residential site in the new city. The land that they staked as part of the land run would then be placed within the city limits. Four days after the land run, the town, with 2000 lots and 2300 stakeholders, had been divided into streets and lots. A drawing was then made from two separate barrels simultaneously, one with a lot number on it and the other with a stakeholder's name upon it with lots being assigned to individuals. The two were then matched and the stakeholder now had his lot in Ponca City. While the majority of the homesteaders never ended up with the plot of land they had staked in the land run, they were part of the new community of Ponca City, which elected founder member B.S. Barnes as its first mayor. As worried as the Ponca had been about the repercussions of settlers exploiting their lands, they did not expect to see an entire city of white people spring up so close to them in a matter of days.[28]

In 1904 Congress finally recognized defeat over the issue of the surplus Ponca land and authorized the allotment of surplus lands to any Ponca children born

[28] Interview with Mrs. W.B. Frederick, February 23, 1938, Doris Duke Collection,

since 1894. The Ponca victory had far more beneficial repercussions for their Otoe-Missouria neighbors, who were emboldened by the success of the Ponca strategy, and refused point blank to enter into discussions. The 1904 act of Congress allowed the tribe to divide its entire land base among its own members, unencumbered from federal interference. Despite this success, Ponca land soon began slipping out of the tribe's control. The passage of the "Dead Indian Act," an appropriations act for the "current and contingent expenses of the Indian Department," of 1902 established a system whereby the heirs of a deceased allottee could sell the land without approval from the Secretary of the Interior. For many Poncas, the hot dry summers meant that their crops never grew and reports from the Indian agents of increasing drunkenness and despondency were broadcast from White Eagle. The "Dead Indian Act" provided an opportunity for financial security and people began to sell their allotments.[29]

In 1906, the Burke Act allowed the Secretary of the Interior the authority to arbitrarily circumvent the land sale restrictions of the General Allotment Act. The following year, the same year as Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory were incorporated into the State of Oklahoma, the "Noncompetent Indian Act" allowed the Secretary further freedom by granting him the authority to overrule the noncompetent status. These three acts enabled a total 26,120 acres of Ponca land to be sold. Much of this land was sold to the Miller Brothers, who, in 1905 opened the

[29] "An Act Making appropriations for the current and contingent expenses of the Indian Department and for fulfilling treaty stipulations with various Indian tribes for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and three, and for other purposes." MAY 27, 1902, 32 STAT., 245, Kappler's Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties, Chapter 888, pg. 119

Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Real Wild West Show. The remaining 75, 249 acres was divided between 628 tribal members with 524 set aside for the tribal cemetery, high above ground as per Ponca tradition, agency buildings, and boarding school, the site of which is now the Clyde Warrior Memorial Building.[30]

George Miller leased from the Ponca after the Land Run of 1893, and established the Miller 101 Ranch upon this land. Miller and his sons systematically stripped the Ponca of large swathes of tribal land while appearing to do everything in their power to help the tribe maintain its cultural heritage. Eventually the ranch grew to 110,000 acres with land purchased from the government and the Ponca. In 1905, Miller's three sons diversified into show business with the creation of a Wild West show, in their father's honor. George Miller had died of pneumonia in 1903. The *Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Real Wild West Show* took advantage of the brothers' ties to the Ponca and embellished the family's role and importance in Ponca tribal history as a method of authenticating the show as reality rather than fantasy. The brothers also employed many of them as dancers in their displays to help with this sense of authentication. The brothers; Joe, Zack, and George Jr.; also showed themselves as masters of publicity, claiming that it was a young Joe Miller who had ridden out to Baxter Springs to convince the Ponca of the merits of the Salt Fork and Arkansas site after they had rejected the Quapaw reservation. The brothers also claimed that by employing the Ponca to perform at their shows, initially to crowds as high as 65,000 people, they were enabling the tribe to maintain their customs free

[30] Acts of Fifty-Seventh Congress, First Session, 1902. May 27, 1902, 32 Stat., 245. Act of March 1, 1907, 34 Stat., 1015, Kappler Idem. pp. 119 & 269. Idem, *The Standing Bear Controversy*, pg. 182

from the pressure of white encroachment and assimilation that they were subjected to at White Eagle. Despite this 'honorable' intention, it was the diversification of the Miller ranch into oil speculation that destroyed one of the Poncas longest held traditions.

Those Ponca who remained at White Eagle fought hard to retain their tribe's cultural identity and traditions, and each winter set up "Winter Camps" away from the main settlements on White Eagle. They camps were set up in the brush alongside the river on higher ground than the settlement downstream. A remnant of the tribe's origins as a nomadic hunter nation, the purpose of the camps was to provide shelter and community to the people after the warriors had returned from a summer of hunting for bison. After the completion of the tribe's annual Sun Dance ceremony, warriors would be sent out to find a suitable location for the camp to shelter against the bitter cold of the harsh Plains winters. Traditionally, tribal historians would take a head count, and record the stories of deeds achieved throughout the year. On the reservation, these camps were primarily a communal exercise that enabled people to swap songs and stories, sheltering in temporary round houses, while maintaining one of their oldest traditions, and teaching new generations the tribe's history.

In 1909, however, the Miller Brothers created the 101 Ranch Oil Company with Ernest W. Marland to search for oil on their land. In 1911, Marland struck oil on Ponca land leased for a $1,000.00 annual payment from Willie Cries-For-War. The 101 Ranch Oil Company quickly became the Marland Oil Company, now known as Conoco-Philips, and in 1918 a giant refinery was built on the banks of the

Arkansas River to process the crude oil that Marland was drilling, now from other leased Ponca, and nearby Tonkawa, land. The development of the refinery and the Ponca and Tonkawa oil fields caused massive environmental destruction to the area with the Arkansas River water quickly becoming highly contaminated with toxic oil waste.

This destruction and pollution forced the tribe to abandon their winter camps completely, which "resulted in an irreversible change in Ponca culture" as they lost another valuable tradition, and important piece of their culture, by 1915. The loss of the winter camp disrupted the cyclical nature of tribal life, even when life was restricted to White Eagle. There were certain traditions and customs that belonged exclusively in the winter camps, and the many months of preparation, logistical and ceremonial for the camps were now no longer required. This was a significant cultural and psychological loss to the tribe. By this time, the Ponca had already lost its Sun Dance, with the ceremony, for all tribes, having been declared illegal under the Courts of Indian Offences in 1883. The destruction of the rivers also cut deeper into Ponca life than the loss of their winter camps, as many homes, including the Collins family farm where Warrior was raised, used water from wells that tapped directly into the now polluted Arkansas.[31]

The Ponca also struggled to maintain the traditions of the Hethuska Society, dormant in 1929 until Warrior's uncle, Sylvester Warrior, revitalized the society in 1958. While the reservation and allotment eras had rendered the martial aspect of

[31] History of the Marland Oil Company, Ponca City Official Website, www.poncacity.com. Ponca tribal History, Tribal Website (2009) www.ponca.com. Accessed May 10, 2010

the society relevant only for remembrance, the society's other duties "to look after the elders, widows and orphans, and see that they were taken care of, that they were protected" and maintain the tribe's spirituality, continued. Society leaders were concerned about the affect of federal Indian policy upon the society, and in an effort to ensure its traditions continued, they passed the right to the dance to several other tribes. The gifting of the Hethuska, to the Osage, Kansa, Sac and Fox and Comanche, was borne out of a desire to ensure that the society's traditions lived on. At a time when the Ponca society leaders feared that they would not be able to continue the society within their own tribe, the survival of the society was paramount.

The first diffusion of the Hethuska was to the Osage in appreciation for that tribe's help and support in tending to their elderly and infirm while the Ponca acclimatized to their new environment while on the Quapaw Reservation. The system of gifting was such that a representative of the recipient tribe would receive a drum, and specific songs of the ceremonial celebrations. Their instructions were to form a society within their own tribe that represented tribal values, rather than merely replicate the Ponca Hethuska. As Sylvester Warrior, Nudahonga (Head Man) of the society in the 1960s and 1970s, later explained, "we passed on the social aspect and retained the spiritual Ponca side to ourselves." The Ponca Hethuska ceased as an active organization in 1919 due to economic hardship and declining membership through the death of its older members. By this time the society had weathered two federal dance bans under the Court of Indian Offences, and the songs

of the society remained with family members to be passed down through the generations.[32]

The declining membership of the Hethuska was, aside from the loss of older members, due primarily to a rise in Peyotism and Christianity among the Poncas, and the subsequent rejection of their traditional faith. Originally a ceremonial religion of Mexican Indians, Peyotism spread north during the Civil War. In recognition of the strength of the two 'new' religions, two Ponca men, Frank Eagle and Louis McDonald helped co-found the Native American Church, with Eagle being elected the church's first president. The belief system of the Native American Church mixes Peyotism, which reached Indian Territory in the late 1880s, and Christian theology.[33]

The warrior aspect of the Hethuska Society had been dormant since removal but revived during World War One, as young Ponca warrior again earned the right of induction. However, in 1918, Ponca veterans created the first American Indian chapter of the American Legion. Many were converted Christians and wished for a new organization rather to than maintain the Hethuska because of its connections to traditional faith. The branch was adopted the name Buffalo Post 38 in honor of Bob Buffalohead, a Ponca soldier killed in action. Remarkably, the creators of the American Legion chapter were not American citizens. The federal government granted citizenship to all Indians who served in World War One in 1919, a year after

[32] Interview with Sylvester Warrior, dated May 3, 1969, Oklahoma Federation of Labor Collection, M452, Box 5, Folder 2. Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.
[33] Sturtevant, William. C, DeMallie, Raymond, J., *Handbook of North American Indians: Plains, Part 1,* Smithsonian Institute, 2001

the creation of Buffalo Post 38 and citizenship to all American Indians finally arrived in 1924 when Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act.

The Ponca veterans adopted many of the songs and dances of the Hethuska, adopting a more secular approach devoid of the traditional spirituality, which they now found elsewhere. Buffalo Post 38 also formed the Ladies Auxiliary who supported the veterans by performing Scalp and Soldier Dances in their honor. Many of the original warrior songs of the Hethuska were changed to accommodate the new enemy. For instance, one song challenging Spotted Tail to war was changed to include the word Kaiser, in reference to the German leader. The dances of the Hethuska were not dormant, or restricted to the American legion, however, and the burgeoning Southern Plains powwow circuit provided an excellent outlet for the Ponca singers and dancers, who were widely recognized among the other tribes as being among the most skillful in Indian Country. In the absence of any diplomatic or political rivalries, tribes began to compete among themselves for bragging rights over the quality of their dancers, with the Ponca, Kiowa, and Cheyenne among the most competitive. Matters eventually came to a head at the Haskell Indian School Homecoming celebration in October 1926. The celebration had grown from a small parade to commemorate the school's new football stadium into the largest powwow of the time, with over 2000 Indians, representing 75 different tribes convening for the weekend, at which would be a dance exhibition and contest within the new stadium.[34]

[34] Ellis, Clyde, *A Dancing People: Powwow Culture on the Southern Plains,* Lawrence, USA, University of Kansas Press, pg. 37

The three tribes reached an agreement that their dancers would compete for the title of best war dancer, with the estimated 75,000 audience deciding the winner. As a special inducement, the winner would be crowned World Champion, and the tribe would earn the right to hold the War Dance World Championships from that moment on. Steven Mopope, more famous as an artist, represented the Kiowa, Chester Lefthand represented the Cheyenne, and Augustus 'Gus' McDonald represented the Ponca in a contest that was to be decided by flexibility, flamboyance, and stamina. McDonald rose to the challenge and channeled a great deal of Ponca history and culture into his 'performance.'

Soon after arriving in Indian Territory the Ponca Hethuska, of which McDonald was a member, had discarded the Crow Bustle; a dance bustle made up of eagle feathers, that warrior's wore at the small of their back; in favor of a full-length sash running the length of the body at the back. In order to stand out against the other two dancers, McDonald decided to wear the Crow Bustle, and add an extra one about his shoulders. As a Hethuska member he had also been taught an old dance that the tribes warrior used to perform in diplomatic relations with the Sioux. In order to avoid the bloodshed of battle, the two tribes often allowed their best warriors to dance against each other in what was known as the 'feather pull." A three-inch feather was planted in the ground and the dancers were required to pluck it without using their hands, while dancing to a fast Northern drumbeat. The flamboyance, artistry, and sheer athleticism of his dance saw McDonald leave the other two dancers for dead, as he incorporated cartwheels and backflips into his

repertoire. He was crowned the first Fancy War Dance World champion, a title that Warrior himself would hold three times.[35]

The title of World Champions sat well with the Ponca and their annual powwow went from strength to strength, with many of Indian Country's best dancers challenging McDonald, and throngs of tourists desperate to view the spectacle. In 1928, the Ponca Indian Agent finally granted the tribe's wishes for a dance arbor, and solicited funds for the creation of an arena. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Charles Burke, author of the 1906 Burke Act, and also, the third federal dance ban under the title of Circular 1665, objected to the dance arena, and demanded an explanation from the agent. The agent's response was that the arena would ensure that the Ponca actually stayed home, rather than spending "about half their time attending dances on the Osage reservation." The Osage In-Losh-Ka had grown in strength as the Ponca Hethuska had dwindled, but in recognition of the societies origins, the Osage always treated the Poncas as honored guests at their dances.

In 1936, two years before Warrior was born, Congress passed the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act, which created a system whereby tribes could create governing councils designed as business councils. The OIWA set aside a revolving credit fund for tribal economic development, and halted the allotment process. The OIWA was targeting specifically at the Five Tribes and their neighbors. Ostensibly designed to assist tribes economically and protect their cultural, religious, and linguistic rights, the OIWA also introduced what Warrior later described as a 'system of peonage'

[35] Ibid. pg. 127

between the more assimilated tribes such as the Cherokee and the more tribal communities such as the Ponca. The OIWA gave the assimilated tribes such as the Cherokee more freedom to decide their own economic fate, albeit with a federally appointed tribal leader. Concern over the competence and capability of community members led to unyielding federal supervision and micromanagement of the programs and investments of the more traditional and 'tribal' communities because of. Rather than drive the economic expansion of the smaller tribes, however, the OIWA unwittingly created a situation were tribes felt incompetent, and communities withdrew into themselves. The Ponca were such a community and refused to adopt a tribal business committee whose structure bore no resemblance to traditional tribal governance by consensus. It was into this conflicting situation of nationalism; traditionalism; cultural loss, retention, rebirth and immersion; economic frustration; poverty; dispossession; and collective self-doubt that Warrior was born and raised. This cultural and historical inheritance defined his campaign for tribal self-determination as an adult.[36]

[36] Interview between Stan Steiner and Clyde Warrior, September 1966, Stan Steiner Collection, Stanford University Special Collections. (Hereafter the Stan Steiner Collection)

CHAPTER 2

"A PONCA CHILDHOOD"

Warrior was immersed in his tribal culture from birth. His formative years were spent learning Ponca traditions and cultural values. His grandparents talked to him in Ponca, his first, and for many years, only language. He recalled that 'I was raised by my grandparents in a typical American Indian home, poverty stricken…my world was that of my tribe and I (took) part in all gatherings, organization, and functions of my tribe.'[1] Until he entered Junior High School at twelve years old his most immediate points of reference for moral, spiritual, and intellectual guidance, and his entire worldview, were almost exclusively Ponca. Any external influences came from neighboring tribal communities that his grandparents mixed with. This immersion was crucial to the way Warrior would later formulate ideas and view federal Indian policy.

The Collins family farm, a working farm, was situated approximately two miles due west of the Ponca reservation at White Eagle, Oklahoma. The family grew "corn, green beans, onions and tomatoes," and raised "cows, hogs, and chickens." As Metha was wheelchair bound, the children were responsible for many of the smaller manual tasks around the farm, such as gathering eggs from the chickens or drawing water from the well. What food the farm did not provide, such as rabbit or fish, they hunted for, "living off the land" as much as they could.[2]

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[1] Untitled, undated, autobiographical essay in Warrior's handwriting. Box 5, Folder 3, NIYC Papers

[2] Harjo, Darlene, Personal Interview, Ponca City, February 20, 2010.

Despite living away from the tribal complex the family's ties to the White Eagle Community were extremely strong. Many an afternoon after school Warrior would sit at the feet of his grandfather listening to discussions of tribal politics, gossip, and stories and songs shared with friends and elders. Friends and elders from other tribes, including the Otoe, Osage, Tonkawa, and Kiowa were all regular visitors to the Collins kitchen table. It was here that Warrior learned a respect for other tribal cultures and the unique importance of tribal elders in maintaining and preserving those cultures. He also learned the art of talking, and listening, to his elders, and a strong sense of social responsibility in a traditional setting, that many Indians of his generation had lost.

Warrior's childhood was filled with song. By the age of four he could join in with, and even lead, the many songs he heard his grandparents sing around his home. Singing was such an integral part of the Collin's family home that many mornings began with Grandpa Bill, singing and "dancing round a big pot-bellied stove" as he prepared breakfast or coffee. Bill and Metha Collins were traditional drum makers who began making drums in 1928. Cultural immersion for Warrior meant participation. He did not simply watch his grandparents in the long, arduous, but culturally uplifting process of traditional drum making, but joined them. For Bill and Metha the process was far more involved than the simple manual labor of construction. His immersion in this process left Warrior with a respect for, and

attachment, to Ponca traditions and cultures that many of his generation did not have.[3]

For many American Indians, across all tribes, the drum is much more than a musical instrument. It is a significant and spiritual symbol of the earth's power. The drumbeat holds a variety of meanings. Many of these meanings transcend tribal identity and geography, ranging from the beat representing thunder, or symbolizing the heartbeat of the earth itself. As such, many in the powwow circles and ceremonial traditionalists view the drum as a living, breathing entity, rather than an inactive instrument. In powwow and ceremonial situations the drum is central, as without it there would be no ceremony. There is therefore a great deal of respect and honor paid to drum makers. The traditional creation of a drum begins with skinning cattle of their hide. The animal must be "over two years old or the hide will be thin." Warrior's sister Betty Primeaux remembers having to negotiate her way through cattle carcasses and drying hides whenever she was on the farm. The fur is stripped from the hide, which is then repeatedly washed it in cold soapy water, before leaving it to almost dry in the sun, when it is slightly damp rather than saturated. [4]

While the hide is drying, the midsection of a wooden barrel must be strengthened with an iron 'wheel rim' inserted and fastened inside the barrel, which is then covered with bark from an ash tree. Once the hide is almost dry it must be cut and two pieces stretched, separately, over the hollow ends of the barrel. A series

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[3] Ibid

[4] Lutz, Aleta, "Drums for the Powwows," unattached newspaper article, Ohoyohoma Club Scrapbook, Boyce Timmons Collection, Box 3, Folder 4, Western History Collections.

of slits are cut into the drum skins and the dried sinew of the dead animal's muscles is then laced through the slits to tie the two drum skins together. The threaded sinew is then tightened until the drum skins are stretched over the hollows, taut enough to make the musical tone of a 'tuned' drum rather than a dull thud of an 'out of tune' drum. The drum is then left out in the sun once more for the skin to dry completely across the frame, with the 'laces' being continuously tightened to ensure that the skin remains taught as it dries. This process is the same for small hand drums, or the larger 'powwow' drums. The entire process for each individual drum takes several days, and many laborious hours, to complete.[5]

For the Collins', and subsequently Warrior, the creation of the perfect Ponca drum was a far more involved process. Grandma Metha would "put several songs in the drum when I lace it," while Grandpa Bill would "lift it and beat a song into it when it is finished." The songs were important because it established a form of 'medicine "the drum which created a sense of "good feeling, a feeling of health and prosperity.'" It was somewhat inevitable, growing up in this environment, that Warrior was a skilled singer, and drummer by a very young age.

His grandparents also taught him the difference between social and ceremonial meanings of the songs and the drum. There was a distinction between social and ceremonial practices that generations of Plains Indians had observed as they shared songs and dances between tribes as methods of diplomacy, an intertribal diffusion that laid the foundations for the evolution of the powwow. It was a distinction that his uncle insisted had happened when the Ponca gifted their

[5] Ibid.

Hethuska ceremonial rights to neighboring tribes. It was also a distinction that Warrior himself would carry forward as a young adult as he delineated clear cultural differences between the Indian and non-Indian worlds. His grandparents also raised him to be aware of the economic necessity of catering to the tastes of non-Indians for survival, by creating different styles of drum for sale. For tourists and non-Indians, the Collins' painted the drum skins with a picture of an Indian chief in full headdress. There was no such decoration on drums intended for Indians though, as "Indians care only for the sound. They don't want paint that may flake off after many beatings."[6]

The Collins' sold their drums at the annual Gallup Ceremonial celebrations in Gallup, New Mexico, where there was always an abundance of tourist traffic, the Miller Bros. Ranch 101 Real Wild West Show store, and at powwows on the Southern Plains powwow circuit in and around Oklahoma. Gallup Ceremonial dated back to 1920, when Indian Superintendent Samuel Stacker originally conceived the event. The first, titled simply, Indian Ceremonial, took place at Crownpoint in 1920 before moving to Gallup and adopting the grander Gallup Intertribal Ceremonial Exhibition, under the guidance and control of the Gallup Chamber of Commerce, in 1922. Originally, the event was organized to showcase the dances of Navajo and neighboring tribes, and rather than money, "all Indians attending were furnished food, hay and oats for their horses, with camping space on the ceremonial grounds." By 1929, the food available to Indian dancers and artists included a daily, free

[6] Ibid.

barbecue in which "55 goats, five beeves and 700 loaves of bread" were eaten during the three-day event.

In the 1930's the Ceremonial expanded its exhibits and gradually recruited dancers from Oklahoma, the Plains, California, and New York tribes. Warrior accompanied his grandparents on their trips to Gallup and quickly became aware of the many cultural distinctions between the various American Indian tribes and nations who attended the Ceremonial. He observed the unique ceremonial traditions of many different Indian cultures, from the Pottawatomie Eagle Dance, the Apache Fire Dance, the Hopi Katzina Dance, Taos Surrender Dance, Zuni Butterfly Dance, to the Aztecs, wearing "long headdresses, pheasant features and peacock feathers." At the '49's', which followed each day's dancing, Indians from all nations would mix and share songs and dances, teaching and learning from each other's cultures. Ceremonial programs would give a brief history of each dance and the significance to the particular tribe that performed it. The vast intertribal gathering exerted a considerable influence on Warrior throughout his life, and he absorbed songs and dances from many of these nations. The trips to Gallup, which usually included his uncle Sylvester Warrior, who sang with a Kiowa group accompanying Kiowa dancers, educated Warrior in the myriad cultural and traditional differences and languages of American Indian nations. The experience enhanced his cultural understanding of "Indian-ness" within the context of ceremony, tradition and performance, rather than through Indian/White relationships or the suffocating racism he was surrounded by in Ponca City.

The Southern powwow circuit, in contrast, had grown in two separate stages in the early twentieth century. Having grown and spread from the first Ponca intertribal dance in 1878, the powwow circuit grew very quickly in the 1920s. The final 'dance ban,' issued under Circular 1665 by Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles Burke, proved ineffective due to the number of Indians who were now private landowners, as their allotments fell out of trust, and therefore BIA control and supervision. Land ownership was the means through which Indians were expected to fully assimilate into white culture. It instead provided a means whereby they could flaunt their cultures unencumbered by threat of federal prosecution. This coincided with the Haskell Homecoming Weekend bringing together thousands of Indians from across the nation in the largest celebration of its kind in the twentieth century. Haskell, in turn, inspired a large number of small tribal powwows that sprang up as these tribal delegations returned home to their reservations. The second stage of the powwow circuit's growth occurred in the wake of World War II, as many Plains tribes felt the necessity to revive age-old, but long dormant, warrior traditions honor those among them who enlisted in the U.S. Forces. The revival of warrior societies and ceremonial dances had the domino effect of creating greater interest and demand for a more social, and inclusive form of cultural expression, which the powwow filled.[7]

As powwows grew in popularity, the dances grew from a generalized 'war dance' to specific 'contest' categories. Each of the male categories were derivatives of traditional Plains Indian Military Society ceremonial dances, and the most

[7] A more detailed overview of the evolution of powwow culture is presented in Clyde Ellis's *A Dancing People.*

popular categories were Straight Dance or Southern Traditional, Northern Traditional, Grass Dance, and Fancy Dance. At this time the Chicken Dance was exclusively performed at Northern Plains powwows. The distinction between Northern and Southern Traditional was one that was traced back to the Poncas arrival in Indian Territory, with the Southern regalia resembling post-bustle Hethuska regalia, which had been shared as the Ponca gifted the rights to their ceremony across the region. The commonality of Straight Dance regalia and songs harked back to the Ponca diffusion of the social aspect of the Hethuska to the aforementioned tribes.

As educational and enthralling that Gallup was to Warrior, he felt much more at home on the powwow circuit. Even as the Ponca had no ceremonial societies themselves after the 1920s the Ponca singers were highly sought after on the powwow circuit. The Ponca powwow was also a highly popular event on the Oklahoma powwow calendar. It was a five-day celebration of war dancing which closely followed the traditions of the Hethuska ceremonial dances. Warrior's grandfather had been a member of the Hethuska society before it disbanded in 1929, and taught Warrior many of the songs and dances from the ceremonial. This was a traditional practice among Plains Indians as a way of keeping their ceremonies and traditions alive, even if the appeared to be in decline, or even lost to future generations. His uncle was also a skilled singer and drummer and Warrior benefitted from his advice and expert instruction in addition to Grandpa Bill. As well as the more traditional Hethuska dancing, which transferred to the Straight Dance

powwow category, Grandpa Bill also taught Warrior the fancy dance moves he himself had learned from Gus McDonald, a close friend.

It was in this environment as well as at his grandfather's feet that Warrior absorbed the many different types of songs sung at the powwows and ceremonial gatherings. Warrior, had an uncanny and "very sensitive, very intuitive" ability to "feel" the songs. From this he learned the value and cultural necessity of songs, social and traditional, to Indian tribes. He also learned the distinction between when a single song could be used for both social and spiritual or ceremonial purposes. He created a vast, internal database of songs from many different tribes that he could recall at a moments notice. His grandfather also taught Warrior the traditional Ponca songs and dances of his own youth, having been a Hethuska member and accomplished dancer himself. The powwow circuit was a natural extension of Warrior's cultural comfort zone and worldview, and by the time he was four years old, his grandfather had 'paid' his entry into the powwow arena, with a gift to the drum, the request of a particular family song, an a giveaway for respected friends and powwow officials.[8]

Warrior was already a fluid dancer and skillful singer, with songs never far from his lips. He also built an affinity with the songs and dances of other tribes that many of his friends and peers commented upon in his adult life. Indeed, Tony Isaacs recalled that Warrior was "the only Indian that I had ever met that whistled Indian songs." This affinity would serve him well, because as fluid and skillful as he was

[8] Isaacs, Tony, Personal Interview, Taos, July 30th, 2009. Hill Witt, Shirley, Skype Interview, March, 9, 2010.

there are other vital aspects to any fancy dance. A dancer's feet need to touch the ground upon every 'honor beat,' and he must be able to stop dead in his tracks the second the song ends. An honor beat is the moment of each song when the lead singer beats the drum hardest. Neither of these requirements are easy tasks given the speed at which fancy dance songs are sung.[9]

Warrior's Ponca heritage will undoubtedly have also helped him, as the Ponca singers held the reputation as the best fancy dance singers in Indian Country. Gus Palmer Jr. remembered them as being the best because "they're fast, and they're in the ruffle dance they call it. It's the real fast one where they roll around. You get down and shimmy all over. And then when the drum goes you go, but you don't know when it's going to stop." The ruffle dance or trick dance as it is also known is musically idiosyncratic, stopping and starting at irregular intervals, and it was a Ponca 'invention.' Dancers who master the 'ruffle dance' are supremely talented. It takes enormous concentration to focus on hi-speed footwork and unexpected drumbeats. By 1954, Warrior was already such a fluid and graceful dancer, with a highly intuitive ear, that at the age of 16 he was crowned World Champion Fancy Dancer at the annual Ponca powwow. This was a title he would win twice more in his life before he later switched to the Straight Dance category.[10]

In November 1955, anthropologist James Howard article on powwow culture, titled "Pan Indian Culture of Oklahoma," appeared in *The Scientific Monthly*. The previous month, historian Wilcombe Washburn had published an

[9] Tony Isaacs interview, *Idem*.
[10] Gus Palmer interview, *Idem*.

article discussing pan-Indian Cherokee-Delaware culture. Unsurprisingly, as the theory of pan-Indianism was relatively new at this time, both scholars used exactly the same sources to supplement their articles, relying heavily on (then) recently deceased University of Oklahoma anthropologist Karl Schmitt's unpublished notes, *The Diabolic Root: A Study of Peyotism* by Vincenzo Petrullo, and Wilcombe Newcomb Jr.'s *The Culture and Acculturation of the Delaware Indians*. Each of these texts discussed the Delaware Indians almost exclusively, yet Pan-Indianism quickly gained credibility as an anthropological theory under which many tribal affiliations could be categorized.

Initially the term was used to describe the merging of certain tribal entities within each other. It could also be applied to other Indian nations who had banded together culturally and politically to ensure survival in the face of Americanization. These categorizations rendered tribes such as the Sac and Fox, who were originally two distinct nations, the Colfax-Todd's Valley Consolidated Tribes, who were forced together on reservations, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation or the Confederated Tribes of the Coos-Lower Umpqua-Siuslaw Indians as Pan-Indian cultures. These affiliations and 'mergers' were primarily a result of government policies of pushing nations together on reservations, and the subsequent drive to assimilate the individual members of these nations into white society. Once the term began to gain wider credibility in the 1950s, it has erroneously, and almost unilaterally, been applied to any political or cultural collective of American Indians, from the Indian rights groups of the twentieth century, including the Society of American Indians, National Indian Youth Council,

and National Council of American Indians, to as far back as Tecumseh's intertribal military alliance of the early 1800's, and even Metacom's similar alliance in the colonial era.[11]

In certain cases, the label has proved correct. The Society of American Indians (SAI) formed in 1911 and openly pursued the creation of an 'Indian' identity at the expense of tribalism. The SAI's founder members were boarding school educated, and active assimilationists. Arthur C. Parker, Charles Eastman, and Carlos Montezuma, collectively argued for the rejection of the "social tyranny" of communal tribal life, the abolition of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, full citizenship for American Indians, and assimilation into American society, retaining only Indian-ness as a racial signifier. The American Indian Movement formed in 1968. Founder members Dennis banks and Clyde Bellecourt were second generation 'relocated' Indians suffering from systematic racism and economic depravation in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. With many of the groups leaders raised in the cities, far removed from traditional tribal communities or reservations, AIM embraced Indian-ness as a marker of identity, and leaders fully expected members to adhere to this concept of Indian-ness rather than proclaim any tribal affiliations.[12]

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[11] Most texts discussing Metacom, or King Philip's colonial era resistance against the English refer to his inter-tribal alliance as pan-Indian. Colin Calloway's *After King Philip's War: Presence and Persistence in Indian New England* is an example. John Sugden's *Tecumseh: A Life* offers the same analysis of the Shawnee leader's military alliance against the United States in the early 1800s. As one of the few authors to buck this trend, R. David Edmund's stresses the tribally specific perspectives of Tecumseh's allies in his text *A Shawnee Prophet.*

[12] More on the SAI and pan-Indianism can be found in Hazel Herzberg's *The Search for an American Indian Identity*. Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Warrior discuss pan-Indianism of AIM in *Like a Hurricane*

In both cases, however, tribalism rose to the fore. In the case of the SAI, tribalism led to the group's eventual demise. In World War One, many members sought justification for enlisting to fight the Kaiser when they were not citizens of the United States. Arthur C. Parker hit upon the idea of having tribe's individually declare war on Germany to circumvent the dilemma some Indians faced of fighting for their oppressor. With individual tribes independently declaring war, their warriors could now fight for the homeland rather than fight for America. This sudden recognition of the value of tribal identity saw tribalism rise through the organization, forcing a conflict of interests with the group's original cause. When Indian Citizenship Act was passed in 1924, when the groups should have celebrated its greatest success, tribalism had created irreparable fissures and the SIA disbanded. In the case of AIM, the primary motive for many of its leaders very quickly became to reconnect with their tribal roots and discover their tribal identities. This, as much as the well documented counter intelligence operations of the FBI and legal pursuit of AIM leaders for alleged crimes related to activism, saw the group splinter in much the same way as the SAI. AIM does still exist but now more as a collection of local chapters rather than the centrally organized militant unit of its heyday. Many of the original members, such as Dennis Banks and Clyde Bellecourt are now respected tribal elders.[13]

Howard's was the first major scholarly article about the Oklahoma powwow circuit. He labeled the powwow and its various categories as proof of a pan-Indian culture having replaced tribal cultures in Oklahoma. Howard was well respected as

[13] Again, Hertzberg's *The Search for American Indian Identity,* and Smith/Warrior's *Like A Hurricane* are valuable sources for information on the two organizations.

the head of the University of South Dakota's Anthropology Department, and his discussion of powwow culture as a pan-Indian cultural movement was accepted without discussion. He was also a hobbyist. The 'Hobbyist' movement began as an offshoot of the Boy Scout Movement in the early twentieth century. As a 'right of passage' to mark their teenage years, Scout Troops were taken to Indian Reservations to witness ceremonial dances. Many Scouts became fascinated with the dances and soon turned to 'playing' Indian themselves. Form this 'playing' Indian, a collective urge to honor the ceremonies and customs of a 'dying' race, with participants visiting reservations to learn dances, songs, and mimic the regalia the Indians wore.[14]

Many hobbyists of this period, Howard included, believed that 'true' Indian culture ceased to exist after the reservation period. They positioned themselves as 'speaking for' Indians and preserving their cultures in a way that modern and contemporary Indians could not. The songs, dances, and cultures Sioux and other Northern Plains Indians, replete with their famous savagery from the Western folklore, formed the main attraction for hobbyists at this time. It is not clear whether the Sioux originally fascinated Howard in his early hobbyist days, although he had researched the Dakota War Dance complex in his earlier academic career. By the time of his "Pan Indianism" article, however, he was conducting research at White Eagle for his forthcoming text *The Ponca Indians.* What is also certain is that the

[14] Howard, James, H., "Pan-Indian Culture of Oklahoma," *The Scientific Monthly,* November, 1955, pg. 215.

common hobbyist mantra of being the true protector of Indian cultures informed his analysis and classification of powwow culture as pan-Indianism.[15]

Despite his research, and all evidence to the contrary in his later text of the more traditional cultural exclusivity of the Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma, Howard included them in a list of tribes who "are losing their tribal distinctiveness and in its place are adopting a "nontribal" Indian culture." In focusing upon the War dance, as the "secular focus of pan-Indianism," he ignored his own research. Sylvester Warrior, Clyde's uncle, informed him of the various times and reasons why the Ponca had gifted their Hethuska to other tribes across the Southern Plains. Rather than focus on the cultural significance of the dance to each particular tribe, Howard focused on the similarities of dance regalia and steps to ascribe a pan-Indian-ness that was almost exclusively social without any religious or spiritual overtones. In doing so, he ignored the long-standing tradition among Plains tribes of the functional duality of songs and dances. During the year, between ceremonies such as the Sun Dance, or other ceremonials such as the Ponca's Hethuska, a song was available to all within the tribe to sing and celebrate as they wished. During the ceremonies, the songs 'ownership' reverted to the particular society or clan by and for whom it had been written. Dances were treated in a similar manner. At ceremonial times, they told stories such as of valiance in war, love, or honoring the creator. In between ceremonies, society members used regalia and dancing to try

[15] There is a very limited historiography of the hobbyist movement. Currently, Philip Deloria's *Playing Indian* and Clyde Ellis's *More Real than the Indians Themselves: The Early Years of the Indian Lore Movement in the United States are* the two most prominent scholarly texts discussing this phenomena, although Ellis has a new text in publication.

and entice warriors to switch allegiance, or to entice single females to the dancer's side. The division between spiritual and secular, often within the same song or dance, was not a new function of assimilated twentieth century life, but an age-old practice that was a revered tradition in Plains cultures.[16]

Howard's article contained several pertinent points about the generality of regalia, but he also ignored the distinction participants made between social and ceremonial dancing, especially when discussing non-contest dances such as the Buffalo or Snake dances. Traditionally for many Plains tribes, these dances were medicine dances designed to call upon the power of the beasts to heal the sick or find water and were very similar across the Plains, long before the twentieth century. Howard also ignored the fact that beading or imagery specifically significant to the dancer or his/her family or clan adorned most regalia. Many songs in the arena also carried similar familial, clan or tribal attachments. Participants found many ways to practice and preserve traditions within powwow, even if powwow itself was not strictly traditional.

To those who took part, powwow did not replace their tribal identity as the dominant cultural form. Many Indians who powwowed also took part in traditional ceremonies. While Howard positioned powwow as the ultimate example of Indian culture, it was just one of many different aspects of many different cultures, even within Oklahoma. Many Indians who took part in traditional tribal ceremonies ignored the powwow circuit, while more still, who had converted to Christianity, saw powwow as exemplifying past savagery and refused to condone it. Among this

[16] "Pan-Indian Culture of Oklahoma," idem, pg. 215.

particular group, however, there was a growing number of children who saw powwow as a method of refusing assimilation. They secretly attended, knowing that to do so openly would risk censure, banishment from the family home, or even beatings. They were fiercely clinging to this 'remnant of the past' as a rejection of the Americanization their parents had succumbed to. A growing number of Indians from non-Plains tribes did adopt powwow as a form of expression, but for the vast majority, this was in addition to their own traditional dances or celebrations. Also, in the 1950s, this was a relatively small number.

Howard contended that a common poverty among, and rampant racism against, Oklahoma Indians led to such solidarity that they eschewed their identities and cultures in favor of Indian-ness. Yet the fierce nationalism that such conditions created in Clyde Warrior and the Ponca people demonstrated the folly of this analysis. He also credited boarding schools such as Chilocco and Haskell as being "responsible for a great deal of the intertribal exchange of songs, dances, and costume styles." In this instance, Howard's error was two-fold. Firstly, he completely ignored the generations old traditions among Plains tribes, including the Ponca, of honoring neighbors and allies with the gifting of songs, dances and ceremonies. Secondly, he also failed to note the distinction between inter-tribalism and pan-Indianism, the first being a recognition of shared symbols and meaning among distinctly different cultures, and the second being the willful merging of different cultures into a single amorphous entity as Howard himself defined it.

Howard's greatest mistake, however, was in his concluding analysis of powwow and pan-Indianism as "one of the final stages of progressive acculturation,

just prior to complete assimilation," although he did offer the caveat that he was unsure of how long this last attempt at cultural resistance would last. His insistence that many Indian participants of powwow were themselves unsure of their heritage or customs strengthened his commitment to the Jeffersonian theory of the noble savage who was doomed to disappearance. It also allowed him the freedom to continue his own practice of Indian dancing safe in the knowledge that, as this was a contrived non-traditional custom that belonged to no particular traditions, he was neither harming nor insulting anybody in his participation. He wrote the article, and his assessment of Ponca pan-Indianism, with the full knowledge of Sylvester and Clyde Warrior's commitment to revive the tribe's flagship cultural emblem that was the Hethuska Society.[17]

Aside from the strong cultural retention and pride of the Ponca people, which Howard discussed in great detail in his *The Ponca Tribe,* the 1950 adoption of a tribal constitution under the 1936 Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act also signified a continuing commitment to tribal identity. In the face of growing efforts by Congress to remove itself from 'the Indian business,' tribal leaders finally decided that adoption of a tribal committee was needed to protect the history and culture of the Ponca at White Eagle. Originally, tribal elders rejected the idea of a tribal constitution based upon the American system of government, and of a tribal leader being selected by the Secretary of the Interior, as anathema to their traditional form of government.

[17] Ibid. pg. 220

The Ponca Business Committee, as it was formed under the OIWA, focused upon three core tenets as its code of ethics: "be good to the people; be good to orphans; and be good to the needy." The tribal seal, created at the same time, contained three tepees, each representing one of these ethics, behind the sacred ceremonial pipe of the Ponca. The pipe religion and spiritual significance of tobacco, as the plant that connected the creator to the earth, was still strong in Ponca society. In the late 1950's Frank Turley, as he saw Grandpa Bill light some tobacco, remarked to Warrior that he never realized he smoked, to which Warrior, laughing, retorted, "he's praying, you idiot." Warrior's paternal grandmother, Grace Warrior (nee Standing Buffalo), was the tribe's "keeper of the pipe" which, according to tradition, was the sacred pipe of the Hethuska Society. This was a position formerly held by Standing Buffalo, but at that point it was vacant due to the society laying dormant.[18]

Even in its absence, the Hethuska Society still informed many aspects of Ponca life, as Howard was well aware. The intertribal powwow arena and drum making process were also not the only places in which Warrior received a cultural education. In 1945 by Warrior's maternal grandmother Metha Collins (nee Gives Water) organized the Gives Water Service Club in recognition of the Ponca warriors who had served in World War II. The word 'service' in the title carried a double meaning of honoring veterans, and also providing service to those in the tribe who needed help. This was in recognition of the role of the tribe's Hethuska Society, of

[18] Ponca Tribal History from the official website of the Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma. www.ponca.com. Accessed May 10, 2010. Turley, Frank, Personal Interview, Santa Fe, July, 27, 2009

which many Gives Waters ancestors had been prominent members in the past, and the tribal ethos of always helping others. Indeed, many of the Veterans songs, War songs and Round Dance songs the Gives Water Service Club performed were based upon traditional Hethuska songs and were in the same style, and continued to be so after the society's revival in 1958. Regalia for the dance were the same Hethuska-styled regalia that became known as straight dance regalia in the powwow world. As with the powwow, women dancers were required to wear a shawl before entering the arbor.

Aside from warrior and Veterans songs, 'Specials' the drum also sang in honor of specific veterans. 'Specials,' which are also a common occurrence at Southern Plains powwows usually consist of a family or clan song being sung by the drum while the honored veteran/guest conducts a 'Giveaway.' 'Giveaways' usually consist of the person being honored returning the 'gesture' by gifting respected people groceries and blankets, representative of the pre-reservation commitments of tribal member to provide each other with food and shelter when needed. Between 1883 and 1934, they were also as illegal under the Courts of Indian Offences as dances were, as the federal government considered them prime examples of Indian 'savagery.' Each member of the Gives Water family, including Warrior, attended the dances and helped with honoring the veterans through the feasts being offered, the dances being performed, and any other activities that were required. The Gives Water Service Club is still a prominent organization in contemporary Ponca cultural life, hosting gatherings every Memorial Day, and sponsoring charitable dances throughout the year.

In addition to powwowing, Gallup, and the Gives Water ceremonial dances, Warrior also regularly visited the Indian Village at Quapaw. Located on Route 66, this was a massive trading post that sold regalia, fabric, beads, and drums, and catered to Indians and tourists alike. His grandparents sold both types of drums there and occasionally Warrior performed in his fancy dance regalia. It was here that he met Bill Center, an Indian Trader from Pawhuska who had extensive contacts with the California hobbyist movement. Center later told people that he first saw Warrior, not dancing, but "running on the roofs of the cabins. Jumping from one roof to another, and hollering and carrying on like a wild young man." This carefree attitude also gave Warrior an advantage when playing the Ponca game of Shinny. As agile and swift on the field of play as he was fluid in the dance arena, Warrior was a natural talent at Shinny, or Tabégasí. This is a fast, furious, and often violent ball game involving players of two teams attempting to drive a ball on to a six-foot single 'goalpost' with short, curved, ash sticks. The game is gradually made more difficult with the ball, made from horsehair decreasing in size each time a goal is scored. The first team to four goals wins. Center saw Warrior dance later in the afternoon, and gave the 15-year-old boy some cash in appreciation. Bill and Metha also benefitted economically from a new trade partnership with Center, who would buy their drums and sell them on in California and his trading post in Old Town, Albuquerque.

The friendship with Center went much deeper than business and Center took Warrior under his wing, acting as a surrogate father with the blessing of his grandparents. He took Warrior with him on his trips to California, exposing him to a

vastly different world from Oklahoma. On his first visit to Los Angeles, Warrior "went down to the ocean by himself and sang to the ocean," so awestruck was he by the sight and the power of the vast expanse of water. It was in California that an unusual friendship between Warrior and a number of hobbyists sprang up. Through Warrior, the hobbyists' interest changed from their usual fayre of Sioux and Northern Plains songs to Ponca culture, songs, and dances. Frank Turley, a hobbyist who Center employed to teach children to sing and dance, and his friend Jim Steiner, began to accompany Warrior back and forth on his trips between California and White Eagle. Turley remembers the trips being memorable because to "the three of us would be driving around beating on the dash board and singing." They were also memorable because of the stories they would swap, including one of Warrior's about his first stint as a seasonal worker in Disneyland, employed to paddle tourists around in canoes. On one occasion a rather precocious child insisted that everything in Disneyland was make believe, and that Warrior was "not a real Indian." No matter how hard he tried, Warrior was unable to convince the boy that he was a real Indian. Warrior used to "laugh a lot" at the memory of being accused of being a "fake Indian."[19]

Warrior trusted Turley and the California hobbyists because they never adopted the paternalistic conviction that Indian songs and dances were dying out and needed to be 'saved' or preserved and protected. Instead, they immersed themselves respectfully in the Indian powwow world and became friends with Warrior and other Indians rather than observers. Turley remembers Warrior having

[19] Turley, Frank, Email Interview, February 27, 2009.

a large "coterie of friends from different tribes that would sing and dance together whenever possible." Warrior also introduced Turley and his friends to the 49, where he would always be at the drum, singing many of the vast library of songs he had picked up from the powwow circuit and the Gallup ceremonials, as well as the Ponca sings he had ben raised with. Turley appreciated the fact that Warrior "was willing to share and he would help translate the songs. So many of the Ponca songs are word songs. He would help translate and that was really valuable for me. Because I wanted to learn." This mutual respect led to a friendship that would last the rest of Warrior's life.

Warrior's easy attitude towards the hobbyists was in sharp contrast to many Oklahoma Indians, who deeply mistrusted their motives for dancing. It came about because of his childhood experiences around tourists, and his attendance of the Ponca City High School. Living "off reservation," the choice of where Warrior was educated fell out of the realms of BIA authority and lay with his grandparents. Perhaps influenced by their own bitter experiences at boarding schools, they deemed the local public school as being the better option for Warrior to receive a decent education. In many ways, he deeply resented being one of only a handful of young Indians forced to attend 'white school' rather than Chilocco, where most of his Ponca friends went and the experience gave him an insight into white culture many of those friends never had. As an adult, he would be eternally grateful that he was not sent to Chilocco. Ponca City High School was not, however, an easy experience for the young Ponca and he remembered that, "during my high school life, I really experienced no association with the dominant society." While he attended school

with white students on daily basis, he rarely mixed socially with them. On a social, cultural, and economic levels, they were from different worlds. He later admitted that 'I used to hate white people and hated them with good reason. I went around hating them for years." Over time, "I realized that it wasn't the white people I hated, it was the bureaucracy, the institutions they created, the education, the system, that I hated." This hatred, and later realization, was borne of being surrounded, almost exclusively, by white students in a town renowned at the time for it's inhabitants' racist attitudes towards Indians.[20]

Ponca City residents' racism towards Indians was almost exclusively focused upon the Ponca community. Della Warrior, Clyde's future wife, grew up on the Otoe-Missouria reservation just south of White Eagle. She recalled applying for a job in Ponca City where the employment counselor noted on her application that she was neat, clean and pretty before telling her that, "you're not from around here are you. You're not like the rest of these Indians." Similarly, Warrior's friend Katherine Red Corn, (Osage) who met them both at the university of Oklahoma and roomed with Della, remembered the shock on Warrior's face when he discovered the she and her Osage friends were served openly and welcomed warmly at Perkins restaurant. The establishment had a blanket ban on serving Ponca Indians. There were tales of Indian children as young as nine and ten years old being strip searched in the street under accusation of shoplifting, rather than be given the courtesy of detention until the police arrived. The poverty of the Ponca was exacerbated by the fact that the only facility that would openly employ them was the Conoco-Philips

[20] Warrior essay, NIYC Papers. Powers, Charles, T. "Bitter Look at Uses of Red Power," *The Kansas City Star,* 1968

Oil refinery, the one place in town the Ponca would not work due to long standing disputes over leasing and mineral rights. Ponca's were also subject to the same laws of social segregation as African Americans in the Jim Crow South. Many garages in town would have white doors, and "negro/Ponca" doors. Those restaurants that would serve them operated white counters, and "Negro/Ponca" counters. Such was the pervading atmosphere of the town in which Warrior went to school.[21]

Warrior initially resisted learning at the school and clung to his tribal identity as a method of resistance. He refused to learn English and, "in the eight grade I thought that English was a bunch of nonsense. I would scream, almost scream, that my language was sufficient enough for me to be understood, that there was absolutely no reason why I should bother learning English." Even when he began to learn the language, however, he found that money, or the lack of it, played as much a part in being accepted by his white peers as race and language. He recalled that, "you knew you didn't fit. Economically you didn't fit, socially you didn't fit." The situation was occasionally so restrictive that "there wasn't a year that I didn't quit school at least twice."

Warrior later remembered that 'I participated in functions to the greatest extent of which I was permitted – which was not much due to the dominant attitude and also my background of limited resources," An avid reader, however, Warrior was enrolled in the school's Library Club for his final three grades as a student,

[21] Warrior, Della, "Education, Art, and Activism," *Beyond Red Power,* Cobb, Daniel, Fowler, Loretta, (eds), School For Advanced Research Press, pg., 295. Red Corn, Kathryn, Telephone Interview, February, 9, 2010. Interview with Frank Turley, *Idem*.

borrowing books requiring no financial outlay. He also found respite and some acceptance in music, and was a tuba-playing member of the Ponca City High School "Big Blue" Band. He played in the January 1957, Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, California after the band raised $13,500.00 in sponsorship. His cousin Steve Penseneau, remembers the entire family huddling round a television, and hearing his aunties yell out "there's Clyde" as the cameras briefly caught sight of Warrior during a panoramic sweep of the parade.[22]

Attendance in the predominantly white Ponca City High School taught Warrior methods of survival and interaction that served him well later in life. The experience also showed him, although it would be years before he could articulate it, that the educational requirements of the American system clashed dramatically with the distinctly tribal worldviews of American Indian students. Despite this intellectual and cultural clash, the experience gave him knowledge of traditionalism and modernity and how that allowed him to frame his rhetoric on terms that both sides of the racial divide could understand.

This knowledge came later, though, with the maturity of adulthood. As a teen he retreated into traditionalism and the retention of the Ponca culture and worldview. In 1958, he assisted his uncle Sylvester and Owen Walkingsky in the revitalization of the Hethuska Society. He was 19 years old. Until this point, the Ponca had contented themselves with singing at the Hethuska 'derivatives' of the Osage In-Lon-Schwa Society, still faithfully performed in the villages of Pawhuska,

[22] Interview with Steve Pensoneau. idem. Warrior essay, Idem. "Bitter Look at uses of Red Power" idem.

Hominy and Grayhorse; the Pawnee Ruska: and the Otoe I'loshka. The process of reviving the Hethuska began with Sylvester Warrior's experiences as a Marine in World War II. Although he saw no actual combat, Sylvester did witness Indians of other tribes perform their ceremonial dances in the Pacific Theatre. Seeing Apache soldiers perform their Devil Dance, Pottawatomie's perform the Eagle Dance, Hopi's the Hoop Dance, Navajo Mountain Chants, and Kiowa and Comanche War Dances, made Warrior anxious to reconnect with his own familial, clan, and tribal traditions.[23]

Grace Warrior, Standing Buffalo Bull's daughter, raised Sylvester herself rather than pass him to the older generation, as with Clyde, Sylvester's maternal grandfather was a great influence on his life and cultural upbringing. Big Kansas (Konze to"ga), another of the Ponca chiefs who had travelled to Washington with White Eagle and Standing Bear, taught Sylvester the same Hethuska songs that Grandpa Bill taught Clyde. Grace also passed on the two personal songs that had been gifted to Standing Buffalo Bull during his life. This background was of enormous benefit to Sylvester as he tried to piece together as much information as he could about the original society, its rules, etiquette and cultural values to the Ponca people.

Sylvester's ambition was to "provide inspiration for younger Poncas to keep our Ponca ways," but he found unexpected resistance from many of the older generation, including those who were members of the original Hethuska. To this

[23] Duncan, Jimmy, W., *Hethushka Zani: An Ethnology of the War Dance Complex,* MA Thesis, 1997

generation, the Hethuska was a "memory of times that could not be brought back." To Grace Warrior's generation, many of who had converted to the Native American Church, the Hethuska represented an old religion that had been cast off. To many of Sylvester's, and especially Clyde's generation, most of whom had experienced the rigidity of boarding school life, the Hethuska was ancient tribal history, with even Sylvester's brother Amos telling him to let the society remain "a victim of history."[24]

Many of the elders were reluctant to share the spirituality behind ceremonial rituals because felt they had "no authorization" to share. Such was the resistance from the older generation that Sylvester relied on the epic history of *The Omaha Tribe* written by Alice L. Fletcher and Francis LaFlesche in 1911 to learn the internal structures of the Hethuska Society. Drawing from the history of the society in the period when the two tribes existed as a single entity when it was known as Hethu'shka, Sylvester gathered enough information to re-establish the society. A small number of society members were also willing to share information with him, enough for him to recreate a purely Ponca Hethuska. Before he could formally do so, however, he needed the permission of those elders who had been members of the original organization. Using the traditional protocols for requesting authority, Sylvester, Walking Sky, and Clyde Warrior, sought meetings with Ernest Blueback, Henry Snake, Woolsey Walkingsky, Simon, Eagle, Jim Poorhouse, David Buffalohead, and Bill Collins Sr. in order to continue with their mission they needed

[24] Ibid. pps. 92-93

the blessings of these men, some of the most revered and respected elders of the Ponca Tribe.

Each meeting took place over a period of four days and involved taking gifts of food and Pendleton blankets to the elders. On the fourth day, if the gifts had been accepted, they were allowed to ask about the Hethuska and its rituals. Once this process had been undergone, protocol demanded a feast be organized, at which any tribal member who attended "accepted and sanctioned the request of the sponsor" to reorganize the society. In total Sylvester, Clyde and Walking Sky held fourteen feasts to ensure the support of a majority of elders and clans within the tribe. A final hurdle to overcome was the hesitations of some elders over Sylvester's qualifications to be the *Nuda'ho'ga,* or Head Man. Although a Marine Veteran of World War II, Sylvester had never seen actual combat, which concerned several elders. The Hethuska had, after all, originally been a military society, and the idea of the society leader having never actively engaged an enemy was disturbing. Eventually, several combat veterans lent their support to Warrior's case and he was given permission, albeit never unanimous, to revive the organization.[25]

In early 1958, at the Giveswater Dance Arbor, Sylvester sponsored the first Hethuska Society since 1929. He appointed Albert Waters as Xú'ka-hoN-ga (Head Singer), a role that had not existed in the original society, and Lamont Brown and Joe Rush, a member of the original society, formed the backbone of the drum. Clyde Warrior, Owen Walkingsky, and Abe Conklin, were three of the four SiN'-de, or Tail Dancers. In pre-reservation times, the tail dancers were society members who

[25] Ibid. pg. 96

carried the crooked staffs, or coup sticks, some as long as eight feet, which were formerly used to strike the enemy. The crooked ends of the staff were also used to scoop wounded warriors from the battlefield and carry them to safety. The sticks were also used to 'poke' fallen enemies to ensure that they were dead. The tail dancers would also be the last warriors to leave the battlefield, thus protecting the 'tail' of the war party.

Modern tail dancers are chosen because they are "either outstanding dances or they or their families provided outstanding service to the organization." They act as role models for the younger society members and as representatives for the society as a whole. The coup sticks are now short, beaded sticks about three feet long, known as tail sticks. In ceremonial gatherings they dance on the repeated final, or tail, verse of a song, to represent the original duties of their office. Some tail dancers, of which Warrior was one, will kick their foot at the final beat of the tail verse, signifying the act of kicking the fallen enemy to ensure he was dead. For Warrior to be invited to this office at such a tender age reflected the gratitude of Sylvester for his role in the revitalization of the society, and also the respect of many within the tribe for his skill as a dancer. In recognition of the honor, his Grandpa Bill provided a roasted hog for the feast to pay Warrior's way into the society. Outside of the Hethuska, his singing skills were also recognized as he enjoyed an open invitation to join the Ponca Singers whenever he had the opportunity. His grandparents were permanent members of the drum, with Metha

forming part of the circle of lady singers who would sit outside and behind the men.[26]

The revival of the Hethuska by Warrior and his Uncle Sylvester coincided with a surge of similar cultural revitalizations across Indian Country. In Oklahoma, the Kiowa revived two of their societies either side of the Hethuska revival. On July 4th 1957, the Kiowa Gourd Dance Clan officially reformed after a 1955 exhibition of gourd dancing was particularly well received at the American Indian Exposition in Anadarko. The revival sparked a wave of gourd dancing across the Southern Plains as many more tribes followed the Kiowa lead. The following year, two months after the first Hethuska meeting in twenty-nine years, Gus Palmer Sr., a good friend of Bill Collins Sr., revived the Kiowa's most prestigious warrior society, the Black Legs. Palmer did this to honor his brother Lyndreth who had posthumously received the Bronze Star in recognition of his bravery during bombing expeditions during World War Two. The symbolic crooked staff of the Society bears 42 eagle feathers, one for each mission Lyndreth Palmer successfully carried out. In respect of the spiritual and social gravitas of the original society, compared to the newer incarnation, Palmer altered the name to its present version of Black Leggings Society. Further afield, in the Ponca's original homelands, traditionalists in several Sioux nations were reviving the self-piercing rituals of the annual Sun Dance.

Each of these revivals spoke to the pride and honor with which the tribes, all of whom also held powwows, clung to their traditions, and offered compelling evidence against James Howard's theory of collective pan-Indianism usurping

[26] Ibid. pg. 100

tribalism as the banner of identity in Indian Country. The theory of pan-Indianism was one that fit well into the Cold War 'liberal consensus' of America's melting-pot homogeneity. The fear of the 'other' drove a desire for conformity in a society anxious about Communism and the threat of the Cold War. People rallied around the perceived perfection of American identity and the necessity for all minorities to be absorbed within it. The theory of pan-Indianism, and the perceived rejection of tribal identity therein, fit this model perfectly, while in Indian Country the physical imposition of the liberal consensus was most obvious in the government's termination policy and the Urban Relocation Program. The cultural revitalization of the Hethuska, and other societies, flew in the face of the liberal consensus, and both government policies.

Termination was the process under which Congress proposed to end the trust relationship, and all subsequent funding and protection, between tribes and the federal government. The concept was initially introduced by Senator Arthur V. Watkins of Utah, who had successfully manipulated the receipt of treaty reparations under the Indian Claims Commission to coerce one half of the Ute Indian population into rescinding federal funding and tribal membership as a condition of accepting the money. Flushed with this success, he and other Utah senators pushed House Concurrent Resolution 108 into law in 1953. The law determined to end Indians "status as wards of the United States" and flagged initial termination of all tribes in California, Florida, New York and Texas, with others to follow.

Termination hit Warrior and the Southern Ponca particularly hard in 1960 when Congress announced the termination of the Northern Ponca.[27]

The Urban Relocation Program was designed to bring rural reservation Indians into the cities whereby they would assimilate into the general populous as hard-working wage-earning everyday people. The Program was created on the back of the success of the Navajo-Hopi Rehabilitation Act of 1950. Decimated by drought, and a lack of resources on their reservations to cope, the Act funded new schools, construction and economic development for the two tribes. One section of the Act called for "the more productive employment of their manpower, and the supplying of means to be used in their rehabilitation, whether on or off the Navajo and Hopi Indian Reservations," and under this caveat, many were sent to nearby cities such as Tucson, Arizona to work. The success of the Act suggested to Congress that Indians of other tribes would fare equally well in the cities and the Relocation Program was born. Cities such as Chicago, San Francisco, Dallas, Denver, and Oklahoma City were chosen as Relocation Centers, and while relocation was proclaimed as voluntary, many rural Indians perceived it as simply another attempt to grab reservation land and resources.[28]

In the face of such encroaching government policies, and despite his increasing involvement with his community and culture, Warrior's grandparents insisted that he continue his education. Oklahoma educational laws during this period required any Indian enrolling in Higher Education to prove themselves in a

[27] http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/vol6/html_files/v6p0614.html
[28] Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Chicago Field Office Employment Assistance Case Files, 1952-1960.

junior two-year college before being allowed to transfer an accredited four-year institution. Accordingly, in the fall of 1960 Warrior enrolled in Cameron State Agricultural College in Lawton, Oklahoma. He found the collegiate atmosphere at Cameron easier to adjust to than High School and was voted Outstanding Indian Student of the Year in 1962. His adjustment was undoubtedly eased by a larger presence of other American Indian students than the mere handful of Indians attending Ponca City High School. One of these fellow students was his future wife Della Hopper (Otoe-Missouria). Her first memory of Warrior was of hearing someone incessantly "whistling Ponca songs" on the bus that took them from the Fort Sill Indian School, where they lodged during the semester, to the Cameron Campus every morning. She also remembered that many people thought, "he was so egocentric…I guess he was like that, there was no in-between for Clyde. You either hated or you loved him, that's the kind of person he was.'[29]

Once at Cameron, he made the ultimately life-changing decision to join the Ittanaha Indian Club. The Ittanaha, which is Choctaw for 'Council Fires,' was originally a cross campus club for all Oklahoma Indian students in higher education. In the 1950s, it accepted only Cameron students. Across Oklahoma, and the Southwest, other universities had similar clubs, with the University of Oklahoma's Sequoyah Club, founded in 1914, boasting the record of the longest standing university club for Indians in the nation.[30]

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[29] Della Warrior interview, Robert Warrior Papers
[30] "Ittanaha Club Makes a Comeback", *The Cameron University Collegian,* Sept. 19, 2005, Vol. 79, Issue 4

Membership took Warrior and his colleagues to meetings and conferences across the Southwest. As well as providing a sense of community among college Indians, these intertribal clubs reflected long-standing tribal traditions, pre-dating even America, of discussion and consensus among men and women of each nation. For Warrior, this was an opportunity to compare the poverty and lack of resources of White Eagle with similar situations he had witnessed in reservations across the powwow circuit. Many of the students enrolled in the clubs were previously unaware that the vast majority of reservation Indians across America shared the social and cultural depravation of their homeland. The growing number of clubs opening across campuses created a circuit of increasingly politically aware young Indians unafraid to voice the discontent and anger they felt at the contemporary and historic economic, social, political, and cultural dispossession of their people.

The central hub of this circle of student clubs in in the South was the Southwest Regional Indian Youth Council (SRIYC). The Southwest Association on Indian Affairs (SAIA) sponsored the SRIYC, under the direct control of Charles E. Minton, the Executive Secretary of the SAIA. Minton was a former lawyer from Missouri who moved to New Mexico to work with Indians. Once there he was Executive Director of the State Commission on Indian Affairs before taking up his post with the SAIA. He proclaimed three objectives of the SRIYC: “to stimulate Indian youth to acquire…skills that would… be of service to the tribes and communities”; “to expand their circle of Indian acquaintance”; and “to acquire an

understanding of the varied and complex problems in Indian affairs, so they will work together…to improve conditions among Indian people."[31]

The SRIYC had grown out of an annual conference held in collaboration with the Kiva Club of Indian students at the University of New Mexico. As with the Ittanaha Club, the Kiva Club recognized traditional motifs in its name, a Kiva being a ceremonial room that Pueblo Indians used in the centuries prior to Spanish invasion of their homelands. The conference began in Santa Fe in 1954, with the SRIYC originally being named the Santa Fe Indian Youth Council. One of the attendees at the conference was a young Navajo student named Herb Blatchford, who later became an instrumental figure in the founding of the National Indian Youth Council. The 1954 conference promoted the concept of college education as an attainable goal for Indian students of the local pueblos, especially those of the Santa Fe Indian School. By the fourth annual meeting of the Santa Fe Indian Council, interest from local Indian students was enough that Minton decided to expand the project. The following year, in 1958, he unveiled the SRIYC and invited students from Arizona State College, and high school and college students from Colorado and Utah to attend. These were the first students from outside New Mexico to attend the conference.

At the same time as this network of Indian students was growing and championing education, the civil rights movement was springing to life in other regions of the South. After a series of boycotts against bus segregation across the

[31] Minton, Charles, E., "The Place of the Indian Youth Council in Higher Education," *Journal of American Indian Education,* Vol.1 No. 1, July 1961, pp. 54-55

region, the most famous of which in Montgomery Alabama made a young Dr. Martin Luther King a household name, the leaders of various protest organizations decided to join forces. In early 1957, at a meeting of over one hundred African American clergy, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was formed, with King elected president. The SCLC began to promote the concept of non-violent resistance against segregation, with full integration and equal rights as its ultimate aim. For African Americans, the demand was that the federal government and American people finally kept the promises they made in the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the constitution, guaranteeing them citizenship, equality and suffrage. For the Indians, segregation was certainly an issue, socially and educationally, especially for people like Warrior growing up next to Ponca City, and Sioux Indians growing up near Rapid City, South Dakota. Of paramount importance though were the numerous broken treaties under which the federal government had continuously guaranteed Indian nations their perpetual independence and sovereignty from the United States. While many African Americans were calling for inclusion and equality, these young Indians were calling for cultural and political independence.

The SRIYC also, in contrast to the SCLC, chose a new president every twelve months. Its aims were also slight broader than the SCLC. Federal policies and program such as termination and relocation were discussed at length, especially as they were the two flagship projects of Congress during the decade. Other issues formed a myriad of debate and discussion topics, such as cultural retention and revitalization, mineral and reservation exploitation, voting rights, intertribal

relationships, intercultural relationships, the protection and perpetuation of traditional arts and crafts, and the government's obligations to honor treaty agreements regarding funding, education, and health care.

The inaugural president was a Pueblo (Laguna – San Juan) student named Beryl Spruce. He delivered an opening speech that ruffled more than a few feathers in the audience. The speech, titled *We Are Born at a Time When the Indian People Need Us,* set a challenging tone towards Indian students that Warrior would later follow. Spruce accused his fellow students of having "false pride" and being "lazy," with thoughts that "defeat you before you even start." According to Spruce, the large drop out of American Indian students, which saw roughly two or three students complete an academic year in which fifty or sixty Indian students were enrolled was primarily because "you're quitting before you even get started." As Warrior would also do in his speeches, Spruce compared his own generation unfavorably with his ancestors. While Warrior was as quick to blame administrators and the culturally and intellectually suffocating policies of the federal government, however, Spruce blamed his peers for their predicament. He argued that his ancestors "had courage. They had pride and they had self-discipline. Those are things we seriously lack today. We don't have them anymore. We're cowards. We can't face the world." He continued that "respectability comes from inside. It's you, people. It's in your hearts. No we're not proud. We're not proud at all. We don't even care about ourselves."[32]

[32] Spruce, Beryl, "We Are Born at a Time When The Indian People Need Us," *New Mexico Association on Indian Affairs Newsletter,* January 1958, pp. 1- 3

Even as he was castigating his audience for relying on self-pity to justify their failures he reassured them that they could succeed at college and still retain their Indian identity. Many of them were high school students attending the conference through curiosity about college life, and Spruce's words shocked them. He insisted that, "whether you live among white people or whether you don't, you can still be Indians. You can still pray the Indian way. You can still think the Indian way…you can still be an Indian in a white man's world." He also urged the need for the students to return and help their home communities upon graduation. He proclaimed that, "by our birth we're dedicated to our race. *We are born at a time when the Indian people need us!* There is nothing else we should do except work among the Indians and with the Indians."[33]

Spruce's focus upon Indians as the cause of their problems was meant to galvanize his audience into embracing education as a means to achieving a tangible method of helping their communities, whether it be through law, medicine or science. Minton later described the speech as "the Gettysburg Address of Indian Education" and claimed that it had been circulated to other youth councils all across Indian Country, inspiring a dedication to education that was "difficult to estimate." As effusive as Minton was in his praise of the speech and its effects, even promoting it as a catalyst for growing youth consciousness in Southern Rhodesia, others felt that the speech was far too heavily weighted against Indians. It is difficult to estimate exactly how much of an impact that Spruce's speech had upon Warrior, Thom and the other NIYC founders, but they followed his rhetorical methods of

[33] Ibid. pg. 2

attack. Warrior and Mel Thom, following Spruce's example in trying to prick the conscience of their audience into action, also went a step further. They openly castigated the federal bureaucratic machine that they felt had created this culture of self-pity, and to an extent, self-loathing, within Indian communities in general and Indian youth in particular. Warrior was especially caustic of both sides of the equation, his speeches dripping with contempt for the system, and the people it produced.[34]

Much of this was in the future though, although even during his early foray into youth councils he quickly earned a reputation as something of a "radical." By the time the SRIYC annual conference made its first appearance in Oklahoma, on the University of Oklahoma's Norman campus, this reputation was growing. Warrior had already become something of a regular on the youth council circuit within Oklahoma and had attended several meetings hosted by the University of Oklahoma's Sequoyah Club. He had also encouraged students at his old high school in Ponca City to start their own club in 1960. Mona Reed remembers Warrior telling her that even the name of the club was an important factor, and that she needed "to think about what you want from this club before you name it." When she replied that she, and the other Indian students, wanted a group that would encourage each other to graduate and attend college, he suggested the name Oo-Kee-He (Able To Accomplish) Club.[35]

[34] idem. "The Place of Indian Youth in Higher Education," pg. 55
[35] Reed, Mona, Personal Interview, White Eagle, November 13, 2010.

The Sequoyah Club was the oldest university affiliated American Indian student group in the country, having founded in 1914, and enjoyed a reputation as a serious and dedicated cohort of students even before its affiliation with the SRIYC. Warrior also befriended Browning Pipestem (Otoe), an OU student and Sequoyah member. Pipestem later recalled that as popular as he was with many people, there was an equal number of Indian students who 'hated' Warrior "because he was right." Many students felt uncomfortable with Warrior's plainspoken approach with which he aimed to "take that negative image of Indians and shove it down people's throats." The conference, titled the Workshops for College Sessions, on April 28 and 29, 1961 offered Warrior just such a chance. It was also where he first met Mel Thom, his later co-founder of the National Indian Youth Council. Thom, president of the Indians of All Feathers Club at Brigham Young University, was leading a panel on 'the changing relations between tribal and federal governments.' Pipestem and Thom became close friends and confidants of Warrior's over the following years.[36]

Publicly Minton welcomed the change of venue for the conference, from its usual locale of New Mexico, Utah, or Arizona as a chance to get "acquainted with Indian students from Oklahoma and seeing how different conditions there are from New Mexico and Arizona." Privately he was concerned about the effect of such a controversial figure standing for the annual presidency of the SRIYC. Minton turned to Gerald Brown (Flathead) and talked him into standing against Warrior. Brown was unconvinced but acquiesced to Minton's request. He remembered diligently

[36] Robert Allen Warrior, Paul Chaat Smith, *Like A Hurricane,* New York, (USA), The New Press, 1996 pg. 41. Tentative workshop program, AII Papers

preparing a thirty-minute speech "outlining the issues and causes I thought the council should pursue over the following year." After Brown's speech was over, Warrior leapt on to the stage, rolled up his sleeves and thrust them at the audience. His campaign speech began and ended with the words "I am a full blood Ponca Indian. This is all I have to offer. The sewage of Europe does not run through these veins." The small matter of his 1/16 Irish blood could be categorized in two ways: either as irrelevant to somebody so immersed in, and attuned to, his cultural heritage and identity that he instinctively rejected the government's assimilationist tactics of blood quantum; or as the bellicose rhetoric of a young idealist. Either way, in three short sentences Warrior tapped into the frustration, anger, and resentment of his fellow students towards to dominant white society, even if the directness of his statement shocked quite a few of them. Minton's fears were realized as Warrior won the election in a landslide. He remained close friends with his reluctant opponent, who confessed to feeling "quite relieved" that Warrior had won, having been press-ganged into standing for election in the first place[37]

At the end of the school year, the newly elected president of the SRIYC took up again with his powwow companions and good friends Frank Turley and Jim Steiner. By this time he had developed a rather distinctive fashion sense of cowboy shirts with snaps rather than buttons. One night, as the friends rested up for the night in the motel room, after a night in which Turley and Steiner had been drinking, Warrior tore of his shirt, not remembering that on this occasion it was buttoned rather than snapped. Turley remembers buttons flying across the room, and the pair

[37] Brown, Gerald, Telephone Interview, April 1, 2010.

of them falling down laughing. He also remembers that at this point, the summer of 1961, Warrior still did not drink, but was "addicted to Cokes" to the point that he drank "about 20 Cokes a day." Whenever they teased him about it, he would just shrug, "go ahead tease, I'm going to get another Coke."[38]

Halfway through the summer, on a trip back to White Eagle, Warrior informed Turley that he would not be heading back out onto the powwow circuit with him. From someone like Warrior, this was staggering news, and Turley initially thought he was teasing him. Warrior, however, informed him that he was "going to Southern Colorado for an educational workshop and leadership training." Fully aware that Turley was "broke" that summer, and relying on the kindness of Warrior and his other companions for food and transport, Warrior told Abe Conklin, his fellow Hethuska tail dancer, and future Nudahonga, to drop Turley off at the Collins family farm when they were done powwowing, and he would met him there to resume powwowing when he was done with his workshop.

[38] Interview with Frank Turley, idem.

CHAPTER 3

"A BROADER EDUCATION"

The leadership training workshops that Warrior described to Turley were the Workshops on American Indian Affairs held at Boulder, Colorado. Created in 1956 by Dr. Sol Tax, of the Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago, and aided by his graduate students Robert "Bob" Thomas and Al Wahrhaftig, the Workshops were conceived of as a practical extension of Tax's concept of "action anthropology" as the ideal intellectual approach towards Native peoples. Tax was as certain of the Workshops importance to the history of American Indian education as Minton was of the youth councils'. Fellow anthropologist Robert Rietz, and sociologists Murray and Rosalie Wax joined them in this experiment. As Warhrhaftig explained,

> "action anthropology held that by intervening in a community in such a way that new alternatives can be created without co-opting the power to incorporate only such alternatives as are perceived by its members to be beneficial, anthropologists can observe "values in action": they can simultaneously study and help."[1]

Applied in an education setting these goals certainly reflected the aims of Minton and his youth councils, but rather than seek a peaceful partnership, the two men became embroiled in a brief but biter rivalry for the minds and loyalties of the young students they were attempting to re-educate.

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[1] Wahrhaftig, Albert, L. "Looking back to Tahlequah: Robert K. Thomas' Role Among the Oklahoma Cherokee, 1963-1967," in Pavlik, Steve, (ed.) *A Good Cherokee, A Good Anthropologist,* pg. 93

While the Workshops offered Indian students the chance to discuss and analyze Indian history from their own perspectives, they were also controlled environments in which Tax and his students could "intervene, study, and help." The main purpose was to help "the young Indian student find himself," as the organizers and educators of the workshops, saw Indian youths, not just those at college, but 'whether of tribal or de-tribal background,' as suffering from '"marginality": (sic) they are unable to see themselves as either Indians or as white people.'[2]

Despite the generality of this perception, and the tendency towards classification and pigeonholing students, which lasted well into the mid 1960s, it was this "marginality" that Tax and his colleagues wished to confront. As action anthropologists they were confident in their own experiences that "with persons so troubled it has usually been helpful to acquaint them with their history and heritage." The common belief was that "even the knowledge that other young people are in the same situation often increases their self-confidence and their ability to cope with their own problems." The result of this concern displayed itself in the early teaching methods used in the workshops. Tax needed to be sure that he could "reconcile projects, planned entirely by the staff and requiring so much non-Indian leadership and stimulation" to keep the students motivated with "the notion that Indians would do best if they were allowed to make their own mistakes." Warrior, however, later complained that workshops and youth council organizers

[2] Rosalie Wax, *Report on American Indian Workshops,* pg. 3

alike constantly attempted to tell the students what the solutions to their problems were rather than let them discover them for themselves. [3]

Along with financial backing from Reverend Galen Weaver of the Board of Home Missions of the Congressional and Christian Churches, the Workshops received sponsorship and funding from such Indian 'reform groups' or 'friends' as the Indian Rights Association, Association on American Indian Affairs, Arrow, Inc., the Mission Groups of the Protestant Denominations, and private foundations such as The Emil Schwarzhaupt Foundation, Inc.[4] Most crucially they also, according to Rosalie Wax's report, had the full endorsement of the National Congress of the American Indians, which alleviated some, if not all, tribal suspicion of the motives of the non-Native anthropologists.

According to Rosalie Wax's sociological theory, and the instructors desire for classification and categorization, the student body was divided into different 'types' of Indian. Wax determined that most of the students were educated in schools and colleges "near their own relatively rural and isolated communities." She reported that the majority of them had very little experience of interaction with the white community. However, those who had such experiences may, "depending on the region of the country…have been respected, tolerated, ignored, or despised by their white neighbors," which in reality covered most forms of Indian/white

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[3] Ibid., pg. 1

[4] Rosalie Wax, *A Brief History and Analysis of the Workshops on American Indian Affairs Conducted for American Indian College Students, 1956 – 1960.* pg. 4. Unpublished, Murray Wax Papers. Also, Arrow Inc., was an offshoot of the NCAI formed in part to offset crippling tax charges by the federal government. For more information see Thomas Cowger's *The National Congress of American Indians: The Founding Years.*

interaction. She estimated that the majority of the students were, in her opinion, "marginal" in that they were neither culturally Indian nor white, and had "retained, unconsciously, many Indian attitudes and have also adopted a motley collection of "general American" middle and lower-middle class ideas and mannerisms," irrespective of their cultural backgrounds." Conversely, she also estimated that each year of the workshops, "about a third to a quarter of the students are from a tribal or "conservative" background," an estimate that would have included Warrior upon his enrollment in 1961. [5]

Underlying these definitions was, according the Wax a common Indian identity among the students, irrespective of their individual tribal cultural backgrounds, or life experiences. She did comment, though, upon 'the credulous bigotry and self-hatred of some of the students, (who) ironically, if these "Indian-Haters" had been less Indian in personality, could have fought back on the level of intellectual discussion." Warrior, however, argued against this superficial stereotype of culturally traditional Indians being anti-intellectuals, as well as the more generic label of Indian-ness. To him, and many of his cohorts, looking from within "Indian" culture, there were far more differences than similarities between tribes and nations for the 'catch all' label of Indian to sit comfortably. For these students, the Workshops were an opportunity to learn about each other as much as about themselves. Throughout his adult life he reiterated that it was their individual tribal cultural backgrounds that shaped he and his peers' identities. It was these tribal identities that subsequently shaped their understanding and development of

[5] Wax, *Report on American Indian Workshops,* pg. 2

the intellectual discussions Wax and her colleagues tried to formulate. In Warrior's experience, it was the assimilated, or slightly assimilated, Indians with little knowledge or attachment to their tribal cultural heritage, who took it upon themselves to denounce tribal identity and Indian-ness in their self-loathing. The more "tribal" personality a person had, the less likely he or she was to suffer self-loathing. The differences between "Indian" and "tribal" identity were the ones that defined much of Warrior's later rhetoric. [6]

The early emphasis was very much upon the workshop aspect of " students producing something," in this case a newsletter, under faculty oversight. Wax and Thomas devised a strategy of presenting the courses on two simultaneous, or counter-pointed, levels, which became the template for subsequent workshops. The essential intent was to allow the students to follow their own study paths while assuming they were following instructions. While this was very much more a sociological and anthropological experiment than an educational tool, according to Wax it worked. She reported that, "the more serious student…would tell us privately that he had at last figured out why we had assigned a particular reading or given a particular lecture." The subject matter of the lectures was also a matter for discussion at the workshops. In order to best prepare the students to educate white people about Indians, the organizers decided to educate the students about white people first, although this approach changed radically in the 1960s, when D'Arcy

[6] Ibid., pg. 15. Brackets mine.

McNickle took formal control and instigated a change in focus to American Indian cultures and histories.[7]

Prior to 1959, when Rosalie Wax assumed directorship of the workshops, the curriculum had been a series of lectures and guest lectures on 'Indian history and Current Life Situations.' While Wax retained this seminar, she now included a variety of Indian leaders who accepted invitations to speak before the students. The workshops, according to Wax, also succeeded in making the students realize "that the margins of cultural difference between Indian and European were neither clean-cut nor unequivocal as to value." This approach however, often produced resentment and distrust from the early Workshop students towards the faculty, however, to the extent that many even questioned the heritage of Bob Thomas, a full-blood Cherokee. In a 1960 article co-authored with Rosalie Wax, Thomas complained that, "we were unable to accomplish much in the Workshops on American Indian Affairs until we redefined the teacher-learning situation." There is a rich, unintended irony about the article. Wax and Thomas decried white interference; to create certain reactions or outcomes; in American Indian lives as culturally aggressive and jarring. At the same time, however, they openly extolled the virtue of interfering and experimenting with their Workshop students to arrive at pre-determinedly acceptable modes of student behavior and reaction.[8]

The students' skepticism may have been due, in part, to the fact that the majority of the staff were white anthropologists. From an initial teaching staff of

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[7] Ibid. pg. 13. Wahrhaftig, Al, Telephone Interview, October 7, 2010.
[8] Ibid., pg. 14. Wax, Rosalie, Thomas, Robert. K, "American Indians and White People," *Phylon,* Vol. 22, No. 4, pg. 315

just Dr. Fred Gearing, the faculty, by the time of Warrior's attendance in 1961, had doubled. Dr. Murray Wax, who in 1959 had been 'a sociologist who went along for the fun of it,' replaced his wife, Dr. Rosalie Wax and Mr. Robert Thomas, a full-blood Cherokee graduate student in the University of Chicago, Department of Anthropology, had replaced Dr. Gearing. The original sponsors of the workshops were also all white, with the exception of the formal recognition of the National Congress of American Indians, and Arrow, Inc. There was some Native influence, however, as organizers consulted and retained the services of Helen Peterson from the NCAI and Thomas Segundo, Chairman of the Papago Nation, as guest speakers. Peterson, a Lakota and Cheyenne Indian, was Chief Executive of the NCAI and had worked with McNickle for many years, while Segundo had met McNickle through his pursuit of the tribe's land claims, and was the type of tribal leader that McNickle wanted his students to emulate.

The organizers were willing to make adjustments and incremental changes to the curriculum, however, and in 1960 a new seminar entitled the 'Study of the White Man' proved a great success. According to Wax, her husband's approach to Indian and White cultural histories was very appreciated by his students. Rosalie Wax also reported that "the conservative students (of which Warrior was one) were entranced and the assimilationists stunned, having never heard the ways of their elders spoken of with such respect by a white man." He, in turn, was so enthused by his student responses that he campaigned to make his temporary appointment a permanent one. Indeed, Bernadine Eschief, in her student assessment of the 1960 workshop commented that, "Dr. Wax's lecture on the worldview of the Indian and

"white man's" view may have brought into focus more clearly Indian thinking and the situation we are in now." She surmised that, "probably many have never seen it in this aspect, I know I did not. I was an Indian but I did not know what was expected of me." In fact, such was the effect of Wax's approach on Warrior that he continued to count upon him as a mentor throughout his student career. [9]

This approach led to an atmosphere where the more reticent conservative students felt confident enough to discuss change in Indian Country. When Wax proposed that the students study white people in an effort to try to understand their behavior, even those conservative Indians his wife was so worried about embraced it as a worthwhile project. According to Wax, for many of the students the corrosive effect of three generations worth of boarding school education held full sway in their households. This meant that the Workshops were the first time they heard that their history and culture was rich and worthwhile. As Warrior pointed out, this was also certainly true from within their high school education, although he had the advantage of a culturally immersed upbringing. Whether in public schools like Warrior, or Indian Schools like many of his contemporaries, the students were always subjected to the hegemonic educational mantra of the superiority of Western civilization and culture. The fact that other young Indians shared exactly the same life experiences was, according to Wax, especially surprising to many of the students as well, sheltered as they had been from the wider world. One student of the 1959 workshop admitted that "my formed opinion

[9] Student Assessments, Box 7, Folder 12, Robert Rietz Papers, University of Chicago Library, (hereafter the Rietz Papers)

before I arrived…were mainly that the Indian was just plain stubborn, hard to please, and ought to "shape-up.'"[10]

While the faculty took this to be the dominant opinion that the students heard everyday, even on the reservation and in other Indian communities, it was a situation that they could not address through the workshops. What they were aiming for was to alter the self-perception of those students under their tutelage. They also intended to educate them, shape them into "wise Indian leadership" and to send these youth back to their people better equipped to make a positive difference to their communities. This was a concept that Warrior openly embraced in the months leading up to his first Workshop visit, telling his good friend Frank Turley that he was skipping out of the powwow circuit for a couple of months.

The redefinition Thomas alluded to occurred in the same year as his article was published, and when NCAI offshoot American Indian Development, under the aegis of D'Arcy McNickle and Viola Pfrommer, took formal control of the Workshops while Sol Tax focused on preparing for the 1961 American Indian Charter Convention in Chicago. McNickle, a Flathead Indian from Montana, refocused the Workshops, even moving them from their original home of Colorado Springs to Boulder to suit his geographic needs. He was also worried that most of the students attending the workshops wanted "to transform their reservation communities into rural small-town America where everyone would act as whites and set about restructuring the students educational experience." Over the

[10] *The Indian Progress,* Newsletter of the Workshop on American Indian Affairs, July 8, 1960, Vol. 1, AII Papers

following three years the Workshops underwent several major changes in teaching and thematic focus, as they become more focused on the perceived needs of the student rather than the 'reformist' desires of the faculty.[11]

D'Arcy McNickle had been a guest speaker at the 1958 workshops. He was one of the founding members of the NCAI, an anthropologist, historian, and former BIA employee. As such, he had the right credentials and experience to guide these students through the workshops.[12] McNickle's leadership also gave the workshops a more coherent approach than the more 'ad hoc arrangement' and experimental approach that preceded his tenure, even if Rietz and Thomas still played it 'by the ear' on a number of occasions. He determined that the 4,000 Indian students enrolled in universities at that time "represent an investment in the future. They are needed in the communities that brought them forth and that now look to them for leadership." He insisted that, "this cannot take place if the student is turned away from his people by teachers who do not understand or are not in sympathy with the student's objective." His vision for the Workshops was that of "helping the students gain a better view of themselves, of their abilities, of their place in the future." The students would be instructed in subjects useful to their future vocations as tribal leaders, including "Indian legislation; tribal histories; reservation planning; the administration of law and order in Indian communities; the problems of minority

[11] Dorothy Parker, *Singing an Indian Song: A Biography of D'Arcy McNickle,* Lincoln, (USA), University of Nebraska Press, 1992, pg. 186

[12] McNickle's life and career has been documented in a number of texts, perhaps the most respected of which is Dorothy Parker's *Singing an Indian Song: A Biography of D'Arcy McNickle.* This career included, among other things, working as an author, novelist, and program director for the Newbery Library Center for the History of the American Indian.

groups in the United States," all of which we designed to enable the student to "emerge with greater respect for themselves and their people."[13]

McNickle introduced a popular skit on the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the curriculum, the 'Bureau of White Man's Affairs,' with the intention of strengthening his students' realization of the complexities of the federal/Indian relationship. In this seminar, the Indians, as the dominant race, 'tried to cope with the irrational behavior of white people.'[14] He decided that merely educating the students about each other's cultures was not enough. The collective opinion was that these students had no real idea of their own community's 'legal and social relationship' with the rest of the United States, and that 'even more rarely does he (sic) have an accurate perception of the situation of the Indian peoples as a whole.' A further desire was that these students would go out and 'give the non-Indian world a more accurate understanding of the Indian world.'[15]

McNickle also developed and implemented a long-term fund raising program. Despite the acknowledged support of the organizations mentioned earlier, he felt that primary funding for the workshops should come from the Indian communities themselves. He argued that such a show of support from the communities would send a message to the students that the workshops were a worthwhile investment educationally. In order to win that support he drafted an overview of the articles in which he stressed that while the "Workshop set itself the

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[13] *Education for Leadership"* information factsheet on the 1961 Workshop, pg., 4 Box 7, Folder 3, Rietz Papers
[14] Dorothy Parker, *Singing an Indian Song,* pg. 190
[15] Ibid. pg. 1

task of salvaging Indian students" this did not mean "that students must be pampered by designing easy course for them. On the contrary, they are required to work at stiff assignments." Sponsors recognized however, that, as with many other Indian run programs designed to help Indians, only those with experience of the workshops would act. The organizers complained that only those tribal leaders who saw the workshops in action 'have been impressed and concerned to recruit students from among their peoples and to raise monies to defray their expenses.' Those tribal leaders who had not seen the workshops in action were 'naturally skeptical of the enterprise.'[16]

Even with McNickle's reorganization, the majority of the faculty, with the exception of Wahrhaftig, who joined the Peace Corps, remained much the same, as Bob Thomas and Murray Wax gave the primary lectures. Bob Dumont, a graduate of the 1957 workshop, began to assist as well as D'Arcy McNickle and Tillie Walker of the American Friends Service Committee. All five of the above played important roles in Warrior's life. McNickle's tenure also coincided with the recruitment of far more culturally and socially aware students, many of who already knew each other from the various campus youth councils and organizations that were springing up in campuses across the country. Due to his wider connections as founder and member of the National Congress of American Indians, the recruitment net was cast farther afield than before. It also meant that most of these students were already aware of the collective economic and social inequality of Indian nations in America. The recruits came from such traditional tribal

[16] Wax, *Report on American Indian Workshops,* pg. 5 Also, *Education for Leadership,* Rietz Papers

communities as the Oglala Sioux in South Dakota, the Navajo in Arizona, the Turtle Mountain Chippewa, North Dakota, the Ojibway, Saulteaux, in Canada, and many Oklahoma nations, including the Osage, Creek, and Warrior's Ponca. In total twenty-one tribes and fifteen states were represented at the 1961 Workshop, including Seneca-Cayuga tribal chief Richard Whitetree, who was the youngest chief ever to represent his tribe.

In keeping with his agenda to produce "wise Indian leadership," McNickle decided that the students would spend the first week of the 1961 Workshops at the American Indian Chicago Conference "learning and participating in a major conference on Indian affairs."[17] The conference was another idea of Sol Tax, to gather as many Indian leaders together as possible to give a unified Indian voice of intent to incoming president John F. Kennedy. McNickle wanted the students to observe these leaders as they created "a body of recommendations to guide Indian programs in the future" as a blueprint for their own future behavior as tribal leaders.

Rosalie Wax speculated that this arrangement boosted applications and attendance for the Workshops exponentially compared to previous years, while McNickle believed that exposure to this event would also expose his students to Indian leaders he respected, such as Thomas Segundo, (Papago/Tohono O'dham), who he respected as traditional, yet forward looking. The Chicago Conference, which ran from June 13 to June 21,' was organized by the University of Chicago's anthropology department s the brainchild of Sol Tax. Applying 'action

[17] "*Education for Leadership*" Rietz Papers,

anthropology" to a larger test area than the workshops, Tax and his fellow organizers intended using the conference to encourage Indian communities to take control of their own destinies,' Tax believed that in order for Indian communities to truly achieve self-determination, tribes and leaders needed a workable consensus. Working with the cooperation of the NCAI, he conceived the Chicago Conference as a way to reach such a consensus and then present it to the incoming president.[18]

Rather than simply observe and listen, the students threw themselves into the proceedings. Indeed, Warrior felt so comfortable in his surroundings that during the Opening Session he seconded a motion by Robert Burnette, president of the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Council, calling for certification of individual and tribal delegates for voting purposes. Burnette was convinced that without individual certification, mixed blood tribal leaders, many of who would collaborate to push through their own agenda, would dominate voting. With individual certification, he was confident that the more traditional, full-blooded Indians in attendance would be heard. This argument was precisely the tone Warrior wished to hear at the meeting. He was also selected to the Drafting Committee that had final say on the Declaration of Indian Purpose, which served as that unified consensus. Warrior's ease in these surroundings arose from him already having a healthy skepticism of tribal politics and tribal politicians thanks to listening to tribal elders talking at his grandparents' house. Even so "it was sickening to see American Indians just get up and tell obvious lies about how well the federal government was treating them, what

[18] There are many excellent articles written about the Chicago Conference with Nancy O. Lurie's *The Voice of the American Indian: Report on the American Indian Chicago Conference* being the most authoritative, as she was assistant coordinator under Sol Tax.

fantastic and magnificent things the federal government were doing for us." Making a clear delineation between the tribal leaders he mistrusted and the elders with whom he closely identified, he referred to the conference as a gathering of "all these tribal finks" and a "bad meeting."[19]

So frustrated were Warrior and other youths, including fellow Workshop students Karen Rickard (Tuscarora) and Bernadine Eschief (Shoshone Bannock), and fellow SRIYC members Mel Thom and Herb Blatchford, that, "we began having meetings of our own between sessions, drafting statements and resolutions and said we were going to try to work within that structure." Shirley Hill Witt (Mohawk), who first met Warrior at the Chicago Conference remembers that, "the Chicago conference allowed us to recognize that we could be movers and shakers and work towards change. We, at Chicago conference, we watched the older generation engaged in their timeless competition for scarce resources." Warrior complained, however, that, "every time we tried to do it, we stood up and worked within that structure, our own kind stood up and screamed at us, "radicals!" "Possibly Communists are infiltrating us! Ignore these young foolish kids. They really don't know what they are doing.'" He noted that "I was pretty sorry of my own kind of people, they had degenerated to such a level where they would do that."[20]

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[19] "We are among the poor, the powerless, the inexperienced and the inarticulate:" Clyde Warrior's Campaign for a "Greater Indian America." Paul McKenzie-Jones, *American Indian Quarterly,* 34, 2, pg. 246

[20] Interview with Shirley Hill Witt, March 9, 2010. *Idem*.

This frustration and impatience produced a heady cocktail of alternative ideas and demands for action which resulted in twenty of the youths agreeing, at the suggestion of Herb Blatchford, to meet again at the August 13th Gallup Ceremonial in New Mexico to discuss forming their own organization. Attendance at the Chicago Conference also gave Warrior and his cohorts the opportunity to mix with other powerful people beyond the tribal leaders he so disdained, including heads of Indian Organizations, important BIA personnel, and influential academics, a network of people that would later serve them well. The experience was not quite what McNickle had in mind when he envisioned the students learning from the experience but it certainly taught them the type of leaders they wished *not* to become.[21]

Indeed in a letter to Mel Thom, dated June 28, 1961, Blatchford extolled the resourcefulness of the Workshops students and "other interested young people" who gathered to "discuss the reasons for the youth being represented in an adult conference." He was also proud that several of the students, concerned that "the conference was going out on a tangent" and "diverting from the original purpose of the convention" came up with an "alternative statement of purpose to redirect our aims," which was subsequently drawn and presented at the conference. According to Blatchford, it was these incidents that exemplified the need for those young Indians, who were described by many as "the most unified group in the conference," to "participate and prepare for leadership through organized means."

[21] Although the actual number of students who founded the National Indian Youth Council was nine, there were many more who originally signed up for the idea at Chicago and ten at the first meeting.

Their unity was even more remarkable, considering that McNickle described the conference as an event where "reservation Indians were especially distrustful of their urbanized kinsmen" to the extent that "in the absence of traditional channels for intertribal communication…at several critical moments the conference stood ready to dissolve." McNickle's observations were in stark contrast to the unified image presented to the public by the publication of the Declaration of Indian Purpose.[22]

Disillusion was not limited to the students, and their youth council mentor, Charles Minton railed against the conference, as well as the 'true' intentions of Sol Tax in organizing it. In two confidential letters to Stan Steiner, a journalist and author who was researching for his forthcoming book *The New Indians,* Milton did not disguise his contempt for Tax or the conference. It also appeared that despite his initial uncertainties over Warrior's suitability as president of the SRIYC, Minton shared similar opinions about the more prominent actors in Indian affairs. He complained to Steiner that no one with experience in Indian affairs took the conference seriously except "the professional Indians, the Indian politicians, and the Indian phonies." He also dismissed the conference as having "inflated Tax's ego…and triggered a brisk sale in war bonnets." The war bonnets were simply to

[22] Letter from Herb Blatchford to Mel Thom, dated June 28, 1961, Box 1, Folder 11, NIYC Papers. Hauptman, L, Campisi, J, "Eastern Indian Communities Strive for Recognition," pg. 469, in Hurtado, A, Iverson, P, (eds) *Major Problems in American Indian History,* Second Edition, New York, Houghton Mifflin Co. 2001

enable the "phonies" to "reassure themselves that they were Indians" by even wearing them to the baseball game.[23]

What particularly irked Minton was Tax's claim that with the conference, "the Indians are beginning to express themselves for the first time." He ridiculed the claim as being "farthest north in assininity," insisting that "if he knew anything about Indians, he would have known that they have ben expressing themselves for a very long time in meetings under their own auspices and under those of this association." Here he also clearly marked a territorial boundary, over the various youth council students in attendance at least. Furthermore, Minton insisted that the entire enterprise was a wasted effort anyway, describing it as a "costly wet firecracker." He insisted that the January, 1961 publication of *A Program for Indian Citizens* and the July report of President Kennedy's Task Force on American Indian Affairs, said everything that the conference's "Declaration of Indian Purpose" did, only more forcefully and with more clarity.[24]

For all of Minton's objections, the stark contrast between the two reports he favored and the Declaration that came from Tax's conference was the volume of the Indian voice. Both reports were conducted by appointed 'experts' on Indian who filtered the Indian voice through their own prism of concern for, and uncertainty of, the Indian's ability to truly understand what was best for him. As such, they smacked of the same paternalistic, if not the territorial, attitude that

[23] Letter from Charles Minton to Stan Steiner, dated August 7, 196, Series 2, Box 1, Folder 9, Stan Steiner Collections, Department of Special Collections, Stanford University.
[24] Ibid.

Milton carried towards the SRIYC. The Declaration, however, was prepared and worded by Indians themselves.

The *Program for Indian Citizens* was the summary report of four-year investigation by the Commission on the Rights, Liberties and Responsibilities of the American Indian, a six-man board that included former Commissioner of Indian Affairs, William A. Brophy, and federally appointed Cherokee Principal Chief W.W. Keeler. The Commission's full report was later published as *The Indian: America's Unfinished Business* in 1966 by Brophy, and added Commission member Sophie D. Aberle. The Commission was created by the Fund For the Republic, a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of civil liberties, which itself had ben created by the Ford Foundation in 1952. The Ford Foundation, created in 1932 with funding from Edsel Ford, son of Henry Ford, was dedicated to charitable and educational services that benefitted the public welfare. The Commission's purpose was to create a "fresh, up-to-date appraisal of the status of the Indians" in light of the recent federal termination policy.

The Task Force on Indian Affairs was created at the behest of newly installed Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall. In January 1961, two days after Udall's Senate confirmation, and the same month as the publication of the Commission's summary report, Udall announced that he had appointed W.W. Keeler as his advisor on Indian Affairs and Chairman of his Task Force, which also included soon to be appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs Phileo Nash. Despite Minton's claims that the task force spoke better for the Indians than those at the Chicago Conference, Udall warned his Task Force, in his very first meeting

that the investigation did "not mean that we are going to let, as someone put it, the Indian people decide what the (federal) policy should be." Despite this misgiving, Udall encouraged tribal consultation and seven meetings over fifteen days were conducted with tribal leaders from as far apart as South Dakota, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Washington State, four states containing some of the most traditionally focused Indian nations in the country. Rather ironically, giving Minton's complaints, the Task Force also attended the Chicago Conference and lobbied the opinions of the attendees.[25]

The Task Force and Commission recommendations were similar in tone and content, with the main ideals being the creation of job training, resource development, economic growth, improved community services, such as housing and health, and a restructured Bureau of Indian Affairs. Both reports also called for the education of Indian children to be the responsibility of the public school system, although the Commission acknowledged that a small number of tribal school children would need federal education. Significantly, while both reports urged for programs under which "the Indian must be given responsibility, must be afforded an opportunity he can utilize, and must develop faith in himself," neither rejected termination as the ultimate goal, urging instead for a more thorough preparation of tribes before the process began. Also, while Minton and other interested observers lauded the efforts of the Task Force and Commission, this sentiment was not universally held. While Phileo Nash claimed that "98 percent of the Indian population was represented by the elected leaders that appeared before us and

[25] Clarkin, Tom, *Federal Indian Policy in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations,* University of New Mexico Press, USA, pg. 26. Brackets Mine.

offered programs," critics including Warrior, noted that many of these leaders were neither traditional nor full blood. They also criticized the personnel of the two projects. W.W. Keeler, the sole Indian on both committees, was merely one sixteenth Cherokee, did not know the language, and practiced none of the cultural traditions of his people. In many ways he was the complete polar opposite of Warrior.[26]

In contrast, the *Declaration of Indian Purpose,* crafted by the same leaders Nash claimed shaped his Task Force recommendations, flatly rejected termination and called for "a right to choose our own way of life." The Declaration also parodied the American Declaration of Independence by describing that "we believe in the inherent right of all people to retain spiritual and cultural values, and that the free exercise of these values is necessary to the normal development of any people." The issue of the inherent rights of tribal sovereignty as the original occupiers of the land was a recurring theme of the Declaration as the tribes positioned themselves squarely behind the concept of self-determination.[27]

The Chicago conference was not, however, simply an exercise in politics and political maneuvering, or ideology, as Minton complained, especially for

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[26] Brophy, William, A., Aberle, Sophie D., et al. *The Indian: America's Unfinished Business,* University of Oklahoma Press, USA, 1966, pg. 23. Clarkin, Thomas, *Federal Indian Policy in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations 1961 – 1969,* Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2001, pg. 27. Margaret Huettl also discusses the role of Keeler in Indian Affairs in her MA thesis, *Product of Chaos: W.W. Keeler, Community Organization, Identity, and Cherokee Revitalization, 1961 - 1976*

[27] *The Voice of the American Indian: Declaration of Indian Purpose,* American Indian Chicago Conference, The University of Chicago, June 13-20, 1961, pg. 5. Records of American Indian Charter Convention, Sol Tax Papers, Box 4, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institute (hereafter, Sol Tax Collection)

Warrior and his fellow youth caucus members. Hill Witt recalls that each evening they would gather for singing and dancing. “Once or twice it was formal, alright all you Indians go out and dance in circles for a while, were going to put the cameras on were going to put lights up and you do your colorful stuff.” Once the cameras were turned off and the ‘entertainment’ over, they would begin their “49’s. A ‘49’ is a purely social dance which, “is non sacred, it’s non sacred. Its fun it’s also where people get to meet each other in informal ways,” where courtships are often played out, songs are sung in English, away from the powwow arena, and etiquette and tradition are forgotten as the focus is on enjoying oneself and making friends. As well as being a formidable dancer and traditional Ponca singer, Warrior was also an entertaining and accomplished 49 singer. The ultimate social distraction of the conference for Warrior was the final weekend’s powwow, where he won second place in the men’s war dance contest behind Tom Eschief. From the powwow the students were driven by bus to Boulder for the second week of the workshops. In addition to those lectures already discussed there was a formal syllabus to the workshops.

The second week saw the beginning of what was essentially an immersion course in anthropological, sociological and historical theories and how they related to American Indian communities. The students were lectured on basic concepts of social sciences, using past and present Indian communities as the prism by Robert Rietz, and a review of American Indian cultural history, from ‘prehistory’ to the colonial period, by Bob Thomas. Their required readings focused on urbanism, folk societies and the results of these two culture types interacting. Discussing one such

text, Everett and Helen Hughes' *Where Peoples Meet,* Warrior commented that "I learned that all over the world tribal peoples are coming into contact with the outside world and basically they all have the same reaction, So, after all, we American Indians are not the only ones hitting it tough and not being understood."[28]

Robert Redfield's concept of 'Folk Society,' was a firm foundation of Thomas' teachings on the subject and showed his strong belief in the 'structuralist' vision of Indian communities as 'folk' cultures, which were static, unmoving and restricted by tradition. He also emphasized the benefit of urban society in defining identity as 'the more kinds of people you come into contact with the more you know who you are."[29] In short, a traditional community was seen as 'closed' and one that would stifle growth due to the limited opportunities to interact with the unknown. Urban communities, on the other hand, were seen as fluid, interchangeable arenas, whose very unpredictability and scale encouraged growth and self-knowledge. While this jarred with the absolute sense of self-identity that Warrior and other culturally immersed students claimed, the overall concept of the differences in personal interaction and traditional motifs between folk and urban societies, struck a chord. Interestingly, given the close friendship the two men developed and Warrior's later struggle with alcoholism, Thomas dismissed the 'urban' concept of self-discipline, which underpinned the ideal of personal growth

[28] Clyde Warrior 1962 assignments, Box 7, Folder 3, Rietz Papers.
[29] Tape recording of Robert Thomas lecture on Folk Society,

that he espoused, as one of 'not liking yourself' and unnecessarily forcing oneself to forgo pleasure for the sake of conformity.[30]

Thomas also classified Indian-ness as an ideology rather than a racial or cultural identifier, while dismissing the idea of Indian communities as being 'tribal' because "I would define tribal people as people who do not see other human beings outside their group as really human beings."[31] He did, however, stress the far more personal nature of community interaction in folk societies than could be found in the very impersonal life of urban societies. Ultimately, this was a confusing paradigm. Indians were evolved enough to eschew tribalism in their ability to recognize others as human. Their 'folk' societies were still static and unyielding environments that stifled personal and intellectual growth, which was the ideal of urbanity. Urbanity, however, was a cold impersonal environment which necessitated self-control and sacrifice, rather than the warm, closely knit folk society that they were being urged to leave behind. The major sacrifice then was human interaction, and the loss of such would stimulate intellectual growth and self-awareness.

The rigidity of the concepts, bound by structuralism, also failed to take into account the generations of infringement from, and interaction with, urban society, and the resultant subtle shifts in reservation "folk" communities when defining them as static, immovable cultures. Despite this formulaic, and often contradictory, view of Indians as belonging to folk societies rather than tribal cultures and ultimately belonging to static environments that stunted self-awareness, Thomas

[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid

and Warrior became close friends over the following years. This was as much due to Warrior's love of arguing theory, politics, and culture as their intellectual and personal connections.

Thomas continued his survey of American Indian history in the third week while Rietz did the same with his study of the social sciences. The readings continued along the same lines of cultural interaction but now also included John Collier's *Indians of the Americas,* with the idea of taking the concepts of folk societies, urbanism, cultural interaction and applying them to Indian nations for a conceptual analysis. Collier's text, while lauding 'the enduring organization of Indian groups' also blatantly defended his tenure and achievements as Commissioner of Indian Affairs by emphasizing that "the democratic way has been proved to be enormously the efficient way, the genius-releasing and the nutritive and life-impelling way, and the way of order," in contrast to the Indian policies followed before and after his term in office.[32]

The fourth week saw both lecturers focus on American culture, history, character and communities and federal Indian policy. The readings were still shaped to emphasize comparison and contrast with William Hagan's newly published *American Indians* joining Collier's text in contrast to David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*. Hagan's text was a welcome historical addition to the sociological and anthropological dominance of the workshops and offered a far more academic analysis of Indian/White relations than Collier's more romanticized overview. Riesman's text, on the other hand offered what is now considered a

[32] *The Indians of the Americas*. John Collier. New York, W. W. Norton and Company, 1947. Pp. xi, 326.

classic sociological study of (white) American character. He identified three character types of "tradition-directed", "inner-directed", and "other-directed" people, the existence of whom depended upon the type of society they appeared in. For the sake of the comparisons the Workshops lecturers were interested in, Indians, or 'folk societies' consisted of 'tradition-directed' people who relied on their elders for advice and guidance and were ill equipped to deal with the modern world. This contrasted with contemporary white America was dominated by "other-directed" people who craved the approval of their peers above all else: the 'Lonely Crowd" of his title. The text also served to supplement the argument put forth by Redfield, and extrapolated by Thomas, on the lack of evolutionary development of Indian communities.

In the fifth week the focus was purely upon Indians and Indian communities of the 1960s, i.e. the students themselves, their families, tribes, and peers. The readings included articles by both Rietz and Thomas on Indian populations trends and urban Indian agency reports, as well as studies of urban compiled for the American Indian Chicago Conference. Thomas' article, "Population Trends in American Indian Communities," formally presented at the Chicago Conference, contradicted his affirmation of Redfield's static, rigid, community hypothesis by arguing that while "American Indian communities, as a whole, are distinct growing communities that still preserve the core of their native system of life," many of those which had interacted with American society had taken over "a great many

Euro-American traits and institutions but (to) fit them into a context of the older covert Indian patterns of life."[33]

The sixth and final week of the 1961 Workshops entailed a lecture about comparative minority problems, widening the scope of the students' intellectual analysis from the strict duality of Indian/White relations to include an appreciation of the African American, Chicano and other minorities in America. The final lecture was a re-evaluation of the Chicago Conference, while the readings included the Statement of Indian Purpose drafted by the Chicago Conference participants, including Warrior and other students now studying it.

The students were also required to attend guest presented during their five weeks in Boulder. D'Arcy McNickle presented the first lecture, on June 27, discussing American Indian Development's successful Crownpoint Project in helping the Navajo build their own meeting hall. The lecture introduced Warrior and his cohorts to ways that self-determination could be physically applied to Indian communities, beyond the scope of the federal trust relationship or political realm of Indian affairs. For community-centered students such as Warrior, this was a revelation. McNickle, who in 1954 had warned his colleagues in the NCAI that "the battle for civil rights may not yet be won, but the battle for the right to be culturally different has not even started" told them, "not to have any preconceived ideas---let the people work it out for themselves," before re-emphasizing the need to "let the people make the decisions all alone." McNickle left the students in no

[33] "Population Trends in American Indian Communities," Robert K. Thomas, presented at the American Indian Chicago, taken from *Native American Tribalism,* D'Arcy McNickle, Oxford University Press, 1973, pg. 7

doubt that that had "not been the policy in the past with the dominant societies' relationship to the American Indian."[34]

Lectures on the 'Value of Indian Culture' and the importance of history in understanding the contemporary context of their lives followed. These lectures, presented by Ataloa, A Chickasaw from Oklahoma, and Helen Peterson (Oglala), the Executive Director of the NCAI, covered every aspect of Indian life "from arts and crafts to political movements," as well as the complicated issue of land rights and fractionated heirship. They also highlighted the importance of education to the students in order for them to be aware of the position of Indians in society, and stressed that "Indian young people must begin taking more active rolls in the affairs and problems of their people." While not entirely along the trajectory Peterson or McNickle had in mind, that was exactly what Warrior and several of his classmates were planning to do in Gallup, New Mexico. Warrior absorbed the messages of these lectures and ideas of "utilizing certain organizations, creating interest and better educational facilities" were all ideas that he later espoused in his speeches and articles.[35]

As with the Chicago Conference, the Workshops were not solely about work for the students. There were formal, and informal, social gatherings, such as

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[34] McNickle's warning came as the NCAI fought Congressional termination policy on behalf to its member tribes and is probably the most succinct summation of the American Indian struggle during the twentieth century. *The National Congress of American Indians: The Founding Years,* Thomas W. Cowger, University of Nebraska Press, 1999, pg. 113. *The Indian Progress, Newsletter of the Workshop on American Indian Affairs, Boulder Colorado,* July 10, 1961, No. 3, pg., 3, Box 7, Folder 4, Rietz Papers

[35] Ibid. *The Indian Progress* July 17, 1961, No. 4, pg., 3, Box 7, Folder 4, Rietz Papers

the one on July 1st when the White Buffalo Council of Denver at the Lone Star Ranch, Elizabeth, Colorado, entertained the students with baseball and barbecue. There were several, uncomfortable, attempted informal gatherings between students and faculty, at which Bob Thomas described the students as "expressionless and non-committal guests" who "had concluded that his role at the party was to paint his academic future," ad so when confronted conversationally by the instructors "delivered a modest, but well organized address describing his educational plans." Each weekend, briefly free of the constraints of early morning starts and the intellectual demands of the faculty, many of the students would '49' in nearby fields. Some of the students would complain about the socializing of the others, and especially the alcohol consumption. The instructors, however, never saw fit to impose a curfew on the after-hours activity, but the student's imposed their own, of sorts. According to Warrior's widow, Della, the rules were simple, "if you couldn't get up and be at class at 8 o'clock. Then don't go." Indeed, Thomas saw "joining them in their social activities" which often included "drinking late into the night," as an ideal way to gain the students' trust. This socialization was also the first time that Warrior drank alcohol, having never done so before he attended the Workshops.[36]

As well as attending classes, 49'ing, and drinking late into the night with Bob Thomas, Warrior served as co-editor, with Bernadine Eschief, of the Workshop newsletter titled *The Indian Progress.* The mid-Workshop newsletter,

[36] Wax, Thomas, *American Indians and White People,* pg. 307, Shreve, Bradley, Glenn, *Red Power Rising: The National Indian Youth Council and the Origins of Intertribal Activism,* unpublished dissertation, University of New Mexico, pps 93, 100. Interview with Della Warrior, *Idem*.

published on July 10, or Week Four, carried several ringing endorsements of the conduct and vision of the leaders present at the Chicago Conference. Leo LaClair (Muckleshoot) declared that, "the experience of attending the American Indian Chicago Conference has helped me a great deal in understanding some of the major current and historical problems in American Indian Affairs," while Bruce Wilkie was proud that, "for the first time in recorded history American Indians assembled, representing all parts of the country to form a common front to define the things in which they all believe."[37]

In the following issue, however, Warrior and Eschief's editorial comment painted an entirely different picture. Without referring directly to events in Chicago the pair declared that, "TODAY the Indian people are without great leadership. Today the Indian people are in dire need of leadership." They went on to argue that, "the Indian people must provide this leadership from their own kind: from their own young people" before concluding, with echoes of Beryl Spruce's 1955 Santa Fe Indian Youth Council call to arms that,

> "Young people, we must, by the fact that we are born American Indians, be dedicated to our people. There is nothing else we should do except work for, with, and among our Indian people. TODAY, Indian young people, we are born at a time when our Indian people need us."[38]

Despite the powerful rhetoric of the joint editorial, the end of the Workshops saw Warrior heading towards Gallup, and the reunion with the rest of the Chicago Youth Caucus, via the All American Indian Days powwow in Sheridan Wyoming.

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[37] *The Indian Progress,* July 10, pg. 4
[38] *The Indian Progress,* July 17, pg. 2

He had with him a disappointing final grade of D for his effort over the previous six weeks. However, in a February 19, 1962 letter, in which he accepted McNickle's offer to serve on an Advisory Committee to the Workshop to "help us in deciding what to include in the course (from the point of view of Indian needs)" Warrior admitted that, "last year I missed much due to my being blinded by youth." In a request to retake the Workshops he surmised that "I have grown up since then (I think) and I believe I could learn much more if I was to attend another session." Having obviously made a favorable impression upon McNickle to be asked to serve on the advisory committee, his request was granted and along with Bruce Wilkie, Warrior returned to the Workshops for a second time in the summer of 1962. [39]

Prior to his return though, he and Eschief produced one more issue of *The Indian Progress.* Published in March 1962, it was intended to update the 1961 class with news of their peers' achievement since they had gone their separate ways. The issue opened with a summary of the intentions of the Workshops and an analysis of the 1961 model. The joint editors declared that, "everyone became aware of the needs, the lacks, the problems of the Indian people. Everyone left with one thought

[39] The events at Gallup which culminated in the creation of the National Indian Youth Council, and all else that Warrior was involved in during the year between the two workshops, will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters. Letter from D'Arcy McNickle to Clyde Warrior, dated February 13, 1962, Box, 24, Folder 212, D'Arcy McNickle Collection, Newberry Library (hereafter the McNickle Papers). Letter from Clyde Warrior to D'Arcy McNickle, dated February 19, 1962, Box 24, Folder 212, McNickle Papers

in mind – to help in one way or another all the American Indian people on this continent."[40]

In the 'news extra' section they proudly announced the fact that they had been introduced individually, along with several others, as students of the workshops at the annual American Indian Exposition at Anadarko, Oklahoma. They also mentioned Warrior's participation in annual Oklahoma Society affair in the Senate auditorium in Washington D.C. Accompanied by Eschief and Ansel Carpenter Jr. he had visited with Commissioner of Indian Affairs Phileo Nash and Assistant Commissioner Fred Massey. Tucked away in the middle of the newsletter was the announcement that "On August 11, 1961, the National Indian Youth Council was formally initiated." The list of officers included Warrior, Eschief, and Karen Rickard from the class of 1961.

When Warrior and Wilkie returned in 1962 they found that much had changed, as did the instructors. For Warrior, one benefit from the previous year was the attendance of some familiar faces. Aside from Wilkie, he was joined by his best friend Browning Pipestem, as well as Jeri Cross, Gerald Brown, Georgianna Webster, Angela Russell and Fran Pfoabitty, each of whom he knew either from the powwow circuit, youth councils, the National Indian Youth Council, or Cameron Junior College. The abundance of familiar faces for so many of the students dramatically changed the dynamic of the Workshops as well. Even at this early stage of his activism, Warrior projected a self-confidence that drew others to him,

[40] *The Indian Progress,* March 30, 1962, No.5, Box 9, Folder 5, Sol Tax Collection, Records of the American Indian Charter Convention, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institute (hereafter the Tax Papers)

and Kathryn Red Corn, who quickly became one of Warrior's best friends, met him for the first time at the 1962 workshop and remembers that Warrior "kind of stood out… and he had a certain charisma about him that I felt was kind of neat."[41]

Whereas there had been a gradual evolution from the compliance of the early students in the 1950s to the more vocal students of 1961, there was a vibrancy about the 1962 class that the instructors noticed immediately. Robert Rietz commented on the energy of the class, telling them that it 'felt different from previous years" and that "something had changed."[42] He noted that "almost all students had the conviction that there is an "Indian way" which is contradicted by and therefore in conflict with a "white man's way."[43] The wife of guest lecturer and legal defender of Indian rights, John Cragun commented that, "the group seems very sophisticated and they were beginning to "organize themselves" on the second day, which hadn't happened in previous workshops according to D'Arcy and Viola, until about the end of the second week."[44] That being said, Rietz also noted that due to the various environments from which the students were recruited, an "ambivalence ranged over definitions of Indian identity, from being something to be overcome to being something to be defended with pride." [45]

Rietz and Thomas had been retained as Director and Assistant Director of the Workshops but they dramatically changed the curriculum to accommodate the

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[41] Interview with Kathryn Red Corn, February 9, 2010. Idem.
[42] Red Corn, Jeri, Personal Interview, Norman, October 12th, 2010.
[43] Workshop on American Indian Affairs, pg. 51962 Report, Box 8, Folder 7, Rietz Papers
[44] Letter from Mrs. John Cragun to Clarence and Alice Wesley and Ruth Bronson, dated July , 1962, Box 12, Folder 15, Helen Peterson Papers, National Museum of the American Indian Archives (hereafter the Peterson Papers)
[45] 1962 Report, pg. 5, Rietz Papers

issues raised by the rising number of urban Indians in America. The first four weeks of the course covered contemporary Indian issues and community action, tribal government, and discussions upon 'enemies of the People,' which was supplemented by a field trip to Pottawatomie, Kansas, and organizational impingement by religious organizations and benevolent associations, who were responsible for keeping decision making away from Indians. The fifth week, and "focal point" of the course was a field trip to Chicago to visit the American Indian Center. Rietz felt that "much of the program will revolve around the sessions held in Chicago, since the Indian in the urban settings tend to be a microcosm of the issues of development in contemporary Indian communities." He surmised that if the students could understand the issues facing individual Indians as they attempted to either assimilate or acculturate into the modern world, they could apply these lessons to their reservation communities as a whole. The final week, building upon those discussions and lessons in Chicago, included focused on discussions of social movements and the concept of "New Indians," as journalist and author Stan Steiner categorized them. According to Rietz's post workshop report "this did not work out too well" due to the failure of the students to understand conceptual abstractions of general thinking rather than applying everything to "the particular and personal."[46]

As with previous years, there were plenty of guest speakers during the six-week course. Drs. Sol Tax, Murray and Rosalie Wax each discussed social science contributions and social concepts with the students. Dr. John Taylor, a consultant for the House Committee on Indian Affairs, outlined the machinery of the

[46] 1962 Workshop syllabus, Box 8, Folder 17, Rietz Papers. 1962 Report, pg. 12, Rietz Papers

legislative process, while John Cragun discussed issues of jurisdiction and Indian claims, whole Dr. Omer Stewart discussed specific claims he had stood witness for as well as the legal and cultural defense for peyote. Four former officers of the NCAI, including Joseph Garry and Helen Peterson, again spoke before the students about the practical problems facing Indian communities.

The students were split into four groups of eight, each with different afternoon scheduled meeting times with Rietz and Thomas for their discussion sessions as outlined in 1961. Aside form these scheduled appointments, which for Warrior's group, meant Monday and Wednesday at 2.15 with Thomas, and Tuesday, Friday at 1.15 with Rietz, the rest of the days were spent with morning lectures from 9:00 until 11:45. Thursday afternoons were free fro all but upper division students. the readings were also more substantial than the previous year. Alfred Schutz's *The Stranger* replaced Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*, which became an upper division only reading. Felix S. Cohen's essays *Colonialism, US Style* and *Colonialism: A Realistic Approach* were added to the fourth week's readings, as was Robert Manners' *Pluralism and the American Indian.* Two of Thomas's essays, on the *Cherokee Values and Worldview* and *Social Problems of the Eastern Cherokee* were added to the final week. The expanded reading list, especially Cohen's analysis of Indian communities as subjects of American internal colonialism, helped Warrior develop concepts that he articulated in his later speeches.[47]

[47] Cohen's essays formed the bedrock of all future academic analysis of Indian reservations as being subject to internal colonial rule. Written in the 1950s they

The concept of Indian communities as internal American colonies, new as it was to Warrior and his cohorts, did not begin with Bob Thomas or Felix S. Cohen, however. In 1919, at the end of World War One, as Woodrow Wilson was attempting to dictate the peace process and co-ordinate the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and Germany's burgeoning empire, members of the Society of American Indians clamored for the same recognition of self-determination, citizenship, and nationalism for the American Indians within Woodrow's own nation. Zitkala Ša (Gertrude Bonnin), Charles Eastman, and Robert Yellowtail each called for citizenship for American Indians as well as the end of "political slavery" and recognition of the rights of Indian people to "their unquestionable and undeniable right to determine how much of their own lands they shall retain as their homes and how much they shall dispose of to outsiders." As well as colonialism, self-determination was another concept that pre-dated the Workshops.[48]

Even before this though, American intellectuals and business leaders themselves had long recognized the imperialist tendencies of the federal trust relationship. This was never more apparent than at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. The Smithsonian Institute organized "Indian Villages" as "living ethnographic displays" of America's conquered peoples. This was in direct response to the colonial villages that the European powers displayed at the 1889 Paris Exhibition. Such showmanship of America's conquered colonies was not

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mapped out the many ways that the American government served as internal colonial 'master' over the Indian nations of the United States.

[48] Hoxie, Frederick. E. (ed) *Talking Back to Civilization: Indian Voices from the Progressive Era,* New York, Bedford/St. Martin's, USA, 2001 "Robert Yellowtail Calls for Self-Determination," pp. 133-134

restricted to the Smithsonian either. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas Jefferson Morgan arranged a model Indian school at the same fair. This was meant as an example of how America educated and attempted to civilize her conquered colonial cousins. Contrast was again the message, with Morgan attempting to exemplify America's greater moral conduct in comparison to her European counterparts, who simply enslaved and traded their colonial 'subjects.' Nor was this sentiment restricted to the Columbian Exposition. In preparation for the 1898 Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition in Omaha, Nebraska, Senator William V. Allen urged the board to display Indian villages. He openly compared their benefit to that of colonial displays, arguing that "foreign governments which have held or promoted great world's fairs in recent years have made these the occasion of bringing from their remotest colonies and dependencies families, groups and even whole villages of aborigines." In other words, the Omaha exposition would need to do the same with America's colonial aborigines in order to be equally successful.[49]

The major difference in the workshops was that now it was the Indians themselves who viewed the federal trust relationship as one of colonial master and subject, rather than the bureaucrats, politicians and businessmen who administered of benefitted from the government's policies. The subject of colonialism, and the effect of such on Indian communities, was one that Warrior would refer to often throughout the rest of his life. Even those students as deeply culturally and socially immersed in their people and Indian country as Warrior was were astounded by the

[49] Rydell, Robert, W. *All The World's a Fair,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, USA, 1984, pg. 112

wealth of knowledge and experience made available to them over the six weeks. Jeri Red Corn (nee Cross) later explained that the Workshops allowed the students to externalize and intellectualize their particular situations when they had previously only been able to understand them on an emotional level. The full intellectual impact of the Workshops upon Warrior became abundantly clear in his final exam.

The essay also echoed Standing Bear's lament about the divisions rife among the Ponca almost a century earlier. Answering the question of where his community would fall on the folk-urban scale, Warrior divided the Poncas into two categories of "folk-like" and those "midway between Folk and Marginality." He proudly identified himself as belonging to the folk-like half of the community. They were "the ones who take an active part in all tribal organizations and functions" and, "never refer to the person as "I" but refer to themselves as "we" or the tribe." He stated, simply, that, "these are my people." Confirming Rietz's comment about the student concept of the "Indian way" contrasting with the "white man's way," Warrior observed that "these people have no idea of leaving this life, they think white men are strange and have bad ways and they're out to get the Indian." In addition to his people being the traditionalists of the tribe Warrior also marked them as the cultural core of the tribe's heritage, claiming that, "the majority of these people are the full-bloods, many are from chieftainship blood," while, like his drum-making grandparents, "each one has a definite role, with the role each one has a definite status and they all recognize it as being that way.[50]

[50] Clyde Warrior, 1962 Final Exam, Box 7, Folder 3, Rietz papers

In contrast, the other people of the Ponca were "out for themselves and they don't hesitate to tell you. They say Indian way will not work today, that only dumb, ignorant people, and lazy people cling to a way of life that is gone." The were people who "care less what the tribal organizations do" and "think tribal functions are a malarkey." They were the "wealthy farmers who have exploited their relatives land" and "teach their children to be ashamed of being Indians." While he hoped that one day these two groups would form an understand he was doubtful because "presently neither one understands and don't want to understand the other."[51]

He carried the hope of this reconciliation into an essay answering the question of where the students hoped to see their community in twenty years time. Admitting that it was something of a dream his desire was that by that time the Ponca would be fully functioning as a "tribe of Indians. With everyone concerned about each other, everyone helping each other, with everyone working for the common goal of the tribe." In order for this to happen he knew that the entire tribe "must meet on a common ground of understanding and concern for one another" to create a plan for economic self-sufficiency. Even twenty years into the future he saw the biggest resistance to any idea of actual, physical, self-determination facing the "most resistance" from the BIA who "would want to control the whole plan. And if this would happen BIA would end up making all decisions, forcing their ideas and this would defeat the purpose."[52]

It was in this essay that Warrior showed that he fully embraced the essence of McNickle's Crownpoint Project, in which, after the community had erected its

[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.

own meeting hall, leaders met to discuss methods in which to improve their situation. These discussions led to a community laundry, proposals for "expanded school facilities, for better roads, for domestic water development, and for improved law enforcement and social services." All that had apparently been lacking at Crownpoint was a communal meeting place for people to gather and discuss their issues. The essay displayed the burgeoning rhetoric for which he would become famous, declaring that, "I say again and again the people have got to do this for themselves. Indian people have got to help each other help themselves."[53]

In a third essay, addressing the issue of whether or not the Indians in his community should "shape up," Warrior was forceful in his advocacy of self-determination. His immediate response was that yes they should, as they "are poverty stricken, discriminated against, and as a whole the slobs of the area." At this point he was referring solely to "his people," those in the tribe who "are unable to relate to the outside society" because "they are unable to understand this white man's way of doing things." What was needed, he thought, was for the tribal council to "take their own initiative and make progress (coming from the people) to better help our people to "shape up." This way he envisioned that "the people will learn on their own how to better adjust and have a definite relationship with the outside society." Echoing many similar calls from over the years he suggested that, "perhaps the BIA could instead of administering, act as a sort of advisory...with the

[53] Ibid. McNickle, D'Arcy, Fey, Harold, E., *Indians and Other Americans: Two Ways of Life Meet,* Harper & Bros. USA, 1959, PP. 212-213

Indians doing the doing, with nothing happening until the Indians make it happen."[54]

This message was at the core of much of Warrior's future rhetoric for all Indian nations rather than just his own. He derided the current format of BIA paternalism as being outside the natural order of the world. He claimed that, "it is not natural for one group of people to tell another group of people what is right and what to do. People making their own decisions is only a natural thing to do. Therefore this is right." For Warrior, the benefits of this approach were manifest, "for being that they did it on their own, became self-sufficient, their pride of being a tribe and men again will return. When this happens they will say "we are men, let us help you or any of you, for we are as everyone else.'"[55]

The maturity that Warrior claimed he had gained between 1961 and 1962 was obvious in his essays, which earned him an overall grade B for the workshops. Clearly influenced by friends and events at Gallup, and regional workshops in the intervening months as well as a second chance at Boulder, his burgeoning vision shone from the pages. There was a determination to force change and an absolute conviction for tribal self-determination that hinted at his future campaigns for Indian rights and a better Indian world. The Workshops gave Warrior an intellectual voice with which to better declare the bitterness and anger at status quo he had felt growing up. This voice complimented the rich cultural voice that Warrior carried with him everywhere he went in his songs and dancing. This voice

[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.

was polished through long discussions with friends and colleagues over the coming years as he wedged tightly the ‘open door’ that the workshops represented.

CHAPTER 4

"THE BIRTH OF A MOVEMENT"

At the end of the 1961 Workshop Warrior made a circuitous journey to Gallup, New Mexico to reunite with the other member of the Chicago Conference Youth Caucus. Travelling with Tom and Bernadine Eschief, he first visited the All American Indian Days powwow in Sheridan, Wyoming. Originally part of the Sheridan, Wyoming, Rodeo, until it became a separate, Indian-controlled event in 1958, All American Indian Days was one of the largest Indian celebrations of its day. The celebration often attracted upwards of 4,000 Indian participants, not least of all due to its hosting of the Miss Indian America pageant. The trip was a successful one for Warrior who took first place in the fancy dance contest, further enhancing his reputation as one of the foremost war and fancy dancers of the era, and Tom Eschief also, who placed third in the Straight Dance.

It was participating in celebrations such as this across Indian Country that gave Warrior much of his insight into the conditions that Indian communities faced in the modern world. More influential than any workshop or regional youth council conference, his dancing was, according to Shirley Hill Witt, "the core of his political self." It was the strength and permanence of this influence in Warrior's life that made his politics and rhetoric completely culturally focused rather than intellectually or ideologically centered. The focus on tradition, song, dance, and; with the Hethuska and Gives Water Memorial dances; ceremony, throughout his life meant that everything in the world was viewed through this cultural prism. As one

of the few Plains Indians among the youth caucus, the powwow circuit was very much "Clyde's bag" over the other members, especially once Tom Eschief withdrew his name from the charter membership. It was the traditions and practices of his powwow and ceremonially influenced identity that he carried with him into the Gallup meeting, as much as his intellectual growth from the recently attended workshops. [1]

Warrior was not unique in this sense of cultural immersion though, and each of the other caucus members as equally comfortable as Warrior in their own tribal and cultural identity. Rather than the pan-Indian organization it has been labeled, the collective that met on August 10th – 13th, 1961 to discuss their future plans and targets was very much an intertribal gathering. As such, that the time and venue of the meeting coincided with the 40th anniversary of the Gallup Intertribal Ceremonial was rather apt. Herb Blatchford's reasons for choosing the location were twofold. As Director of the Gallup Indian Community Center he helped organize the Ceremonial, from the Indian side of affairs, and was also presenting a paper on the future of Indian Youth on the Saturday afternoon. He managed to convince the Ceremonial organizers to allow the caucus to meet and talk in some office space originally set aside for the conference portion of the week's events. At that time there was no contest powwow in the Gallup Ceremonial, with the event focusing on the exhibition of ceremonial dances from Indian tribes across the nation. There were also exhibits and sale items of local jewelry and art as well as educational lectures

[1] Interview with Shirley Hill Witt, *Idem*.

from anthropologists and other 'experts.' It was still a regular stop on the powwow circuit though, as a way for dancers to earn money and meet up with old friends.

Indian Superintendent Samuel Stacker originally conceived the event in 1920. The first, titled simply, Indian Ceremonial, took place at Crownpoint in 1920 before moving to Gallup and adopting the grander Gallup Intertribal Ceremonial Exhibition, under the guidance and control of the Gallup Chamber of Commerce, in 1922. In the early days the event was organized to showcase the dances of Navajo and neighboring tribes. In those early days, rather than money, "all Indians attending were furnished food, hay and oats for their horses, with camping space on the ceremonial grounds." By 1929, the food available to Indian dancers and artists included a daily, free barbecue in which "55 goats, five beeves and 700 loaves of bread" were eaten during the three-day event. In the 1930's the Ceremonial expanded it's exhibits and recruited dancers, gradually, from Oklahoma, the Plains, California, and New York tribes. By the time of the 1961 Ceremonial, attendances reached upwards of 20,000 in each of the now four-day event in the self-proclaimed Indian Capital of the World.[2]

By the 1960's, however, there was a growing resentment from the local Navajo, Hopi, Zuni and Pueblo nations at their economic exploitation at the hands

[2] Stacker, Herbert, C. *Intertribal Gathering at Crownpoint New Mexico in 1920 and 1921 and Intertribal Indian Ceremonial held annually in Gallup, N.M. starting in 1922,* pg. 3, Stacker Family Papers, Box 1, Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico (hereafter the Stacker Family Papers). 14th Annual Ceremonial Program, pg. 3, Box 1 Folder 9, Stacker Family Papers. It should also be noted the Anadarko, Oklahoma, home of the American Indian Exposition, once a great rival to the Gallup Intertribal Ceremonial, also claims itself as the Indian Capital of the World.

of the Ceremonial Board of Directors. Shirley Hill Witt remembered that by then the Ceremonial had become the town's "money making cash cow, where essentially Anglo merchants sold Native American "stuff" for big money. The Native crafts people earned very little." It was within this environment of garish tourist displays, cultural celebrations, and simmering discontent that the Chicago Conference Youth Caucus came together. Blatchford, who was very much the glue that held everyone together in those nascent days, had arranged with the local Bureau of Indian Affairs office to allow the youths to spend the nights in BIA dormitories that remained empty over the summer. He also organized with the ceremonial organizers for bus transportation to ferry them from the Manuelito Hall dormitory, which was usually reserved for Indian high school students of Gallup's public schools, to the Ceremonial grounds. Long before the caucus reunited though, they had spent the summer exchanging ideas via letter, ensuring that their enthusiasm and energy never flagged in the months between Chicago and Gallup. These exchanges also ensured that "when we met in Gallup we had a very clear notion of what we could do. What we could try to do and what we should do. With regard to our status as young educated native peoples." [3]

The very early exchanges were between Blatchford and Thom, with Blatchford posing many of the early questions about what direction the organization, which Thom later christened a "movement," would take. In his June 28th, 1961 letter to Thom he theorized as to the role the new group could play in Indian Country. He envisioned helping high school student youth groups in

[3]Interview with Shirley Hill Witt, *Idem*.

"carrying out their contentions" and college students like themselves by taking over sponsorship of their youth councils instead of non-Indian sponsors. He also pondered whether the new group could help "fill the need" of college graduates who were unsure of their future direction, or needed further training "before attempting to hold a leading position," or even elders in their decision making by offering "support (for) the more relevant needs they propose." He was not alone in his grand visions for the group, with Shirley Witt writing on July 2nd, 1961 that while she was prepared to travel to Gallup by ox-cart if necessary, Hank Hawkins, a tribal leader she had travelled from the conference to the airport with, felt "that we might accomplish near miracles for the Indian people." Hawkins also offered her very sage advice which the groups always heeded, that "we listen and respect and honor the experience and advice of our elders: and that we must not become discouraged in the face of the adversities we are bound to encounter."[4]

On July 13th, Blatchford wrote to the group informing them that their meeting was scheduled for 9:00 am until noon on Thursday, August 10th, and Friday August 11th, 1961 at the Gallup Indian Community Center Social Room. In addition he had arranged for the group to hold a panel discussion at the Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial Exhibit Hall on the Saturday. While ideas and suggestions continued to flow, such as Larry Martin's idea of a central "bulletin board service" for Indian

[4] Letter from Herb Blatchford to Mel Thom, June 28th, 1961, letter from Larry Martin to all youth members, June 30th, 1961, letter from Shirley Witt to all youth members, July 2nd, 1961, Box 1, Folder 11, NIYC Papers,

students, and Joan Noble throwing her name into the ring of interested parties, nothing else of import was decided until the meeting itself.[5]

When the group convened in Gallup on August 10th, 1961, the original charter number of twenty had whittled down to ten. Those present, the numbers evenly split between men and women, were Shirley Witt (Mohawk), Thomas and Bernadine Eschief (Shoshone, Bannock, Pima), Karen Rickard (Tuscarora), Mary Natani (Winnebago), Joan Noble (Ute), Howard C. McKinley, Jr. (Navajo), Mel Thom (Paiute), Herb Blatchford (Navajo) and Clyde Warrior (Ponca). Warrior appeared apprehensive on the first day's meeting and immediately requested that Blatchford elaborate on what the goals of the group were, as he had many unanswered questions to be addressed.[6]

Warrior's wariness of political maneuvering in Indian Country was at the fore of his initial objections, especially after the experience of Chicago. When Blatchford repeated many of the objectives he had laid out to Thom over the summer Warrior was still unsure, confessing that, "I don't really like the way it sounds." As he testified in his Workshop essays, he had experience within his own tribe of people adopting the selfishness of Western culture and he needed reassurances whether "are we really going to help our people, or are we going out to seek status for ourselves?" Shirley Witt attempted to assuage his fears by proposing they set up a system whereby "this organization can guard against political

[5] Letter from Herb Blatchford to all youth members, July 13th, 1961, letter from Larry Martin to Herb Blatchford, July 17th, 1961 and letter from Joan Noble to Herb Blatchford, dated July 23rd 1961, Box 1, Folder 11, NIYC Papers
[6] Bradley Shreve discusses the significance of gender equality in the NIYC in *Red Power Rising.*

climbing" and "prevent its being used as a lever to gain a higher position in other organizations."[7]

A couple of months before the meeting, Charles Minton, sponsor of the SRIYC had expresses doubts about the viability of a National Indian Youth Council. He argued that it was better for "several regional Indian youth councils" to establish themselves and then wait for students to demand a national organization, rather than impose a "forced development" upon people. Consequently, there were initial concerns at the Gallup meeting about the influence and range of Minton through the regional youth councils. Warrior assured them that Minton's main concern was that the SRIYC was covering too much ground, having only been intended for New Mexico and Arizona. Subsequently, the development of separate regions was a good thing "as long as they do not get out of hand with this development." In other words, rather than follow Minton's model and wait for a national organization to be demanded, the NIYC as it would become, could organize the growth and management of regional councils instead. They could use Minton's plan in reverse.[8]

Shirley Witt, however, confessed that she had received letters from people who opposed the idea of the younger Indians forming their own organization because "they feel we should not maintain our (Indian) identity." Joan Noble pointed out that they, the younger Indians, were "more apt to go out and do what they think is right than the older group." She was confident that even though many

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[7] *Minutes of the National Indian Youth Council, August 10, 11, 1961,* pp. 1-2, Box 1, Folder 11, NIYC Papers.
[8] Minton, Charles, E. "The Place of the Indian Youth Council in Higher Education," *Journal of American Indian Education,* Vol. 1, No. 1, June 1961. NIYC Minutes. *Idem*.

of them were still relative strangers as a whole, "we have grown to the place where we can function as a group even though we are from all over." The issue of whether they, as youth, were ready to function properly, as Noble believed, was also mooted. Blatchford pointed out that while Indians had a "long history of not handling out own affairs," people expected more change out of youth than their elders. Warrior again raised doubts as to whether "we are capable of it?" He pointed out that "all these years Indians have not paid much attention to youth," and was emphatic about the value of the experience that elders had when they spoke. He was wary that the group "doesn't result in something disastrous for us." Shirley Witt again rose to dampen Warrior's doubts, telling him that "I don't think we should ignore or minimize the experiences of our elders, but try to give them benefit of what they do not have." She figured that this "might give us a little edge in some areas." [9]

Blatchford took the discussion onto another level by asking the group "if we are going to have vitality on Indian Affairs, where is it going to come from?" He pointed out that "someone is going to have to maintain interest in youth" and challenged them as to who that should be. His ambition was that "we get together and expound upon our ideas, and take out of a meeting a few grains of knowledge which we can take home with us." The collective arguments of Witt, Noble, and Blatchford, appeared to calm enough of Warrior's doubts that he declared "I have resigned myself to it whether I like it or not. I think it is going to be," despite admitting that all his questions had not been answered. Warrior was not alone in his doubts, however, and Mary Natani confessed that, "the time will come when the

[9] Ibid. pg. 3

youth will have to take their place in leadership." She warned against doing it "to fight the adults or establish any status for ourselves." As with Warrior's earlier reservations she claimed that, "I would not join an organization to show up the adults because we have been trained to have more respect for our adults and they are doing the best that they can." Echoing Warrior further, she cautioned that, "I think one of the difficulties of youth is that we are trying to move too fast that we are leaving a gap between the traditional group and the youth group."[10]

The distinctions the younger Indians made between tribal elders and tribal leaders were becoming clearer as the meeting progressed. Noble confessed that, "I'm not here to fight to leaders of any tribe. I'm not here to fight the council, in fact I don't bother the tribal council." By the time they reached the council, it was too late to try and change their attitudes or opinions, as they were too politically, and often financially, invested in the system. Instead, she saw their role as helping the "younger ones that when they take their position as council members they can bring out what we are thinking rather than change them." She saw this as a much better proposition that them "just being left on the reservation to live and die there." She and Blatchford also agreed that the basis of the group should be about the retention of Indian identity that Witt had previously mentioned. Both had examples of people they knew in Washington, or the armed forces, who were losing their identity. Warrior saw this goal as a much more fitting one, saying that, "I hope everyone who gets into this will think along this line."[11]

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[10] Ibid. pg. 4
[11] Ibid. pp. 4-6

Warrior also struggled briefly with issues over the naming and membership rules for the organization. He initially felt that "National Indian Youth sounds like little kids" but agreed with Blatchford that "membership is for those who are as young as they feel" as long as they were American Indian. While some pondered the idea of allowing just federally recognized Indians, Warrior voted for any Indian being allowed membership whether they were federally recognized or not. Rather than any ideological standpoint, this opinion was formed pragmatically because, "after all we need the money, and theirs is as good as anyone else's." Ideologically, however, it also made sense because "there is one thing that stands out and that is better harmony among Indians to get more strength for this body." A wider membership would ensure greater results, for, "we seem to have this continuity of force to band together, and out of this group we can develop some understanding." He also argued, rather ironically given his future reputation, that, "when we start drawing lines on this sort of thing we antagonize people." The last agenda of the day was the creation of a paper by the group, originally named *Aborigine,* as a means of communicating news and ideas, and from which would come more membership, little realizing how powerful that newsletter would become.[12]

Warrior closed the day's proceedings by reading from an article, submitted by Mel Thom, which would later form a part of the National Indian Youth Council's (NIYC) Preamble. Thom had written that, "we recognize that the future of the Indian people will ultimately rest in the hands of the younger generation, and that Indian youth need to be concerned with the position of the American Indian." In

[12] Ibid. pp. 6 - 11

what was to become the Movement's clarion call he signed off by stating that, "we believe in a greater Indian America, one in which the Indian people recognizing our future position as leaders, and promoting the highest principles of citizenship."[13]

The next day's proceedings began with Warrior still expressing doubts over the projected name of the movement, suggesting that they try and find a substitute for 'youth' because it sounded like "I'm just a little young boy running around." The name eventually stood after a lengthy debate about various options and alternatives as well as over any perceived weakness or issues over the use of the word 'youth.' Many other minutiae were ironed out on the second day, including when and were to meet, with Blatchford making the case that all future meetings should be on reservation land, as those were the locale of the issues usually under discussion. The organization of the group was also discussed with it being decided that each of the nine people present, after Thomas Eschief had withdrawn his name, form the board of directors, with terms of office being staggered along the same rules that applied for tribal councils.

By this point Warrior was firmly in line with the others about the need for the organization for succeed, telling them that "I for one do not want to go along with this, and go out on a limb and have it crumble." He knew that this would reflect badly upon them and allow those leaders who sneered at them in Chicago to "have us classed as a bunch of young brats." He joined in the discussions over the pricing of the publication, the makeup of the executive committee and other small but important aspects of laying the foundations before leading the nominations

[13] Ibid. pg. 11

process for officers. Displaying what Witt referred to as "a knack for spotting other's strengths," Warrior nominated Thom for President, Witt for First Vice President, and Joan Noble as Second Vice President. When Mary Natani and Thomas Eschief withdrew their names as contenders for the board positions, the remaining names went into a hat at the suggestion of Shirley Witt. The names pulled out were Warrior, Bernadine Eschief and Howard McKinley. Warrior then rounded off the voting process by nominating Blatchford to serve as Executive Director.

Warrior unofficially appointed himself the conscience of the group, urging them not to "just forget about this when you get home." Before offering to close proceedings with an invocation, he reminded them that, "this is going to be a tough year because we are building a foundation, and if we all get lax and let it go, then the whole organization will disintegrate. We are all part of this now." The initial skeptic was now a firm believer in the cause and would fight tooth and nail to ensure its success as a bridge between elders and youth, the past and the future.

The NIYC were not the only group who met to discuss the future of Indian youths as a result of the Chicago Conference. On September 13th, 1961, a meeting to discuss the 'Problems of Young People of American Indian Heritage" was held in the Jefferson Room of Washington D.C.'s Mayflower Hotel. Principally under the auspices of the National Committee for Children and Youth (NCCY), other organizations represented included the BIA, NCAI, Arrow Inc., Indian Health Services, and the Association on American Indian Affairs. While the NIYC had focused upon the attitude of Indian teachers and how they could help high school and college graduates find a place in the world, this meeting discussed Indian high

school and college dropouts. Dr. Edward Greenwood, a member of the NCCY, displayed an immediate grasp of the connectivity between the Indian community and the individual, usually missing from many previous 'studies' of American Indians. He declared that, "in order to understand the problems of children and youth, unless we understand the entire dilemma of the Indian population in the U.S., it's unfair to talk about just the American Indian youth." He also questioned whether it was actually neglect, rather than any cultural deficiency that resulted in "the number of school dropouts, particularly between junior and senior schools is far higher than in the rest of our population."[14]

Whereas the Workshops had proven an informative and rewarding approach for college students such as Warrior, Greenwood proposed a similar revamp of the high school curriculum for Indian students. Rather than completely tearing down the system he proposed redirecting the "old concept" of vocational training "because you happen to have equipment" to a system whereby "vocational training should be based on potential needs in industry, local or national." While Mrs. Thomas Herlihy, Greenwood's supervisor and Chairperson of the NCCY noted that the people attending the meeting were there because of their "particular interest in the problems of Indian youth" and because they "were in a position to be articulate about the problems, Greenwood did not see them as the solution to these problems. Unlike the usual message from the social workers, teachers and bureaucrats that Warrior

[14] 'Summary report of the Meeting Concerning the Problems of Young People of American Indian Heritage,' pg. 2, Box 6, Folder 32, Peterson Papers

and other members of the NIYC mistrusted, Greenwood insisted that, "leadership must come from within the Indian group."[15]

Mamie Mizen, who was representing both the BIA and the NCAI's Chief Executive Helen Peterson at the meeting, spoke out against the then commonly held theory that Indian children reached an educational and intellectual plateau at the age of 14, which was the age of the highest number of high school dropouts. As with Greenwood, she displayed a cultural sensitivity lacking in many experts on Indian affairs. She also hit upon a theme that Warrior and the NIYC were to make their own over the coming years, in relation to their won and their contemporary's life experiences, as well as the future Indian generations. She insisted that it was the social environment of Indian education that fostered low self-esteem among Indian students, observing that,

> "the Indian child at 14 years becomes conscious of the social attitudes about him, the things he has to contend with that other children do not have to contend with, and under the pressure of those attitudes and of the difficulties that he has he begins to wonder what it's all about. He goes to school and the textbooks discuss our Indian wars, the bloodthirsty savages, etc., and he begins to wonder at about 14, "I am Indian. Does this mean me?"[16]

Despite the awareness and sensitivity of their comments, and the fact that the NCAI was represented, the group was a perfect example of all that Warrior and his colleagues saw as being wrong with Indian affairs. Despite Greenwood's earlier comment that leadership must come from Indians themselves, the committee

[15] Ibid. pg. 4
[16] Ibid., pg. 4

consisted of concerned non-Indians, rather than Indians, deciding what they thought best for the future of Indian children. While acknowledging that many kids didn't want to go to public school because they didn't identify with anyone or anything there, "you can't grow a greenhouse plant and then set it out in the sun and expect it to live," the group could not make a definitive decision on the best way forward for an educational program for Indian youth. Their main dilemma was "either we make up our minds that Indian youth should be educated for their role in an integrated society or for the role they might play on the reservations." They were grappling with many issues that they were ill equipped to solve, including the role of the youth on reservations, and the potential job opportunities available. They were unsure as to whether boarding schools or integrated schools were the answer, or even how to provide integrated services for Indians when they were not available for the rest of the country. They admitted that they had not arrived at any answers but had at least made inroads into looking into the problem. As Warrior and the NIYC would keep insisting, they may have arrived at answers sooner if they had asked the Indians, who actually lived the experiences they were theorizing about, for their opinions.[17]

While this group focused on the students lost to education, Warrior and his cohorts had returned to their respective colleges and universities. In the 1961-1962 semester Warrior was voted Outstanding Indian Student of Cameron Junior College. It was also during this time that Warrior met Della Hopper, his future wife. Both were at Cameron due to BIA scholarship funding rules, which dictated that Indian students had to attend smaller schools to prove their worth before receiving the

[17] Ibid. pg. 7-13

financial backing required to attend a larger institution such as the University of Oklahoma. Della recalled not being overly impressed with Warrior when they first met when, "every morning we would get on the bus and he would be singing or whistling or something, and I just thought it was really annoying you know." Despite this inauspicious start to their relationship, they slowly became friends over the ensuing months. It was during this time that Warrior made Della aware of the Boulder Workshops and the fledgling NIYC.[18]

He continued in his role as President of the SRIYC, issuing a newsletter in October 1961, discussing the Chicago Conference and the formation of the NIYC. He also maintained a lively conference attendance during the academic year. In December 1961, Warrior received a letter from SRIYC sponsor Charles Minton who threatened to restructure the regions within which the organization would be funded. Warrior was already aware of Minton's concerns over the size of the SRIYC and had informed his NIYC colleagues at the Gallup meeting in August. Nonetheless he was worried enough about Minton's threat to write to Herb Blatchford expressing his concerns. Blatchford replied that Joan Ablon had expressed similar concerns over the future of the Tribe of Many Feathers, proposed host of the 1962 SRIYC annual conference. Blatchford sought to comfort them both with the news that Minton would stand down as director of Southwestern Association on Indian Affairs, Inc. on December 31st, at which point the board would decide what level of

[18] Interview between Robert Warrior and Della Warrior (no relation) undated. In author's possession

support they offered. He told them that, "Mr. Minton has written this letter to keep you on your toes."[19]

Blatchford, who Witt remembered, "worked very hard for us, in so many ways I couldn't begin to list," reminded them that, "these youth councils are a compromise between traditional ways of handling affairs, and the educational ways of doing the same." He reassured them that the "Tribe of Many Feathers can continue as in the past," in offering a venue for Indian students to meet and discuss ideas and concerns, with no need to be concerned at funding being withheld. Rather than submit to the whims of a non-Indian sponsor, he suggested they could get the SRIYC mailing list from Minton and either "distribute some topics for the different clubs to choose from, or you may want to wait for the council to make up it's own program at the beginning of the meeting." Thanks to Blatchford's ability to keep "us going on one level and in a very good trajectory," the 1962 meeting took place, as planned, on April 26th – 28th at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Titled "Exploring Ourselves For a Vision Of the Future," the conference was as successful as previous events. NIYC attendees, such as Warrior, Thom, Blatchford and Noble, also made spread the word about the 'movement' and its plans for the future, including the 2nd annual NIYC meeting to be held later in the year at the Gallup Ceremonial.

The four NIYC members also discussed the importance of forging ahead with the publication of their newsletter as a method of communication. Indeed,

[19] Letter from Herb Blatchford to Clyde Warrior, dated November 12, 1961, Box 1, Folder 11, NIYC Papers

earlier that year Blatchford had suggested to Witt to "let us try to put in some slightly more controversial material to spark deeper reasoning and concern – as long as it is reasonable and not antagonistic." Despite the success of the conference, however, Minton, declared that it would be the "last convention of the Southwestern Regional Indian Youth Council at such great distance from the original home of the Council, New Mexico." True to his word, the following year's conference was held at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. There was an element of pique about Minton's decision that resulted from his belief that the NIYC was a "forced development" that had not followed his ideal of "several Indian Youth councils (being) established" first before "demand for a national body" caused it to appear as a "natural outgrowth" that would obviously fall under his sponsorship.[20]

Prior to the Utah Youth Conference, one of Warrior's final acts as SRIYC president was hosting the February, 1962 Ittanana Conference at the University of Oklahoma. Unlike the Ittanaha Club, which was exclusively for Cameron Junior College students, the Ittanaha Youth Conference was an annual, statewide, conference that had begun as an offshoot of the SRIYC. The chosen theme for the conference was *The Changing Indian – The Changing Society* and three main forums on heritage, citizenship and education were held. Warrior presided over the Citizenship forum, who's panel included such diverse figures as the head of the

[20] Shirley Hill Witt interview, *Idem*. Blactchford letter, Nov.12, 1961. National Indian Youth Conference Program, "Exploring Ourselves For a Vision of the Future," Boyce Timmons Collection, Box 1, Folder 3, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma. Letter from Herb Blatchford to Shirley Witt, dated February 5, 1962, Box 3, Folder 27, NIYC Papers. Minton, Charles, 'The Place of the Indian Youth Council In Higher Education,' pp. 37-39, *Journal of American Indian Education, Vol. 1, No. 1,*

Welfare Branch of the BIA, the State Treasurer of Oklahoma, and Allen Quetone, Chairman of the Inter-Tribal Business Council of the Kiowa, Comanche, Apache tribes. The conference also included guest speakers W.W. Keeler, Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation and Senator Harry Belvin, Chief of the Choctaw Nation.[21]

Following the 1962 SRIYC, at which he handed over the Presidency of the organization, Warrior finished his classes at Cameron before heading back to Boulder for his second shot at the Workshops where McNickle had appointed him to the student advisory board. As with the previous year, he went from the Workshops to All American Indian Days at Sheridan before travelling to Gallup for the second annual NIYC meeting. In July, the group had received the gift of a drum from Marcelo Quintana of the Cochiti Pueblo. The gifting of a drum was an age-old tradition, especially among Pueblo and Plains Indians, in which the gift represented the recognition of the receiver's adherence to the 'old ways' by the giver. As such, this was s significant moment in the NIYC's first year, as it showed the high regard with which more traditional Indians already held them.

At the meeting, held on August 6 -8, 1962, the first two days were dominated with discussions over the group's publication, and the critical attitude and behavior of some Indians towards the group. Blatchford dismissed such attitudes as the result of too much western influence upon the group's critics. The reason for such criticism and ridicule for the group was, he said, because of "poor interpretations of human qualities" due to the popularity of non-Indians dealing with

[21] National Indian Youth Conference Program, "Exploring Ourselves For a Vision of the Future," Boyce Timmons Collection, Box 1, Folder 3, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma

problems in terms of "personality." Such a cult of personality "often over-rides a necessity to work on a given set of principles." His argument highlighted the chasm between the cultural worldviews of traditionally raised Indians and American society. For Blatchford, each tribe traditionally had such a "set of principles" within which their societies were governed. These principle were exemplified in the way Indians had "always made up and tested their rituals, legends, and language on the distinct definition of four human qualities: Spirit, Emotion, Mind and Body." Conversely, he claimed, he personality driven structure of American society ignored such human qualities. The group agreed with his sentiments and general consensus of opinion over the critical behavior was that it was, in many ways, a signal that too many Indians were copying the ways of non-Indians. They did this because "they think it is more acceptable" to "criticize and ridicule."

In response to these issues, Shirley Witt suggested the NIYC attempt to build a "middle-ground" approach to understanding both groups, although Karen Rickard countered this suggestion as causing "too much controversy." Mel Thom noted that as he had travelled around recruiting members, he had found that "most people were not really familiar with our train of thought and that this may be one of the reasons behind it." Warrior argued that he "thought that it took time for anyone to become familiar with another's thinking" and that "this was the reason that leadership training was so important." The group also admitted that while their aim was "uniting the Indian people in general" it had "a long way to go before it would be accepted." They theorized about the "original Indian concept of unity," which essentially focused upon family, clan, community and tribe, which generally kept

outsiders at arms length. Inter-tribal unity was usually only achieved at times of great stress and common cause, such as with Tecumseh's vast inter-tribal military alliance of the early nineteenth century. Blatchford saw some cause for optimism though, suggesting that each winter, tribes had held a communal trading amnesty wherein "unity existed from the fact that an inter-tribal sign language existed between nearly all tribes." Hopefully, the NIYC could find enough common cause in the present state of Indian affairs to foster more than a temporary unity.[22]

In regard to their newsletter, Warrior urged the group to become more organized on their clarification of purpose and also warned them that their publication was "running into competition from the University of Chicago, for they received $250,000 to make a publication similar to ours." The rival newsletter was titled *Indian Voices,* edited by Bob Thomas, and funded as part of Sol Tax's Carnegie Cross Cultural Project into Cherokee literacy. Mel Thom suggested changing the name of the newsletter but the others felt that *Aborigine* "served as a good reminder of who an Indian is." A series of articles on various tribes was agreed upon, with Warrior being charged to write an article on the Cherokee.

On the last day of the meeting, a clear distinction was established between the goals of the NIYC and that of urban Indian groups. Sun Bear (Chippewa), the publisher and editor of *Many Smokes*, who was based out of Los Angeles, was introduced to the council. He informed that there was far more interest in Indian affairs below the surface of white society than they cared to show, including the girl

[22] *Summary of Minutes of the National Indian Youth Council, August 6,7,8, 1962,* Box 3, Folder 27, NIYC Papers

and boy scouts eulogizing Indian societies as the ideal lifestyles. He bemoaned the iniquity of the job availability for Indians who were relocated or terminated and stressed that, "more tribally owned industries were needed both on the reservations and in cities." He also highlighted the use of the Indian voting 'bloc' to coerce help from city administrators to build a community hall. After being accepted as a member of the NIYC, he was told by Blatchford that the L.A Indian Center and the NIYC "had a great deal in common though they work on a different level." Blatchford asserted that the L.A Indian group was working in an environment "which involves the parental adult level whereas the NIYC was concentrating its efforts on the young adults who were going through and finishing college."[23]

When asked by Sun Bear if the NIYC had any intention of becoming involved on reservations, Blatchford told him that "the group was concentrating on working internally within its own group in trying to understand and comprehend what is needed for good leadership." While the "NIYC advocates the process of internal growth for reservations to develop, they were not planning to instigate any changes without the peoples' wish." At this juncture, the consensus was that "the Council should continue to operate on what it has convinced itself is worthwhile and change it only when it has something better to substitute." They were well aware that they still had many strides to make before they could be considered a force in Indian Country. A final decision was also made to hold the following year's meeting on the Fort Duchesne Ute reservation in Utah.[24]

[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.

Following the meeting, Warrior transferred from Cameron Junior College to the University of Oklahoma for the 1962-1963 academic year. At OU, he took classes in history, anthropology, government, and Latin American History as well as attending the College of Education. In a Political Science class, he wrote a seventeen page paper on his favorite US president, "Thomas Jefferson and Jeffersonian Democracy."[25]

In between classes Warrior also maintained his interest in Indian affairs. In December 1962 he wrote to Helen Peterson expressing concern for the future of Indian people. In a plea that would eventually see Warrior become instrumental in the election of the NCAI leader, he complained that the organization's current leadership was "neither intelligent, devoted, responsible, much less sincere, nor is the organization unified." He was convinced that without unity, Indians would not be able to affect change in their communities because "we have learned by experience that a tribe alone cannot do this." He expressed sadness that he could not "see any man who is really capable of bringing about the unity of the various tribes" as Tecumseh had done in the early 1800s. He was determined, however, that "we must start now to look for this man, that is intelligent, devoted, responsible, and sincere for the welfare of his Indian people." Warrior's grandparents had taught him that "a man doesn't look for people to lead but that the people look for a man to lead them," and he urged Peterson to 'Let us today begin to look for that man." That man

[25] Details of Warrior's college courses are taken from the Inventory of the Clyde Merton Warrior Papers, 1950-1971. While this collection is the private collection of Della Warrior, Clyde's widow, it is currently in the possession of Dr. Daniel M. Cobb. Unfortunately, while the collection is in Dr. Cobb's possession, this author has no access to it.

had to be "filled with the initiative, self-determination, and sacrifice for his Indian people" and "will give his all for our Indian people." For a short while Warrior thought than man to be Vine Deloria Jr., who Warrior helped into office as Executive Director of the NCAI.[26]

Peterson, in conjunction with Father Paul Powell of the Chicago Indian Center, also advised Warrior on what action to take in tackling rampant racism towards his people from residents of Ponca City. Warrior had personally experienced the brutality of this racism, needing, as he walked home from school, to carry a bat with him having been "attacked a few times." He wrote to Reverend Clifford Samuelson, Consultant on Indian Affairs to the National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church asking for his intervention. In Ponca City, the South's Jim Crow laws were applicable to Ponca Indians as well as African Americans. Despised and reviled, much of if derived from the city being named after the Indians, the Ponca suffered from "inadequate economic finances, inadequate housing, inadequate education, and most important, inadequate understanding, to say nothing of the inadequate help available." Originally Warrior had considering appealing directly to the Episcopal Church in Ponca City both because it was the "first church the Poncas ever joined," and he had learned of the "benevolent policy of the Episcopal Church towards the Indian people of this country." He decided to approach the National Council, however, when he "remember(ed) the attitude of the

[26] Letter from Clyde Warrior to Helen Peterson, dated December 2, 1962, Box 10, Folder 47, Peterson Papers. Interview with Della Warrior, *Idem*.

non-Indian in Ponca City, Episcopal or not." Help would not be forthcoming locally, due to the universal racism of Ponca City residents. [27]

Appealing to the institutional pride of Reverend Samuelson, he declared that, "as a matter of fact the local Episcopal Church couldn't care less what happens to the Poncas. I think of the national Episcopal policy towards Indians, and wonder what happened here?" He implored Samuelson to "help in this pathetic situation," suggesting that if nobody tried to do anything then "in twenty or thirty years hence the situation will be the same, if not worse." Given the hope he had expressed in his Workshop essay, this version of the future horrified him. He hoped that a visit from Samuelson to the local Episcopal Church would "somehow better the situation." He ended the letter by informing Samuelson that the Poncas were not alone in this regard though, as it was the same "in other areas of Western Oklahoma."[28]

Warrior reached out to those Indians in Western Oklahoma, and others, via the *Indians for Indians Hour* radio show, broadcast out of OU's WNAD student station. His college transfer also initiated a switch in membership from the Ittanaha Club to the Sequoyah Club, America's oldest university Indian Club, where he was elected president during the fall semester. The presidency of the Sequoyah Club carried many responsibilities under which Warrior excelled. One of these responsibilities was to act as the occasional host of *Indians for Indians Hour.* Created in 1941 and attracting over 200,000 listeners in its heyday in the 1950s the show still carried a substantial number of followers when Warrior took to the air.

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[27] Letter from Clyde Warrior to Reverend Clifford Samuelson, dated February 1, 1963, Ibid.
[28] Ibid.

Another duty was recruitment outreach to neighboring high schools. On one such occasion a visit to Riverside High School in Anadarko, Oklahoma led to a request in April 1963 from the school principal for copies of speeches given by Sequoyah Club members Della Hopper and Kathryn Red Corn.

Warrior decided to use the radio broadcasts as a form of outreach, merging both responsibilities into a single opportunity. The usual format for the radio show was for the presenter to briefly announce personal dedications before introducing the music, which were themed each week. This meant that each week an hour of Kiowa prayer songs, gourd dance songs, Ponca war songs, Apache fire dance songs, for example, would be played or performed for the listeners. Warrior's first broadcast followed this pattern, with him announcing local dances, powwows, ceremonials, tribal meetings and social events before presenting different singers and songs from various tribes. His next broadcast was markedly different when he announced the upcoming annual Ittanaha Youth Conference to be held in Norman on April 19th and 20th.

The Ittanaha Conference was one of many that were now operating out of university campuses across the Southwest, demonstrating the far-reaching effects of the SRIYC and NIYC. Blatchford had earlier noted that, "this era was started nearly ten years ago by Indians themselves through College Indian Clubs, Community Indian Clubs and Community Indian Centers." College attendance by American Indians had also grown in that time. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, there were so few Indians in "that no records were maintained." By 1963, "3,141 Indians were attending colleges or universities and 2,290 others were enrolled in post-high

school vocational schools." While the growth in college attendance numbers undoubtedly helped the surge in youth councils, the relationship was reciprocal. The youth councils were intended, from the viewpoint of sponsors such as Charles Minton in New Mexico, and BD Timmons in Oklahoma, to set an example to high school Indians, that college was an attainable and achievable goal for young Indians. There were also, as were the Boulder Workshops, intended to create wise Indian leadership, on the reservations and in individual tribal communities. A more collective leadership role, such as with the NCAI, was one that the students could expect to mature into after several years experience of tribal politics.

The NIYC changed this dynamic though, and began to draw the regional youth councils under its influence, and increasingly discussing colonialism, cultural retention and identity, and the preservation of treaty rights. This was exactly what Minton, and those tribal leaders of the Chicago Conference had not wanted, with Minton hoping instead for the creation of a national body from within the regions, focusing upon education. The NIYC immediately created a new dynamic in Indian affairs, as young Indians, students and non-students alike, began to turn to people such as Warrior, Thom, Witt, Noble and Blatchford for advice and support, rather than tribal leaders, social workers, and academics. The NIYC also believed in a more direct approach, to Indians and non-Indians alike, rather than the more diplomatic approach of negotiation and discussion with Congress favored by the NCAI. And they were more than happy to put in the time and effort to reach out to young Indians across all regions and territories. In an April 1963 missive to NIYC members, Blatchford described his recruitment journey from Fort Lewis in

Durango, Colorado, to Las Cruces, New Mexico, via Tempe, Arizona, Albuquerque, and Silver City, New Mexico visiting youth councils along the way. [29]

Warrior's use of *Indians for Indians Hour* as a rhetorical propaganda tool was a perfect example of the more direct approach favored by the NIYC. Through the show, his message was reaching homes far beyond the three thousand college students across American college campuses, including many rural Indian homes far removed from interaction with the white world or general American society. On April 9, 1963, he urged his listeners, especially "those of you who have children in high school or college or know of Indian students in college," to attend the upcoming Sequoyah Club Conference. He told his audience that Oklahoma's Governor Henry Bellmon would attend and present a speech for the Indian students at the conference. The aim of the conference was to encourage college and high schools students to embrace higher education, and would be rounded off by the annual OU powwow, where the Head Was Dancer was "some guy named Clyde Warrior, I think."[30]

Warrior advertised that there would be discussion panels on the various opportunities available to young Indians in Oklahoma. There including discussions on politics, "why Indian students should stay and obtain a higher education" and "why Indian students should stay and pursue careers and vocations and technical

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[29] Letters from Herb Blatchford to NIYC members, dated September 5, 1962 and April 3, 1963. Box 3, Folders 27 and 28, NIYC Papers. Figures taken from a 1963 Arizona Indian Education Association conference speech by James C. Officer titled "Indian Unity." The speech was alter published in the Journal of American Indian Education. Vol. 3. No. 3. October 1963.

[30] *Indians for Indians Hour,* Broadcast #143, April 9th, 1963, Western History Collections, University Libraries, University of Oklahoma

training." He offered more details about the *What is the Future* conference, the purpose of which was to "instill the advantages of a higher education to American Indian students," and which he "personally urge(d) students to attend," during the April 16th broadcast. He revealed that the Friday panels would discuss, as well as which college education, scholarship and assistant programs that were available to Oklahoma Indian college students. The Saturday would be given over to discussions on technical training in the morning before the annual Spring Dance, hosted by the Sequoyah Club. The dance would include war dancing and round dancing, with permission received from the university for the dancers to 49 all night after the event if they so desired.[31]

Warrior's final broadcast on April 30th 1963 was marred by his anger at being "dragged into tribal politics by Kiowa, Comanche, Apache groups," many of who were arguing about the tribal, and occasionally familial, origins of certain songs being played on the show. These accusations, of cultural theft and appropriation, were another of the unfortunate side effects of the three tribes being forced to share the same reservation since 1875. The tribes, especially the Kiowa and Comanche, had a history of shared enmity that had only ceased in 1836. Many of the disagreements and much of the distrust between the two had carried onto the reservation, especially with individuals old enough to remember the last of their shared conflicts. This distrust had subsequently been passed down through the generations, often to the point where people of mixed heritage would acknowledge one tribal identity and disown the other. In this instance, groups from each tribe

[31] Ibid, Broadcast #s 144 and 145

were claiming certain gourd dance songs as their own, and attempting to convince Warrior not to play them.[32]

Life at the University of Oklahoma was not all classes, conferences, youth councils, and inter-tribal conflicts, however. The student body enjoyed a vibrant social scene, of which the bars and restaurants of Campus Corner were a focal point and Warrior surrounded himself with a healthy cache of like-minded friends who formed a lively social group. Browning Pipestem (Otoe), his future wife Della (Otoe Missouria), Kathryn Red Corn(Osage), and her future sister in law, Jeri Cross (Caddo), and the non-Indians, Tony Isaacs and Garrick Bailey. Bailey became friends with Warrior through their mutual friendship with the Red Corn family. Isaacs had met Warrior previously at a California powwow in 1958. Warrior was there with his uncle Sylvester, while Isaacs was part of the hobbyist cohort that included Frank Turley, and slowly began taking a closer interest in Ponca music. Many of the hobbyists saw Warrior as an "ambassador" due to his friendly charm and "magnetism," especially because he would "take time to talk" to those of them interested in Ponca music and traditions. Warrior and Isaacs resumed their acquaintance in 1961, while Isaacs worked at the Denver Art Museum and Warrior attended the Boulder Workshops. When they met again in Norman, where Isaacs enrolled in a degree in Anthropology, the two decided to become roommates, in an apartment overlooking Campus Corner, where the deal was that Warrior "would cook and I would wash dishes."[33]

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[32] Ibid.
[33] Bailey, Garrick, Telephone Interview, October 26, 2010, and Tony Isaacs, *Idem*.

Isaacs described Warrior being "very passionate" and teaching him a lot about "his Ponca ways and about Indian ways" during long chats into the night about various types of tribal ceremonial and social songs. He recalled that during his visits to Boulder, Warrior would have off the cuff singing contests with a Winnebago Indian named Andy Thundercloud, wherein they would each try to out-sing each other, dueling back and forth with Ponca and Winnebago songs. As passionate as Warrior was about Ponca songs he was also instinctive and intuitive to all songs due to his upbringing. Isaacs, who went on to forge a successful career recording tribal songs with Indian House Records, was astonished one evening as they listened to a recording of Sioux songs. Halfway through the recording, Warrior told him "listen, they're crying," as he could hear pain in the song, rather than the singers were literally crying. Although the song was being sung in Lakota, Warrior could hear the lament in the tilt of their voices, and was astonished at the skill of the singers, remarking that, "listen you know they're crying like that you know. It's amazing what you can do with a bunch of "yo's" and "hey's.'" Through conversations such as this Warrior taught Isaacs a great deal of how to listen and interpret the many nuances and idiosyncrasies that make each war, stomp, ceremonial, or powwow song unique.[34]

While Warrior and Isaacs would talk music long into the night, Garrick Bailey remembered that Warrior "loved to talk politics or political strategy and how you motivate people." A large group of people used to meet regularly in a Campus Corner bar called "Tony's," where they would meet and discuss politics, and it is

[34] Tony Isaacs interview, *Idem*.

here, rather than in class, that Bailey recalls Warrior developing a "very good understanding of the American political scene." Within this informal group of students and professors who would come and go was an "Irish drinking society" known as the "Drew Society." Warrior called them a group of "functioning alcoholics" which suggests an awareness of his growing dependency upon alcohol in the relatively short period since he had started drinking a the 1961 Workshops. He jokingly used Ernest Hemingway as an example of a successful functioning alcoholic and was already drinking Johnny Walker whisky alongside his beer. Membership of the society was also the one time Warrior acknowledged his partial Irish roots, as he mixed with people of all political persuasions, and talking about "any type of politics." In this respect, Warrior's passion for politics was quite unique among his peers in the Indian community at the University of Oklahoma. Bailey remembers that, "one of the real problems Clyde has in the Indian community was that it was not that politicized. Clyde…a lot of people made fun of Clyde" for his political views. He recalled that many people would tell Warrior that "you can't go back in the world, you trying to go back in time, and you can't hunt buffalo again." At this time, as was reflected in the drive for recruitment and participation in the NIYC, and Rosalie Wax's sociological surveys for the Boulder Workshops, there were only a small proportion of the 3,141 Indian students nationwide who were politically active. There seemed, to Warrior, to be even fewer who were culturally participating.[35]

[35] Garrick Bailey interview, *Idem*.

Bailey and Warrior's mutual friendship with the Red Corn family meant that many of their social gatherings included Kathryn Red Corn. She roomed with Della Hopper and Jeri Cross, her future sister-in-law. Kathryn and Jeri knew Warrior from the Boulder Workshops while Della knew him from Lawton. Warrior was a "lot of fun to be around," and Della Warrior remembered that, "he was like a magnet. People were just drawn to Clyde. If you go into a room and Clyde was in there, there would be people that would just want to talk to him." It was due to this magnetism that Warrior and Della Hopper became very close " and of course I fell in love with him," although they did not begin dating until the following year.[36]

During the summer of 1963, once the semester had finished, Warrior again found work at Disneyland. Rather than dancing, as Joe Herrera had promised him he would be, he was working 33 hours per week manual labor for $1.98 per hour, tending the gardens and occasionally escorting visitors around the Indian Village. To keep cost down while based in Hollywood he stayed with his close friend and father figure Bill Center. He still kept up with the life of his Ponca community though. Writing to Helen Peterson for advice, he bemoaned the behavior of his tribal council who, "in open defiance to the desires of the tribe" passed a resolution approving construction of a BIA road that "is going to be built to benefit not Indians but white people." He was saddened because his grandmother had written to him "telling me the tribe has given up, thrown the towel in" after doing "al they could in opposition to this road." It was this lack of communication and respect between the tribal leadership and community that formed the bedrock of much of Warrior's

[36] Della Warrior interview. *Idem*.

rhetoric. The road, which cut right through the middle of White Eagle, and was of no economic benefit to the tribe, is still open today. It leads directly to Ponca City.[37]

Despite his protests to Peterson that his meager salary at Disney meant that he would miss the Alumni Weekend at the Workshops due to a $96:00 shortfall, he somehow raised the necessary funds. The event was a very portentous moment in the Workshops history. While it was deemed "disruptive" in the yearly report, the Alumni Weekend spawned an annual return of alumni as guest instructors, and visible role models, for the following years' students. By the end of the decade the student influence was so great that the NIYC acted as main sponsor and organizer of the Workshops, even renaming them in Warrior's honor after his untimely death in 1968. In 1963, however, it was Warrior's 'celebrity' on the youth council circuit that dominated the weekend. Reflecting his growing reputation among the younger, more politically aware Indian student community, Della remembers that prior to his impending arrival, "everybody was all 'Clyde Warrior is coming, Clyde Warrior is coming.'"[38]

[37] Letter, from Clyde Warrior to Helen Peterson, dated June 29, 1963, Box 7, Folder 3, Helen Peterson Papers
[38] Robert & Della Warrior interview. *Idem*.

CHAPTER 5

"A FRESH AIR OF NEW INDIAN IDEALISM"

The reception Warrior received from the Workshops students was markedly different from the one Garrick Bailey described on the OU campus. A subtle shift was occurring within the youth councils and workshops, as a more strident voice replaced the traditionally conservative tribal and cultural voices of earlier years. This reflected the rewards of the efforts that Warrior and his NIYC cohorts were making to galvanize their fellow students. There was a growing demand for Warrior's presence at youth council conferences across the Southwest, and this increasingly reduced the time and effort he could apply to his scholarly activities during the 1963-1964 academic year. He was off-campus to such a degree that year that Garrick Bailey recalled, "I don't think he took any classes." Instead, Warrior focused on raising his and the NIYC's profile in the growing fight for cultural retention and the protection of tribal treaty rights.[1]

The third annual NIYC meeting in Fort Duchesne, with the dates arranged so that members such as Warrior could still attend the Gallup Ceremonial, was an eventful one. The meeting was interrupted by the unexpected arrival of Marlon Brando, the world's most famous actor at that time. He wished to meet the young Indians and requested permission to film their meeting. Brando, already a staunch advocate of African American civil rights issues, had, rather coincidentally, become interested in Indian Affairs after reading John Collier's *Indians of The Americas,*

[1] Garrick Bailey interview. *Idem*.

the same text that Warrior, Rickard and Eschief had all been assigned at the Workshops. The text led him to D'Arcy McNickle's *The First Americans*, and after meeting with McNickle personally "he suggested that I get in touch with the National Indian Youth Council." He noted that, despite his fame, "they didn't give anyone movie-star treatment. They didn't give a damn about my movies" In turn, the NIYC remarked in the December 1963 edition of *Americans Before Columbus* that Brando was "one of the crowd and very respectful and appreciative." As intriguing as Brando's presence was, however, the wider civil rights debate raging across America was of more immediate concern to the young activists. The primary issue to the members was the idea that Indians joining the "Negro Civil Rights Movement" to gain more public attention to their causes would cause division and disunity among tribes. [2]

The African American Movement was gathering greater prominence in the national media primarily because of the increasing violence against protestors. The Movement had gained momentum in the mid 1950s with two Supreme Court decisions, *Brown v. Board of Education* outlawing segregation in schools, and *Browder v. Gayle* casting the same ruling on public transport segregation. These decisions galvanized African American across the South to fight for inclusion and equality across all social and economic strata. The first major violent flashpoint of this fight was in 1957 in Little Rock Arkansas, when nine African American students attempted to enroll in Central High School. The violent outrage of local

[2] Brando, Marlon, *Songs My Mother Taught Me,* New York (USA) Random House 1974, pp. 375-376. NIYC Meeting at Fort Duchesne," *Americans Before Columbus,* pg. 2, NIYC Papers, Box 3, Folder 5

parents and 'concerned' citizens against desegregated education, using slogans such as "Race Mixing is Communism" and "Stop the Race Mixing," spread to such a degree that President Eisenhower called in the National Guard to protect the students as they entered the building. This violence set a precedent among the Southern population desperate to maintain the racial status quo. African American leaders, such as Martin Luther King Jr. insisted on maintaining peaceful protest despite the violence, which spread viciously through a wave of unprecedented intimidation against African Americans across the South, from citizens and law enforcement. Racial hatred exploded with the re-emergence of the Ku Klux Klan, who delighted in setting burning crosses on African American householder's lawns, and in front of African American churches.

By the summer of 1963, with its backdrop of "freedom now," the violence against the protestors had reached such a crescendo that President Kennedy, elected in 1960 on the promise of a New Frontier for all Americans, finally felt obligated to speak out. On June 11, Kennedy addressed the nation in a live press conference and admitted that, "we face…a moral crisis as a country and a people." He was acutely aware of the damage that this violence and segregation itself were doing to America's international reputation, and he asked the nation "are we to say to the rest of the world, and much more importantly to each other, that this is a land of the free except for Negroes?" He acknowledged the growing violence across America and admitted that the issues at stake in the Civil Rights Movement could not "be met by repressive police action" or by "increased demonstrations in the streets." Equally he admitted that serious governmental action was needed, as the issues would not

disappear with "token moves or talk," and promised that "a great change is at hand, and our task, our obligation, is to make that revolution, that change, peaceful and constructive for all." Kennedy's speech, whether consciously or inadvertently, also showed that the Civil Rights Movement was unequivocally an African American campaign. There was a fear among the NIYC that attaching themselves to the Civil Rights Movement would not actually generate greater publicity for tribal issues, but would see these issues subsumed by the growing public interest in the African American fight for equality.[3]

Indians and tribal communities also viewed civil rights quite differently from African Americans. Despite sharing several key concerns with African American communities, namely education, employment and poverty, for tribal communities civil rights also included the preservation of historic treaty rights, or languages, and cultural identities. Historically these rights had been fought for in the 'Indian Wars' that exemplified European and American settlement and expansion of the continent. In more recent times, these rights had been pursued by Standing Bear; who's victory in gaining formal recognition of Indians as "people" is recognized in the federal Indian law community as the first Indian Civil Rights case; and the Society of American Indians, who successfully lobbied for the recognition of American Indians as citizens of the United State in 1924. Between then and the birth of the NIYC in 1961, the most prominent Indian Civil Rights organization was the National Congress of American Indians, created in 1944. In 1953, D'Arcy

[3] Kennedy, John. F, "Address to the Nation," June 11, 1963 http://www.jfklibrary.org/Exhibits/Permanent-Exhibits/The-Oval-Office.aspx. Accessed June 23, 2011

McNickle, addressing an NCAI annual conference focused exclusively on fighting unilateral termination of all tribes, had warned that "the fight for civil rights has not yet been won, but the fight for the right to be culturally different has not even started." It was this "fight for the right to be culturally different" that most clearly defined the contrast between the Indian and African American Civil Rights causes.

The National Indian Youth Council ultimately opted for a position of affirming 'treaty' rights over fighting for 'civil' rights. The NIYC shared a sentiment expressed by past and future NCAI leaders D'Arcy McNickle, and Vine Deloria Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux). They argued that "Indians want to retain what they have and the Negro wants something the whites have. This movement would also disturb the special status the Indian has in his favor." The NIYC were very aware of the historic legal differences between Indians and African Americans and knew to allow their cause to become part of the wider civil rights movement would see treaty rights and tribal sovereignty swept aside in the name of equality and acceptance. The matter proved slightly more complicated than such an all-encompassing statement suggested however, and the debate did not end there. Tackling an issue that quickly became a flagship cause of the NIYC, they admitted that Indians in the south needed civil rights "because they need equal education rights, so some stand should be made on behalf of those Indians." The main point of contention over how exactly to take such a stand was the issue of Indian voter registration. While "pressure could be brought by Indian voters," there was a "great

deal of difficulty in getting Indians to register," as many "still do not feel safe in joining the general public practices."[4]

In later years the issue of Indian vote registration and voting blocks was a political tactic that the NIYC would help develop. In the meantime, however, they opted for a resolution declaring that, "the National Indian Youth Council endeavors to carry forward the policy of making their inherent sovereign rights known to all peoples." They would also be "staunchly supporting the exercise of those basic rights guaranteed American Indians by the statutes of the United States of America." In closing statements, one member offered a barbed criticism of one of Warrior's less salubrious habits when the remark was made that "to be a better trained leader, the Council members should…minimize the "belching." While ignoring the impetuosity of youth, and Warrior's famous irreverence for formal situations, outside of powwow and ceremonials, the remark signified the first elements of discord, albeit slight at this moment, among the NIYC board. Warrior, and others, such as Witt, Thom, and Rickard, still firmly held the belief that the organization was merely a vehicle for them to fight for the survival and regeneration of their communities. They were not using the NIYC as a vehicle towards leadership and Warrior held great disdain for anyone who did.[5]

Despite the official resolve not to join forces organizationally with the African American civil rights movement, Warrior and other NIYC members recognized and embraced solidarity in poverty that crossed racial boundaries.

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[4] "Summation of 1963 National Indian Youth Council Uintah Youth Camp," *American Aborigine,* Volume III, Number I, pp. 21-26
[5] Ibid.

Warrior also saw great value in studying and attending their protests in order to "find out how they are organized." On August 23rd, the day after the youth council had closed Warrior took part in the March on Washington for Freedom and Jobs. Organized collectively by various African American civil rights organizations, the march attracted over 250,000 demonstrators to Constitution and Independence Avenues in Washington D.C. While Vine Deloria Jr. later dismissed Indian involvement in the moment as too insignificant to matter, the event had a clear effect on Warrior, who was not the only NIYC member present. Warrior was galvanized by the electric performance and rhetoric of Reverend Martin Luther King's *I Have a Dream* speech. The event had such an effect on Warrior that he occasionally quoted from King's speech in his own addresses, and later set events in motion for the NIYC to officially represent Indian interests in King's 1968 Poor People's Campaign on Washington. Warrior's untimely death preceded the 1968 event, but Thom acknowledged his influence in himself and other Indians, albeit not the NIYC, attending.[6]

The issue of Indian disunity stayed with the youth caucus after the meeting and was the subject of an editorial in the October issue of *Americans Before Columbus (ABC).* Renamed from *Aborigine* because the former title "was somewhat of a joke because of the ridicule made of Australian and African natives," the newsletter carried a review of that years NCAI conference. In words reminiscent of Warrior and Eschief's biting commentary of the Chicago Conference, the editorial, written by Ansel Carpenter, Jr., complained that "it is surely too bad that a

[6] Interview with Frank Turley, *Idem*.

people with so much to gain and so much to lose would waste time, energy and talent on petty tattle-tailing and personal vengeance." It was enough to make Warrior determined to attempt to install, by whatever means necessary, Vine Deloria Jr. as Executive Officer at the following year's convention. This was especially so when, "such insinuating shiftiness continues through the year, well then, any Indian organization is sure to falter." Reflecting Warrior and Eschief's call for strong Indian leadership the article, insisted that "it is foolish to think that one tribe or group of Indians will benefit by sacrificing the interests of another tribe or group." Instead, "personal political attitudes must be sacrificed for the present and future well-being of all Indians," rather than the current climate of "petty tattle-tailing and personal vengeance." Warrior and his cohorts declared that "Indian people must get behind their national organization and its administration, support it, pay it, praise it, for you will have use of it one day." They saw no future for the NCAI in tribal factionalism or one-upmanship.[7]

After the NCAI Convention, Warrior returned home to spend Thanksgiving with his family. His sister Charmain remembers people's excitement when news of Warrior's return spread round White Eagle. In a similar vein to Della's memory of the giddiness of the workshops students, Charmain recalled people yelling, "Clyde is back, Clyde is back" and rushing to the Collins farm to "hear his stories," greeting him like an adventurer returning from far flung lands. The meal was set out on a large canvas sheet spread across the floor, with everybody sat around it in a circle. On this particular Thanksgiving Warrior also returned to campus long enough to

[7] Carpenter, Ansel, "After The Convention," *ABC,* Vol. 1. No. 2, pg. 6

invite Garrick Bailey and Tony Isaacs to join him. Isaacs remembers Warrior bounding into the house with his two guests in tow and announcing, "look Grandma, I brought Pilgrims." His sister Darlene remembers being teased by Warrior at the same Thanksgiving dinner, as he would nudge her and tell her to "hurry up, Darlin', Darlin' Darlene" as the food was passed around. Once the Thanksgiving holiday was over, Warrior settled into schoolwork until midway through the next semester.[8]

The October *ABC* newsletter also carried an assessment of the NIYC's concern over the passage of Public Law 280, known as the Enabling Act, which gave certain states primary jurisdiction over criminal and civil matters on Indians reservations. Of primary concern in the article, written by Hank Adams (Assiniboine), was the impact upon the tribes of Washington State. Adams, who grew up on the Quinault reservation in the Pacific Northwest coast carried his assessment over into the December issue when, after a brief summary of his disputes with the new law, he, specifically targeted the issue of Indian Fishing Rights. Adams was determined to enlist the help of Warrior and the rest of the NIYC in fighting for the tribes in eastern Washington who "are presently engaged in a great battle to preserve their aboriginally-derived and treaty-guaranteed fishing rights." Unity was again a cause for concern as he noted that, "the latest battle finds certain influential Indians allies of the opposition," but warned that, "those Indians do not realize that the patting hands move steadily closer to their own tribes' throats." It is unclear whether Adams was referring to the Oklahoma "country club

[8] Charmain Billy interview, *Idem.,* Tony Isaacs interview, *Idem.,* Darlene Harjo interview, *Idem*.

set" of W.W. Keeler, Earl Boyd Pierce, and J.W. Belvin, who controlled the Cherokee and Choctaw tribes respectively, or the NCAI who opposed direct action as a form of protest.[9]

The fear and apprehension of the state's Indian tribes reached boiling point in January 1964. Warrior travelled to an executive meeting of the NCAI and "laced in the older tribal leaders for having been willing through the years to let the white man rule the reservations and control the affairs of the Indian people." He found an unexpected ally in Robert Burnette, the NCAI Chief Executive whose removal from office Warrior would engineer later that year. Burnette remarked that, "I had wanted to say some of the same things for the past three years." Warrior greatest weapon, it seemed, was his lack of fear. Seeking no personal gain or glory, he deemed the personal repercussions of his plain spoken-ness as irrelevant irritants. For people like Burnette, who often felt as encumbered by the power of the office they had sought, and the political ramifications of speaking out of turn, no such freedom existed.[10]

Warrior also, together with Thom, Wilkie, Brando and Eugene Burdick, launched the NIYC's "Campaign of Awareness" before the major news services of the world in New York. Including an appearance on the Today Show, they informed

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[9] Bradley G. Shreve offers an exhaustive and extremely informative analysis of the background to PL. 280 and its impact upon the tribes of Washington State in '"From Time Immemorial": The Fish-In Movement and the Rise of Intertribal Activism," *Pacific Historical Review,* Vol. 78. No. 3 pgs. 403-434. Adams, Hank, "Indian Fishing Rights," *ABC,* Vol. 1. No. 2, pg. 4. The "country club" jibe was a reflection of the NIYC's distaste at the wealth, and perceived lack of traditionalism, of the leaders of two of Oklahoma's most powerful tribes.

[10] Josephy, Alvin. M, Jr., *Now That the Buffalo's Gone: A Study of Today's American Indians,* Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1982, pg. 224.

the media that, "Indian people have their backs to the wall" and that the "present termination and forced assimilation policy must be halted." As if to prove their point, Nisqually fisherman discovered the entire Nisqually River closed to them by game wardens at the behest of the powerful local Sportsman Council. The state Superior Court subsequently issued restraining orders after arrests were made, in clear violation of their treaty fishing rights. As Adams argued in *ABC,* "for many of us fishing is still a matter of survival," and he was determined to enlist the help of the NIYC in fighting for that survival. He initially enlisted the help of Bruce Wilkie (Makah), who had joined the Council at the Fort Duchesne meeting, and was a fellow Washington State resident. Together the two collaborated with tribes in the area to organize direct protests against attempts to regulate and suppress Indian fishing in the state's rivers and lakes. With the help of Herb Blatchford's organizational skills, the NIYC garnered support from tribes as far away as Florida, Montana and the Dakotas, with the Seminoles, Blackfeet, Sioux and others, offering to help the tribes of Washington in staging a "fish-in."[11]

On March 2nd, 1964 the stage was set for what Herb Blatchford later described as "the first full scale intertribal action since the Indians defeated General Custer on the Little Big Horn." Such rhetoric, as Bradley Shreve observes, marked the moment as the "true birth of the Red Power Movement." The Workshops and youth councils may have given the young Indians an educated voice with which to declare their anger and impatience, but the staging of a mass protest, on a day

[11] Ibid. "Indian Fishing Rights" *Idem*. "From Time Immemorial" Idem. "National Indian Youth Council Highlights for 1963-1964, *ABC,* July 27, 1964, Vol. 2, No. 3, pg. 2

Warrior described as "a landmark in American Indian history" was the first time the Movement attracted worldwide media attention. The protest consisted of local Indians, the aforementioned tribes offering help, NIYC members, and news reporters, thronging the banks of the Puyallup River to bear witness to game warden's abrogation of treaty fishing rights. Marlon Brando also offered his support and remembered that, "I got in a boat with a Native American and a Catholic priest; someone gave us a big salmon we were supposed to have taken out of the river illegally and, sure enough, a game warden soon arrived and arrested us." The presence of Brando had the desired effects on news organizations and by the time of the second protest, on the steps of the State Capitol in Olympia, reporters were everywhere.[12]

The evening after the protest was spent in discussion and quiet celebration of a job well done in raising awareness and attention to the serious issues facing the tribes in the region. The mood was light as Warrior and Brando gave short speeches to a small audience of organizers and interested parties, in the Senate Chambers of the Olympia Hotel, with Brando triumphantly holding his paddle above his head. After the speeches Warrior, Brando, Bruce Wilkie, Mel Thom, Reuben Wells, and Gerald Brown all relaxed by donning Beatles wigs and miming guitar playing. Brando mastered his 'guitar' while clinging to a half full shot glass. At one point he

[12] Shreve, Bradley, *Red Power Rising: The National Indian Youth Council and the Origins of Native Activism,* Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2011. pg. 13. *Songs My Mother Taught Me,* Idem, pg. 375. "From Time Immemorial," Idem.

stole Warrior's glasses and placed them upside down on his own nose. After the Beatles rendition, Brando tangoed with Shirley Witt late into the night.[13]

On the second day of the mass protest, with the crowd estimated at between 2,000 and 5,000 Warrior took center stage after Hank Adam's opening speech. His reputation for stirring eloquence was growing faster by the day and his speech did not disappoint. His first tactic was to portray the event as the most American of events, claiming that, "we have gathered here in peaceful assembly in the best tradition of Jefferson, Thoreau, and Lincoln." He declared that "today, March 3rd, 1964 marks the beginning of a new era in the history of American Indians" in which Indians would no longer remain in the background. He eviscerated the American history of treaty abrogation, labeling it "a cancerous sore." He appealed to Americans to see past racial boundaries and to view the treaty abrogation as an American, rather than American Indian problem, declaring that, "in these days an injustice to one American is an injustice to all Americans." Warrior was almost poetic as he testified that, "from the beginning of time American Indians have made their living from the bountiful waters that God gave to us." Now, however, Indians were being arrested for fishing "as they have done from time immemorial." He portrayed these actions as cutting apart the "sacred relationship between the Indian and God," in which the fish were provided for the Indians to survive.[14]

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[13] Home video by Rueben Wells. Copy in author's possession. Shreve, Bradley, *Red Power Rising,* pg. 130

[14] "Ponca Protests Treaty Making By Washington," *ABC,* May 5, Vol. II, No 2. Pg. 3

In an attempt to exemplify why exactly this was also an American problem, he painted the situation as a betrayal of America's founding principles, arguing that as a result of treaties being broken, "the word of America's founding fathers has been made a mockery." In a Cold War era when American politicians were increasingly calling upon the founding fathers as rhetorical tools in the fight against communism, such a comment was designed to create a reaction. This was not the end of Warrior's ire, however, as he quickly shifted gears and appealed to his audiences' basic humanity. He told them that as bad as the treaty breaking process was, America was guilty of even worse crimes against Indians. In President Johnson's January 1964, State of the Union address, he had acknowledged the rampant poverty, starvation, and persecution of Indian Country. He had also included Indian Communities in his "War on Poverty," recognizing them, as several presidents before him had, as the poorest communities in the nation. Despite, this acknowledgement however, Warrior argued that it was the continuous, generational deliberate neglect and humiliation heaped upon Indians that was an "indignity to (their) human spirit." He reminded the crowd that, "we are part of America's past and America's future. We are not "impediments to progress." To reinforce his point about how humiliating it was for Indians to be ignored he pointed out that "even unpopular racists are given a hearing on the American scene." This was despite him being wrong, "the whole world knows he's wrong, but his opinion is respected."[15]

Warrior reiterated his opening statement that the day was a landmark in American Indian history. He claimed it as the "beginning of the active participation

[15] Ibid.

of American Indians in the creation of a new society." This new society would be forced to acknowledge his dual identity as an American and a Ponca Indian, because neither he, nor his cohorts, were going to permit their tribal identities to be removed by federal law any longer. He proclaimed that for the "past 100 years we have held back" because of assimilationist programs that meant, "we were told we could not be Indians and Americans." Now, however, in one of the clearest examples of D'Arcy McNickle's 1953 clarion call for the "fight to the right to be culturally different," Warrior stressed that, "we refuse to accept that definition. We will be Indians and we will accept us as total human beings." For Warrior, the entire situation revolved around respect. He was "passionate" about gaining respect for American Indians, and he was fiercely proud of his Ponca identity. He told the crowd that, "I am an American and an Indian." [16]

For the majority of Americans at this time, still inured in the ideals of all cultures assimilating into the melting pot of Americanization, the concept of dual identity, or multi-culturalism in American was alien. Warrior insisted though, that the Indian part of him, which included the fact that the United States government "made solemn treaties with my fathers," "must be accepted and respected along with the rest of what I am." He was by this point, not only challenging Washington's assumed "right" to break treaties, but the entire history of broken treaties, religious and cultural suppression, contemporary termination and removal policies and programs. His speech echoed arguments made by late nineteenth

[16] Ibid. Cowger, Thomas, *The National Congress of American Indians: The Founding Years,* Lincoln, (USA), University of Nebraska Press, pg. 118, McNickle quote came during the 1953 NCAI annual delegation amid the first flushes of the fight against termination. Interview with Steve Pensoneau, *Idem*.

century immigrant intellectuals who insisted that being an American did not require a rejection of one's primary culture, but that the two could exist in harmony. He also cleverly positioned Indians as America's conscience, reminding his audience "we are proudest that we gave our democratic ideals, and on this day we remind Americans of those ideals and their duty to live up to their own standards. This is our contribution on this day."[17]

Warrior was not content, however, with summoning the ghosts of the founding fathers and making Indians the guardians of American guilt. Again displaying an uncanny knack for hitting the psychological target, he used the specter of international shame as an incentive for America to change. His words echoed Kennedy's "moral crisis" speech but placed the historic mistreatment of American Indians and treaty abrogation as the focus of international outrage. He began by throwing the Cold War propaganda of Russian Premier Khrushchev in the crowd's faces. He reminded them that America's arch-enemy, still demonized after the near miss of the Cuban Missile Crisis, dismissed America as a nation that could not be respected because it had "broken so many treaties with Indian tribes." He asked them, "Can we, as Americans, let this accusation stand?" and taunted them with "he has also said he will bury Capitalism." His challenge was "are both of these statements true?"[18]

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[17]Warrior, Clyde, "On Current Indian Affairs", *ABC,* May 5, 1964, Volume II, No. 2, pg. 2

[18] Ibid. The Panama Canal Crisis actually flared up over the scarcity of Panamanian flags in the Canal Zone. The dispute led to almost 200 Panamanian students stormed the border. When their flag was ripped in the struggle thousands more Panamanians joined the fracas, leading to an international crisis under which Panama revoked the

Highlighting the hypocrisy of America's disregard of Indian treaties, and the disrespect this garnered in the international environment, Warrior raised the subject of the Panama Canal crisis that exploded in January of that year. Pointing out that the U.S. government was preparing to present to the Organization of American States its case against Panama for breaking the Rio Treaty, he declared that "if this treaty is not an outmoded agreement from the past then why are Indian treaties considered such?" Warrior challenged the legality of America's foreign and domestic policies by claiming that, "America cannot behave one way internally and another way overseas." Although these policies deserved a far more complicated analysis that Warrior's more moralistic assertion, he displayed a knack of localizing and domesticizing contemporary Cold War rhetoric and issues in a way that made Indians the focal point.[19]

Warrior often used Cold War rhetoric for this purpose, although, as with the Civil Rights Movement, he saw American Indian issues as separate and unique in the world, and thus deserving of their own attention. He concluded his speech by again making Indians the guardians of America's conscience and international reputation. He declared that, "millions of people all over the world are looking to America for moral guidance. We cannot abandon them." In order to ensure that America retained the international moral high ground, "American Indians for the good of all Americans will see that the treaties are kept." For this to happen though, he implored the government to "give us Life for our tribes, Liberty for ourselves,

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terms of the Rio Treaty after accusing the U.S of aggression. The dispute lasted for over a year and led to President Johnson threatening to build and entirely new canal.
[19] "On Current Indian Affairs," *Idem*.

and the Pursuit of happiness for our children." The event was orchestrated collectively between the NIYC, Hank Adams, Bruce Wilkie and the local tribes. The power and skill with which he weaved American Indian treaty rights into the very fabric of American identity, however, thrust Warrior firmly into the limelight as an orator and activist to be reckoned with.[20]

Despite the glow of Warrior's rising stature, the political strength to fight for cultural preservation lay in the collective. Warrior, Adams, the rest of the NIYC board and Marlon Brando issued a joint statement reminding Washington State Governor Rosellini that "state law does not supersede federal law" which meant that "the provisions of any federal treaty is the supreme law of the land. That the provisions are superior to the exercise of any state's police power." They also suggested, again that America's international reputation was at stake because, "maybe like the American Indian who have been constantly swindled of their last vestiges of land and rights by the repeated treaty violation, the world questions the good faith of a United States treaty." Rosellini eventually agreed to meet some demands and promised to set up an advisory board made up of Indian members, but the fishing rights issue would rumble on for many more years before it finally came to a head in the 1974 decision by Judge George Boldt.

In *United States v. Washington,* Boldt's decision, upheld by the Supreme Court in 1979, that Indians had the right, under treaty to fifty percent of Washington's annual fishing haul. Boldt's reasoning was that the tribes held the right to fish in these waters long before Washington State had been created.

[20] Ibid.

Therefore, they had extended this right to white settlers, rather than the other way round. He also ordered the state to limit fishing by non-Indians, rather than Indians as it had been doing. Aside from the political ramifications of the decision, Boldt's ruling ensured the survival, and eventually economic regeneration of the treaty tribes in Washington State. While, in March 1964, the Boldt decision was far in the future, a chain of events had been set in motion by Warrior and his cohorts from which there was no turning back.[21]

Immediately following the March 'fish-ins" Warrior received a letter of congratulations from Viola Pfrommer, one of the Boulder Workshop organizers. She also acknowledged his recommendations for Hank Adams to attend the workshops and urged Warrior to remind him to mail his application. After attending to this matter, it was back to the college youth council circuit for Warrior and the other young activists before their next assault on a wider audience. Warrior's first stop was an Indian Rally in Reno, Nevada on April 11, before he returned home to the annual April 17-18 Ittanaha Conference at OU, hosted by the Sequoyah Club, and accompanied by the ubiquitous Spring OU powwow, the oldest university powwow in the nation. Following this, Warrior made his way to the North West Regional Youth Council in Missoula, Montana before travelling to Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado for the Southwestern Regional Indian Youth Conference, hosted by the college's Shalako Indian Club. Here he presented a paper titled, "Views of a Young Indian." Directly after delivering his address, Warrior

[21] Ibid. "From Time Immemorial" Idem. pg. 421

made his way to the American Indian Capital Conference on Poverty in Washington D.C.

Prior to Fort Lewis and Washington, the NIYC published a new issue of *ABC,* which included an article from Warrior. Titled "On Current Indian Affairs" it was a hard hitting repost to repeated criticism, "from prominent Indian leaders," of the NIYC as "ignorant little kids" and "foolish radicals with no reasonable policy or viewpoint." In its most basic form, the NIYC's policy was "in favor of Indian self-government, real, not fictional self-government, true self-determination." The biggest challenge to this policy was, however, the very government apparatus set up to promote it, in that "this bureaucracy is actively using all its resources and manipulating powerless tribal governments against their own communities." Warrior complained that the programs implemented by Congress "only serve to divide and conquer a helpless people" in such a way as "even the people of Angola, under the Portuguese, or Zulus of South Africa or the Negroes of Mississippi do not have to suffer this type of discrimination."[22]

The article laid the foundations for many of Warrior's subsequent speeches while drawing on inspiration from his childhood, youth council, and Workshop experiences. He identified Indian communities as the most subjugated communities, historically and contemporarily, in America. Drawing a direct contrast to the issues facing African Americans Warrior argued that, "segregation and exploitation are a cross to bear, but the Indian is attacked in his own home and community as no other American citizen is." Growing up in Ponca City; with its "White Only" restaurants

[22] "On Current Indian Affairs", *Idem*.

and separate "White" and "Indian" serving counters at gas stations, high school textbooks describing his descendants and recent ancestors as "savages," and all community decisions coming under federal supervision and approval; Warrior was well placed to compare the effects of southern Jim Crow laws with the added problems of assimilation and cultural suppression in Indian Country. Furthermore, this "system of under which Indians live a horrendous combination of colonialism, segregation, and discrimination has been going on for over 100 years." Not only did this leave his community and relatives "uneducated, and poverty stricken, helpless and without hope and divided among themselves" but it also left them "confused and threatened beyond belief."[23]

He and the NIYC felt that there were three major changes that needed to take place in decision-making policy, the attitude towards treaties, and serious economic and educational reform in Indian Country. Regarding the first issue, he suggested that without eliminating the Bureau of Indian Affairs, decision-making power over Indian communities needed to be put "where it belongs in the hands of the people and the community." The present system, for the vast majority of tribes, saw their political leaders appointed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and all decision-making requiring the approval of the Secretary of the Interior before it could become tribal law. To Warrior, and many others, this rendered tribal government ineffective, as the ultimate power of veto was held by the United States. Warrior returned to using the Soviet Union as a rhetorical tool and suggested that rather than propagate a system "of repressive internal colonialism which parodies the Soviet treatment of its

[23] Ibid.

national minorities," Indians should be granted "at least the self-determination that other American communities have." In short, "Indians should have real self-government," rather than the parody of government that was in place at that time.[24]

An essential element of real self-government was the protection of treaty rights, as highlighted in Washington State. Warrior acknowledged that the majority of treaties were "made by the United States as a small emerging nation and world power to survive in the early days of their struggle upwards." The NIYC's position was that the fact that the United States' was now "a powerful nation and Indian tribes are weak" did not "justify the blatant violation of these time honored agreements." Again, targeting American national pride he suggested that, "if the United States is to be the moral force in the world which she has aspired to be, morality must begin at home." He emphasized "we only as the American people to honor their word."[25]

Warrior returned to the role of the BIA when tackled the issue of Indian education and economic reform. He stated the NIYC idea that the "BIA must be in an advisory capacity with the community making the necessary decisions." Echoing Shirley Witt's withering assessment of the behavior of tribal leaders at the Chicago Conference, he denounced "the indignity of Indians with hats in their hands pleading to powerful administrations for a few crumbs must be removed from the American scene." Indignity was also endemic in Indian education, however, and Warrior compared "a system which is calculated purposely to turn children against

[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

their parents" to "an aspect of state control as only seen in Nazi Germany, Communist China, and American Indian reservations." Referring to those textbooks that denigrated his ancestors he reiterated, "this kind of discrimination is an indignity that no other ethnic group has to suffer." The indignity was not simply that of being taught that your ancestors, history and heritage were outmoded, savage and dead, but also the wider "indignity of a man's family being turned against him in his home and community, while he is powerless by law to stop it." It was this reason, more than any other, why the NIYC targeted education as a major front on which to wage war. The combined effect of treaty abrogation and assimilationist education meant was "eroding the Indian character and sapping his very life blood."[26]

This, said Warrior, "is the position of NIYC and their overall attitudes in respect to ameliorating the current situation of Indian communities." With regard to those critics who implied that the NIYC were "ignorant kids" he asserted that

> "We as members of NIYC have to ask ourselves constantly and very clearly which are the things in the past which we mean to carry forward in our children's life and which are those we shall leave behind."[27]

This showed those critics that, rather then being ignorant, the NIYC were constantly assessing and evaluating the most valuable aspects of the past would continue to serve Indian communities in the future. It also told these critics that the NIYC members were not prepared to simply abandon their tribal ways of conduct or morality and submit to Western cultural motifs. Traditional religion, language, and ceremony were an obvious choice for Warrior to make, as these practices had given

[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

him a self-awareness that exuded at every turn. There were also such traditions as helping the needy, protecting the community, and sharing any surplus with those around you, traditions and moral values that many NIYC members saw as lacking in American culture. They also discussed educations, but rather than simply saying that Indians required education, the council discussed which educational methods would work with Indian children, a conversation which would continue for many years.. He noted, however, "NIYC is often told we spend too much time talking of the "old days.'" This was reminiscent of the mocking that took place on the University of Oklahoma campus.[28]

Revealing a key tenet of Warrior's belief in the strength of tribal traditionalism, he retorted, "we feel that talking about the past means talking about the future." If one retained those ideals and traditions that made the Ponca identifiable as a community among the several hundred Indian communities before European contact, then one would enable the community to continue in the modern world. In defense of this stance he pointed out that "we were the first to hold our annual meeting in the tradition of our forefathers, the open "council." Admitting that the "the NIYC has made mistakes," he also defended their approach, pointing out that they were "the first to hold a successful demonstration of protest against abrogation of treaties." The NIYC was a young organization and the majority of its board members were essentially learning as they went along. The Workshops had provided a brief training session in leadership, but this was meant to be an introductory seminar in preparation for tribal politics, not national politics. Warrior

[28] Ibid.

pointed out that, despite their mistakes, and lack of experience, "as members of the NIYC we are trying to make the future better ourselves…we as Indian people are doing it ourselves." In conclusion he declared that, "as members of the NIYC we believe that everything is still ahead for us. The history of our people is not over." Most importantly, although they were young, they were determined to take matters into their own hands, with as much conviction as tribal people had done so in the past. [29]

Warrior's article revealed several key factors of his and the NIYC's approach to Indian affairs. As impatient as he and they were to foster change in federal Indian policy, their concerns were focused far more on fighting for the Indian rather than simply against the government. Their conviction in an Indian future was firmly grounded in their respective Indian pasts, a reciprocal relationship that journalist and author Stan Steiner labeled "new Indian nationalism based upon tribal traditionalism." Rather than reject their pasts in favor of a government-sponsored future devoid of tribal identity and culture, they embraced it as the foundation of their people. As Shirley Hill Witt later testified, "we Native peoples, we walk with a beautiful shawl around us and that that shawl is our history and we live with it every day. It's on our shoulders and around us and protects us."[30]

Despite Warrior's impassioned defense of the NIYC's position, their impatience, and his utter conviction in their approach, upset Indian leaders more often than not. One such occasion was at the American Indian Capital Conference

[29] Ibid.
[30] Interview with Shirley Hill Witt, *Idem*.

on Poverty. Organized as one of the first assaults in the War on Poverty, the conference was a collection of organizations, churches, and agencies involved in Indian Affairs. It was exactly the sort of event that Warrior had so recently declared needed to be handed over to Indians. The four day conference, from May 9 to 12, was targeted by the NIYC as they were "not recognized as a cooperating organization of the conference until the opening" or more directly, until they forced the organizers to recognize them. This was despite the presence NIYC officers such as Mel Thom on the conference steering committee. Once underway, the NIYC members expressed "their disappointment with the complacent attitude of the older Indian leaders," and, as in Chicago in 1961, formed a youth caucus.

Able to present their views on this occasion, Mel Thom spoke for them, declaring that, "We do not want to be freed from our special relationship with the Federal Government." They did, however, "want our relationship between Indian Tribes and the Government to be one of a good working relationship." Despite this being a position with which Warrior concurred, he did not approve of the rather "tame" language of the youth report. Aided by Shirley Witt (Mohawk), who respectfully interrupted the proceedings to gain Warrior permission to talk, he presented a more direct critique of government policy. Speaking in the presence of Vice President Hubert Humphrey, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, present and future Commissioners of Indian Affairs Phileo Nash and Robert Bennett (Oneida), he "marched down the aisle, gracefully vaulted up onto the stage" and bluntly accused the government of systematically depriving tribal elders of "basic life experiences" through their administration. Witt later recalled that, " the speech

horrified all the tame Indians in the room."[31]

One anonymous NIYC member did send Warrior a rebuke. It was not just for his speech, however, but also his drinking, as he was warned that, "whites always spot a drunk Indian quicker than ten of his drunken white kin. In this same token, a drunken NIYC member will be spotted very quickly when he is in an unwelcome atmosphere." The letter lamented that, "we were, as a group, condemned for certain acts due to alcohol." This in turn meant that, "we wasted valuable time, which we could have utilized in creating a better impression on the general conference attendants." Warrior was by no means the only NIYC member to enjoy alcohol on this trip, and while the letter of complaint suggested otherwise, drinking alcohol was a key component of Indian affairs meetings in this era. In regards to Warrior's speech the letter confirmed Witt's assessment, and complained "it greatly annoyed me when persons were automatically condemned without really having a fair chance." He warned that, "when the faults of others are "done in" and used as a tool against an interested soul, and done so with vehemence, hard feelings are created." This letter was another sign that not everybody in the NIYC favored the harsh, forthright manner with which Warrior and Thom addressed white society and fellow Indians. Some preferred a more conciliatory approach to solving problems[32]

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[31] "American Indian Capital Conference on Poverty: Findings," 9-12 May 1964, 14-17. Email conversation between Shirley Hill Witt and Edward LaCroix, dated Sept. 20, 2001, Box 19, Folder 4, NIYC Papers.

[32] Anonymous letter to NIYC Member, dated may 14, 1964, Box 19, Folder 4, NIYC Papers.

Taking a rare break from conferences and politics, Warrior returned home to White Eagle to take part in the annual Memorial Day Gives Water Service Club Dance on Memorial Day weekend, May 30th and 31st. While Warrior constantly astounded and impressed his friends and colleagues with his vast knowledge of other tribes' songs, he was always most at home with his Ponca songs, dances, and prayers. Among the Ponca it was often said that they could "sing for four days and four nights without singing the same song." The Gives Water dance was especially important to Warrior as his maternal grandmother's family sponsored it. The dance has always been held at the Gives Water family Arbor in White Eagle, occupied in the 1960s by Albert Waters, Head Singer of the Ponca Singers. Warrior was also welcome at the drum whenever he was home, and not dancing, while his grandmother Metha was a regular member of the Ponca Singers. While not a traditional ceremonial dance the Memorial Day event was, and still is, well respected and even revered among the Ponca people.[33]

Each day of the dance began with Metha Collins, the first president of the Gives Water Service Club, addressing the gathered crowd from her wheelchair. Her original intention in forming the club was to gather baskets for single mothers and other needy people in the community, and she would request donations of food, clothing or anything else that was useful in her address. She also organized to formal 'free feed' in which the Gives Water family and their descendants would feed whoever stopped by. This followed a family tradition, for as the name suggests, the Gives Waters of previous generations "would feed the whole tribe. People

[33] Charmain Billy interview. *Idem*.

would come out to the Gives Water family arbor just to be fed." It was traditions such as this that Warrior referred to as being necessary to carry forward from the past. As a member of the Gives Water family, a respected dancer and singer, as well as being a tail dancer for the Hethuska Society, Warrior's presence was expected and honored during these prayers and honor dances. As a dedicated follower and proponent of tradition, he saw it as his duty and honor to attend each year. The honoring rejuvenated him and brought him back to the bosom of his family, where his widow Della remembers, "he was always happiest," before he vanished again on to an ever-increasing conference circuit.[34]

On June 12, Warrior and Mel Thom attended the Indian Leadership: Accent on Youth Conference at Wisconsin State University in Eau Claire. His speech displayed an awareness of international events, as he opened "Time For Indian Action," by discussing the student uprisings that were taking place across Europe and Latin America. He described the American Indian student movement in America as being a "quiet revolution," in comparison. This was due to the inability to see "our young people in America as really a potent force for change in our society." While Warrior never specifically directed Indians towards joining or creating a global indigenous decolonization movement, he was aware of the power of such rhetoric. He hoped that by pointing to such events in the global arena he could galvanize Indian students to act in a similar fashion much closer to home. Referring to the independence campaigns against their European 'masters' of many African nations, he claimed that American Indian students were "sitting on the

[34] Della Warrior interview. *Idem*.

sidelines" of, "perhaps an even greater social movement than student protests in other parts of the world." This was one of the very few occasions that Warrior called for solidarity with other indigenous peoples, choosing instead to focus on maters closer to home, although he did use the rhetoric of colonialism, and of reservations as internal colonies of an American empire, throughout his future speeches in order to highlight the racial, social and economic iniquity of America.[35]

In Warrior's view these students did not have the freedom of choice available to students of other ethnicities, as "all the expectations of the adults around him- - Indian leaders, teachers, adults interested in Indian affairs - - are keeping Indian students from being a student." They also lost the freedom of simply enjoying the moment and experience of college. He clarified this by stating that 'many Indian students see themselves as going on after college and becoming Indian leaders. They are *in training* to be. They are not *being*." He highlighted the unfairness of this situation by claiming that while white society trained its young people to possibly become leaders *if they chose*, "I know of no society (except Indian) that *expects* young people to be leaders." The frustration here was one born out of expectations thrust upon the MIYC. While they courted publicity and attention in order to precipitate change, they also resented the mantle of leadership thrust upon them at the same time. Unfortunately, however, with tribal communities in dire need of educated people to lead them and create programs, and little over

[35] Warrior, *Time for Indian Action.* American Indian Mission and Ministry Collection, The National Council of the Episcopal Church , New York. Italics mine. Warrior often referred to other indigenous revolutionary movements but never openly called for a unity of purpose across international lines that the NCAI, and later, AIM did.

3,000 Indians attending college, there was a shallow pool of potential leaders to choose from.[36]

Warrior identified the conference organizers as being part of this problem. He noted that "when I go to conferences at which these "future Indian leaders" are gathered together, I get the impression many times that these very same adults have structured the conference, defined the problem, and implied the solutions." As such they had left little room for the students gathered to propose any meaningful suggestions for change themselves. He had seen this firsthand with Charles Minton, and Sol Tax, both organizing conferences around their chosen motifs and solutions. He indicated that he was not alone in this viewpoint, stating, in a theme that he would pick up again in later speeches, that, "many older Indians, in fact, feel that white adults use their young people against them." He had hinted at this in the May issue of *ABC,* blaming, in particular, those educators who were teaching young Indians that their heritage was worthless.[37] This issue, of choice and respect for youth, was one that had contributed to the birth of the NIYC. It reminded them that while Indian leaders expected their youth to be able to lead, they also expected them *to be told how to lead* rather than have their own opinions on that leadership.

Choice was a theme to which Warrior would return in many of his speeches. He warned his audience that, "American Indian students have very little choice in the world. They cannot even *choose not* to be "future Indian leaders."" With

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[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid. The SDS was a student activist movement that came to represent the New Left student movement in the 1960s. The statement was adopted at the organization first convention in 1962. More information is available about this group in Terry Anderson's *The Movement and the Sixties.*

rhetoric reminiscent of the 1962 Port Huron Statement of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and highlighting his knowledge of the greater civil rights movement around him, he suggested that, "you refuse to take that definition of yourself and *be* students and youth." The Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was formed in 1960, the year before the NIYC, by left-wing students unhappy at the stifling conformity imposed upon American society by the Cold War rhetoric of the liberal consensus. In contrast to the NIYC, who were poor, rural, culturally immersed students, the SDS were largely affluent, middle-class, white students. The Port Huron Statement served as the SDS's manifesto. The manifesto called for the creation of a "New Left" and "for participatory democracy, direct action and civil disobedience, and an end to racial discrimination" In this vein, Warrior challenged the students in the audience to "participate in the condition of being students and youth. Figure out together your generation's idea of what is wrong and right in the world and in the Indian world, particularly. Give yourself some freedom. In fact, I am telling you to take your freedom. I say do as you please."[38]

He then told them that only "after you have thought these things out as Indian students, if you want to be active in Indian Affairs, do that!" Alternatively, "If you are content with your new discoveries, only in your daily life, by all means do that! But most of all be free students, students with a capital S." He finished the speech by inviting his audience to shake off those shackles imposed by Indian leaders and to "be a student with me and to take action for *your generation,* as

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[38] Warrior, Clyde, *Time for Indian Action.* Anderson, Terry, H. *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995, pg. 61

students. If you choose to take action I will welcome you and together we will not be left out of this exciting time in history. We will live and learn as students, as youth, and as Indians." Warrior was reaffirming the original concepts of the NIYC, which was that one could act on behalf of one's fellow Indians without appointing oneself a leader in the process. The glory was in the action and achievement rather than any assumed title.[39]

After the Wisconsin Conference, Warrior faced choices about his own college career. He flirted with the idea of transferring to Wayne State University to work under the guidance of James Howard before deciding to transfer to Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, which meant he could also join up with Bob Thomas, who was conducting research into Cherokee education in the area. In the meantime, the summer powwow circuit and the 1964 Boulder Workshops Alumni Weekend beckoned.

[39] Warrior, Clyde, *Time for Indian Action,*

CHAPTER 6

"WHICH ONE ARE YOU?"

The switch from Norman to Tahlequah was a significant move for Warrior. It brought him closer to his own people and, with a full blood Cherokee stronghold close by, near to a traditional tribal community. As much as he had enjoyed living in Norman, he had missed this proximity to traditionalism, even if Cherokee culture was vastly different from the Poncas. Despite his ease with mixing in non-Native circles, he always felt most at home with other Indians. At his core, he was still a traditionally raised, community focused, Ponca Indian. His relaxed attitude to speaking before large audiences was born of his innate confidence in his own identity thanks to the way his grandparents raised him. As his cousin, Steve Penseneau articulated, "we have no identity crisis, because we were raised to know who we are as Ponca Indians." This security of identity, and culture, ensured that Warrior never doubted the veracity of his words or the value of the community he was fighting for. He was raised by grandparents who taught him, "never to be ashamed" of his heritage or race. His sheer conviction, and the weight of authority that this conviction added to his words meant that by 1964, Warrior was undoubtedly the most influential young Indian activist of the era. This influence increased with his growing profile, as more and more young Indians took his concerns back tot heir tribal leaders and demanded change within their communities.[1]

[1] Steve Pensoneau interview. *Idem*.

This innate sense of self was also of the reasons he was so popular among the Workshops students. Many recognized the love Warrior had for his community, while others aspired to make the same connections to their own people when they returned home. The Boulder Workshops continued to be a source of intellectual stimulation and inquiry for Warrior, especially as the student body grew in awareness and curiosity over Indian Affairs each year. Warrior immediately struck a rapport with Al Wahrhaftig, who returned to teaching at the Workshops after a three-year hiatus. Wahrhaftig's worldview had expanded greatly in his time away from Boulder, as he served in the Peace Corps in Columbia, working with the Guambiano and Paez Indians. He began by working on small community development programs before helping the local Division of Indian Affairs "completely revise its approach to development in Indian communities and its relationship with traditional Indians leaders" before travelling to Bogota to witness these changes being "adopted as policy on a national level." This experience was invaluable to Wahrhaftig, and as somebody who had actually worked to help traditional communities, his was an opinion that Warrior immediately respected.[2]

Wahrhaftig, meanwhile, was struck by the changing dynamic of the Workshops in the short time since he had left. He recognized a far less "compliant" student body than had been the case during the early years of Sol Tax's action anthropology experiment. Wahrhaftig remembered that, "The thing really begin to catch fire, and people begin wanting to come because their older siblings or because other people in their tribe or their community had gone. And you know it's like any

[2] Email exchange with Al Wahrhaftig, dated February, 29, 2012.

success of that sort. It gained a momentum of its own." He credited much of the success of this momentum, and the intellectual vibrancy of the class of '64, on the influence of the NIYC in spreading their message of pride and honor in tribal identity.[3]

Between the Workshops, and the annual NIYC meeting, Warrior took a short trip to visit his friends in Los Angeles. While there he publically came out in support of the Republican presidential candidate Barry M. Goldwater. Rather than follow party political allegiances, many American Indians simply "went with those politicians that supported native issues," and Goldwater was well known in Arizona, his Senate constituency, as a strong supporter for "economic self-sufficiency and local tribal self-rule." Privately, he told Shirley Witt that while in L.A. he heard that Goldwater was flying into town, "so I thought, I want to take a good look at that guy." Warrior turned up at the airport wearing "cut off Bermudas, an aloha shirt, old sneaks and white socks that kept falling down over my ankles." He jostled to join the throngs of supporters waiting to greet Goldwater as he left the plane and maneuvered himself into a position whereby he could shake the candidates hand. However, "Goldwater came down the stairs…and he shook hands with this person and he shook hands with that person, and he shook hands with this person, took a look at me and skipped over me, and shook hands with the next person." He laughed to Witt that "I'm going to vote for that man, he's a racist and so am I." Having been

[3] Wahrhaftig, Al, Telephone Interview, September 19, 2010.

the victim of racism during his childhood, the joke revealed a more sardonic side to Warrior's wit.[4]

In early August, while back in Oklahoma between his visit to Los Angeles and the NIYC meeting, the Civil Right Movement caught Warrior's attention. He asked Shirley Witt if he could borrow her "old beat up" Volkswagen bus. Witt was surprised and intrigued. She had no idea that Warrior could drive, nor had he ever expressed a desire to do so before. She was also curious as to his plans. His response was even more surprising than his request. On August 4, 1964, the dead bodies of three civil rights activists were found dead in Philadelphia, Mississippi. The three young men had been missing since June 21 when they had investigated the fire bombing of an African American church, which was being used as a freedom school. It was later discovered that members of the Ku Klux Klan had murdered them. Warrior told Witt that, "I want to borrow your bus to go to Mississippi. The killings were on the reservation of the Choctaw in Mississippi. I would be a better warrior to go to Mississippi than to go to Vietnam." When he arrived at the NIYC meeting and returned the bus to Witt he would not divulge what he had done to help in Mississippi. He did however have to explain a rather large dent in the side of her bus, sheepishly admitting, "I went off a bridge."[5]

At the annual NIYC meeting on the Makah reservation, such considerations of race and racism were far from the thoughts of the NIYC board members. Hanks

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[4] Cornell, Stephen, Kalt, Joseph, "American Indian Self-Determination: The Political Economy of a Successful Policy," The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, October 2010. Della Warrior interview, *Idem*. Shirley Hill Witt interview, *Idem*.

[5] Witt interview. *Idem*.

Adams was assigned as public relations committee chair, with an initial brief to "watch Clyde Warrior pass in review." Passing in Review is a military term that means a victory parade, often used for graduating recruits who are about the enter the armed services full time. This was a compliment to Warrior's prowess at public speaking, and showed that despite his reputation outside of the NIYC as being outspoken, his methods were highly appreciated by the Council. The most pressing concern for the group was to try and convince Vine Deloria Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux) to reconsider his decision not to accept the Executive Directorship of the NCAI. Deloria had refused to accept the post until the NCAI had enrolled sixty member tribes, but the NIYC Executive Board were determined that with him in position the two groups could work far more closely together than they had previously.[6]

Warrior and Deloria (Standing Rock Sioux) had first met at the 1963 Boulder Workshops and were fast friends for a short, fortuitous, time. Deloria was interviewing for a position with the United Scholarship Services, a fledgling organization that would also play an important role in the life of Warrior and many other American Indian students, when he was invited to visit the Workshops. As with many other friends and acquaintances over the years, one of Deloria's earliest memories of Warrior, was that "Clyde danced while Bob and I just stood measuring each other." At one of the Workshops' ubiquitous 49's, which Deloria claimed were "the real activity of the workshop." He remembered Warrior and Bob Thomas as intellectual cohorts who were determined to test him out. Warrior was impressed

[6] Minutes of the 1964 annual NYC meeting, August 19 22, *American Aborigine,* Vol. IV, Number 1, pp. 10 -16

enough with Deloria to invite him to join the NIYC but quickly developed other ideas about how the young Sioux could be a useful ally in Indian affairs. Although their relationship appeared to settle into acquaintanceship rather than friendship, there was a mutual respect between the two borne from this early meeting.[7]

Deloria credited Warrior with winning him the NCAI position he later prevaricated over. In a testimony to Bob Thomas, he recalled that, "Clyde had set various political traps for Robert Burnette and triggered a general rebellion against him which then rebounded to my benefit." Burnette was the incumbent Executive Director who had systematically removed the influence of Helen Peterson, one of Warrior's mentors, and a guiding light in the early days of the NCAI, during his tenure of office. Warrior's motivation may have been equally as much about revenge for his dear friend as it was about taking "the NCAI away from the older generation." It also showed that the many hours Warrior had spent in Tony's Bar at the University of Oklahoma's Campus Corner, where he "loved to talk politics or political strategy and how you motivate people" now had a practical outlet.[8]

Maneuvering Deloria into office in the fall of 1964 did not, however, yield the wider results Warrior had hoped it would. Deloria claimed that his refusal to use the position to sponsor another Chicago conference under the guidance of Dr. Tax, as Warrior and Bob Thomas intended, resulted in Warrior vowing to remove him from office at the following year's NCAI convention. Wary of how the first Chicago conference had been the battleground on which Burnette had beaten

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[7] Deloria, Vine, Jr. "Bob Thomas As Colleague," in *A Good Cherokee, A Good Anthropologist: Papers in Honor of Robert K. Thomas,* Steve Pavlik, ed. pg. 27
[8] Ibid. pg. 27-32.

Peterson, Deloria was not prepared to risk his newly gained position. Although the two remained on cordial terms with each other professionally they were often on opposing sides politically for the remainder of Warrior's life, with Deloria making occasionally quite personal attacks on Warrior's intellect and eloquence. Warrior preferred to simply include Deloria in the general field of the many Indians he saw as failing to fight enough for Indians, as he railed against the "finks" in the NCAI. Deloria, however, targeted Warrior specifically, dismissing his approach as "brash and abrasive."

Deloria often damned Warrior with faint praise, referring to him in his 1969 book *Custer Died for Your Sins,* as "perhaps the greatest wit in Indian Country," and only referring to Warrior's activism as he retold a Warrior joke. "Do you realize," he said, "that when the United States was founded, it was only 5 percent urban and 95 percent rural and now it is 70 percent urban and 30 percent rural… "Don't you realize what this means?" he rapidly continued. 'It means we're pushing them into the cities. Soon we will have our country back again.'" In later years, Deloria grudgingly conceded that, "he had a way of presenting his points crudely and effectively so that people would not forget." His bitterness extended beyond Warrior, though and included much of the NIYC leadership, suggesting scars from the rift between the two organizations that never truly healed. Deloria also remembered listening to Mel Thom and Herb Blatchford testifying before the Secretary of the Interior in 1963, and recalled feeling "a bit betrayed that Thom and Blatchford did not have ideas of their own – but merely recycled the concepts they had learned from Bob Thomas at the Workshop." This was actually quite a feat for

two of the driving forces behind the NIYC, as neither had, at that point, attended the Workshops as students. The particular testimonies that Deloria described came a full year before Thom enrolled at the Boulder Workshops and studied under Thomas.[9]

While Deloria disclaimed Warrior's rhetoric as "crude," his efforts were much more appreciated by his peers in the NIYC and in campuses across America. And for Warrior, whether he was seen as "crude" or not was unimportant. Being "effective" in getting his message across was all that mattered. In December 1964, a few months after tackling the issue of the unfair expectations placed on Indian students in "Time For Indian Action," Warrior published an article, titled "Which One Are You?" in *ABC*. The newsletter had been created in order to reach all members of the NIYC to keep them abreast of political and cultural events as they happened from region to region and tribe to tribe. As such, Warrior's identification of the type of Indians he saw these expectations' creating was directed towards the very people it argued against: young Indians too easily, in Warrior's eyes at least, swayed by non-Indian influences. Reflecting upon, and dissecting, the categorization of students that he knew took place at the workshops and elsewhere in society, he issued the article it as a challenge to the students themselves.

Before describing the five types in detail he warned his readers that "this writer does not pretend to know why (they exist)" but could only "offer an opinion as to name and types, define their characteristics, and offer a possible alternative." He emphasized alternative rather than solution before adding that "All this writer is

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[9] Ibid. Interview with Garrick Bailey, *Idem*. Deloria, Vine, Jr., *Custer Died For Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto,* New York, Macmillan Publishing Co., 1969, pp. 164-166. Pavlik, *A Good Cherokee,* pg. 28

merely saying is he does not like Indian youth being turned into something that is not "real" and that somebody needs to offer a better alternative."[10]

The five types included the "the slob, or hood," who molds himself into the white misconception of Indian-ness "by dropping out of school, becomes a "wino", eventually becomes a court case, usually sent off…another Indian hits the dust, through no fault of his own." The second was the 'joker,' who "has defined to himself that to be an Indian is a joke. An Indian does stupid, funny things… and he goes through life a bungling clown." The third was the 'redskin "white noser" or sellout,' who "has accepted … the definition that anything Indian is dumb, usually filthy, and immoral, and to avoid this is to become a "LITTLE BROWN AMERICAN" by associating and identifying with everything that is white. Thus society has created the fink of finks." The fourth "type" was the "ultra-pseudo Indian" who "is proud that he is Indian but for some reason does not know how one acts. Therefore, he takes his cues from non-Indian sources, books, shows, etc. and proceeds to act "Indian." Hence, we have a proud, phony, Indian." The final type was the "angry nationalist" who "is generally closer to true "Indianism" that the other types, and they resent the others for being ashamed of their own kind." He went on to say that "this type tends to dislike the older generations who have been 'Uncle Tomahawks" or "yes men" to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and whites in general." He claimed that this type viewed the "problems of personality disappearance" with "bitter abstract and ideological thinking" and were labeled "radicals" as they tended to "alienate themselves from the general masses of Indians

[10] Warrior, Clyde, "Which One Are You?" *ABC, Americans Before Columbus,* Volume 1, No.4, December 1964

for speaking as it appears to them, "TRUTHS.'" Ironically, Warrior himself was often placed into this final category. His childhood friend Browning Pipestem recalled that many other Indian students hated Warrior "because he was right."[11]

Warrior's alternative to these types was for "genuine contemporary creative thinking, democratic leadership to set guidelines, cues and goals for the average Indian." He emphasized that "the guidelines and goals need to be based on true Indian philosophy geared to modern times, (but) this will not come about without nationalistic pride in one's own self and one's own kind." Superficially Warrior appeared to be drawing Indians under a single pan-tribal identity, but he emphasized tribal distinction, less forcefully than he would do in later speeches, in his reference to nationalism and "one's own kind." Drawing on the expectations placed on Indian students he declared that, "this group can evolve only from today's college youth, not from those who have sold out, or those who do not understand true Indianism. Only from those with pride, love, and understanding of the people and the people's way from which they come can this evolve."[12]

As well as those Indian youths who had fallen into the "types" he described, Warrior lambasted those he felt were responsible for creating them. He declared that, "this writer (is) fed up with religious workers and educationalists incapable of understanding, and pseudo-social scientists who are consciously creating social and cultural genocide among American Indian youth." Displaying his ability to distinguish leaders from elders, he wrote that "I am sick and tired of seeing my

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[11] Ibid. Robert Allen Warrior, Paul Chaat Smith, *Like A Hurricane,* New York, (USA), The New Press, 1996 pg. 41
[12] Warrior, "Which One Are You?"

elders stripped of dignity and low-rated in the eyes of their young. And I am disturbed to the point of screaming when I see American Indian youth accepting the horror of "American conformity" as being the only way for Indian progress." He ended the article by placing the responsibility for finding an alternative to the situation firmly with the NIYC to forge a new path rather than simply following the example of tribal leaders, saying that "the National Indian Youth Council must introduce to this sick room of stench and anonymity some fresh air of new Indianness." Borrowing from Mel Thom's iconic NIYC presidential inauguration address, he insisted that what was needed was "a fresh air of new honesty and integrity, a fresh air of new Indian idealism, a fresh air of a new 'greater Indian America," before issuing the simple, yet powerful, call to arms of "How about it? Let's raise some hell."[13]

Gus Palmer Jr. remembered being shocked at how many Indians he and his friends recognized from the descriptions in the article because "we just didn't have the courage to write it and say, "Guess what? These are the five types of Indians...It seemed that he was kind of irreverent. It was very self-assured. He wasn't afraid." He also remembers feeling quite awestruck, and thinking, "wow, this guy is fearsome. He's Crazy Horse. He's the real thing." At the core of the article was the issue of respect. It was respect that had been denied him by schoolteachers, and church leaders, and the people of Ponca City as he had grown up. He had witnessed many people within his own community falling victim to the stereotypes and demands listed in the article. He had seen similar situations on reservations and

[13] Gus Palmer Jr. interview, idem. Ibid. Mel Thom's address "A Greater Indian America" can be found in Alvin Josephy's *Red Power*

college campuses across the country, and the article was a demand for respect. Rather than submit to people who "tried to make us be like them," Warrior wanted Indians "to be respected for who we are. People who maybe wanted to be like us." The article hit a nerve with many people who read it because they felt that Warrior "would probably be insulting right there cause they were looking at you, and you were one of these guys and you knew it." That same ability to shock saw Warrior's speech at a June 1964 War on Poverty conference doctored by the organizers.

The original speech, titled "Poverty, Community, and Power" was later published in "New University Thought" magazine. While the speech Warrior was 'allowed' to present still offered as damning an indictment of white society as his previous speeches, it was neither as vitriolic nor personal as the banned version. His ability to speak freely was, however, hampered by his impromptu presentation to the American Indian Capital Conference on Poverty in May 1964. At the AICCP the attendant youth caucus, which included fellow NIYC members Robert Dumont (Cree) and Tillie Walker (Mandan), took the position that in order to combat poverty among American Indians, the government needed to adopt a "cultural framework that respected traditional tribal values." Despite this being a position with which Warrior concurred, he did not approve of the rather 'tame' language of the youth report. Aided by another NIYC member, Shirley Hill Witt (Mohawk), Warrior respectfully interrupted the proceedings to give his own viewpoint. Speaking in the presence of Vice President Hubert Humphrey, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, present and future Commissioners of Indian Affairs Phileo Nash and Robert Bennett (Oneida), Warrior "horrified all the tame Indians in the

room" by declaring that the government had systematically deprived tribal elders of "basic life experiences" through their administration of tribal life.[14]

Even in the speech Warrior was allowed to present at the "War on Poverty" he attacked the reservation system that still dominated many tribal communities. Drawing upon the lessons he had learned at the Boulder Workshops, he stated that these reservations " are administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in much the same way that an imperial government administers a colony." Warrior used the rhetoric of colonialism as a device to highlight America's treatment of Indian tribes as foreign nations even after federal law had dismissed the concept with the abolition of treaty making in 1871. Given the Cold War rhetoric of decolonization that was driving the international political arena at that time, it was a powerful rhetorical weapon to wield, in much the same way the Society Of American Indians had done in their campaign for citizenship after World War One. In other areas of Indians affairs, the metaphor of colonialism was rife among those Native American such as Bob Thomas and D'Arcy McNickle, who sought to place Indian Affairs in keeping with the global indigenous movement. The NIYC had flirted with the idea of 'global outreach,' but posited the idea as one of educating European nations, rather than claiming solidarity with indigenous peoples across the world. The reason why they changed the title of their newsletter from *Aborigine* to *Americans Before*

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[14] Shreve, Bradley, M., *Red Power Rising: The National Indian Youth Council and the Origins of Intertribal Activism,* pg. 216. For more information on Johnson's War on Poverty, see David Zarefsky's *President Johnson's War on Poverty*. Excerpts from Thom's speech are reprinted with a contextual explanation in Alvin M. Josephy's *Red Power.* (1st edition). Warrior, Clyde, "Poverty, Community, and Power," *New University Thought,* Vol. 4, No. 2, Summer 1965, pg. 5. This is part of the speech that Warrior was 'allowed' to give.

Columbus was to ensure a primary focus on the indigenous people within America's border. Solidarity with foreign nations would, and did, come later.

Warrior compared the government's provision of "trusteeship for the land, social services, and programs designed by non-Indians for the betterment of Indians" with "McNamara's designing of a military program for South Viet Nam," claiming that "the fact is nobody knows what the hell is going on." The Vietnam War was a physical manifestation of Cold War rhetoric that many people in America vehemently opposed. The conflict had arisen out of President Truman's post was policy of "containment" against the Soviet Communist regime. After Truman, despite his calls for unilateral decolonization, had sent troops into Vietnam to help the French maintain control of their colony, his successor, President Eisenhower, developed a "Domino Theory" under which he claimed that if South Vietnam fells to communists, the rest of the Asian continent would follow suit. The Domino Theory was one that Eisenhower's successor, President Kennedy, also adhered to. Coupled with Kennedy's hawkish foreign policy rhetoric that showing force was the best defense, the advisory troop build up in South Vietnam increased dramatically during the first years of the 1960s. By the time Johnson inherited the Oval Office from Kennedy, he was caught in a "Catch 22" situation, go to war, or see Communism spread. He chose war.

Protestors, including Students for a Democratic Society, and the Free Speech Movement opposed the war on the grounds of American imperialism. They used rhetoric similar to that used by Mark Twain and the Anti-Imperialist League in opposition to the Spanish American War of the late nineteenth century. A

compulsory draft, growing numbers of soldiers being sent overseas, and the sheer viciousness of the war, coupled with unparalleled media coverage, saw Vietnam quickly become an extremely unpopular war. For Warrior, the case against the war was far simpler than issues of imperialism, colonialism, or an involuntary draft. In 1963, he had considered joining the U.S. Army and going to war, telling Shirley Witt that, "my people have always been warriors and I look at my name and wonder whether I should become a warrior too." He decided against the idea quite quickly though because, "I can't see myself killing those people in Vietnam, they all look like Hopis to me. And I could never kill a Hopi." [15]

The theme of domestic colonialism was prevalent within his speech, however,. He described the 'fiction' of tribal sovereignty within the federal trust relationship, and asked, "if these sovereign entities have self-government, why are their acts subject to approval by the Secretary of the Interior?" He described how "American Indians exist today in a variety of social and economic circumstances…however the majority of Indians are presently on relief." Warrior also addressed the theme of Indian unity, or perceived lack thereof, and laid claim that the only "pan-Indian" condition was one of mutual poverty. He claimed that "in the past they (Indians) had no one particular thing in common. Today, thanks to Western civilization, they have finally found the common denominator – poverty." This was yet another indication that the concept of pan-Indianism and a single

[15] McNamara was one of the prime architects of the Vietnam War and the increased troop presence in South Vietnam. Also see Donald Fixico's *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960* for a discussion of the problems faced by relocated Indians. The issue of domestic colonialism is another that is covered extensively in Cobb's *Native Activism in Cold War America.* Interview with Shirley Hill Witt, *Idem*.

Indian identity was vey wide of the mark. Regarding the civil rights movement he had discussed in "Time For Indian Action", he noted that, "American Indians are not as concerned with civil rights as they are about going to bed with an empty stomach." Warrior again used his innate connection to his own community and tribal history as the fulcrum of his message. In response to why "many people wonder why this is so," he told the audience that "American Indians come out of a very definite, defined historical tradition which stresses the preservation of the family, the people, and the community." This historical tradition was at odds with the concepts of Americanization that had been forced upon tribes for generations, as tribal land bases had shrunk through, removal, reservations, allotment and the ever-present process of assimilation. As Warrior pointed out, tribes were still present, but their people were hungry.[16]

Warrior emphasized the uniqueness and diversity of Indian cultures across America. As a fiercely proud Ponca, tribal identity was one of the most precious properties to retain. Highlighting his distinctly inter-tribal perspective Warrior stated that 'today I see my people yet speaking many different tongues and living their lives in many different ways….but by and large the American public disregards and ignores the fact that American Indians, like most other ethnic groups, want very much to maintain their heritage and their culture." Warrior again insisted that ignorance of tribal diversity led to the perpetuation of the "Indian Problem." He claimed that 'it is typical of bureaucratic societies that when one takes upon himself to improve a situation, one immediately, unknowingly falls into a structure of

[16] Warrior, "Poverty, Community, and Power". *Idem*.

thinking." He told them that, "you take the existing avenues of so-called improvement and reinforce the existing condition, thereby re-inforcing [sic] and strengthening the ills that are implicit in the very structure of that society." He had seen this situation happen many times over, wherein the societies being helped, Indian communities were never consulted over the potential for success of particular programs, but always blamed for their failures. In reference to his banned speech, and why he felt he was prevented from presenting it at the conference he declared that 'in January of this year the National Indian Youth Council submitted a statement to the National Conference on Poverty in the Southwest" before noting that 'this fell on deaf ears because it was essentially a protest against the very conditions outlined above."

Warrior closed his speech by urging his peers to accept the challenge of President Johnson's vision of America, which he had outlined during a commencement address at the University of Michigan. Johnson had told the 1964 graduating seniors that America's Great Society "rests on abundance and liberty for all. It demands an end to poverty and racial injustice, to which we are totally committed in our time." Warrior, in response, cautioned that "What was once thought a fantasy could become a reality. But if you don't speak, no one will listen." Unfortunately, at this point in time, it was only Indians who were listening to him, although as more and more flocked to the cause, it was simply a matter of time before the government would begin to heed his words.[17]

[17] Ibid. pg. 6. For the full text of Johnson's 'Great Society' speech see http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~hst306/documents/great.html. Also see Zarefsky.

Warrior's banned speech more specifically addressed his sense of the potential futility of the War on Poverty in relation to Indian peoples and tribal communities. While he claimed no racial boundaries to the collective powerlessness of the poor to effect change on their own within the current system, he did focus very much on his own Ponca community as an example of American Indian poverty, and identified racism as its cause. He again demanded that changes be made to the system in order for it to be truly effective in helping to defeat poverty.

Introducing himself as "a full blood Ponca Indian from Oklahoma" he stated that he his purpose was to "try as much as I can, to present to you the views of Indian youth." He wrote that "if I start my presentation with a slightly cynical quote ('Are you contributing to the solution or to the problem?'), it is because American Indians generally and Indian youth particularly are more than a little cynical about programs devised for our betterment." He claimed that this was because "these programs have, by and large, resulted in bitter divisions and strife in our communities, further impoverishment and the placing of our parents in a more and more powerless position." He noted these divisions had led the more traditional elders to withdraw from society and that "this has been the experience of Indian youth – to see our leaders become impotent and less experienced in handling the modern world." This was in stark contrast to tribal leaders who used political power to manipulate community programs for their own benefit rather than the tribes. He offered the assessment that "the indignity of Indian life, and I would presume the indignity of life among the poor generally in the United States is the powerless of

those who are "out of it," but who yet are coerced and manipulated by the very system which excludes them."[18]

Warrior admitted that, "I must say I smiled at the suggestion that this conference would draw together articulate spokesmen for the poor." He chastised the organizers for their imperiousness, stating that "there may indeed be articulate spokesmen for the poor, but there are no articulate spokesmen of the poor." He told them that, "if my relatives were articulate they would not be poor… They might not be the warm human beings they are, but they would be verbal, aggressive, and not so poor." Attacking the social system within American society that was maintaining the poverty situation he argued that "the powerful do not want change…and it is futile to work within this framework." He challenged the organizers of the conference to prove themselves capable of waging the War on Poverty. Preparing them for the verbal onslaught he was about to deliver, Warrior warned them that "I hope that men of good will even among the powerful are willing to have their "boat rocked" a little in order to accomplish the task our country has set itself."[19]

Warrior reiterated his cynicism at the government's programs for the poor, saying that "now we have a new crusade in America – our "War on Poverty" – which purports to begin with a revolutionary new concept – working with the local community." Johnson's front line in the War On Poverty was indeed the local community. The plan was for local community action by citizens to help individuals, families and communities to help themselves, as they would know

[18] Warrior, "Poverty, Community, and Power" *Idem*
[19] Ibid. pg. 7

better than federal bureaucrats what action was actually needed. As with other federal Indian policies, however, this self-help was not immediately offered to Indian communities, which was a situation Warrior sought to change. Showing the bellicosity and acerbic wit for which he was famous, Warrior stated that "Indian youth could not be more pleased with these kinds of statements, and we hope that for the first time since we were disposed of as a military threat our parents will have something to say about their own destiny and not be ignored as is usually the case." However, he conceded that "I do not doubt that all of you are men of good will and that you do intend to work with the local community. My only fear is what you think the local community is."[20]

He used this last comment to emphasize the very different worldviews held by whites and Indians in regard to the definition of community. He noted that "it has been my experience that many Americans think of a community in terms of a physical area or a legal unit, not in terms of a social unit – a unit where people have close personal ties one to another." He used his own Ponca tribe as an example. He acknowledged that, "the Ponca tribe of which I am a member lives in Kay County, Oklahoma. You could call Kay County a community, it is a legally designated unit, but if it is a community my relatives are not part of it." He then dissected this definition of community further, saying, "I would imagine Kay County, Oklahoma to be a number of different communities, as I use the term – several white communities and an Indian community." He commented that, "there is probably some overlap between the various white communities in our county, but certainly

[20] Ibid. pg. 8

our Indian community, as far as being part of Kay County, might as well be on Mars." Drawing again on the powerlessness of Indian communities, a situation he was attempting to change within his own community, he reiterated that, "our communities have no representation in the legally designated units of which we are a part." Community for many Poncas began and ended with the physical boundaries of the White Eagle tribal complex, or for those like Warrior who lived farther afield, in the spiritual and cultural boundaries of Ponca identity. This was especially so, when the Ponca were treated so poorly by the people of Kay County, to the extent that Warrior used to carry a bat home from school, and was astonished by Kathryn Red Corn being allowed to eat at certain Ponca City restaurants from which the Ponca were banned. [21]

Referring to the complexity of the trust relationship between tribes and the federal government, Warrior acknowledged that, "with the Indians this is even more complicated because, as many of you know, we do have a legal structure which articulates with the central government even though we have no articulation with the county and state government." Referring again to the 'fiction' of tribal sovereignty, he noted, however, that, "these institutions called tribal governments have very limited functions from the viewpoint of the Indians who live in our communities." Ostensibly, while these governments technically had a sovereign relationship with the federal government, no such relationship of 'equality' was in place with the much closer state, county, or city governments. And the equality of the sovereign relationship with the federal government was nothing but a smokescreen, with the

[21] Ibid. pg. 8

majority of tribal leaders being appointed by the government and all tribal decisions needing federal ratification before they could become tribal law. Warrior argued that federal recognition and status was all well and good, but it did little to alleviate the tensions of relationships with those local agencies, such as Ponca City Council, whose policies continuously and dramatically affected tribal community life. Referring to the role of tribal governments within those communities, and how little white people understood tribal communities, he stated that, "in most places they serve as a buffer against the outsider. And in fact other people of prestige and influence among us go unnoticed and unbothered by the white man, so that much of our important leadership is hidden from the eyes of outsiders." Such leadership included his grandparents. Bill and Metha Collins were highly influential within the Ponca tribes, as drum makers, and as integral members of the Gives Water Service Club, original Hethuska Society, and the Ponca singers. To the outside world, they were traders, who sold pretty drums for the tourist children to play with. There was a willful ignorance of the knowledge and traditions that the couple carried with them. Politically, they were insignificant, having no seat on the tribal council.

The paradox of this statement was not lost on Warrior. Ambitious yet weak tribal governments were alienating the culturally influential tribal elders, but this alienation in turn protected those cultural leaders from the harm of white interference. Conversely, the true cultural and spiritual tribal leadership was kept hidden from view from white society while the corrupt and ambitious leaders curried favor with powerful whites at the expense of the tribe as a whole and as a community. It was a position that under current federal programs had no positive

outcome for the Ponca or indeed other tribes in the same situation. Lamenting the overall iniquity of Indian Affairs, Warrior complained that, "many times our tribal governments, which have very little legal power, have been forced into the position of going along with programs they did not like and which in the long run were harmful." He again reiterated that 'they were powerless to do otherwise."[22]

Warrior stressed that, "there is no Kay County, Oklahoma, community in a social, or societal, sense. We are not part of it except in the most tangential legal sense. We just live there. There is no Ponca tribal government. It is only named that." The Ponca were socially excluded from the city built upon what used to be tribal lands, and the tribal government simply followed the guidance offered by the federal government. In a prelude to his later "We Are Not Free" speech, he repeated his earlier charge that thanks to the iniquity of the federal trust relationship "we are among the poor, the powerless, the inexperienced and the inarticulate." In a similar refrain to his article on the five "types" of Indian youth created by white society, Warrior admitted that I do not know how to solve the problem of poverty and I'm not even sure that poverty is what we must solve – perhaps it is only a symptom." What he did offer was a powerful indictment of the powerful elites that controlled the economy, saying that "of this I am certain, when a people are powerless and their destiny is controlled by the powerful, whether they be rich or poor, they live in ignorance and frustration because they have been deprived of experience and responsibility as individuals and as communities." This was a common refrain of the times, from the anti-Imperialist rhetoric of the Vietnam protestors, to the Port Huron

[22] Ibid. pg. 8

Statement of the SDS. What made Warrior's lament unique among these protests, is that while the SDS and most anti-war protestors were outside of the situation the protested as socially aware affluent middle class Americans, he and his community were the victims of this bureaucracy. For Indians this was a generational inheritance that had created a despair of epidemic proportions.[23]

Warrior returned to his own Ponca heritage to re-emphasize the point that Indians themselves needed to be involved in any decision making processes. Using the buffalo metaphor that University of Oklahoma students had found so absurd, he declared that 'in the old days the Ponca people lived on the buffalo and we went out and hunted it ... no one went out and found the buffalo for us and no one organized our hunts for us … we did that ourselves" He emphasized that "white businessmen and bureaucrats did not make the Ponca decisions, the Poncas made those decisions and carried them out…there can not be responsibility unless people can make decisions and stand by them or fall by them." He added that, "it is only when a community has real freedom that outside help can be effective." [24]

Again drawing on his Workshops lessons he reminded the audience that "it was only when colonies in Africa and Asia had their freedom that economic help from France and England became productive." As colonies, when the English and French government's decided how to allocate funding, programs failed, much as they continued to do on the reservations despite funding from the federal government. His message was clear - without allowing tribes to determine their own

[23] Ibid. pg. 8
[24] Ibid. pg. 8

fate, no amount of federal money or programs would solve any of the problems in Indian Country. In closing he addressed the conference organizers directly, congratulating them "on the great crusade you have undertaken," but beseeching them "to in fact deal with the local community, not just a physical or legal area, but a community of people." He urged them to "give our communities respect, the power to make choices about our own destiny, and with a little help we will be able to join the United States and live a decent fulfilling life." It was unfortunate that the conference organizers saw fit to tone down Warrior's rhetoric in the hope of avoiding similar scenes as those at the AICCP. This is especially so when the speech raised such pertinent points, which undoubtedly needed addressing, about the potential ineffectiveness of the War on Poverty's Community Action Program on Indian communities.[25]

Warrior was becoming increasingly aware of the sentiments towards government policy among Indian communities other than his own through his work with the NIYC. He also maintained a friendship with Bob Thomas, and in April 1965 he became co-editor of Thomas' monthly *Indian Voices* newsletter. This was the same newsletter he had warned his NIYC cohorts about a year earlier. He had an immediate effect on the newsletter as the content shifted from a purely political outlook to one that encompassed Indian cultures as well. Warrior's Plains Indian influence shone through as, in a reprise of efforts he made as Sequoyah Indian Club president at OU, the pages included updates on the powwow circuit and news of

[25] Ibid. pg. 9 Westad, Odd Arne, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times,* Cambridge University Press, pg. 26. Westad gives a fascinating account of the role of African nations in the Cold War era and the impact of the Cold War on the decolonization efforts of many African nations.

ceremonials and social dances, alongside rallies, conferences, and scholarship news. Even Thomas himself left the safety of his Stomp Dance heritage to accompany Warrior on the powwow circuit around Oklahoma. It was not until 1966 that the Cherokee people held their first powwow so at this point in time Thomas was in unchartered cultural waters. His involvement with Thomas and *Indian Voices* meant Warrior began spending more time in Tahlequah as his home base, which in turn facilitated his need, in the fall of 1964, to transfer from the University of Oklahoma to Northeastern State University., where he majored in Education.

Despite his co-editorship of *Indian Voices,* Warrior continued to write for *ABC*, and in June 1965, such was the response that "Which One Are You?" had generated that he published a follow-up article. In "How Should An Indian Act?," he told his readers that the answer, "is simple – Indians should act appropriate to their circumstances." By this he meant that they should retain their identity rather than throw it off to attempt to fit into another preconditioned identity over which they had no choice. It went straight back to respect again, but rather than merely seeking respect for who they were from others, Indians should also look for self-respect, and be confident enough as an Indian to act like an Indian, whatever tribal or cultural manifestation that may be. The article clearly deferred to the concepts of folkism versus urbanity, which had been so prevalent in his Workshops education. Warrior was convinced that those Indians who took behavioral and attitudinal

prompts from the outsiders he described in his first article "are not acting appropriate to their circumstances."[26]

He admitted to his readers that he had not intended to tell them how to act, nor was he suggesting that every Indian student fell into one of his categories. He reassured them that "it is a tribute to the human spirit that so many young Indians have survived our "educational" institutions and are still whole human beings." Again, he was speaking from personal experience. His parents, and grandparents had all been boarding school educated, as had his uncle Sylvester. Each of them had retained their cultural identity when they left these schools. To Warrior, this retention of culture, language and identity was what constituted a "whole human being," and was why he proudly identified himself as a full blood Ponca Indian. He knew though, that not everybody was as lucky to survive the travails of boarding school culturally intact, or indeed have the courage to remain with their communities in the face of overwhelming poverty. As such, he would, "attempt in this article to give my opinion as to how an Indian in today's complex urban world can make a suitable adjustment to today's diversified society."[27]

Warrior identified family and community as the root of the strength of the Indian's human spirit. For Warrior, who's grandparents had relocated to Tahlequah with him, the family and the tribe were still the center of the world, no matter how large or fragmented that world had become. He insisted that to be truly successful all Indian students needed to embrace their family and communities, as Indians had

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[26] Warrior, Clyde, "How Should An Indian Act?" *ABC: Americans Before Columbus,* Vol. 1, No.5, January 1965, pg. 2
[27] Ibid.

always done, for inspiration and guidance, rather than the foreign institutions they now more regularly followed. He claimed that, "in those days an individual Indian's position in his tribal world was clearly defined by his family, his kin group and the tribe as a whole." It was also due to the positive and consistent influences of the 'institutions of that tribe of which he was an integral part" that an Indian man would be guided and his actions governed.[28]

This was not merely rhetoric or a romantic embellishment of lost traditions on Warrior's part. For a Ponca man such as he, one of those institutions was the He-Thus-Ka, which contemporary members describe as a "way of life, you join He-Thus-Ka, you think He-Thus-Ka, you act He-Thus-Ka, you live He-Thus-Ka" or the Gives Water Service Club, both of which he was a member. His role in both organizations was clearly defined and based upon the traditional rules of care, respect, and honor with which his grandparents had inculcated him from birth. Reflecting this debt, he acknowledged that, "probably the factor which gave him the most important cues was the family."[29]

Somewhat ironically, his unrelenting campaigning for the protection and preservation of cultural identity almost cost him his place at the Hethuska. In the summer of 1965, at the same time as his article was published, Hethuska Society leaders held a committee meeting. They discussed Warrior's increasing activism and its potentially detrimental affect upon the society. Sylvester Warrior, as Nudahonga, shared his concern that Warrior was neglecting the office of tail dancer

[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

after conference commitments kept him from the April ceremonial. The attendance of the tail dancers is essential to the integrity of the ceremonial. Warrior, after a long and fraught meeting finally convinced Sylvester, fellow tail dancer Abe Conklin, and the elder society members who had approved the organization's revitalization, that the April absence was unfortunate, misguided, and would be the only one. He counted his reprieve as a blessing. The April absence aside, he took the role so seriously, that "when he tail danced he wore the small (crow or eagle feather) bustle on his back." This was part of the original Hethuska regalia that was eventually replaced by the otter skin 'drop' sash after the tribe relocated to Indian Territory. Warrior did own a 'drop' as well but maintained that for Straight Dance purposes rather than Hethuska.[30]

Warrior knew that in many tribal communities this focus upon the traditional was not as strong. The modern urban world had changed much of that dynamic within tribal life, according to Warrior, whereby "most tribal institutions have been smashed and replaced by different outside institutions with a foreign personnel directing them." The issue was not merely with changing times, evolving concepts, or merely communal interlopers however. Much of Warrior's rhetoric focused upon the issues of conflicting worldviews that have dominated Indian/White relations since first European contact. He argued that the reason Indian students acted so inappropriately to their circumstances was because, despite still having a "tribal outlook" he was being influenced by "alien institutions, alien because they are out of context." Warrior firmly believed that it was this lack of context that led to the

[30] Tucker, Mike, Personal Interview, October 1, 2009.

"misunderstanding, confusion, and anxiety which create the five "types" I mentioned in the previous article." This was an issue that Warrior tackled in far greater depth when he campaigned against district and bureaucratic, rather than tribal or community, control of Community Action Programs in Johnson's War on Poverty.[31]

He did add, however, "it appears to me that the individual Indian student had better "WAKE UP" and decide if he is going to accept these definitions that are being cued to him by this alien society and institutions." It was more than simply conflicting worldviews that were the problem though. Warrior saw a more sinister reason for belittling of Indian culture so prevalent in American society that went far beyond mere cultural misunderstanding. He suggested that American society was littered with "narrow minded Anglo-Saxons who are bent on stamping out Indians because they pose a threat to the way of life that created them." It was, he believed, because of this perceived threat, born out of a fear that "their "pseudo-American" way of life could be wrong" that these bureaucrats defined Indians as "incompetents" who were "unable to cope with the world which has been created by this foreign society."[32]

What Warrior found so ironic was that the white accusation of an Indian's inability "to cope with the world" was true because of the very demands white society placed upon Indians to conform. He saw this as the reason Indian students acted the way they did within the parameters of his "five types." Warrior's 'solution

[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.

was for Indians to reject the definitions and classifications of western society and "make his own definitions as he sees fit, as any "truly" successful non-Indian does in living in this society." He saw the most successful 'whites' as being those who rejected their own societies ideas of conformity "as a heaping mass of BULL" and suggested than in order for Indians to be successful also they needed to create their own definition of success rather than bend to the will of the dominant society.[33]

For Warrior, the family was again the foundation upon which any success should be built, as "the foundation of any individual, his foundation is his family." He believed that the fragmented family dynamic of modern American society was at the root of many of its problems. He believed that while "it is true that white American young people are in revolt against their middle class parents" they would actually be "overjoyed if they had such full and human parents as American Indian students have." He saw many of the facets of American culture as dehumanizing, largely because of the dominance of business and institutions in that society. His concern was that rather than remain faithful to the traditional values of trust and care they had been raised with, many Indian students were "beginning to take their cues from various occupations and businesses they enter into." The problem with this was that these cues were "not conducive to producing a wholesome "real" human being" and were more likely to produce "an alienated anonymous "thing." Many on the New Left recognized these same issues in American society and denounced a condition that pervaded American culture. Rather than corrupting society as those on the New Left feared, Warrior saw these issues as fragmenting and ultimately

[33] Ibid.

destroying tribal cultures, to the point where complete assimilation would occur. This created even more of an incentive within him to retain and protect the cultures and traditions he had been raised with.[34]

Warrior concluded the article with a few "pointers" as to how Indian students could avoid being dragged down into this state of bland anonymity. Besides acting "appropriate to the circumstances" and no longer being "sucked in by phony bromides and false ideologies" his advice was proactive. He suggested that his readers should "decide where your loyalty and reference group lies in today's world and decide what you are, what you want and set a goal," and that they should "get your mind out of the stagnant "status quo" thinking." Most importantly though, he reminded his readers that "when the "chips are down" it's the family that counts in any society."[35]

In the same issue of *ABC,* the NIYC published the first half of Felix S. Cohen's essay on Indian Self-Government. The editors, acknowledged Cohen, who died in 1953, as the "foremost authority on federal Indian law that this country has ever known" and it was rather pertinent that his views reflected those of the young activists. He offered a startling condemnation of government collusion in keeping the trues state of tribal sovereignty hidden from Indians. He revealed that during the process of drafting tribal constitutions as part of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, he had discovered that "the laws and court decisions clearly recognized that Indian tribes have all the governmental rights of any state or municipality except in

[34] Warrior, Clyde, "How Should An Indian Act" *Idem*.
[35] Ibid.

so far as those rights had been curtailed or curtailed by Acts of Congress or by treaty." Rather than the commonly held belief that such adjustments were significant enough to explain why tribes were now in such conditions of poverty and neglect, Cohen explained that, "such qualifications are relatively minor in fact." In short, the American government had repeatedly, through Congress and treaty reaffirmed the sovereign right of Indian nations to self-govern. Once Cohen's report, highlighting these issues was printed, however, "I learned to my dismay that all copies of the opinion in the Indian Office had been carefully hidden away in a cabinet." Furthermore, "when an Indian was found reading this opinion, the copy was forthwith taken from his hands and placed under lock and key" because "the Indian Office was sure that the opinion, if released to the public, would be most disturbing."[36]

This revelation, upon the article's original publication in the 1949 edition of *The American Indian*, astounded NCAI officers. When campaigning against the impending threat of termination they formed a great deal of the NCAI's legal strategy around Cohen's words. From the 1965 printing, the NIYC, and Warrior particularly, chose to incorporate the revelation around a shared ideology with Cohen, that the true measure of self-government was that "decisions are made...by the people who are most directly affected by the decision." The alternative was the status quo, whereby the decisions were made…by those closest to some throne in Washington." Warrior had already stated his case, including lambasting the NCAI,

[36] Cohen, Felix, S., "Indian Self-Government," *ABC,* Vol. II, Issue No. 5, June 1965

that this type of decision making usually resulted in tacit support for policies that kept true self-government at arms length.[37]

Cohen argued that those who derided Indian self-government as being unworkable because it created "a state within a state" while championing assimilation as the "best solution of the Indian problem" were ideological hypocrites. The argument failed on the most fundamental level simply because this was the American system of government. The concept of a "state within a state" was the "whole substance of American federalism and tolerance." He further argued that it was "not the business of the Indian Bureau or of any other federal agency to integrate Indians or Jews or Catholics…into the rest of the population as a solution of the Indian, Jewish, Negro, or Catholic problem." Rather than forced assimilation, he declared that it was "the duty of the federal government to respect the right of any group to be different so long as it does not violate the criminal law." These concepts spoke directly to the core of Warrior's own argument for tribal and cultural sovereignty. For Warrior, the emphasis was always cultural retention. As long as community and culture were retained, anything else was achievable. And it was the democratic duty of the federal government to protect, rather than attack, Indian communities and cultures. Affirmation from the "architect" of twentieth century federal Indian law further validated his argument in the eyes of his peers.[38]

Family and community remained central to Warrior's thinking as he maintained a presence on the conference circuit. In the same month that "How

[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.

Should An Indian Act?' was published Warrior spoke before the Vermillion Conference, an annual anthropological gathering at the University of South Dakota, which that year was co-sponsored by the NIYC. Five months after President Johnson's State of the Union address in which he had reaffirmed his "War on Poverty," Warrior again spoke out against Indians conforming to the assimilationist demands of white American society. The speech, titled "Don't Take No For An Answer," again showed his aptitude for irony as well as his penchant for rhetoric. Warrior drew upon two of the Western world's most iconic twentieth century leaders, John F. Kennedy and Winston Churchill, to inspire those Indians in the audience into action. He also continued to develop his themes of "selling out" Indian heritage, in contrast to attaining self-awareness and self-identity, and showing respect for elders and ones tribal heritage and community. In order to do so, Warrior compared Indians, and their role in American society and culture, to that Catholics and Jews, two cultural groups he deemed comparative ethnic minorities and spiritual communities.

Warrior lauded Kennedy as the epitome of what could be achieved by individuals within an ethnic group that refused to assimilate into the American mainstream. He stated that instead of becoming "pet Irishmen as many Indians have become "pet" Indians" the Irish used their natural propensity for politics to forge their own niche in America…and by this move, the Irish gained access to new jobs and to new power in American society and later Irish businessmen like the Kennedys contributed money to the cause of Irish advancement and the betterment of their people in the United States." He used American Jews as an example of how

education could be used for the betterment, rather than subjugation of a race, claiming "they have seen education as the way to contribute to the Jewish community, not necessarily to leave it or coerce it." His argument was that these "two ethnic groups have made it in America, as whole communities" he pointed out that in contrast to Indian people "they did not separate themselves off from the rest of their community, they did not try to please powerful people by trying to change their community to fit some image handed them on a platter as is done in American Indian communities." In other words they did not accept that assimilation was the only means by which to escape poverty or disparity within America.[39]

Reprising an issue first raised in "Time For Indian Action", Warrior challenged those Indians in the audience to buck the trend. He told them that "every youth conference that I have ever gone to has been attended primarily by Indian students who want to break away from their own community and curry favor with the powerful in hopes of getting a few crumbs of rank." The gauntlet that Warrior threw down was simply that "I hope this will not be the case at this conference." He also questioned the veracity of his fellow conference attendees, claiming that "the first thing that happens is that everyone wants to talk about the Indian problem...and it always turns out that the Indian problem is defined implicitly as those ways in which Indians are a problem to powerful whites." This was the type of remark that Browning Pipestem remembered Warrior being "hated" for. It was also the counterpoint to an earlier observation in his *Time For Indian Action* speech, in which he had criticized conference organizers for identifying the problem and

[39] Ibid.

solution the solution even before these events began. It also carried echoes of *Which One Are You?,* in which he condemned those Indians he saw as simply following cues offered them by the dominant society. His message was clear. Not only was it time for Indians to act for themselves, it was also time for Indians to begin thinking for themselves, and putting themselves, and their communities first.[40]

Warrior's intention was to challenge his audience to find their own solutions as to how they defined the problem, rather than simply follow the direction in which they were led. Cautioning his audience that, "these so called problems are only symptoms of the total situation in which Indians find themselves" he asked them "do we really want to help our people or just please the powerful?" He challenged them to "having defined the "Indian problem" ask "How do we as Indians change the situation, not how do we help whites "shape up" our relatives?" His solution was that "we have to throw away these old categories and talk about the situation as a whole and how we as a people can use our talents to make a place for ourselves on the American scene, just as the Irish and Jewish people have done." He insisted that, "this does not mean that we all need to think about becoming tribal leaders or that we have to discuss only the Indian community." He also pointed out to his audience that they already were Americans, and had no need of casting off their cultural identity to become more so. He challenged them to "think as Americans about what kind of country we want to live in so that we as Indian people can find and make our place in it."[41]

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[40] Ibid
[41] Ibid.

This duality of identity was not something people expected to hear from Warrior, whose first major commentary on Indian/White relations had been that "the sewage of Europe does not run through these veins." Yet, this idea of being Indian *and* American was one of the foundations of the NIYC. The preamble to the Council's Articles of Confederation called for a Greater Indian America. The distinctions Warrior and the NIYC championed were common concepts among American Indians. Contrary to the theory posited by James Howard and soon to be developed by his former researcher Bob Thomas, this was not pan-Indianism. After all, within the racial epithet of Indian bestowed upon them by Christopher Columbus, they were Ponca, Paiute, Mohawk, Navajo, Shoshone-Bannock, and many more, each sharing cultures and identities that were occasionally similar and often distinctly different. Expanding the concept across racial boundaries to include America and Indian was a very small step to take. This was not a call to join the global indigenous decolonization movement as some recent academics have argued, but an argument that had its roots in America's immigrant population of the early twentieth century.

For white America, the concept of cultural pluralism, or in this case, the idea of American and 'other' existing simultaneously, was as alien as its early proponents. During the colonial period before America was created, there had been a process of forced colonial Europeanization towards Indians. After this, the process of Americanization, through language, education, and assimilation was extended beyond Indians towards immigrants of all nations and eventually African Americans. This process of Americanization underpinned the 'melting pot theory'

that America was a single culture which absorbed and assimilated all other cultures. Immigrants in the late nineteenth century began to question this theory and pushed for cultural pluralism, the recognition and retention of their original cultures to exist in conjunction to American culture. The most vocal proponents of cultural pluralism were immigrants of German-Jewish descent, and the 'movement' peaked during the early years of the twentieth century.

In 1915, Horace Kallen, a German-Jewish immigrant, published an essay titled "Democracy versus the Melting Pot" in *The Nation*. His thesis was strikingly prescient of the arguments that Cohen would make in favor of Indian self-government and that Warrior used in calling for the recognition of joint Indian and American identity. Kallen argued that America, in the early twentieth century, was fast "becoming a true federal state…a republic consisting of a federation or commonwealth of nationalities." He also argued that the concept of the "melting pot" was created by the dominant society, not because the immigrant cultures were "inferior" but because Americans could not "tolerate difference." It was this intolerance of difference that was the basis for the assimilationist policies of American society in the early twentieth century.[42]

Kallen's theory attracted many supporters, including the renowned anthropologist Franz Boaz, another German-Jewish immigrant. Despite growing support, including from American born intellectuals of white descent, cultural pluralism faded as a sociological theory after World War II. Anti-German

[42] Meyer, Gerald, "The Cultural Pluralist response to Americanization: Horace Kallen, Randolph Bourne, Louis Adamic, and Leonard Covello," Socialism and Democracy, Volume 25, No 3, Nov. 2011 pp. 3-4

sentiment, a growing respect for the Jewish population, and the post-War anti-Communism were encapsulated by Cold War rhetoric of Americanization through the 'liberal consensus.' The liberal consensus was anathema to cultural pluralism. The common belief was that America's strength was in cultural uniformity and that this uniformity would be the weapon that would defeat Communism. The liberal consensus underpinned the federal program of Urban Relocation and the policy of termination of the federal trust status. It was not until the 1970s, in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement, and the anti-Imperialist sloganeering of the Vietnam War protests, that cultural pluralism began to regain ground as a viable analysis of American society.

Warrior was a man ahead of his time. His rhetoric echoed many of the theories of cultural pluralists. He demanded the recognition of the rights of the various tribal communities to maintain "distinct cultural allegiances." He envisioned a broader version of democracy that would protect these rights of cultural diversity of the different Indian nations within the framework of America. He reminded his audience that, "the problem of what we want as individuals, as Indians, and as Americans are inseparable. We cannot talk about one without talking about the other because we are individuals, we are Indians, and we are American. He asked the audience to "let us discuss these things together and forget the clichés and bromides which have been shoved down our throats all of our lives by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, churches and other powerful whites." Returning to the theme of the tribal community, one that he would define more clearly in later speeches, he urged the audience to "think about how we as Indians can help our communities break out

of the trap we find ourselves in... think about what kind of community we want to live in – then think about how we are going to bring that about." This assessment of community contrasted starkly with the concept of community that emerged to form the bedrock of the War on Poverty.[43]

Warrior was building towards another stirring finale, and reminded his audience that, "in the old days...it was young people who became the hunters and the warriors and led our people out onto the plains." It was the young who had "created the golden age of the Indian" by "helping and serving their community." He told them that "Indian young people can do that again but we need courage, imagination and dedication." Warrior now openly embraced the concept of youth leadership rather than eschewing it. The difference was born of a belief bolstered by the success of the fish-ins of 1964 when the youth, led by Hank Adams and ably assisted by Warrior, Thom, Witt and others, has successfully brought Washington State's abrogation of the treaty fishing rights of the Indians of the Pacific Northwest to the attention of the national media. Perhaps acknowledging the role that Herb Blatchford played in organizing the NIYC, Warrior asserted that youth was not defined by a person's age, but by how young that person felt.. Turning to a powerful passage from Winston Churchill's autobiography, Warrior displayed his love of history and respect for inspirational oration. Omitting Churchill's opening call to those of "twenty to twenty five years," Warrior, called on the Indian youths in his audience to,

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[43] Ibid.

> Raise the glorious flags again, advance them upon the new enemies, who constantly gather upon the front of the human army, and have only to be assaulted to be overthrown. Don't take No for an answer. Never submit to failure. Do not be fobbed off with mere personal success or acceptance. You will make all kinds of mistakes; but as long as you are generous and true, and also fierce, you cannot hurt the world or even seriously distress her. She was made to be wooed and won by youth. She has lived and thrived only by repeated subjugations.[44]

The reprise carried echoes of Beryl Spruce's 1955 address when he had exhorted that "we are born at a time when the Indian people need us." Churchill and Spruce may have been worlds apart but their words struck a chord with Warrior and reflected his desire and impatience for a stronger and more dynamic system of activism. He saw speeches and conferences as being necessary, but there needed to be more events like the "fish-ins" to maintain the momentum of their movement.[45]

[44] Warrior, Clyde, "How Should An Indian Act" *Idem*. See also, Churchill, Winston, *The Story of My Early Life: A Roving Commission,* pg. 60
[45] Spruce, Beryl, "We Are Born at a Time When the Indian People Need Us," idem.

CHAPTER 7

"I AM ME, TRIBE WARRIOR"

During the summer of 1965, matters of a more personal nature were on Warrior's mind and his commitment to the sanctity of family was strengthened with the birth of his first daughter. Mary Martha Warrior was born in Tahlequah, Oklahoma on July 2, 1965. Warrior and Della were overjoyed with their daughter and Warrior was determined to raise her as traditionally in the Ponca life as he himself had been. This determination was helped by the presence of his grandparents, who had joined the couple in Tahlequah. His professional and academic focus, including his work with the NIYC and Upward Bound project, was very much centered upon education. His speeches and lectures reflected this new direction while over the following academic year he switched from Sol Tax's Carnegie Project to work as a research assistant on Murray Wax's Cherokee Education Project.

Since 1963, the Carnegie Cross-Cultural Education Project had been running an experiment to assess the effects of encouraging literacy among the full blood Cherokees in the area. Robert Thomas, another of Warrior's Workshop mentors, and his co-editor of *Indian Voices*, directed the project under the guidance of Sol Tax and the University of Chicago's Anthropology Department. Thomas' involvement with the Carnegie Project was a major reason behind Warrior's change of schools from the University of Oklahoma to Northeastern State University. He was soon

working unofficially for the Carnegie Project soon after he arrived in Tahlequah in 1964.

The Carnegie Project began in 1963 under the direction of the University of Chicago's Anthropology Department, and funding from the Carnegie Foundation. It was a study in how long it would take traditional Cherokees, those who were the poorest and most illiterate of the Cherokee Nation, to learn to read and write English after they were taught to read the Cherokee syllabary, the written Cherokee devised by Sequoyah in 1821. Tax's original idea was to collate the Cherokee results and formulate a plan to roll the project out to groups working with indigenous peoples across the world and facilitate their ability to read and write English. Thomas, however, also had an entirely political motive for improving literacy in the full-blood communities. According to Dan Cobb, "Thomas meant to catalyze a grassroots movement to heal the traditional community and prepare the way for a renaissance." He had complained many years earlier that the full bloods were withdrawing as far as possible from the "white world," and saw this project as a way for these people to reassert themselves "to whites as modern, 'for real,' worthy people." Warrior was similarly concerned about such a withdrawal from the "white world" all across Indian Country.[1]

Cherokee Chief Counsel Earl Boyd Pierce quickly seized upon Thomas's ulterior motives, however. He warned Cherokee Principal Chief W.W. Keeler in a letter that, "I do not think there is any doubt that the main effort to drive a wedge

[1] Cobb, Daniel M. "Devils in Disguise: The Carnegie Project, the Cherokee Nation, and the 1960s." *American Indian Quarterly,* 31.3, pp. 470-471

between the Executive Committee and the full bloods has been launched." Generally viewed as being pessimistic and paranoid, Pierce's skepticism was with foundation on this occasion. He had also clashed previously with Tax and Thomas as they had travelled from state to state, hosting steering committees in preparation for the 1961 Chicago Conference. Pierce had vehemently opposed the idea and stridently made his opinions of action anthropology being little more than direct outside interference abundantly clear.[2] In 1963, Pierce wrote to the NCAI Chief Executive Robert Burnette claiming that, "Thomas is a plant by Sol Tax… to get even with Keeler and me, and you and all of us, for what we did to them at Chicago." Their achievement at Chicago was the insertion of a pledge of allegiance to the United States in the Declaration of Indian Purpose that Pierce interpreted as "having frustrated an un-American conspiracy."[3] In an effort to subvert this new usurpation among his Cherokee people, Pierce planned an extensive and exhaustive counter-intelligence program against the Carnegie Project, which saw Wahrhaftig, Warrior and several other researchers arrested, detained and questioned by the FBI as 'subversives.' He also spread rumors against the project through different Cherokee communities to the point that many members of the Cherokee Nations refused to take part in the project and openly distrusted the "outsiders."

It was against this backdrop of educational uplift and political intrigue and sabotage that Warrior worked for Thomas and attended his final semester at NSU in the fall of 1965. At the same time, the NIYC agreed to become the third major

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[2] Idem. Pg. 478

[3] Quotes from letter inserted inside a letter from Sol tax to Lloyd Morrisett of the Carnegie Corporation, dated January 14, 1966. Rietz papers, Box 7, Folder 7

sponsor of the United Scholarship Service. The USS had, since 1960, provided scholarship funding for American Indian and Mexican American secondary and college level students. The NIYC's sponsorship replaced that of the Association on American Indian Affairs and was the first major step of Council members in directly engaging with education policies. Their role included "board membership…the planning of program and budget, decision making and organizational development, and the staffing of the USS office itself." Warrior became immediately involved in USS matters, alongside his Cherokee research.[4]

His semester in Tahlequah included an internship, teaching children at the Sequoyah High School. The school had originally operated as the Cherokee Orphan Asylum. In 1914 the BIA purchased the building as a boarding school for the children of all the local tribes. Located in downtown Tahlequah, the building now hosted mostly Cherokee schoolchildren. The prospect of teaching there was quite daunting to Warrior, and he confessed to Murray Wax, that "I would have had a difficult enough time in a public school, much less in a BIA school." Given his previously noted disdain of "Indian leaders, teachers, adults interested in Indian affairs - -(who) are keeping Indian students from being a student" his apprehension was understandable.[5] At the school he taught four separate classes, ranging in

[4] Indian Voices, July 1965
[5] Letter from Warrior to Wax, dated August 12, 1965, Box 488 Folder 17, Murray Wax Papers.

academic ability from "slow kids judged on the basis of reading ability" to "the sharp kids."[6]

Rather than any paternalistic attitude of his BIA paymasters at the school it was the students themselves who offered Warrior the greatest challenge. He noticed that differences in student perceptions and responsiveness were largely depending upon upbringing and their level of tribal cultural immersion and traditionalism. He despaired that with the "slow kids" he "tried every educational method which I had been taught and a few I created on my own to absolutely no avail." Rather than this being any reflection on his own teaching ability, however, he felt it was definitely a cultural issue as, "I couldn't explain in English that they understood about American history. There is a tremendous language difficulty with the ones I couldn't get through." For these students he felt vehemently that the problem was systemic because "after 11 years of this system it's too late to come in with 11th grade American history to get across." Using the same teaching techniques in the other classroom yielded better, if varying, results, however. By attempting to "draw whatever subject matter at hand into their perspective somehow hoping they could identify with something or another," he noticed responses that displayed a distinct difference in the worldviews of the students, again dependent upon their level of cultural immersion. Whereas "some of the breeds would catch onto the middle class perspective quicker," he found that the "tribal types would pick up on the "tromped

[6] May 26, 1966 discussion between Warrior, and Murray and Rosalie Wax about Sequoyah High School, Murray Wax Papers, Box 488, Folder 17

on" powerless group of people that were being bugged," displaying, he believed, an empathy that reflected their personal worldviews.[7]

Warrior found the psychologically detrimental effect of the educational system upon the students extremely problematic. He surmised that in most cases, no matter which group of children he was teaching, "by the 11th grade they got a block against Indian-ness somehow or another and it is very difficult for them to talk about anything like that." He was adamant that the historical portrayal of Indians in the classroom was the most damaging aspect to these children's self-identity. He knew from his own experience that hearing that you and your people are worthless had a steadily deteriorating effect. He had railed against the results of such an education policy in his "Which ne Are You?" article. He was horrified that "in regards to the Civil War and the five civilized tribes roll [sic] in it or the removal in Jackson's policies during the Jackson reign, (that) they want to get away from anything that tends to identify them with those people." Conversely, in the contemporary world "they absolutely know nothing of anything or anyone outstandingly successful and could care less." At no point was anyone in the school system, or the local community, highlighting contemporary role models for these children to aspire to. Everything was geared towards assimilation. He complained that what "bugged me about this system more and more" was the fact that "all they know is that they are alone in this world and that is what they have been taught and they have to get out an get an education." Whether or not the education was

[7] Ibid.

culturally or psychologically uplifting for the children appeared to be irrelevant to educators.[8]

Much of Warrior's observations reflected those of Rosalie Wax in her summation of the early Boulder workshops. He noticed that even as the system slowly turned these children away from Indian-ness they fell into three groups. The first group "want to get an education so they can get out of that situation and somehow or other accomplish somehow or another." The second, large, group "tune out the system and also tune out Indian-ness," while the third group "tune out the system of education but do not tune out their identity because they are very solid and very stable ones in their class." This last group largely resembled the class to whom he could not explain history well enough in English for them to translate into their own tribal perspectives. Warrior's solution, which he saw as being "rather corny," was the creation of an "Indian reader for just the kids with tribes with kids in it with Indian type names and Indian kids doing Indian type things that kids can associate with their communities." He reasoned that this type of educational start in "first, second and third grades" would make them "want to listen to English, or at least more so than something completely alien to them."[9]

As "corny" as Warrior thought it sounded, children's readers of this type now exist for each of the federally recognized tribes of North America. As with his leanings towards cultural pluralism, he once again demonstrated a vision ahead of his time, and cultural relevancy in Indian education became a flagship cause of the

[8] Ibid
[9] Ibid

NIYC in the ensuing years. In 1965, however, the available option was a new federal program titled Head Start. The program, part of Johnson's War on Poverty, was designed as an early intervention program to enhance the social and emotional development of low-income children. The original scheme was an eight-week summer school program whereby underprivileged children could retake the classes they were falling behind in during the regular school year. As far as Warrior was concerned, however, this simply extended the misery of Indian children for two more months. If, during the regular school year they were failing to see any logic in, or make connections with, their lessons due to discordant worldviews, then they would fare no better during the summer.

Warrior also surmised that the system itself was not the only problem. It was broken because of the teachers within it, who repeated "over and over, "I guess the only reason they can't learn is because they are just Indians." He despaired that "they always blame the kids, the family or outside activities but they never come back and look at the God damn system (which) all it does is alienate and cull the optimism of life and youth." Such was the lack of support for these students that "by the time they get to be 15, 16 they have absolutely no optimism about Indians, just toothless and useless." Despite his misgivings and his "horrifying semester" Warrior managed to successfully complete the internship however, and graduated from NSU in the spring of 1966. The experience did, however, leave a lasting impression of the deep-rooted problems that the American education system created for American Indian schoolchildren. These issues came to form the bedrock of Warrior's later

speeches as he and the NIYC targeted education reform as an urgent necessity in Indian Country.

Rather than immediately carry on to graduate school, however, Warrior opted to stay with the Cherokee and Creek schoolchildren of Sequoyah under the umbrella of a research project led by Dr. Murray Wax. The Cherokee Education Project was a research project led by Murray and Rosalie Wax of the University of Kansas Sociology Department. Both scholars had worked with Warrior at the Boulder Workshops, and contracted several Workshop alumni, including Warrior's wife Della and friends Kathryn Red Corn and Bod Dumont, to complete their research team. Funded by the Office of Education, the Project was a study into the relationship between Cherokee school children and families and the local public school system. The pair had worked with Dumont on a previous study of Oglala Sioux school children from the Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota, which resulted in a 1964 report for the Society of the Study of Social Problems. The Cherokee study was designed to compare the educational experiences of rural Cherokee school children in Tahlequah to those of urban Cherokee children living in Tulsa. While the two areas were less than eighty miles apart the gulf in experience and educational attainment was expected to be huge.

In the 1966 spring semester, Warrior began a twelve-month contract with the Cherokee Education Project. His role was to observe the classroom behavior and environments of schoolchildren in the Tahlequah area. These schools included Sequoyah and Tahlequah High School as well as the Junior High School. He also interviewed and observed schoolteachers for their perspectives and feedback on the

students and their abilities. His field notes offer an intriguing perspective from the opposite side of the teacher's desk from which he had faced the same children the previous semester. While the general behavior of the students was fairly consistent in all three schools, ranging from disruptive antics, disinterest, flirting, to hard study, he did notice a difference in their experiences from school to school. The most immediate issue that Warrior raised, however, was how markedly different the attitudes and approaches of the teaching staff were in each of the schools.[10]

Warrior noted that the American History teacher at Sequoyah "did something there that I had never seen any other teacher in any other school do." In an effort to help the students overcome their resistance to the material, the teacher "would go through a chapter and pick out words he knew for sure they couldn't understand and that would be the first thing he would do before he started the chapter." In Tahlequah High School, however, rather than make the material less intimidating for the students, the history teacher relied on authoritarianism to cow the students into learning. Emblazoned upon each of the classroom's chalkboards were the words "thousand word theme for talking." He noted that this particular class was "a horror story or a travesty on the American education system" because, despite the threats being issued towards them, it was the students and not the teachers, who "had control of the class."[11]

The learning disparity between the Indian and white students within Tahlequah High School was most obvious to Warrior during the discussion section

[10] Ibid.
[11] March 25, 1966, Clyde Warrior classroom observations, Box 488 F --, Murray Wax Papers

of the 11th grade history class. He noted that, while at the start of the class's lecture period they appeared "very much interested," later on "they couldn't pay any attention to the discussion group because they had absolutely no idea of what was being discussed." This was not due to inattentiveness, but because "it wasn't within their context of worldview." Indeed, the Indian students were not alone in this disconnectedness, and he noted ruefully that, "if it is completely out of the context for the white students, then it must be absolutely inane nonsense to the Indian students there.

The discordant worldviews of native and non-native cultures was a prominent theme of Warrior's early field notes for the project. He despaired of a system that failed to make any efforts to connect the materials being taught to the individual student's personal experiences or environment. His frustration at this 'neglect' was exacerbated by what he perceived to be the ill-informed good intentions of the Tahlequah High School administrators. He noted that the school principal and counselor, and the majority of the teaching staff, repeatedly assured him that "we don't care what they are, and we aren't concerned with what they are. We treat them all the same." For Warrior, this was a mistake of huge proportions, as he saw the effort to 'ignore' the ethnicity of the student as helping him /her to become invisible and slip unnoticed through the system. He claimed that, "the duty of the education system is to take what they are into context, to take the various differences into context and thereby adjust the educational system whereby they might learn something." Rather than adopt an attitude of "we don't care what they are" he felt that it was "very important to take into consideration what people are,

and to be concerned with what they are." Warrior was convinced that Indian students would only benefit from the education system when cultural identity was accepted, recognized, and incorporated into the curriculum.[12]

Warrior cited two examples that perfectly exemplified why the system, and this determination to be 'color blind' was wrong, and used these examples to question the veracity of the principal's claims. The first problem that Warrior saw with this attitude stemmed from the principal of Tahlequah High School's admission that he could not figure out why the Indian students did not place "much value" on speaking, reading or writing English. To Warrior, the flaw in the "We don't care what they are" attitude was that "it obviously hadn't occurred to him (the principal) that English…isn't their language and they see no need to learn English in the world they live in." The second problem stemmed from the experience of a boy Warrior discovered in the ninth grade vocational mechanics class. Such was the flaw in the principal's system that "here we have an Indian student who has gone through nine years of public school education and now he's a Sophomore and he can't read," although, he noted, the child could speak English fluently. Warrior saw this child's illiteracy as proof of underlying racism in the school's "color blind" system. He questioned in his field notes, whether or not "this overcompensation or overstating that there is no discrimination be fear of guilt because there is an

[12] March 21, 1966 , Clyde Warrior Classroom observations, Box 488, F 17, Murray Wax Papers.

understood policy of discrimination…thus far all my dealings tend to make me believe that this is so."[13]

The same student, however, led Warrior to notice a language correlation between the number of fully culturally and linguistically immersed children and attendance in manual, or vocational classes. While the principal and his counselor merely noted that, "these classes tends [sic] to be Indians, usually 50% or better," Warrior noted that the Indian students fared better in classes that correlated with their worldview in some way. He noted that in the "class of American History where obviously no-one enjoyed that class so therefore there was no learning taking place. Whereas in regard to the carpentry and mechanics class, the students were interested and therefore they were learning." The majority of these students understood spoken English even if they were illiterate. Once the teacher had taken the time to "explain every instrument, what its use is and how it is and how it is employed" they flourished in an active environment. In academic settings, they messed about, talked, or daydreamed, either through frustration, lack of interest or as Warrior had noted in his own teaching semester, an utter lack of context. Tools, building, mechanics and cars were all within the contextual worldviews of even the most rural and culturally and traditionally immersed Indians from in and around the Tahlequah area.

Despite working on both projects, albeit at different times, at no point did Warrior suggest that Murray Wax should take his findings and consult or collaborate with Sol Tax and Bob Thomas in their Carnegie literacy Project. He did

[13] Ibid.

speculate about the benefits to the project of inviting the one Indian teacher in the Cherokee public school system to join them. He hoped it would offer a professional perspective from a Cherokee perspective, and a counterpoint to the more racially charged observations of the white teaching staff. He never, however, made the recommendation to Wax. Warrior's experiences, as trainee teacher and project researcher did cause him to focus his attention on education as one of the most critical issues that needed to be resolved between American Indians and the federal government.[14]

On February 4, 1966, Warrior gave a speech at Wayne State University's Montieth College in Michigan. At this time Montieth College was funded by the Ford Foundation and focused on social humanities courses. Robert Thomas was also a faculty member and instrumental in organizing the anthropological conference at which Warrior spoke. Sandwiched between his teaching semester and much of his classroom research, Warrior discussed, among any other things, public school education and its effects upon American Indian students and their families. Assimilation was still key in American education of Indians. He told his audience that "Public schools preach to the Indian every day that he is a slob, that he comes from a dirty home, his parents are stupid because they can't talk English and he shouldn't be like his parents." This attitude was certainly reflected in his conversations with the teachers of Tahlequah High School. The carpentry teacher, who Warrior described as a "typical Eastern Oklahoma bigot" told him that "the Cherokee's goal in life (was) to live on welfare and not accomplish anything."

[14] March 18, 1966, Vocational Carpentry classroom observations. March 24, 1966 Vocational Mechanics classroom observations. Box 488, F --, Murray Wax Papers,

Indeed, he insisted that the "only thing that is wrong with American Indians is welfare." The art teacher went as far as to take issue with blood quantum as the factor restricting academic ability when reasoned that a student was "slow" because "she came from full bloods." At Wayne State, Warrior argued that subjecting the students to such attitudes caused "great strain and stress in the home." He lamented how "the kid comes back and many times he begins to hate his parents. He doesn't like what they are and it is because he is told that."[15]

Warrior also took this opportunity to elaborate upon his previous article "Which One Are You?" He elaborated more clearly upon the psychological strain that "this tremendous monster … called America" had upon Indian individuals, and thus tribal communities. American society, and the Cold War 'melting pot' theory of a single assimilated nation was in many ways responsible for the conditions and attitudes mentioned above. These conditions then created "(as I define them) five types of American Indian. The education system was a major tool in this process. He clarified the earlier descriptions he had given in the 1964 article, and related each "type" directly to the public school education system. The first, such as the "Indian boy" who arrived late for his World History class in Tahlequah High School and proceeded to act like the "class cut-up or clown," was the "joker" who "is

[15] Ibid. Also March 31, 1966 Art Class classroom observations, Box 488, F--, Murray Wax Papers. Clyde Warrior, "Social Movements" speech, February 4, 1966, Robert Warrior Papers

always hearing Indian jokes…therefore he goes around being funny and a buffoon and laughing and trying to queue into America."[16]

The second type, such as the "daughters of Jeffries' crew, who were "very urban chicks smartly dressed" and began to "communicate constantly loud and clear that they are in "squaresville," were "sellouts or finks." He described them as "completely ashamed of his own kind, ashamed of his color, ashamed of his parents" to the point that "he doesn't want nothing to do with that whatsoever." In Warrior's opinion they became "a phony urban type" who did "all the trite American things that American's are supposed to do (which no-one bothers to do except for American Indians.)" The tragic irony of this type was that "they continue to sell us out today because they hate what we are because what we are is them, and they have been told so much that is horrible, that they don't want to be that."[17]

Warrior was convinced that the third type, the "phony Indian," would not know "what an Indian is or what a Ponca, or Sioux, Osage or a Cherokee is." He described this type as that "who will wear a feather, that will say "How" or "Ugh" and act stereotype Indian, you know, what an Indian is supposed to act like." It was the fourth type, or the "little brown American" who Warrior saw as the most affected and indoctrinated by a system which insisted a student should "change and be clean, keep his nose wiped, take a bath every day, and pledge allegiance to the flag." He insisted that "you could play the first chord of the Star Spangled Banner and they will jump to attention." To Warrior, the most visible result of the "we don't

[16] April classroom observations, Box 488, F--, Murray Wax Papers. Social Movement Speech, pp11 – 12, Robert Warrior Papers.
[17] Idem, April observations. Idem, Social Movement speech, pg. 12

care what they are" attitude, besides illiterate students slipping unnoticed from one grade to the next, was "little brown Americans, scrubbed and washed, hair combed, doing what the middle class does." Warrior maintained that these students were solely the product of the public school system however, and "Indian exclusive" schools such as Sequoyah were equally indictable for this type. Alluding to the original mantra of BIA boarding schools of "kill the Indian, save the Man," Warrior described these "little brown Americans" as the "results of the Bureau of Indian Affairs schools because all they amount to is white man factories." [18]

There was a slight aspect of generalization about the charge, as many Indian children emerged from boarding schools and returned to the traditions and cultures from which they had been removed. There were an inordinate number of Indian children, however, who left boarding schools with vastly different cultural ideals and expectations from which they had entered. These students were seen as the successes of the boarding school system. Boarding school environments were a massive culture shock to tribally raised schoolchildren. Upon arrival, all children received sever haircuts and military style uniforms. The day was structured along military lines, with bells marking significant changes in schedule. Everything was signaled by a ringing bell, "waking up, toilet breaks, lining up for meals, classroom attendance, work periods and bedtimes." As they moved from room to room and task to task, the children were expected to march in formation. Students speaking any language other than English received corporal punishment, the severity of which ranged from being "forced to march, mop floors, paint walls, clean filthy

[18] Social Movements, pg. 12-13. Robert Warrior papers.

bathrooms, and perform other distasteful jobs." Others were forced to "stand in the corner, lie on the floor in front of classmates, wear dunce hats, stand on one foot, and clean the mortar between bricks with a toothbrush." The most humiliating of repercussions was being punished by another student, by "whipping the backs, buttocks, and thighs of boys and girls." At Fort Sill, in Oklahoma, where Warrior had boarded as a Cameron student, "errant" students were often confined to stockades, jails, or guardhouses – hidden from plain view of curious visitors to the school."[19]

The effects of this systematic degradation upon many individual's sense of worth, cultural awareness and appreciation, and tribal affiliations, were catastrophic. Warrior witnessed the results of such an education within his own community. Many Ponca children, especially those from within the legal boundaries of the White Eagle Tribal Complex, attended Chilocco Indian School in nearby Newkirk. Despite the school being only eighteen miles from the tribal complex, many students were forced to board. Many elders within the tribe viewed the boarding of the tribes' young boys as pivotal in the original decline of the Hethuska. The change of venue, from learning at the White Eagle school at day, and returning home at night, to permanent boarding at Chilocco, occurred in the mid 1920s, five or so years before the society ceased meeting. The removal of these boys from their cultural surroundings meant that certain rites of passage could not be performed. Without these rights of passage, membership of the Hethuska was impossible. Later generations, of Warrior's age then lamented the inability of their "fathers or uncles

[19] Trafzer, Charles, Keller, Jean, A, Sisquoc, Lorene, (eds) *Boarding School Blues,* Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2006, pp. 19-21

to induct them into the society." It was the removal of language and culture that created what Warrior termed, "little brown Americans." It was a common phrase in White Eagle, with some on the reservation damning the Chilocco system for creating "white Poncas." As one of Warrior's contemporaries remembered, "they tried to take away our language and culture. We could not speak Ponca. It was forbidden. Without that we are just brown [skinned] white people." The effects of Chilocco on the Ponca community, together with the overt racism of Ponca City helped foster a fierce nationalism within White Eagle.[20]

This was reflected in Warrior's fifth type of Indian created by the American education system; the "young angry nationalist." Warrior described this type as "the type that doesn't like any of the other types that I mentioned and doesn't like what America has done to his people." Given that earlier in his speech he had admitted "it is very difficult to think of America and think nicely of it," he was summing himself up in the most simplistic terms possible. He continued with the self-analysis by describing the "college educated Indian" who was "generally…very abstract and ideological." The description of someone who "can not communicate back to the tribal man that he once was and desires to be again," was not part of who he was, showing that these descriptions were composites and not to be taken completely literally. This was more descriptive of many of the Indian students he saw around campuses and in regional youth councils. He admitted that it "is a very frustrating thing but there are more and more of these coming about" who were "going around

[20] Scott, Erica, A, *Chilocco Survivors: Contested Discourses in Narrative Responses to Ponca Alcohol Abuse,* MA Thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009, pp. 25-27

raising hell all over the country bit can not convey this back to his own tribe or people."[21]

For Warrior, there needed to be a way for these young nationalists to communicate with their people, especially the "old traditionalists who are still very nationalistic in their own thinking." It was this thinking that led author Stan Steiner to describe Warrior's vision for the future of American Indians as "new Indian nationalism coupled with traditional tribalism." Warrior himself, already personified this vision, with one Cherokee tribal elder describing him as someone who

> "may not have the power of the medicine way, but he knows how to talk to those who do have the power and can't express it in a modern way. Some of the young Indians don't know how the old Indians *feel.* He knows…He understands the tribal ways. I mean he really feels it.''[22]

He also displayed an awareness of the global indigenous anti-colonial movement, gleaned from his Boulder Workshop lessons, when he warned that "when this alliance comes about, there are several towns or many towns in this country that had better look out with the present situation because it is liable to make the Mau Mau of Africa look like a Sunday school meting when you get these two together." He added ominously, and presciently that, "things are beginning to

[21] Social Movements. *Idem*. pg. 14
[22]Stan Steiner, *The New Indians,* New York, (USA), 1968, pg. 69. Italics are Steiner's.

look like it going to go that way unless the American society does something about it."[23]

The Wayne State speech did not just cover the effects of American educational policies towards American Indians, however. He opened the speech by disavowing the notion that he was a radical, or an expert on social movements, insisting instead that "everyone tells me I am a radical, you know, preaching for reforms, so that makes me somehow or another, I know something about it." In answer to this appointment he confessed that "all it is is I don't like what is going on, so if that is what a social movement is then possibly I might have an idea or two in regards to that."[24]

Warrior began by challenging the concept of American self-awareness in comparison to that of American Indians. He commented that most Americans had a lack of self-knowledge that unnerved them "because they don't realize why they are but they are bugged about it." This would prove especially pertinent when he compared it to Indians' acute awareness of their own tribal histories. A large part of this difference was due to historic and spiritual connections to the land of their ancestors, which Americans did not have. America, he reminded his audience "is a new country. Two to three hundred years is absolutely nothing in the history of the

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[23] Warrior, *Social Movements* pg. 14. The Mau Mau were a militant African nationalist movement active in Kenya during the 1950s whose main aim was to remove British rule and European settlers from the country, using arson, murder, and other violent tactics until Kenya declared independence as a Republic in 1964.

[24] Warrior, Clyde, *Lecture on Social Movements*, Wayne State University, February 4, 1966, Transcript in author's possession.

world and concerning world government." He emphasized the concept of history by declaring "America…in the span of history…is minute."

He saw this lack of an historic identity is placing a great psychological strain upon Americans as "most Americans living today have absolutely no sense of history or continuity of time and history and are unnerved by this." He also ridiculed Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis, which had been the cornerstone of historical analysis of westward expansion since Turner presented it at the Columbian Exposition of 1893. Warrior assessed the concept of "the distinct American type…a person who settled America…a guy who marched across the Plains, who went across deserts in a covered wagon." He questioned "What on earth would possess anyone to do that? I could not conceive of going to a country, clearing a forest, building a house and settling there, much less if I saw a bunch of screaming savages coming at me."[25]

In contrast, "American Indians are probably this country's oldest minority." He observed that Indians were not immigrants who had arrived in America "looking for the good life or the better way of life...because they didn't like where they came from." Instead, he declared "most American Indians living today (and there are some around) remember that good life we had before these people came here." He echoed the concerns he had expressed at the poverty conferences and told them that "what American means to us today is economic exploitation and economic deprivation." He also displayed a knowledge of the colonial treatment of American Indians that was not learned in the classroom in Boulder, but at the feet of his elders,

[25] Ibid. pg. 3

"there are still people among my tribe who remember that the soldiers didn't leave our community until 1925, when they had pretty well intimidated us to swallow Christianity, the type defined for us." It was these people, including his own grandparents, who had shaped Warrior's self-perception of his Indian identity and his Ponca heritage.[26]

It was not just the Ponca who remembered such treatment either. He told of the "Sioux in South Dakota who will recall soldiers putting a bayonet to their rear and making them move" or "Creeks still in Oklahoma who fought in 1919, the government again, since it had destroyed their central government." To emphasize how far apart the comparative Indian and American worldviews were, however, he acknowledged that "there are still white people on these communities who remember their parents, their grandfathers being killed by Indians." Also as was the theme of so many John Ford western movies of the time, they remembered "their wives being taken off and slaughtered." In a disarmingly understated turn of phrase, he admitted that, "this isn't very conducive to good social relationships between these two groups in American Indian areas."[27]

Rather than these issues being those of contrary neighbors however, Warrior was keen to emphasize the role of the federal government, since its inception, in fostering racial hatred and tensions between the races. He quoted Martin Luther King's assessment of America as "the only country which was born in racial hatred and genocide because America is the only country in the world

[26] Ibid.
[27] ibid.

which embarked on an active policy to exterminate their native inhabitants." Once the government realized that they were not able to exterminate all the Indians "Andrew Jackson…decided it would be a good idea if all Indians move west of the Mississippi." Localizing the history lecture to create a context for his audience he told them that "this are here was probably culturally one of the finest of American Indian ways, the Woodland Indians around the Detroit area." He paid tribute to Tecumseh, the nineteenth century Shawnee leader who led an Indian confederacy against American forces, from the same area. Warrior described how "this also was the area where probably the greatest American Indian (who) ever lived and died fighting for freedom and democracy, his name was Tecumseh. He kept telling these American cats about democracy but they didn't want to listen; freedom of people of a local community to administer and decide their own lives. Unfortunately he died in that struggle."[28]

Warrior dismissed the historic concept of potential statehood of Indian Territory for the removed tribes, which had been rejected in 1906 with the creation of Oklahoma, as the brainchild of missionaries and "mixed breeds," who "it was bad enough having to live with them where we were but when we moved they followed along." He also questioned the validity of the allotment process, which began in 1887 with the General Allotment Act and lasted until John Collier's Indian new Deal in 1934. It was "bad enough," he said, that "they rationalized it by saying that these Indians want progress and they won't shape up and get out and have initiative" so "they gave each person 160 acres and the remainder they opened up to white

[28] Ibid.

settlement." The major issue however, was that "there are many tribes in Oklahoma who purchased that land with their own money." Sharing some of his own tribal history, learned at the feet of his grandparents, that "when we moved to Oklahoma we sued the government, won a court case, and with that money we bought our reservation in Oklahoma."

The court case he referred to was the result of a Senate Hearing into the forced removal of the Poncas from Nebraska to Indian Territory after the government had inadvertently signed their entire reservation over to the Sioux in the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie. On the issue of the subsequent allotment of the Poncas land in Indian Territory he questioned "how the government can legally do this I will never know – open up our land to white settlers and give it out," before repeating that "this is a situation which isn't very conducive to me looking very kindly upon the neighboring white man."[29]

Taking the issue of illegal land acquisition, federally, locally, and individually, further, he described how "there were other policies of bribery by force and murder, that local and state governments began to take the individual allotments away from the Indian…of course there was alcohol involved in a lot of this. This is why many Indians were dispossessed of their land once more." He also told them that "this is presently going on in Oklahoma. It is going on in a national level and

[29] Ibid.

reservations where the federal government passes this whole law stating that certain reservations shall be (that horrible word to us) 'terminated.'"[30]

Warrior returned to the issue of American Indian identity and community being tied to the land of their ancestors. Phrasing it in terms of Christian ideology that in terms his audience could understand he told them that "many American Indians…are living in the Holy Land, land that has belonged to them for generations. This is similar to the relationship that Jews have to Israel." He described how "from the time one is born he knows what he is and he knows his position in life; therefore he is not bugged about this verb "to be," what he is or hopes to be because he "is." He is already a complete man, he knows his place in the world." To emphasize the detrimental effects that federal policies such as relocation were having on this self-identity he claimed that "the difficulty is when he leaves that community or his world and the reaction of the outside world does not respond to his key that he is giving "this is me" and he is completely ignored."[31]

Laying bare the differences between cultural and political sovereignty Warrior used this example to explain the different worldviews that he discussed in his earlier banned speech. He told them that, "people begin to become concerned about how come American Indians don't want to compete or better themselves. How can they better themselves when they already are what they are?" He reminded them that "there are still Indian people who are still around who were involved in

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[30] Ibid. For more information on the allotment of Ponca lands see Tom Hagan's *Taking Indian Lands.* For information on the government's termination policy see Kenneth Philp's *Termination Revisited* and Donald Fixico's ***Termination and Relocation : Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960***

[31] Ibid. pg. 8

the last rebellions to stop this and to maintain our own personal good life." He took this point further, claiming "many (of these tribes) still consider the United States as invaders and also liars and not holding up their word. Others are just completely frustrated by the results they have received by the American way," such as removal, allotment, relocation, and termination.[32]

Warrior then returned to another earlier theme of perceived Indian unity or pan-Indianism and complained that 'also they are always throwing this bit "Why don't the Indians unify? Unity is their strength" and all this jazz." He reiterated his earlier point that "there are tremendous differences in American Indians. Not only are they scattered all over the country, but we live in a different physical world, a different social world, a different historical environment." He went on to describe how "there really is, other than being called 'American Indians,' there is really no thing to be unified about. We speak different languages, we have different social customs, we have different forms of tribal government, and this is very difficult to bring American Indians together." He told the audience how the "typical American" had "created an American Indian." He noted "to them the American Indian is dead, there is no such thing, they only appear in movies, in television…and sometimes it disturbs me a little bit because I am not that."[33]

Warrior described the innate security of self-awareness that came from cultural immersion in his culture, language and tribal history. He proudly told his audience that, "I am me, tribe warrior, a man of the world…I have no questions

[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.

about what I am or what I will be because I am me." This self-knowledge ran in complete contrast to the Americans he had earlier described as people who "don't realize who they are but they are bugged about it.[34]

Turning to the many economic, social, political and cultural problems that the bloated bureaucracy of the BIA brought to Indian Country, Warrior discussed the fallacy of tribal political sovereignty. He complained that

> "each tribe is supposedly able to elect their own governments. This is true but everything the tribe does has to be approved by the Secretary of the Interior. This is not conducive to having self-government. Every act your local Tribal Council or Tribal Council does has to be approved by the Secretary of the Interior. This happens no place but America and it happens with American Indian communities."[35]

When challenged by the audience to give examples of the projects tribes were supposed to be responsible for, Warrior laid bare the sheer scale of control the BIA maintained over many Indians. Way beyond the power of veto that the Secretary of the Interior had over tribes as political units, Warrior complained that even something as simple as owning a car was deemed too complex for individual Indians to handle alone. He insisted that the "title is in charge of the Department of the Interior. Many of the local dealings of each American Indian is handled by the bureau of Indian Affairs with something like Power of Attorney." This level of interference was humiliating to Warrior who accused the BIA of "treat(ing) us like

[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.

babies. We are a group of people regarded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as incompetent."[36]

Warrior went on to discuss the American Indian Chicago Conference of 1961, which had ben convened to send a unified Indian voice to the incoming president that this level of control needed to end. Making a clear delineation between tribal elders and leaders, as he had in earlier speeches, he referred to the conference as a gathering of "all these tribal finks." Displaying a cynicism towards the proceedings that contradicted the glowing report he had written for the *Indian Progress,* he described it as a "bad meeting." He recalled that "it was sickening to see American Indians just get up and tell obvious lies about how well the federal government was treating them, what fantastic and magnificent things the federal government were doing for us." Warrior's outburst confirmed D'Arcy McNickle's recollection that "reservation Indians were especially distrustful of their urbanized kinsmen, whom they suspected of scheming to liquidate tribal resources and claim their share." Nancy Lurie, recalled similar discord, although she claimed it dissipated far faster than McNickle who remembered that, "at several critical moments the conference stood ready to dissolve." Despite her glowing report of the proceedings she did admit that, "all the major factions, issues and personalities came into play." William Rickard, son of respected Tuscarora chief, Clinton Rickard, and father of NIYC charter member Karen Rickard, was more damning than either Lurie or McNickle in his assessment of the conference. He complained that, "we who were from the east were permitted to speak and serve on the various committees but

[36] Ibid.

for the most part it was only a token courtesy." The reality, he said, was that "you would be allowed to talk. When you finished the paid no attention to any suggestions you might have made." Such was the claim and counterclaim of different 'factions' that underpinned the drafting of the *Declaration of Indian Purpose.*[37]

Warrior told his audience that, "it got to the end where we (I and about 20 others of my…) couldn't hack it any longer, we were completely disgusted with it. We began having meetings of our own between sessions, drafting statements and resolutions and said we were going to try to work within that structure." However, "every time we tried to do it, we stood up and worked within that structure, our own kind stood up and screamed at us, "radicals!" "Possibly Communists are infiltrating us! Ignore these young foolish kids. They really don't know what they are doing.'" He noted that "I was pretty sorry of my own kind of people, they had degenerated to such a level where they would do that." The group "met in Gallup in 1961 and we formed the National Indian Youth Council, designed to agitate and bring about whatever social reform, economic reform, governmental legislative reform it could bring about within American Indian Affairs."[38]

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[37] Hurtado, Iverson, *Major Problems,* Idem, pg. 469. Lurie, Nancy Oestrich, "The voice of the American Indian: Report on the American Indian Chicago Conference," *Current Anthropology,* Vol. 2, No. 5, December 1961 pg. 490. Hauptman, L, Campisi, J, The voice of Eastern Indians: The American Indian Chicago Conference of 1961 and the Movement for Federal Recognition, *Proceeding of the American Philosophical Society,* Vol. 132, No. 4, December 1988, pg. 327. Rickard was already a renowned activist in Indian Country for his fight for federal recognition for the Tuscarora and other Iroquois Nations.

[38] Ibid.

Warrior hinted at early conflicts within the new organization that had reemerged more recently, especially over what form their agitation should take. Warrior advocated building upon the gains, in publicity and awareness, of the fish-ins by taking a more aggressive, militant stance. He confessed that, "I was one of them who advocated that, you know – violence. I'm not so sure I have changed my mind." Conversely, "there were the more moderate ones who said, "let's try for some national publicity and maybe the conscience of America will do something about this. Let's don't do anything harsh yet." In June 1965, Mel Thom had mailed a memorandum to all NIYC board members and "working members" of the NIYC. He admitted that the "NIYC is having its difficulties" to such an extent that "our dream of operation in harmony seems to have temporarily fell by the wayside." Much of this was due to strategic differences mentioned by Warrior above, but Thom reminded the board that "NIYC is a dynamic and intelligent organization of young Indians." He was certain that it was imperative for the organization to resolve its differences and move forward because they were the best hope of pursuing change for Indian communities. He declared that "NIYC represents Indian feelings better than other large Indian organizations, and we have the talent to express this to others." The memorandum served to soothe divisions, but only for a short while. Warrior regularly labeled those he disagreed with in the NIYC as "finks' and considered resigning his post on the board in the spring of 1966. At Wayne State, implying that he may indeed have been a radical, even within the NIYC, he told them that "since that time at all of our meetings I still said "we are doing the wrong thing (I still believe since then)," because I don't believe you can work within the

structure of American for change." He told his audience that, "I believe before change comes about in the American Indian situation, American itself has to change." It was how to bring about that change that continued to foster divisions with the NIYC. [39]

By early 1966, the continuing tensions within the NIYC threatened to cause the movement to implode. The board were missing the calming influence of Shirley Witt, who had departed for the Denver Civil Rights Commission, and Herb Blatchford, who had resigned before the August 1965 annual conference, feeling slighted by the lack of recognition for his pivotal role in bringing, and bonding, the Council together. Witt later paid tribute to the importance of Blatchford when she acknowledged that, "it as he who kept rationality functioning among us." Without him, the bonds that Thom, as new Executive Director was fervently trying to keep intact were increasingly fraying. Despite Warrior celebrating the arrival "new blood in the membership" in form of newly elected president Gerald Brown, and vice President Angela Russell (Crow) there were still divisions over the strategic future of the organization. While Warrior championed the idea of "changing the system from within" he was still in favor of doing it by "raising some hell." Dumont, and others within the NIYC favored a more pragmatic approach, and sought to build

[39] *Social Movements* Idem. National Indian Youth Council Memorandum, June 20 1965, Box 1, Folder 5, Robert Dumont Papers.

upon the NIYC sponsorship of the USS by involving members in the Office of Economic Opportunities Upward Bound Courses.[40]

Dumont believed that direct NIYC involvement in Upward Bound would help some of the problems of conflicting worldviews and lack of cultural relevancy that Warrior had identified as being key components in the failure of Indian children to complete, or even attend, school. Upward Bound was part of the same OEO philosophy that had created Head Start, at the opposite end of the educational age spectrum. The plan with Upward Bound was to prepare high school students for college life. In 1965, a year after Head Start was introduced, eighteen pilot summer Upward Bound programs were introduced across the country. The projects were so successful that the following year, eighteen summer camps became two hundred and twenty. Dumont and other NIYC members joined the Indian Advisory Committee on Upward Bound and hoped to convince Warrior to follow suit. As he had noted in his Tahlequah field notes, Warrior was convinced that high school graduation was far too late in a student's life to offer tangible cultural support.[41]

Finally agreeing, after constant cajoling from his cohorts, to attend an April 1966 Upward Bound conference, Warrior wasted no time in making his opinion known to the Upward Bound Directors present. Having witnessed the behavior and attitudes of teachers towards Indian students in Tahlequah, Warrior saw no reason why they should be encouraged to stay in school if they did not want to. He

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[40] Further insight into the internal tensions within the NIYC at this time can be found in Bradley Glenn Shreve's' unpublished dissertation *Red Power Rising: The National Indian Youth Council and the Origins of Intertribal Activism*.
[41] James, William, "Upward Bound: Portrait of a Poverty Program, 1965-1985," *Oklahoma Division of Student Assistance Archives.*

contended that if Upward Bound was simply an extension of standard educational practices then it was just another attempt "to wash students in white paint." At the conference, he was far more visceral in his condemnation of how Indian students were educated than he had been in his Tahlequah field notes. He argued that Indian children became "warped and twisted" by their experiences in the classroom, and that for Upward Bound to help, it needed to "make the shit we all waded through a little shallower for those who follow." As ever, cultural relevancy was the key to a brighter, more successful educational experience. There needed to be lessons and program that "fit into the content of the world of the kids – so they won't be scared." Fellow NIYC members Tillie Walker (Mandan) and Browning Pipestem added a note of compromise to Warrior's words by insisting that these measures needed to take place without a complete rejection of Western culture. They acknowledged that there needed to be a balance between competent Indian educators, and teaching "white culture" so that "Indians can take advantage of it." Warrior suggested that more meetings were needed in order for their ideas to, with "Indians in the central stages" to become actual programs. Despite arriving at an initial working consensus with the Upward Bound directors, Warrior continued to mistrust the OEO and other government agencies, however, as would be seen in later speeches.[42]

Warrior still firmly believed that "change from within" ultimately meant Indian students themselves. He also believed that if his generation of students could not engineer social and cultural change in America, then the next generation of

[42] Shreve, *Red Power Rising,* pp. 152-154. Letter dated, April 29, 2006, from Richard Frost to Clyde Warrior, Box 1, Folder 4, Dumont Papers

Indian students would attempt to change it themselves. He sensed that his own frustration was merely the tip of the iceberg in relation to the frustration of the generation that would follow his. As an avid reader of *Newsweek, Time Magazine,* and *The New Republic,* a left-wing weekly political magazine, Warrior was well aware of the political rhetoric and opinions being voiced at that time. His is conviction was bolstered by the increasing militancy of anti-war, and free speech protestors among white American students, as well as the increasing violence of the Civil Rights Movement. If the whole of American society was erupting in protest and clamor for change, then he was convinced that sooner or later, those in power would have to acquiesce, or face revolution. At this moment, however, as often as he challenged policy makers to recognize the rights of tribal communities to solve their own problems, he had little faith that he would see the day this recognition came. His rhetoric was often more militant than activism and the fish-ins of 1964 showed that Warrior was quite comfortable with direct action. Warrior's greatest frustration however, was his sense of his own relative inability to foster these changes immediately. Not for the first, or last, time he admitted, "how this is done, I haven't figured this out yet and I doubt if I ever will." He could see small, incremental steps, such as NIYC involvement in Upward Bound and USS, being taken, but these steps still felt too small and the speed of change too slow for him to feel truly confident in their ultimate effectiveness.[43]

This inability haunted him as he watched the continual breakdown of tribal communities through this cycle of perpetuating misery, a situation most close to his

[43] Ibid.

heart. Warrior told them that, "it is getting worse, the social breakdown is getting fantastic, you have situations where sons will come in drunk and slap their mothers – unheard of in tribal societies." He emphasized how communities and the people within them saw so little value within themselves that they were turning to "unconscious suicide where people really think within themselves "Man, life ain't worth it. Best we should stay drunk and die or best we should kill each other than have to live the life we have to live today." Acknowledging his own struggle with alcoholism, and despair at the future for Indian Country he confessed that "I am one of them but I am not at suicide point." His drinking appeared to be weighing on his mind since the birth of his daughter, although he himself admitted that it was also something for which he was becoming quite famous in Indian Country. He later told Murray Wax that many of the students at Sequoyah "have heard (of) my tremendous drinking capacity somehow or another."[44]

Regarding the social breakdown on the reservations, Warrior was certain that "If the situation is going to stay the same, then the best American Indians should have to die rather than live in the environment and social structure that they are presently in." In his worst moments he foresaw that despite his constant demand for change, and calls to arms of his fellow Indian youth, the very best future they faced within the current status quo was a slow and steady death by alcoholism. There would be no other escape from the devastating poverty that currently plagued tribal communities, and so bad was that poverty that death was potentially preferable. He admitted that, "this may sound extreme but I am sure many of you

[44] Ibid. Classroom observations, Idem.

here if maybe you have come from ethnic minorities will think about it, that this is true." The need for change, and drastic change at that, was devastatingly apparent with every word he uttered.[45]

Again though, he admitted that he hadn't "the vaguest idea" about how to solve these problems. Warrior did, however, envisage three possible outcomes for tribal dynamics in the white world if the status quo remained the same. The first was that they would stay with the status quo, which would lead to Indians getting "bred out, our blood diluted, then there wouldn't be any American Indian problem." The second option was the formation of "Mau Mau societies among the tribes, very radical, violent type of societies (that) are beginning to come about." Referring to an earlier point that the government essentially ignored nationalistic tribal governments he said that "the government knows of these things and how they don't do anything about them is beyond me!" The third option was one that he suggested would be the most economically devastating for the tribes, while probably the most communally beneficial. He foresaw tribes "further withdraw(ing) from the American scene" as he had seen with many of the traditional Cherokee communities while working with the Carnegie Project. He predicted that "a tribe will become more cohesive and the relationship with the outside world will be less and less…and this has happened before in American Indian societies."[46]

He also envisioned a time when "American Indians get their way (and) they are going to turn this society over and stomp on it and wonder about things later."

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

Displaying a pragmatism not always evident in his speeches he urged that "we should sit down, look objectively at the American situation and somehow or other try to do something about this, rather than see America go down in utter chaos."[47] While he predicted that violence would ensue without change, and occasionally saw violence as a necessary facilitator of change, he did not view violence as an alternative to change. Changing the system rather than destroying it was the ultimate goal for Warrior, even if he readily admitted that he did not have the answers on *how* exactly the system should be changed.

While Warrior's lecture never touched specifically upon the concepts of social movements, his friend Robert Thomas classified his rhetoric and ideals as forming classic examples of a social movement. Thomas labeled the anger and resistance of Warrior and his youth council cohorts, and indeed the creation of the NIYC as "the growing tip of the Pan-Indian social movement," which he defined in a 'Pan Indianism' article published in *Midcontinental American Studies* in the fall of 1965. Thomas tackled the social and cultural aspects of his theory before he discussed the political aspect of Pan-Indianism, which was the main focus of his argument. He admitted that the source of his theory was anthropological fieldwork he had conducted among the Sac and Fox of Oklahoma and the Pine Ridge Sioux of South Dakota. His theory was heavily reliant upon the same anthropological theories of Robert Redfield that he had taught at the Boulder Workshops. Redfield viewed communities, whether they be folk, tribal, or urban, as static unyielding entities with definite and defining characteristics. This analysis is considered

[47] Ibid.

obsolete by contemporary anthropologists, as it does not cater for fluidity, adaptability or evolution within societies or cultures. Thomas also, for the cultural aspects of Pan-Indianism, relied heavily upon the definitions provided by John Howard in his 'Pan Indian Culture of Oklahoma' article, published in 1955 by *The Scientific Monthly,* and for which Thomas had conducted the Sac and Fox research.[48]

Despite admitting at the beginning of his article that "such a complex social movement as Pan-Indianism, which takes in so much territory spatially and temporally is a little beyond our methodology in anthropology and my competence," Thomas's definition of pan-Indianism has stood largely unchallenged as the de facto definition of any group of inter-tribal Indians, whether that group be social, political or cultural in composition. He claimed that, while "there are many gaps in my knowledge of the Pan-Indian movement, one can legitimately define Pan-Indianism as the expression of a new identity and the institutions and symbols which are both an expression of that new identity and a fostering of it." He continued that, "it is an attempt to create a new ethnic group, the American Indian." This definition of American Indian-ness becoming the superior form of identity and ethnicity, or even ideology as he claimed in his workshops lectures, has been accepted as the standard form of self-recognition across all the tribes of North America, despite the many acknowledged weaknesses in Thomas's argument.

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[48] Thomas, Robert, K., "Pan Indianism, *Midcontinent American Studies Journal*, VI: 2, 75-83, 1965.

Through his interpretation of the historic diffusion of Plains Indian cultures after European contact, Thomas classified Pan-Indianism as being both inter-tribal, a system whereby each tribe recognized the identity, sovereignty and culture of the other as being distinct and separate, and the acceptance by all tribes, east, west, or otherwise, of a "Pan-Plains" culture at the expense of their own. As a Cherokee who regularly participated in the Stomp Dance ceremonies that had then, and still do remain, the exclusive practice of Eastern Woodland tribes, this was a deeply problematic assertion. Equally problematic, was the assertion that Pan Indianism was the result of white attitudes towards, and assimilationist pressure upon, different tribes as 'Indians" during the reservation, and allotment eras. For those people, such as Warrior, the NIYC, NCAI and others, who were collectively fighting for the formal recognition of cultural and political sovereignty, and rejection of assimilationist attitudes, such an assessment was undermining. Thomas insisted, however, that, "even national Indian organizations such as the National Congress of American Indians are in flavor Pan-Plains. It is from the Plains that the National Congress of American Indians gets most of its support." The major flaw with this argument is that, while the more powerful tribes of the NCAI were located in the Plains, their traditions and cultures were not. The most common complaint from smaller NCAI tribes was the power wielded by the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma, as they were still collectively known. Each of these tribes were classified as Eastern Woodland in origin, culture and tradition, and by 1966, only the Cherokee had adopted the plains oriented powwow as a form of cultural celebration. Each of the five tribes, in varying degrees, was firmly rooted to their own cultural

traditions and ideals. However, according to Thomas, the "traits and institutions of the Plains area have come to symbolize a new identity of "Indian" for many aboriginal tribal groups in the United States. And, as with Howard before him, he identified the growth of the powwow circuit as direct proof of this new "Indian" identity over tribal identity, rather than simply an economic measure by many tribes to take advantage of a growing popularity among young Indians attracted to war dancing. [49]

Thomas proceeded to undermine his argument by discussing the role of recently relocated urban Indians in the Pan-Indian movement. In describing the Pan-Indian communities of the Indian Centers that sprang up in the wake of Relocation, he acknowledged that "many of the members of the tribes from the Southwest and eastern Oklahoma (two supposed bedrocks of s) to avoid these Indian Centers" This was because "many of the people from these tribal groups outside of the Pan-Plains area do not see these symbols as "Indian," but as in fact "Plains," and these symbols are unacceptable to them as expressions of their new Indian identity." Furthermore, the Southwestern tribes were seen by Thomas as expressing themselves through the prism of 'a kind of Pan-Puebloism" for many years now," while the traditional factions of the Southwestern and Eastern Woodland tribes, had collectively formed a separate "Pan Traditional" movement. Through this collaboration, Thomas identified the "traditional Indian," those elders for whom Warrior and his cohorts had originally declared their protective intentions, as a "new social type on the

[49] Ibid. pp. 76-78. A closer examination of conflicts and resentment of the Oklahoma power base of the NCAI can be found in Thomas Cowger's *The National Congress of American Indians: The Early Years.*

American scene." Whether he meant this as confirmation that such elders had remained hidden from white society, or as an accusation that people were now adopting tribal traditions as a form of resistance, Thomas did not make clear. One thing is certain though, the emergence of "traditionalism" on the American scene, whether it be long-standing or newly adopted, pointed very clearly to an embrace of tribalism rather than pan-Indianism.[50]

Pan-Indianism, it seemed, was not a single social movement after all, but a self-confessed attempt to shoehorn many different tribal identities, regional collaborations, alliances, and shared ceremonies, into a single collective, anthropological, classification of Indian. Each step, however, undermined this attempt. Southwest Indians rejected the idea of Plains motifs as being Indian. Similarly, Plains Indians rejected the concept of Eastern Woodland traditions, or Southwestern traditions as alien to them. Tribes would borrow certain motifs, such as the powwow, and incorporate them into their cultures, but at no point would these motifs be used to symbolize the tribe's cultural traditional or social identity. This practice was the essence of inter-tribalism, which had been practiced across the continent long before European invasion. Perhaps the biggest failure of the attempt to shoehorn the divergent identities into a single pan-Indianism was that the NIYC, the very people that Thomas classified as the proponents of pan-Indianism, were fiercely nationalistic on an individual tribal level.[51]

[50] Ibid. pp. 79-80
[51] Ibid. pp. 79-80

Turning to the political motivations of the "young Indian college students who are actively organizing," Thomas identified their concerns as "poverty…the destinies of their home communities controlled by forces outside of the community, and what they perceive as an inert Indian leadership doing nothing about the problem." He saw their concerns as being compared to "colonial peoples all over the world emerging nations and they see many of the minorities in the United States being granted concession by the general society." He insisted that, "talk of Indian identity is very much in the forefront of their conversations about Indian affairs." Acknowledging some of the primary concerns of Warrior and the NIYC he wrote that, "they are well aware of the loss of community and loss of identity in American urban life." Breaking it down into the most basic analysis he claimed that, "their concern with Indian identity is not only a wish to preserve themselves and their home communities, but also a rejection of this frightening aspect of American society." At no point, however, did he recognize the desire and motivation of these young Indians to protect and preserve their distinct tribal cultures and identities, as evidenced by Warrior's continued declaration of being a "full blood Ponca Indian," or Mel Thomas as a Paiute, Shirley Witt as a Mohawk, Karen Rickard as a Tuscarora, or Hank Adams as Assiniboine.[52]

Despite previously claiming that the young Indians were deliberately rejecting American society, Thomas claimed that, "Pan-Indian ceremonies not only act out the solidarity of the local group and the new "Indian" identity, but also a new commitment to America." He went on the describe how "Pan-Indian institutions

[52] Ibid.

such as Indian Centers in cities, Pow Wow committees and so forth are institutions through which Indians can have some productive relationship to the general society." At the same time, however, "the general problem of loss of identity and community in America may mitigate against even urban Indians cutting their ties with Indians altogether. One could even imagine a resurgence of local tribal identity in response to these conditions." Indeed, working with full blood, traditional Cherokee communities, who would no doubt have been amused to learn that they were a "new scene," and working with young tribally immersed people such as Clyde Warrior, it should not have taken a very great leap of his imagination at all.[53]

Warrior firmly rejected the concept of an Indian/pan-Indian identity in his *Social Movements* lecture, arguing that, "I have yet today to see my first American Indian." He emphasized the many social and cultural differences that such unique identities as to defy the pan-Indian label, stressing that

> "we have Plains Indians (of which I am one) who are warriors; the Southwestern Indians who live in the desert or in the dry, arid areas who are on the verge of being peasant people; we have Northwest Coast Indians who are fisherman who live on the sea; the Eastern Woodland Indians who live in the forest – therefore always complex differences of American Indians."[54]

Despite the fact that groups such as the NIYC and NCAI existed to give each tribe and culture a collective support, their individual identities did not dissipate or become consumed by the collective. Indeed, rather than a collective search, or

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[53] Ibid.

[54] The subject of Plains Indian cultural diffusion has been more recently and critically analyzed by Clyde Ellis in *A Dancing People,* William C. Meadows in *Kiowa, Apache and Comanche Military Societies,* and Thomas Mails in *Dog Soldier Societies of the Plains*

grasping of a new identity and nationalism, Warrior insisted that, "I have seen different tribes, different individuals, and different people, but what an American Indian is, is a figment of the American type imagination." This worldview was one shared by many within the NIYC. Years later, when the American Indian Movement sought an alliance with the NIYC, the approach was rejected by NIYC board members such as Charlie Cambridge because "the basic philosophy of the American Indian Movement was to establish an "Indian". The concept of Indian over tribal identity was anathema to Warrior and his cohorts.[55]

First and foremost, Warrior was Ponca, and proud of it. His commitment to Ponca customs and culture was shown when he introduced his daughter, Mary "into the arena." A form of powwow etiquette that has evolved from traditional Plains cultures is the system of "paying" a child's way "into the arena". In pre-reservation days, a child would be presented to a Society Leader for his 'sponsorship' into the tribe. These ceremonies generally occurred during the annual Sun Dance when the whole tribe was present. It was the method by which the child was formally accepted into the tribe. The parent's would pay for this honor by presenting the society leader with a gift, and hosting a small feast for anyone who was hungry. At the May 1966 Gives Water Memorial Day Dance, Warrior paid his daughter's way into the arena, by 'buying' a song from the drum, and hosting a "giveaway." Mary was now "officially" a member of the Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma.[56]

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[55] Interview with Charlie Cambridge, *Idem*
[56] Warrior, Clyde, *Social Movements.* Robert Warrior interview with Della Warrior. *Idem*

CHAPTER 8

"RED POWER"

Warrior spent the summer of 1966 teaching at a Montana Workshop for teachers of Indian schoolchildren, with Robert Thomas, before attending the Boulder Workshops in his now traditional role as guest lecturer. It was here that Clyde and Della were married in July, because, as Della recalled "we were always too busy before, and we had his grandparents with us, so we decided it was a good time as he was not travelling a lot." Marriage and fatherhood would later cause to him to begin re-evaluating his drinking habits, which by now had evolved to drinking Jim Beam and I.W. Harper bourbon at home as well as beer. Della remembered that often she could never tell that he was drunk, because he would act "very mellow…and never belligerent or argumentative." Drinking aside, however, his increasing workload meant that the couple had little time to enjoy the honeymoon period that so many newlyweds look forward to, with the couple's second daughter, Andrea Imogen Warrior born in September. His increasing weight also saw him switch from fancy dancing to the more sedate Straight Dancing category on the powwow circuit. Warrior was equally adept at straight dancing as the Ponca Hethuska was the dance's origin. His role as tail dancer for the Society meant that he was already equipped with the necessary regalia as well as the skillful dancing which saw him win titles in this 'new' category.[1]

[1] Interview between Robert Warrior and Della Warrior. *Idem*

In August 1966, Warrior's friendship with the California hobbyists bore unlikely fruit. His friendship had extended to include Abe Conklin and Sylvester Warrior as friends and companions of the California dancers, and when Mike Tucker enlisted in the U.S. Navy the two older Ponca decided to honor him. Tucker was leaving for Vietnam at the end of the month and on August 27, at van Nuys, California. The Ponca Singers held a War Dance in his honor. Such ceremonies for non-Natives are extremely rare and it was the first time any Ponca society had done so. Bill Center, the Pawhuska Indian Trader and Warrior's unofficial adoptive father was Master of Ceremonies. Lamont Brown led the prayers in Ponca. Sylvester Warrior gave a speech in which he formally offered the blessing and protection of the Hethuska Society to Tucker as he went to war. He told the assembled crowd that "we are known throughout the state of Oklahoma as the only organization in which we retain the old way of the war dance." He ended the speech by offering tribute to Tucker and reminding the crowd that such a ceremony for a non-Native was a rarity, but that "we're gonna have some prayers for him, so that he may come back again some day and take up where he left off, dancing this war dance." Before the ceremony closed, Sylvester Warrior proposed the creation of a Hethuska Society by the California dancers, so impressed was he by the respect they showed for the Ponca songs. As with the ceremony sending Mike Tucker to war, this was a major event in cultural diffusion, as the Ponca gifted their society to a non-Native community. Warrior's friendship with Center and Turley, also in attendance, was the catalyst for such an historic exchange.[2]

[2] Mike Tucker interview. *Idem*. Transcript of War Dance held in honor of Mike

Warrior missed the event as he was attending the NIYC annual conference, where he was elected to the presidency. In a reprisal of their 1961 battle for the presidency of the Southwest Regional Indian Youth Council, the election pitted Warrior against his friend, colleague and incumbent president Gerald Brown. This time, rather than decrying the "sewage of Europe," Warrior campaigned with the slogan, "Up, UP with Persons." In his victory address, he told the assembled council members that "this is my country and I want to se which way Indian America is going to go." He remained president for the rest of his life.[3]

In a September 21st press conference in Washington D.C. Warrior was much more forthright. He declared that the organization's policy was to "seek radical and drastic changes in Indian affairs in order that the nature of our situation be recognized and made the basis of policy and action." In a short but damning statement Warrior condemned the federal governments policies, actions and attitudes towards American Indians as ineffective, inoperable, and ill conceived. He argued that, "nothing meaningful for tribal people has ever been accomplished in the world unless it has been with a drastic change, and American Indian Affairs is no exception. In a clear call for tribal self-determination he dismissed the government's Indian programs, claiming that, "the government, through it agencies such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Office of Economic Opportunity, are not structurally or functionally designed to work out solutions for tribal people." The primary reason for this was because "most administrators, including some

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Tucker. In author's possession.

[3] National Indian Youth Council Press Release, Undated, Box 3, Folder 30, NIYC Collection. NCAI Sentinel XI, 5, 1966 "Warrior Replaces Brown as NIYC Chief," Box 3, Folder 30, NIYC Collection

Indians, know nothing or care nothing of how the average Indian operates of what the Indian wants."[4]

He issued a vitriolic attack on these people who worked within the system as being "white colonialist, fascists, uncle tomahawks, and bureaucrats who are concerned only with procedures, progress reports, and regulations, and who could care less about the average Indian." Warrior was doing his best to prove Gerald Brown's fears that he would take the organization "in a radical new direction" and demanded to know "How long will Indians tolerate this?" He pointed to the other minorities in America, who had been much more vocal in the Civil Right Movement, and reminded people that, "Negroes, Mexican-Americans, and Puerto Ricans could only take colonialism, exploitation, and abuse for so long; then they did something about it." In contrast, and reminding his audience of the combined threats of the government's termination and relocation programs, he asked "will American Indians wait until their reservations and lands are eroded away and they are forced into urban gettos [sic] before they start raising hell with their oppressors?" The speech was the springboard for a more aggressively vocal Warrior raising issue with government policies and their effects upon America's tribal peoples."[5]

Warrior and the NIYC were still convinced that education was the strongest weapon young Indians could arm themselves with. Warrior and fellow NIYC member Browning Pipestem also began applying for funding for an NIYC

[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

sponsored Institute of American Indian Affairs, as an alternative to the Boulder Workshops. In September Warrior conducted, on behalf of the NIYC and OEO, a review of two Upward Bound in New Mexico and Oklahoma projects designed to help Indian students attend college. He was still suspicious of the methods and motives of the organizations directors and wanted to understand improvements that could be made and the direction the new Workshops should take. The research and funding applications offered a brief respite from the campaigning and publicity and later that year Karen Rickard teased Warrior warning him "we'll have to start an impeachment movement!!!" if he didn't "get on the stick" with "all the NOISE & ACTION." For the moment, however, he focused on appraising the summer programs.[6]

The first project consisted of five Mescalero Apache students attending Eastern New Mexico University at Portales, New Mexico, while the second review was conducted Southwestern State Teachers College in Weatherford, Oklahoma. Warrior found similar stories results of bored, disaffected students comparable to those he had witnessed during the spring semester's research in Tahlequah. He discovered that all the Upward Bound classes were designed to create "sophistication in the American culture." This sophistication consisted of field trips to such places as the Santa Fe opera, Albuquerque's historic Old Town, and Oklahoma's National Cowboy Hall of Fame (known locally to Indians as the "Hall

[6] Letter from Karen Rickard to Clyde Warrior, dated October 1966, Box 3, Folder 1, NIYC Collection

of Shame"). Each of these locations was deemed an example of "true American culture."[7]

He credited the students' boredom to the fact that the Upward Bound projects were merely summer extensions of the same educational structure, and material that they struggling with during the regular semesters. As with the normal school year, and the problems of interpreting differing worldviews, "teachers were pressuring them to participate without any knowledge or idea of cultural differences." Identifying the fundamental problem with the Upward Bound project, however, came from the students themselves. Each declared that they would "have graduated without the program anyway" and all "knew of students at home who would have benefitted further." As with the educational system itself, Warrior saw radical overhaul as the only solution, especially in the recruitment process. This change also needed to come from schools also, who Warrior complained 'sent students who qualified economically for Upward Bound, but they did not send the loser." The problem, as with many of the government's War on Poverty programs, was lack of insight rather than poor intentions. He acknowledged that, "Upward Bound is a good program and instructed by well intentioned people," but "it will not work because it does not reach the people it is intended." Warrior was pushing once for cultural relevancy to be the cornerstone of any educational projects involving Indian schoolchildren.[8]

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[7] Combined Evaluation of Upward Bound Projects. September 8, 1966, Box 488 Folder 17, Murray Wax Collection
[8] Ibid.

Warrior assumed he was in a position as president of the NIYC to push for these reforms, especially as NIYC board members constituted the majority of Indians on the Upward Bound Indian Advisory Panel. He saw the ideal way forward as recruiting students in Junior High, with teaching methods "geared to the various cultural differences," and planned to steer the NIYC workshops in the same direction. He saw no future in simply repeating the regular school curriculum or identifying opera and museums as culture, in a program "that causes drop-outs and pushes kids out of school." He insisted that the program needed to be "more concerned with teaching that individual what he is, improving his self-image and teaching him what America is about." Before any changes could take place, however, other NIYC and Upward Bound board members requested more analysis, as his evaluation was deemed "eloquent, yet the evidence was inadequate for the total picture." As a government agency, the OEO would not approve any changes without statistical analysis to support Warrior's findings.[9]

Before he could complete any further analysis, however, Warrior had to return to Tahlequah to continue his research for Murray Wax's Kansas project, which was now embroiled in a political battle for which the academics were unprepared. Wax had written to Warrior during the summer to inform him that another researcher, Bob Dumont, would be joining the project. Of more immediate concern, however, was the growing tension between the Cherokee leadership and the Carnegie Project. Matters reached such a straining point in the summer of 1966 that Murray Wax began taking action defining clear distinctions between his own

[9] Ibid.

research project; involving Clyde and Della Warrior, Kathryn Redcorn and new recruit Robert Dumont; and Sol Tax's Carnegie Project, led by Robert Thomas. His first step was to reassure the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Robert Bennett that "while Rosalie and I have been critical of some of the operations and programs of the BIA, we are by no means its opponents," and requested access to agency information on Indian education in the area. He also admitted that the "presence in this area of the Carnegie Cross-Cultural Educational Project of the University of Chicago does add an interesting complexity to our research effort."[10]

Before he returned to Tahlequah, however, Warrior decided to have a little fun at the expense of the NCAI. The organization was holding their annual conference in Oklahoma City and had arranged for a grand parade through the city to open proceedings. As determined as he and the NIYC were to maintain the integrity of their fight for individual Indian and tribal rights by refusing to conflate it with the wider civil rights movement, they were still willing to borrow ideas from that movement if it suited their cause. Earlier that summer, the increasingly militant Stokely Carmichael, spokesman for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, issued the rallying cry "We been saying freedom now for six years and we ain't got nothin'. What we gonna start saying now is Black Power" after being arrested in Greenwood, Mississippi, for his part in a protest march. Within months Warrior and Mel Thom coined "Red Power." Although Warrior self-depreciatingly announced that they chose the slogan because they thought it sounded "kind of cute," the tenets of Black Power and cultural organization that Carmichael was

[10] Letter, dated 1 June 1966, from Murray Wax to Robert Bennett, Box 17, Folder 48, Murray Wax Collection

striving for were already present in the NIYC. Red Power existed long before they named it such. In order to take part in the NCAI parade, Warrior, along with Della Warrior and Hank Adams, rented a car. On one side of the car was hung a piece of card with the slogan "National Indian Youth Council. Red Power" and on the other side, they informed watching Americans that "Custer Died for Your Sins." NCAI Executive Director Vine Deloria Jr. showed himself to be a master of political opportunism and he immediately co-opted the phrase. During the opening address to the conference he informed the audience that, "Red Power means we want power over our own lives." He then borrowed the "Custer Died For Your Sins" slogan as the title for his first book, published in 1968.[11]

The intensity of the political hostility in the air when Warrior returned to Tahlequah was summed up when he revisited to the Tahlequah High School and Junior High schools in which he had conducted his previous semester's research. Tribal leaders and local educators were growing increasingly hostile towards the Carnegie Project, and despite Wax's previous attempts to distance his own researchers from Tax's, the political fallout spilled over. When Warrior informed the high school principal that he wanted to resume the observation and interview project of the previous semester, the Superintendent was "very hostile." He angrily informed Warrior that he did not "care to be associated with, or for his school, or any of his students, in the controversy that was going on in the area." He summed up his opposition to the project's resumption as because he "didn't want to be

[11] Anderson, Terry, *The Movement and the Sixties,* Idem. pg. 155. Powers, Charles, T. "Bitter Look at Uses of Red Power," *Idem*. Shreve, Bradley, *Red Power Rising,* pg. 159

caught in the middle between them and us." Wax, himself, had warned Dumont when he recruited him that, "everyone buzzes like a hornet already, having been thoroughly upset and frightened by the Carnegie Cross-Cultural Educational Project of the University of Chicago (RK Thomas & Sol Tax.)" "Them and us" referred to locally powerful Cherokee families unhappy with the growing discontent displayed by usually reticent traditional Indians. With the help, and many accused, under the influence of, Bob Thomas, the traditional families had organized the Original Cherokee Community Organization, OCCO, and began to demand a greater voice in community affairs. [12]

Warrior overcame the initial reluctance of the school principals to remain involved in the project by reassuring them that "in order for us to be responsible to the Office of Education, which is funding us, we could not be opinionated in any way shape or form." After much cajoling of the Junior School principal, who initially insisted he would not cooperate without direct instructions from the County Superintendent, Warrior was also able to furnish a list of all the Indian students from the Johnson O'Malley list. The list was to enable the second part of the project to take place, in which Wax wanted Warrior to interview all those students, and their families, who had dropped out of school.[13]

Perturbed by his experiences with both high school principals Warrior enlisted the help of Bob Dumont in dealing with the county Superintendent when

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[12] Cherokee Education Project, September 19, 1966, Field Notes, Box 488, Folder 7, Murray Wax Collection. Letter, dated 27 June 1966, from Murray Wax to Bob Dumont. Box 1, Folder 1, Robert Dumont Collection, University of Chicago libraries. Cobb, Daniel, *Native Activism in Cold War America,* pg. 157

[13] Field Notes. *Idem*.

requesting his permission to carry on their research. They were pleasantly surprised by his response, in which, "he made no mention…of the turmoil that is going on. He seemed to be completely unaware of it." The Superintendent's viewpoint over education was at odds with Warrior's and those of everyone involved in both research projects. While Wax, Warrior, Tax and Thomas, all identified racial and cultural differences for the reason so many Indian students were failing, the Superintendent deemed the problem to be one of geography and setting rather than race. His opinion fit far more closely to President Johnson's idea of poverty being an issue and he declared the problem as being because "the rural and country schools were not educating the children, not only Indian children but any children in the rural and country schools." He saw a commonality between white and Indian students, irrespective of race, of "economic retardation and social maladjustment," which was a primary target identified in Johnson's War on Poverty.[14]

For Warrior, this opinion was problematic and symptomatic of the problem. Poverty and class were obvious issues that did need to be addressed, but without an acknowledgement of racial and cultural differences there would be no viable solution. The system would continue to churn out self-hating Indians who held their own cultures in disregard. Many teachers within the Tahlequah school system testified that they treated all the children the same, as if by their ignoring racial differences these differences would cease to exist. The reality was very different however, especially while the dominant cultural framework viewed Indians as shiftless, work-shy and useless. White children were not receiving these messages

[14] Ibid.

about their own country or culture, and thus providing a better education would benefit them enormously. In their attempts to create a uniform student body, however, by essentially assimilating the Indian students, educators exposed these students to psychologically and culturally damaging messages. This pattern was repeated in school districts across America, whether rural or urban and the results to Indian children were often the same, as was seen by the growing anger among urban Indians at their lack of tribally, or community, focused cultural identities.

Warrior, however, still thought in terms of the problem being caused by a lack of contextual worldviews. This was a problem created by race and culture, an unacknowledged caveat he and others in the NIYC and Indian Affairs saw as a major flaw of the War on Poverty. He and his cohorts were determined that without cultural relevancy the education system would continue to fail Indian students. Lifting Indians out of poverty would help, but, as he had stated on many previous occasions, without educational reference points that these children would connect to, they would remain confused and adrift in the classroom. It was an argument and a campaign that Warrior would continue until his death. Irrespective of their different viewpoints however, the one thing the Superintendent and Warrior did share was frustration at the lack of progress in rural education. The Superintendent lamented that, "outside of a gallon of gas and a match and burning down the country schools," he had no idea what could solve the problem. In other words, in an ideal world he would be able to start from scratch.[15]

[15] Cherokee Education Projection. *Idem*. September 20

The turmoil in and around Tahlequah reached new heights when Warrior and others were detained by the FBI and interrogated as communist agitators. On September 21, Warrior learned that "we were to be investigated" by law enforcement agencies and Kathryn Red Corn later remembered that "we all ended up down in Tahlequah being interviewed by the government, and we were supposed to be involved in something or they thought we were communist or something, it was kind of crazy." The OCCO were campaigning more openly against the Cherokee National Council and projects that were deemed at odds with traditional Cherokee values, and Chief Counsel Earl Boyd Pierce was increasingly agitated by the complaints. Al Wahrhaftig later discovered personal correspondence between Pierce and the local FBI agent accusing members of both research projects of instigating civil unrest in the area. The unrest also reached neighboring counties and towns as those educators close to Tahlequah were also reticent about allowing Warrior access to their classrooms. One superintendent, Mr. Thompson of the Hulbert School system told Warrior and Dumont that he had "heard the rumor around, that there were several factions among the Cherokee in the county" and said that he didn't want us around or associated with his school." At the same time, he told Warrior that "he had heard a lot about me and my activities" in a "rather slanderous way." Warrior did not know if this referred to his activism or his drinking but began to "feel guilty of being a hindrance to the project." [16]

[16] *Idem*. September 21

At this point, Wax was compelled to write to his local Congressman denouncing the "hostile political pressure" and "congressional investigation" his project was under because of its supposed ties to Tax's research. He acknowledged that in helping to "bring to light the discontent and unrest that had been fermenting among the traditional Cherokee," the Carnegie Project had been accused by Earl Boyd Pierce of actually "fomenting unrest among the traditional Cherokee." Pierce had a running history with Tax that led back to the Cherokee's initial disapproval of the 1961 Chicago Conference. Although he had eventually participated in the conference Pierce held long-standing reservations about Tax's motivation, usually seeing them as a potential threat to his own power base. Such were the personal and professional connections between the members of both projects, with Warrior, Thomas, Wahrhaftig, Red Corn and Dumont all friends, and the Wax's and Tax having studied together at Chicago, Wax admitted that it might lead to the assumption that he and Rosalie were "in league with them." He denounced this assumption however and told the Congressman that "we resent the effort to brand our project with any political label or to terminate it before it has accomplished its goals." These goals resulted in a paper published by Bob Dumont, and titled "*The Quality of Indian Education and the Search for Tradition,"* which was first presented at the NIYC's 1967 annual meeting at the Ponca Powwow.[17]

In October his supervisors were sufficiently impressed with Warrior's work to consider him a useful member of the team, as his October 19th feedback from

[17] Kathryn Red Corn, interview. *Idem*. Letter dated September 29, 1966, from Murray Wax to Congressman Robert Ellsworth, Box 17, Folder 48, Murray Wax Collection

Rosalie Wax showed. While there were obvious supervisory comments from Dr. Wax on areas for improvement, her general feedback encouraged Warrior to "continue, continue, continue, continue," as, "your accounts of conversations with educational administrators could not be improved upon." Her advice for the remainder of the year was for Warrior to work closely with the other researchers on the project, declaring, "God save the Plains Indian peer group. Don't ask me how it happens, but no sooner do you, Mr. Dumont, and Miss Redcorn reside in the same town than your work improves by leaps and bounds." Dumont himself, appeared to have an ambivalent working relationship with Warrior, praising him in some field notes, but at the same time, telling Murray Wax, in exasperation that, "all I can say is that they're you're [sic] research assistants. I assume no responsibility." In January 1967, Wax recognized their strained relationship asking if they could continue working "amicably [18]together without either feeling exploited."

At the same time, Murray Wax wrote to the NCAI Chief Executive Vine Deloria Jr. to further clarify the position of his project and his researchers. He insisted that Warrior had no connections at all with either the Carnegie Project or Thomas's *Indian Voices,* and was instead "a full-time employee of the Indian Research Project of KU." As with his letters to the BIA and Congress, Wax reiterated that the two projects were "dissociated in fact" but complained that "certain parties," which in essence meant Earl Boyd Pierce, "have found it convenient to insist that they are a joint conspiracy." Wax was finding the strain of

[18] "Calling Agent Number 49," October 19, 1966, Box 488, Folder 7, Murray Wax Collection. Letter from Bob Dumont to Murray Wax, dated November 7, 1966, letter from Murray Wax to Bob Dumont, dated January 18, 1967, both from Box 1, Folder 8, Robert Dumont Collection

defending his project quite telling and ended his letter to Deloria by pleading that "we would like to be allowed to go about doing our research."[19]

Retaining Warrior as a researcher, however, was an unfortunate choice for Wax if he truly wanted to avoid controversy. Despite the reassurances to the various school principals that "we could not be opinionated in any way shape or form," Warrior had very firm opinions on the tribal leadership that Wax carefully tried not to upset. Despite Wax's claims to the contrary, Warrior was firmly on the side of those "fomenting unrest among the traditional Cherokee." In an interview with journalist Stan Steiner, recorded in September 1966,Warrior was at his eloquently brusque best as he savaged the Cherokee leadership as "local redneck politicians finding status through claiming (to be) Indian." Keeler, the federally appointed Cherokee chief was one sixteenth Cherokee and did not participate in any culturally traditional practices. The matter of the BIA appointing tribal leaders irrespective of the wishes of the people was a sore point for Warrior, who, saw this as another method of paternalistic control. He dismissed Cherokee Principal Chief W.W. Keeler, who had been appointed by President Truman in 1949, as one of the government's "token Indians who hold high office in oil companies and go around, pat Indians on the back, laugh with them, give them cigars, and get them to sign their land over." Indeed, much of Conoco-Philips oil was drilled on land that had previously been owned by, or was now leased from, Indians.[20]

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[19] Letter dated 20 October 1966, from Murray Wax to Vine Deloria Jr. Box 17, Folder 48, Murray Wax Collection.

[20] September 1966 interview with Stan Steiner, idem. W.W. Keeler remained as the government's appointed chief of the Cherokee until the tribe regained the right to

Sitting in his home in Tahlequah, with an Oklahoma thunderstorm raging outside and his eldest daughter playing inside, Warrior also targeted President Johnson and Vice President Hubert Humphrey. Both had made very public speeches on Indian Affairs earlier in the year, but Warrior dismissed them as simply "paying lip service to a group of people that are finally having people in their midst who are becoming more and more aggressive in trying to do something about their conditions and situation in which they live." Similarly, he categorized Humphrey's imminent visit to La Donna Harris's Oklahomans of Indian Opportunity organization as merely "coming down to calm the Natives down."[21]

Warrior's dismissal of LBJ's speech signified the level of cynicism with which he viewed politicians. The speech in question was given at the April swearing in of Robert Bennett as Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The NIYC opposed the appointment on the grounds that Bennett was a career BIA employee and they did not see an appointment from "within the ranks" as an approach that promised the radical change they demanded. While Warrior dismissed Johnson's call for his new commissioner to "put the first Americans first on our agenda. I want you to begin work today on the most comprehensive program for the advancement of the Indians that the Government of the United States has ever considered," as lip service, his staff had other ideas. Recalling the speech and the reception it was receiving from

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vote in 1972. Keeler subsequently won the tribe's first democratic election under the Self-Determination Act and served as chief for four more years. Margaret Huettl's thesis discusses Keeler's achievements at the head of the Cherokee Nation, but at this time, as an appointed chief, rather than the elected chief he would later become, he was viewed with distrust by many Indians, Cherokee or otherwise, in Oklahoma.

[21] Harris formed Oklahomans for Indian Opportunity in 1965 as an intertribal community organization to help Indian communities secure funding from the Office of Economic Opportunity.

the numerous Indian leaders in the room, Robert Hardesty remembered that

> "Will Sparks and I were standing at the back of the room, wondering how it was going to end, when Jim Duesenberry, of the Council of Economic Advisers, rushed over to us and said in a stage whisper, "Holy God, someone run over to the Budget Bureau and get Charlie Schultze. He's giving the country back to the Indians!"

Johnson had referred to Jefferson's observation that colonial European settlers had found Indians "occupying a country which left them no desire but to be undisturbed." He told the assembled aides and media that "We cannot turn back the hands of time today, but we can, after 161 years of neglect, honor Jefferson's plea." It was this comment that set pulses racing among his aides. He continued that, despite "some success" by previous administrations, "far too many of our Indians live under conditions which made a mockery of our claims to social justice." While members of the White House feared that Johnson was promising too much, logistically and financially, in his support for Bennett and Indians, Warrior's cynicism was born of a mistrust of the government's 'top down' approach to fixing the 'Indian Problem,' which for all the "success" that Johnson referred to, was anathema to his campaign for self-determination. [22]

As he had outlined in many of his speeches, Warrior saw the way forward as "community driven" by the people within the community rather than the bureaucrats outside the community. In his interview with Steiner he used issues of joblessness, poor education, societal "peonage," and political and economic

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[22] Steiner interview. *Idem*. Lyndon B. Johnson "Remarks at the Swearing in of Robert L. Bennett as Commissioner of Indian Affairs," April 7, 1966. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu. Hardesty, Robert L., "The LBJ the Nation Seldom Saw" (1983). Accessed January 3, 2012 *Office of the President Publications*. Paper 2. pg. 18

exploitation facing the local traditional Cherokee as a microcosm for similar pressures and situations within Indian communities across the country. To Warrior, violence appeared to be the only logical outcome "if the country doesn't want to listen to logic." This assumption was based upon the way the wider civil rights movement had progressed, with non-violent protests increasingly being replaced with violent clashes between protestors and the authorities. He told Steiner to "look at the negroes. Nothing was done in their favor until they got violent, and I guess if this country really understands violence then this is the only way to do that." In eastern Oklahoma, where he grew up, he surmised that, "southern rednecks in this area only understand violence. Slap them in the mouth or shoot them, then they'll pay attention to you." This was more like the "action and noise" that Karen Rickard had teased Warrior about, and the radical approach that Gerald Brown had feared Warrior would take the NIYC. Frustration at the lack of tangible progress for Indian communities colored his calls for violence, although as president of the NIYC he felt more empowered to unleash his more radical rhetoric than he had previously.[23]

Steiner offered that alternative options to the violence were the "community actions among Cherokee villages and Creek villages around here." Warrior acknowledged that local groups were forming to try and change the situation of poverty they were surrounded by, and that each local community were meeting to discuss "some kind of policy or plan of action." He argued, though, that as "the powers that be manipulate the political and economic power structures," these community groups would flounder. Repeating a theme that dominated his rhetoric

[23] Steiner Interview. *Idem*.

against Johnson's Community Action Program, which allowed bureaucrats to control the funding, programming and decision making process, he insisted that the only way to change the bureaucratic structure was to "smash it. Turn it over sideways and stomp on it."[24]

When Steiner asked if this tendency to violence was exclusively youth driven, Warrior argued that it was not. He described Oklahoma as a "happy medium of elders with their power in the community working with these younger ones who have some idea of how urban America works." Working together, these two groups "know that they're getting the short end of the deal and that it must be stopped." "In other words," he said, "let's knock off the shit somehow or other." Steiner later used the image of elders and youth working together in harmony to categorize the movement as "new Indian nationalism coupled with traditional tribalism." This was in direct contrast to the imagery being perpetuated elsewhere that activists like Warrior and the NIYC were rebelling against their elders. As he had made abundantly clear on numerous occasions, White House appointed political leaders and cultural traditional elders were two entirely different entities. To Warrior, and others, these traditional elders, with their cultural knowledge and experience were the true political power of the tribes, to be protected and honored at all costs. As catchy a catchphrase as it was though, Steiner's observation was hardly a new one. In 1893, when battling in vain to convince the Ponca to sell their 'surplus' land to

[24] Ibid.

the government, the Jerome Commissioners had made the very same observation about the Ponca people collectively.[25]

He elaborated on this issue when Steiner asked him where were the "Martin Luther Kings or the Tecumseh's, or the Pontiacs, of the Indian Movement?" Reflective of his own unwillingness to be called a leader, despite that title often being bestowed upon him, Warrior surmised that, "leaders come about at the will of the people. A true leader is representative of the people. They make him a leader." Rather, as he told Steiner, "communities decide a plan of action, then an articulate spokesman voices for them, but he is not really the leader. It is the community that is the leader." This was true for Warrior in Tahlequah among the traditional Cherokee, at home on White Eagle with the Ponca, and among his cohorts at the NIYC, and right across Indian Country. These communities included women and children who voiced opinions on what directions to take, while he and other were merely "articulate spokesmen." This concept of communal leadership from within reached back to Warrior's Ponca upbringing, where, although fragile, a clan system still existed within the tribal communal structure.[26]

As far back as the inaugural meeting of the NIYC Warrior had argued against anyone using the organization to appoint themselves leaders, and he lamented to Steiner that "today it's become a political springboard were they were bought off with government jobs." He called for the community to appoint new spokesmen because "the ones who started the movement are now considered Uncle

[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

Tomahawks because there is a more and more angrier bunch coming up – which I like." This was the group that he foresaw bringing violence with them as "they'll be madder and angrier and also have more awareness about how to work the thing (system)."[27]

Warrior knew that the problem was not just isolated to American Indians and African Americans though, and saw the issues as being indicative of a wider malaise throughout the United States. The major problems he identified, "bureaucracy out of control, over institutionalizing, the alienation of individuals, and the exploitation of people, friends and neighbors," constituted "the overall and general nature of our (American) society today." His critique of the modern world paralleled the assessment presented by former Commissioner John Collier in his campaign for Indian Rights as founder of the American Indian Defense Association and his previous role as a social reformer helping immigrants settle in New York. Franklin Roosevelt's Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes promoted Collier to the office of Commissioner, and he immediately ceased the allotment and assimilation policies of the previous administrations. Collier was a cultural pluralist who worked with immigrant communities before he became a defender of Indian causes.

Warrior drew contemporary parallels to the Free Speech Movement and anti-Vietnam War protests when he argued that, "this is what the students in Berkeley are mad about. There's not that much difference in their thinking or anger. This is what people are screaming about Vietnam." It was not just students and Indians who felt this way though, and Warrior referred to Senators William Morse and J.

[27] Ibid.

William Fulbright, who were among Johnson's most outspoken critics over the Vietnam War. He said that "what Fulbright says, and Morse, that maybe we should stop and re-evaluate ourselves as a person as a group of people, as a community, as a nation, and see what we are doing not only to each other but also to ourselves." He reflected, "is this the American Way, a process of hollowing out the insides of themselves?" If this "hollowing out" was, indeed, the price, or prize, of assimilation into American society, then all the more reason to defend tribal cultures and communities. Individualism and alienation were anathema to Warrior's community-centered worldview.[28]

For many, the Vietnam War represented American imperialism at its worst, and protestors saw the war as a colonial war of expansion rather than the proclaimed war of containment against a Communist threat. Warrior himself saw similarities between the colonialist reservation system of the American Indians and the behavior of the American government to the South Vietnamese people. His opposition to the war, though, had a far more instinctive basis. He was convinced that that war was "economically motivated and that they were instigating a lot of the turmoil down there." Beyond the anti-war rhetoric however, Warrior still saw the root of the problem as American society itself. He asked, "if America is so great, and America is so good, and if America is so charitable, then why are we forcing people to behave like this? Why are we warping them and twisting them so that the only thing they can do is come out and cause volcanic eruptions of violence?"[29]

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[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

Slowly, in the midst of his despair over the state of American society in general, and the plight of American Indians in particular, Warrior's growing alcoholism was becoming an issue for those around him. By September 1966, he was signing off his field notes as "Agent 49" in a clear reference to the more social "after hours" events of the powwow circuit. In November, Murray Wax chastised him for his lack of productivity as a researcher, and later confided to Mildred Hickeman, Warrior's research supervisor, that he thought his drinking was to blame for his poor work ethic. In truth, Warrior's increasing activism, public speaking, and greater responsibilities were affecting his work for Wax. His alcohol consumption was affecting his health, more than his work at this time.[30]

Most frustratingly for Wax, was the work Warrior did produce was of a very high quality. A week after the OEO recruited Warrior to serve as a VISTA conference consultant, Wax wrote to him to "confront(ed) the issue of Spring Semester" and whether or not Warrior would be retained beyond his initial twelve-month contract. Wax complained that during his employment as a researcher, Warrior had submitted a "very small quantity of work," although the work submitted had been of a "tantalizingly" high quality in which "you demonstrate that you understand the dynamics of Indian education and of Indian affairs as well as anyone I know." Wax declared himself at an impasse as "I like having the Warrior's about" and "if I were to replace you with a conventional graduate student, it would take him years to understand as much about Indian education and Indian affairs without half trying." Conversely though, such a student would be providing the

[30] Ibid.

volume of material that Warrior was lacking to produce a "presentation, perhaps building it into articles, or a thesis, or even a book." Warrior's lack of "formal background in social science," having majored in education, was also a problem for Wax who did "not see what meaningful participation you could then have on the project." He offered the possibility of a consultancy role as the only viable option for Warrior who it was suggested should "make other plans for spring."

Whether the intention of the letter was truly to relive Warrior of his duties, or shock him into being more productive, Wax eventually decided to retain him after "he begged me to let him continue: and, after reflecting on the matter, I agreed to continue Della, providing he went for treatment." Warrior agreed to the conditions and left for Denver in early December after having a "good talk" with Bob Dumont. He also allowed him to help him by arranging for a friend's father to visit "since he is one of those upper class reformed alcoholics and a pretty sharp brain, though Clyde might enjoy him." The following month Warrior was back in Tahlequah, and not drinking. Della remembers that in the periods after rehab, Warrior would not drink while he was at home, but "if he got asked to be someplace then that's when it started again." Wax assured himself that "Clyde and Della…can keep usefully busy until the end of the month when Millie arrives and can provide local guidance."[31]

[31] Letter from Murray Wax to Bob Dumont, dated 4 Jan, 1967, Letter from Bob Dumont to Murray Wax, dated December 16, 1966. Letter from Wax to Dumont, dated January 18, 1967, Box 1, Folder 11, Robert Dumont Collection. Mildred Dickeman was an Assistant Professor of Anthropology that Wax recruited as a research Associate to oversee the team in Tahlequah. Interview between Robert Warrior and Della Warrior, *Idem*.

While his colleagues and supervisors were discussing his alcoholism and ways to work around it, Warrior presented what is possibly his most powerful, impassioned and iconic testimony on the connection between the material and spiritual paucity of American Indians. Testifying before the President's National Advisory Commission on Poverty in Memphis, Tennessee, on February 2, 1967, Warrior made education for American Indians a central theme of his speech. The conference was one of three organized by the Commission to canvas as many first hand accounts of poverty and potential solutions to the issue as possible. Aside from Memphis, the Commission listened to testimonies in Washington D.C. and Tucson, Arizona. Among its many responsibilities, the Commission was charged with evaluating how existing programs for the poor could be improved to eliminate poverty and unemployment. Warrior's role as NIYC president and his work with the OEO and Upward Bound meant that he was selected for testimony as one of one hundred and five selected "representatives" of the rural poor. At this point in his career, drawing upon his experiences in Tahlequah, he saw definite causal links between poverty, ethnicity, and education.

His rhetoric had also evolved to the point whereby he finally offered solutions as to how change should come about. Not through violence or smashing the system as he had advocated just five months earlier to Stan Steiner, although he did still warn that these were viable options, but through trusting Indian tribal communities to take back control of their lives. Without advocating for the abolition of the BIA or the federal trust relationship, Warrior was determined that the government should take the rare step of asking Indians how they envisaged

rectifying the problems their communities faced. He advocated tribal self-determination through the recognition of cultural and political sovereignty in the true sense of the word, with the community, and not the BIA, determining what was best for the community.

He opened the speech with an enlightening discussion of the concepts of poverty and freedom while declaring a spiritual and intellectual bond between his generation and their elders. Drawing on the personal experiences, and rich cultural and communal heritage, of himself and his peers he told the conference that "most members of the National Indian Youth Council can remember when we…spent many hours at the feet of our grandfathers listening to stories of the time when the Indians were a great people, when we were, when we were rich, when we lived the good life." He acknowledged that, "it was only recently that we realized that there was surely great material depravation in those days, but that our old people felt rich because they were free." This freedom was one that did not necessitate dancing at Trading Centers or canoeing tourists round Disneyland for survival. Rather than material wealth, his ancestors were "rich in things of the spirit" compared to the present situation where "if there is one thing that characterizes Indian life today it is poverty of the spirit." The stifling effect of generations of paternal federal administration meant that, "we are not allowed to make basic human choices about our personal lives and about the destinies of our communities." He labeled the freedom to make these choices as "the mark of a free mature people," and it was the desire for such freedom, to make choice, which was the cornerstone of the push for tribal self-determination. Without self-determination, and the freedom it offered "we

sit on our front porches or in our yards and the world and our lives in it pass us by without our desires or aspirations having any effect." He reiterated that, "we are not free. We do not make choices. Our choices are made for us. We are the poor."[32]

For Warrior, the causes for this poverty, which reached across all Indian peoples, were located in the society and economy around them, whether they be local Boards of Commerce, city and local councils, or government agencies. He claimed that, "for those of us who live on reservations these choices and decisions are made by federal administrators, bureaucrats, and their "yes men," euphemistically called tribal governments." The federal trust relationship between Indians and the American government was not the only reason for this situation, however. Urban and non-reservation Indians "have our lives controlled by local white power elites. We have many rulers. They are called social workers, "cops," school teachers, churches, etc. and now OEO employees." For Warrior, this lack of opportunity or trust to create opportunities were the basic cause of Indian poverty, saying that, "it is also true that our lack of reasonable choices, our lack of freedoms, our poverty of spirit is not unconnected with material poverty." [33]

Drawing upon his most recent experiences in Tahlequah, were he bore witness to accusations of Indians being shiftless, work-shy and benefit dependent, he complained that "we are rarely accorded respect as fellow human beings. Our children come home from school to us with shame in their hearts and a sneer on their lips for their home and their parents." This was something he had witnessed

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[32] Warrior, Clyde, "We Are Not Free," *ABC: Americans Before Columbus,* May 1967, pg. 4
[33] Ibid.

first hand from children attending Tahlequah's Junior High and High schools. It was also a concept that was now much more personal to Warrior as the father of two young daughters. He was also trying to ensure they as were as deeply immersed in Ponca culture and traditions as he was, introducing them into the powwow arena at very early ages. He was worried for their future upbringing within the current social structure of America.[34]

This social structure was one that either ignored Indians or tried to "tell us what is good for us." Warrior was convinced that these people could not solve the poverty problems for Indian communities but were also determined to keep the power to do so from Indians themselves. He saw these bureaucrats, and their self-interest as the biggest obstacle to self-determination. He recognized that "there is a great struggle going on in America now between those who more "local" control of programs and those who would keep the power and the purse strings in the hands of the federal government." This struggle was irrelevant to the NIYC or American Indians, however, because "we know that no one is arguing that the dispossessed, the poor, be given any control over their own destiny." Indeed, reflective of the peonage system he discussed with Steiner, he argued that the "local white power elites who protest the loudest against federal control are the very ones who would keep us poor in spirit and worldly goods in order to enhance their own personal and economic station in the world." For Warrior, the only real solution was to appeal

[34] Ibid.

directly to the federal government for support in the push for self-determination, despite the role of federal agencies in the subjugation of Indian peoples.[35]

Even then however, the governments flagship program for allowing community action was failing the Indians. Returning to the issue of OEO programs and employees, he informed the conference that the War on Poverty was not working in Indian communities, primarily because the status quo of bureaucratic self-interest had not been broken, and the government was funding the very people he identified earlier as keeping Indians down. He identified "alliances in Indian areas between federal administrators and local elites, where "everybody being satisfied" means the people who count, and the Indian or poor does not count." It was this policy of bureaucratic alliance that meant that Johnson's War on Poverty was ensuring that Indian communities remained poor rather than uplift themselves. This was reminiscent of his previous criticism of the concept of community and status of power within his own community in Kay County, Oklahoma. He berated the administrators and social workers that classified Indian children as "deprived," saying "exactly what they are deprived of seems to be unstated. We give our children love, warmth, and respect in our homes and the qualities necessary to be a warm human being." He countered that, "perhaps they get into trouble as teenagers because we give them too much warmth, love, passion, and respect. Perhaps they have trouble reconciling themselves to being a number on a IBM card."[36]

[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.

Warrior contended that the War on Poverty was not the only federal policy or program failing American Indian communities because of bureaucratic alliances with local agencies. He attacked the government's Head Start education program for underprivileged children as "just a federally subsidized kindergarten which no one takes too seriously." However, while the program had not "fulfilled the expectations of elitist educators in our educational colleges and the poor may not be ecstatic with the results," he argued that "local powers are overjoyed, this is the one program that has not upset anyone's apple cart and which has strengthened local institutions in an acceptable manner at least to our local patrons." The initial emphasis of Head Start as a six week summer school program, supplementary to the normal school year led to complaints of weaknesses similar to those Warrior identified in Upward Bound. It was not rigorous enough educationally, it was not long enough, and it did not target those areas specifically needed to counter the intellectual and educational effects of poverty. Local schools, school districts, teachers and administrators were subsequently unchallenged by, and unconcerned with, Head Start as a threat to the status quo.[37]

Warrior compared the effects of immersion into the American Public school system upon the current generation of Indian school children with the effects of forced boarding school education on his parents and grandparents' generations. Unlike many analysts of the boarding school era, Warrior found the current educational system to be causing more damage to Indian children and their communities than the previous one. He acknowledged that his "father and many of

[37] Ibid.

my generation lived their childhoods in an almost prison-like atmosphere." The results of this were devastating as many students returned to their communities "unable even to speak their own language. Some returned to become drunks. Most of them had become white haters, or that most pathetic of all modern Indians – Indian haters." The primary cause of these issues was the forced removal and absence of children from their communities. The overall effect of the boarding school system left these Indians as "very confused, ambivalent, and immobilized individuals" who were unable to "reconcile the tensions and contradictions built inside themselves by outside institutions." These tensions and contradictions were often a result of the loss of language, which in many cases saw the children shunned as outsiders after many years away by the very communities they were desperately attempting to reconnect with. This second loss, a forced rejection compounding the earlier forced removal, was often the cause for much of the alcohol issues that resulted from boarding school education. Naturally, Warrior argued, Indians had little faith in "such kinds of federal programs devised for our betterment, nor do we see education as a panacea for all ills." [38]

As devastating an image as Warrior painted of the effects of forced boarding school education however, he still found the results less psychologically damaging to the community than the present situation whereby Indian children were educated in the public school system. Warrior warned that, "there is a whole generation of Indian children...who look to their relatives, my generation, and my father's, to see if they are worthy people." Rather than facing this disconnectedness when returning

[38] Ibid.

after many years of forced absence, these children were bringing this disdain into the home every afternoon. Warrior was also speaking from first hand experience of a school system in which "I participated in functions to the greatest extent of which I was permitted – which wasn't much due to the dominant attitude and also my background of limited resources. You knew you didn't fit. Economically you didn't fit. Socially you didn't fit." Many youngsters understood that this exclusion was rooted in racial and economic overtones and took that resentment home with them.[39]

As he had noted many times in his Tahlequah field notes, however, the western worldview being inculcated into these children was often in direct contrast to the indigenous worldviews they found at home. He noted that, " their judgment and definition of what is worthy is now the judgment most Americans make. They judge worthiness as competence, and competence as worthiness. And I am afraid me and my fathers do not fare well in the light of this situation and judgment." In this situation, the end result was the children rejecting their communities and traditions rather than having it taken from them. A rejection of the culture from those situated within the culture was far more devastating to the community than the culture rejecting those who had already been forcibly removed from it. The latter was seen as a protective cocooning whereby the culture sought to limit the damage from outsiders. The former saw, potentially, the fabric of the culture and community being torn from within.[40]

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[39] Clyde Warrior autobiographical essay, NIYC Collection, Box 5, Folder 3, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico
[40] "We Are Not Free" *Idem*.

For Warrior this was an issue that was central to the future integrity and prosperity of Indian communities. Unless tribes and individuals found a way to convince these children of their worthiness, they would "turn to drink and crime and self-destructive acts." He was adamant that unless a way was found to change the internal perception of these youngsters "there will be a generation of Indians grow to adulthood whose reaction to their situation will make previous social ills seem like a Sunday School picnic." This devastating scenario was central to Warrior's push for tribal and individual self-determination. There was far more at stake than political power or positioning. He insisted that, "for the sake of our children, for the sake of our spiritual and material well being… for the sake of our psychic stability as well as our physical well-being we must be free men and exercise free choices." This freedom was predicated by certain essential conditions according to Warrior. He stressed that the same issues of choice and opportunity for the individual that he had first raised in *Time For Indian Action* were also essential for tribal communities. Most importantly, whereas he had previously suggested only alternatives, he now provided answers.[41]

He told the conference "We must make decisions about our own destinies. We must be able learn to learn and profit by our own mistakes. Only then can we become competent and prosperous communities." Free from the careful planning and statistical evidence that D'Arcy McNickle and the NCAI had produced in their 1955 Point Nine plan for self-determination, Warrior's speech carried a far more rhetorical claim for independence that was reminiscent of Arthur C. Parker's 1915

[41] Ibid.

essay indicting the government for its actions. Parker, formerly trained by Franz Boas as an anthropologist, was editor of the Society of American Indians *Quarterly Journal*. He published his critique of the government's policies in the first two decades of the twentieth century. He accused the government of stealing seven rights of "intellectual life, social organization, freedom, economic independence, moral standards and racial ideals, his good name, and a definite civic status." Each of these rights are fundamental to freedom, without taking into account "the minor loss of territory and of resources." Parker was adamant that intellect and independence could compensate for loss of land. However, there was no way to rise above "the crushing of a noble people's spirit and the usurpation of its right to be responsible, self-supporting and self-governing." Parker demanded the return of these "seven stolen rights" and for the federal government to work towards giving Indians "order and hope, incentive and ambition, education and ideals" because the current state of American Indians, in 1915, were the "results of a bewildered, dispirited, and darkened mind." Parker's ideals were of a different generation, and he saw citizenship as potentially helping the fix these issues. Perhaps the most damning indictment of Warrior's speech was that so many of the issues he discussed had not changed in the half century since Parker had made his attack. In both cases they demanded freedom of spirit, intellect, and choice, as the only way forward for American Indians.[42]

[42] Parker, Arthur, C., "Arthur C. Parker Indicts the Government for Its Actions, 1915," *Talking Back to Civilization: Indian Voices from the Progressive Era,* Boston, Bedford/St. Martin's 2001, pg. 95-102

Warrior was adamant that "We must be free in the most literal sense of the word – not sold or coerced into accepting programs for our own good, not of our own making or choice." One of the main issues for Indian communities with federal or local bureaucracies determining which programs would run and which would not was that they were programs which "are not theirs, which they do not understand and which cannot but ultimately fail and contribute to already strong feelings of inadequacy." These feelings were not the antidote needed to ensuring that future generations viewed Warrior and his father's generation as being competent. He saw this as being the fundamental flaw with Johnson's Community Action Programs, and argued that "Community Development must be just what the word implies, Community Development."

The problem with the system as it currently stood lay not just in the implementation of foreign programs, but also the administration of them. Even those programs designed to help Indian communities often had minimal input from any Indians within those communities. As Warrior pointed out, "if the program falters helpful outsiders too often step in to smooth over the rough spots. At that point any program ceases to belong to the people and ceases to be a learning experience for them." The path to self-determination and community improvement could only happen with those communities having autonomy over these programs. He declared that "Programs must be Indian creations, Indian choices, Indian experiences because only then will Indians understand why a program failed and not blame themselves for some personal inadequacy." He pointed out that "a better program built upon the failure of an old program is the path of progress. But to

achieve this experience, competence, worthiness, sense of achievement and the resultant material prosperity Indians must have the responsibility in the ultimate sense of the word." He declared that "freedom and responsibility are different sides of the same coin and there can be no freedom without complete responsibility." Rather than the responsibility of current tribes who ultimately answered to the Secretary of the Interior, and his political whims, Warrior defined responsibility as "not the fictional responsibility and democracy of passive consumers of programs: programs which emanate from and whose responsibility for success rests in the hands of outsiders – be they federal administrators or local white elitist groups…the real solution to poverty is encouraging the competence of the community as a whole"[43]

Warrior also saw the poverty and depravation of Indian communities as facilitating the failure of those Indians who strove to 'better themselves' in the "American city with its excitement and promise of unlimited opportunity." Even those Indians who had the benefit of an education carried "a strong sense of unworthiness" which meant that, "for many of them the promise of opportunity ends in the gutter on the skid rows of Los Angeles and Chicago." The solution to avoiding this situation lay in the preventive medicine of enabling them to "grow up in a decent community with a strong sense of personal adequacy and competence."[44]

Warrior saw this, though, not simply as a domestic issue, but one that tarnished the international reputation of America as the world's 'moral high ground'

[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.

in the Cold War. He reasoned that "America has given a great moral and social message to the world and demonstrated (perhaps not forcibly enough) that freedom and responsibility as an ethic is inseparable from and, in fact, the cause of the great American standard of living." Warrior was echoing the sentiments of the Society of American Indians after World War One as America funneled funding for post-colonial rebuilding in Africa and the Middle East after World War One, and of the NCAI in the wake of America's aid to foreign nations after World War II. Also echoing the charges made against America's colonial system by Felix S. Cohen, Warrior complained that, "America has not however been diligent enough in promulgating this philosophy within her own borders." And that American Indians needed the same freedom and responsibility that most Americans took for granted. It would only be then that "poverty and powerlessness cease to hang like the sword of Damocles over our heads."[45]

Warrior's final attack was on the myth of the American 'melting pot's of completely assimilated peoples. He again displayed an affinity with the concepts of cultural pluralism. Repeating a refrain from an earlier speech he reasoned that no ethnic community totally dissolved into the American mainstream individually, but rather entire communities of people, be they Irish, Jewish, Hispanic, African American or Italian American, established themselves as part of American society. American Indians, however, were expected, and requested, to forgo their communities like no other ethnic minority. He insisted that rather than assimilation,

[45] Ibid.

the solution to "Indian poverty is not "government programs" but in the solution of the person and his community."[46]

He closed the speech by reminding the conference that he was no leader but merely a spokesman for his people. He informed them that the "National Indian Youth Council recommends for "openers" that to really give these people "the poor, the dispossessed, the Indians," complete freedom and responsibility is to…let the poor decide for once what is best for themselves." He admitted that, "of course we realize within the present structure this is not possible. So we further recommend that another avenue of thought be tried, such as junking the present structure and creating another." He then repeated his assertion that continuing with existing federal Indian policy would be simply "re-inforcing (sic) and strengthening the ills that are implicit in the very structure of that (Indian) society." Warrior's ideas were ahead of his time, and he continued, with the help of the NIYC, to search for ways in which the present structure could be changed. The alternative was to allow the status quo to remain and for existing policies to slowly strangle the life out of America's Indian communities.[47]

The speech was one of the most eloquent and dramatic calls yet for tribal self-determination and resonated with the anger and frustration of a people so used to seeing their demands for freedom ignored by the administration. Far from the 'conservative' route that Gerald Brown had feared he would take the NIYC, and which the NCAI had adopted under Vine Deloria Jr.'s Stewardship, Warrior's

[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid. Italics mine

speech had carried the NIYC to the forefront of the campaign for self-determination and ensured they were an organization to be taken seriously in Indian Affairs. On the same day tribal leaders were in Washington D.C. offering a cautious reproof of the government's proposed omnibus bill of new economic legislation for American Indians, which fell well short of the demanded repudiation of termination legislation and did not guarantee Indian title to their own lands. The proposed Indian Resources Development Act, approved by Commissioner Bennett, never made it to Congress after the dissent of the tribal leaders, and although a small victory, was a significant step in the direction of tribal self-control that Warrior and the NIYC demanded. Warrior's speech left those governments bureaucrats, and Indian leaders listening and all those who would read his words in *ABC* exactly what direction he and the NIYC considered to be they way forward in Indian affairs. Warrior's words reverberated around Indian Country, while Commissioner Robert Bennett and other policy makers also began to pay closer attention to his rhetoric, and on February 6-7 Commissioner Bennett met with Warrior and other NIYC officers to discuss Indian poverty, education and reservation resources at a conference in Denver, Colorado.[48]

In Tahlequah, however, the main issue for those close to Warrior was his deteriorating health. Five days after his testimony before the Poverty Hearing, and on the same day that Warrior was discussing policy with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Millie Dickeman wrote to Wax to inform him that during a recent check up "Clyde's liver showed no cirrhosis, but promised to do so soon if he'd had a couple more binges like his last. They told him it was severely damaged, tho, but

[48] Alvin Josephy's *Red Power* gives excerpts of the tribal leaders' response to the proposed omnibus bill.

could recuperate if he treated it properly for six months." Warrior's solution was to forgo liquor "except for an occasional breakdown, as at govt. testifications," which suggested he had succumbed to temptation after providing his clarion call for self-determination. Significantly though, Warrior did continue to drink beer, even though he did not "know whether he can cure his liver while drinking beer." Like many alcoholics Warrior was convinced he could control the problem, as "he doesn't really want to give liquor in toto, but wants to cure his liver and then drink sensibly." He also eschewed the idea of help for despite being "aware that alcohol is hard to cure" he did not want to "go for any AA type approaches." Despite these issues, however, she reported that "this is very premature at this point: but Clyde does seem eager and active, so let us enjoy some guarded optimism."[49]

While his national reputation as a speaker and activist was gaining strength, his personal demons were slowly deteriorating those relationships within his daily working life. Wax was becoming increasingly disappointed as he had agreed only to retain the service of the Warrior's on the condition that Clyde sought help. In his point of view, this latest setback at the Poverty Conference reflected badly upon, and subsequently undermined the seriousness of, his research project. Further letters from Millie Dickeman described "Della as the more sensitive and reliable worker, but Clyde is full of ideas...but is impervious to any kind of coordination with the outside world via reading or discussion with other project leaders." By April, she reported that, "Clyde is really in a bad bind now, and hasn't really worked in the last two weeks" while he was "restricting his psychological support to beer" while Della

[49] Letter, dated February 7, 1967 from Mildred Dickeman to Murray Wax, Box 17, Folder 481, Murray Wax Collection.

mailed all his applications to graduate school, including Harvard, Kansas University, and Haverford College. Wax replied that "I'm not surprised that he gave out: all one could ever do is hope that he might take fire." He also seemed to wash his hands of Warrior, declaring that "it seems to me that every project has its share of people who don't belong, for whom it is the wrong project at the wrong time of their life." He bemoaned that "you tried, Dumont tried, I tried, and perhaps so too did RKT (Bob Thomas.)"[50]

One of the issues that had seen Warrior fall off the wagon so spectacularly was concern over attending graduate school. D'Arcy McNickle, who urged him to apply for Harvard, recommended him for a John Hay Whitney Foundation grant, describing him as "one of the outstanding young Indians in the country." Confirmation of his acceptance of a Whitney foundation created a nervousness that Warrior tried to calm with beer, according to Dickeman. While McNickle described Warrior in complementary terms, Dickeman was unsure how to proceed with her own requested letter of recommendation. She confided in Wax that she felt Warrior "has no business in graduate school. His Indian anti-intellectualism is so incredibly strong."[51]

Wax responded that "My policy is to be diplomatically honest: he is bright and insightful; his educational background and training are abominable, he is active

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[50] Letter from Murray Wax to Mildred Dickeman, dated April 20, 1967. Box 17, Folder 481, Murray Wax Collection.

[51] Letter, undated, from Millie Dickeman to Murray Wax, Box 17, Folder 481, Murray Wax Collection. "Indian anti-intellectualism" is described as being at a point of self-awareness that one is automatically suspicious of any attempt to define your identity and culture within an academic framework.

and successful in national Indian affairs; etc." He proceeded to dismiss Warrior's intellectual credentials in the same vein as he had washed his hands of his role in the research project. He told Dickeman that "my guess is Stu Levine at KU will think Clyde wonderful as a resource in American Studies, and that Clyde may be nursed along as the pet Indian of the program." He was certain that Warrior would "surely fail quickly out of a decent graduate program, or even a partially competent program such as Sociology or Anthropology at KU" although "it might be good for him if he did."[52]

Besides the rather arrogant manner in which he dismissed both Warrior and the American Studies Program as inferior to his own sociological, and Dickeman's anthropological background, Wax also showed a deep misunderstanding of the man who he had mentored and worked with since 1961. He claimed that, "it seems quite clear that what he wants is a safe job that will not pinch his conscience too hard, but his opportunities are limited as long as he is branded both as red and lacking in academic credentials." Perhaps, Wax had spent too much time dismissing Warrior's activism as reflecting poorly on his project to read the words he wrote, or maybe he never read Warrior's application to Kansas University where he described his purpose for gaining a degree as being able to "assist the various ethnic groups and types of people that are trying to survive in America today."[53]

Despite such misgivings about Warrior, however, and his deep dissatisfaction over his contribution to the research project, Wax sought to find

[52] Letter from Murray Wax to Millie Dickeman, dated April 20 1967, Box 17, Folder 481, Murray Wax Collection
[53] Ibid.

work for Warrior away from academia. At the same time as Dr. Joseph Feathers of Western Montana College, who had worked with Warrior in the previous summer's workshop, was urging Warrior to pursue a PhD after his Masters, Wax sought a more interactive career for Warrior than academia. He wrote to the Industrial Areas Foundation of Chicago seeking employment for a "person of insight, ability and tenacity." He confided that while Warrior had a "bright and perceptive mind, his interests are not academic but political." In contrast to what he told Dickeman he said that he was worried that he would be "battered about…the aridities of academic life, when his motivation is much more to assist his people to in lifting the yoke that oppresses them."[54]

In April, 1967, however, he told Warrior that he had written him a glowing reference for the Political Science department at Kansas, before cautioning him that his choice of major needed careful consideration depending upon his desires for the future. Political Science would work if he wanted to be a teacher, while he would need law if he desired to be a politician. He ended the letter by suggesting American Studies, as he had done to Dickeman, because "you have shown little aptitude or interest that anthropologists or sociologists do. You will need much less of that for American Studies and KU will be easier by far than Chicago or Harvard." He assured Warrior that "you do have a gift for writing and speaking when you are affected by events and it is likely that you will be able to work and swindle your way through American Studies at KU in the pattern of most graduate students." On

[54] Letter from Murray Wax to Industrial Areas Foundation, dated February 20, 1967, Box 17, Folder 482, Murray Wax Collection. Industrial Areas Foundation is a community organizing network for social change set up in 1940, which specializes in working among the poor, the working poor and working class communities.

May 15, 1967 Warrior received a letter accepting him to the American Studies Program at Kansas University, on a probationary basis in which "you would have a semester to show your stuff, and, if you do well, would continue operating as a regular graduate student." Ironically, with the opportunity to continue working with Murray and Rosalie Wax. Of equally significant importance to Warrior, however, was the news that the NIYC board had agreed to hold that year's annual conference at White Eagle in conjunction with the annual Ponca Powwow.[55]

[55] Letter, dated 12 April, 1967, from Murray Wax to Clyde Warrior. Letter, dated, May 15, 1967, from Stuart Levine to Clyde Warrior, Letter, dated may 23, 1967 from Fran Pftoabitty to Clyde Warrior, All, Box 3, Folder 30, NIYC Collection.

CHAPTER 9

"COMMUNITY IN ACTION"

In the summer of 1967 it was Warrior's activism, rather than his drinking, which caused the most serious fracture in his relationship with Murray Wax. Ironically, it was not national activism with the NIYC which drove the wedge between Warrior and the academic, but activism born directly of living and working with traditional Cherokees as part of Wax's research project. Localized issues became a priority for Warrior over the following year as he focused more closely on affairs at home with the creation of the White Eagle Community Project, and immersing his daughters into his Ponca culture, especially after he failed to return to graduate school after a single semester. As he had done with Mary the previous year, he paid his second daughter, Andrea's way into the arena during the May 1967 Gives Water Memorial Day Dance. National politics were still a concern, though, as he sought to involve the NIYC with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's (SCLC) planned Poor People's Campaign March on Washington for the following year.

In June 1967, the Cherokee government announced the grand opening of the Cherokee Village and Heritage Centre. Located deep inside the Tahlequah countryside, the center was designed as a tourist attraction that retold Cherokee history and culture through a perfomative 'living history' program. Traditional members of the Cherokee community were horrified as they accused to village organizers of misrepresenting Cherokee culture and creating a "monkey house."

Many of them had earlier formed the Original Cherokee Community Organization (OCCO) as a method of collective cultural preservation against federal interference, which included the federally appointed tribal government. The OCCO called on Warrior, and the NIYC, to support a planned protest, and on the opening weekend, Warrior and Della joined a picket line of protestors that included traditional Cherokees from all generations.[1]

As well as bilingual signs carrying slogans in Cherokee and English from the OCCO, the NIYC sponsored flyers criticizing the event and highlighting the concerns of the protestors. Rather than simply handing out flyers to visitors as they passed though the village opening, Warrior and Wahrhaftig hit upon the idea of mass distributing them all over the surrounding area by dropping them from an airplane. Al Wahrhaftig had been taking flying lessons in his spare time, and the Cherokee National Air Force, with Wahrhaftig as its commanding officer and first pilot, was born. Unfortunately, poor weather conditions dictated that the stunt would not succeed.

Wahrhaftig rented a small Cessna plane from Tulsa airport to avoid getting the Tahlequah airport operator into trouble "by somebody reading the numbers on the plane and then extracting vengeance on him." As they finally reached the protest site, he and his Cherokee companion flew into a brewing thunderstorm. Hurrying to finish before the impending downpour, Wahrhaftig and his friend dropped handbills from the plane. Each time they did so, however, the winds shifted strongly, to the point that, "suffice it to say, we threw all the folders, all the leaflets, out of the plane

[1] Al Wahrhaftig interview, *Idem*.

handful by handful, and not a goddamned one of them landed on a demonstrator." After racing the storm back to Tulsa and landing safely "literally seconds before the storm struck", the pair returned to Tahlequah. Still exhilarated from racing, and beating the storm, the pair were greeted with Warrior's laughing retort that, "every goddamn boll weevil in Texas knows about this demonstration but nobody here does."[2]

When Murray Wax heard about the protest, and Warrior's role in it, he was horrified. Having spent the previous summer, and many of the following months, assuring Earl Boyd Pierce, BIA Commissioner Robert Bennett, his local Congressman, and NCAI Chief executive Vine Deloria Jr., that none of his researchers were involved in any attempt to "bring to light the discontent and unrest that had been fermenting among the traditional Cherokee," he was acutely embarrassed by Warrior's participation in the protest.[3] On July 7, he wrote to Warrior that "some of those picketed will decide that NIYC means Clyde Warrior, and that means KU project, and accordingly I expect inquiries and criticism both from KU and the Office of Education." He demanded to know how involved Warrior had been, telling him that "morally I feel vulnerable because publicly. Last fall, I said that our project was not involved with local political affairs and would not be involved…if this latest escapade can be plausibly fastened to us, we're out."[4]

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[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid. Letter, dated September 29, 1966, from Murray Wax to Congressman Robert Ellsworth. Box 17, Folder 481, Murray Wax Collection.
[4] Letter dated, 7 July, 1967, from Murray Wax to Clyde Warrior, Box 17, Folder 481, Murray Wax Collection.

Warrior's telephoned response did little to calm Wax's fears or his unhappiness, but Warrior was already moving forward with educational projects of his own with the NIYC, and had little time to pretend to regret his actions. The previous week, he had written to both Robert Bennett, and Senator Fred Harris, whose wife LaDonna, was becoming a leading Indian activist herself with Oklahomans for Indian Opportunity, inviting the pair to speak at the forthcoming Ponca Powwow. Regret was especially unlikely because, despite Wax's unhappiness, and with the "Cherokee Air Force unfortunately in disgrace, and a Cherokee national joke," those involved saw the protest as successful in raising awareness of their concerns of cultural exploitation.

On July 26, 1967, the NIYC applied to the Ford Foundation for a funding grant of $27,500.00 to develop programs within their newly created educational branch, the Educational Services to American Indian Communities (ESAIC). The NIYC used the ESAIC to expand their involvement in Indian education beyond summer workshops and college students. The idea was to reach out to the grass roots of community development, as described in Warrior's and other speeches attacking the War on Poverty. In the grant proposal the NIYC stated that, "the tribal kin group or extended family within the larger tribe is the locus of control and power, yet these groups are systematically excluded in current community development." As previously highlighted in Warrior's 'We Are Not Free'

testimony, the "ability and competence of these groups is rarely utilized in the development and working out of programs for their communities."[5]

Warrior stated that the role of the NIYC was to "provide a bridge between the tribal community and the urban technological worlds." Within this role was the responsibility of "defining and altering the forces of change, so that the tribal community is allowed at least an equal decision in the direction and method of change." Warrior argued that, "to the extended family, NIYC has a policy of interpretation, protection and development of their desires, obligations, and rights of decision." Conversely, to the "urban technological worlds," the NIYC was "an agency of communication and articulation for tribal communities, in order to implement and insure the right of continued growth and development." The NIYC refused to continue to allow government agencies dictate policy to Indian communities, or sit back while the NCAI backed tribal government's such as the Cherokee in the face of protest from tribal members. The philosophy of two directional interpretation and communication was that of Hank Adams' description of Warrior as a "cultural carrier" writ large. It was also the fundamental basis of the fight for tribal self-determination.[6]

There were three divisions, of research, training, and development under which ESAIC was developed to facilitate this two-way cultural conversation. The research side was contracted out to the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, based in Berkeley, California. The Far West Laboratory

[5] Ford Proposal, submitted July 26, 1967, Box 2, Folder 7, Robert Dumont Collection
[6] Ibid.

was one of twenty regional laboratories appointed by Congress to “find practical ways to improve the education of our nation's children by "bridging the gap between research and practice.’“ The research project consisted of a “10 school study” which would collate data to be used in developing “model schools” in specific Indian communities. Warrior used his influence as NIYC president to ensure that the White Eagle School in the Ponca community was one of the community schools included. These ten schools would serve as the basis for the ESAIC development division, under which formal summer school programs for sixth, seventh and eighth graders “would be structured around the basic notions of Upward Bound but whose primary base of operation will be within the community and secondarily in the school and college.”[7]

In a true reflection of his idealized Community Action style, Warrior took his own concerns about the weaknesses of Upward Bound Program and directly intervened to implement alternatives, rather than wait for Upward Bound to change. Indeed, “planning and development of the program will be done in the community in order to avoid the current pre-packaged plans of OEO, BIA and HEW that have local tribal community involvement on a secondary level rather than a primary.” In addition, plans were set in motion for an Intercultural Planning Exchange program, which would bring other “relevant projects and programs in minority and tribal education on the administrative and community level of planning and development.” As with Upward Bound, rather than wait for Johnson’s Community

[7] Ibid.

Action Program's to be changed to suit their needs, the NIYC set about creating new community opportunities themselves.[8]

The following month, the NIYC reelected Warrior president at the annual conference, held in White Eagle to coincide with the annual Ponca Powwow. The Powwow was the 90th annual powwow, dating back to 1877, making it the oldest, and longest running, intertribal powwow in the Southern Plains. At the powwow itself, one of the most heavily attended powwows in Northern Oklahoma, Clyde won in the Straight Dance category, which, given the dance's origins in the Hethuska, and the attendance of many exceptional Ponca, Osage, Quapaw, and Tonkawa dancers, as well as contestants from tribes farther afield, was no mean feat.

Robert Bennett accepted his invitation to attend the powwow and address the conference on the "racial and economic conditions surrounding Indians in Northern Oklahoma." Bennett's address reflected the NIYC's concerns about Indian peoples abilities to connect with the contemporary world, and he told his audience that they "need to educate ourselves for the world of today. There are few survivors of the modern day environment who are not equipped with the modern day tools of learning." He also admonished the movement though, telling them that while they had the right to criticize, they "should be responsible for constructive criticism," and also warned them that they needed to distance themselves from the yoke of

[8] Ibid.

traditionalism, advising "let us face life in our time. Let us draw on the past but not rest on it."[9]

This advice was at odds with the concerns of the conferences other main speaker, Robert Dumont, the chosen NIYC representative to address the conference and powwow attendees. In a speech titled *The Quality of Indian Education and the Search for Tradition,* Dumont specifically targeted traditional knowledge and learning, as something that there should be more, not less, of in the Indian classroom. Dumont's argument drew from areas that Warrior and other NIYC members had previously discussed, and explained much of the thinking behind the NIYC's educational projects with the Far West Labs. It was also an extremely pertinent speech, given that White Eagle was the location for one of the NIYC's model school projects.

Dumont highlighted the same lack of community involvement in Indian education that the NIYC had exposed in their arguments against the War on Poverty. The differing worldviews of Indian students and western educators, as discussed by Warrior in his Tahlequah field notes, was another issue that Dumont addressed. He argued that the current state of Indian education was the "unification of two different cultural traditions." What was needed, and what he, Warrior, and the NICY hoped to achieve with their model schools. He said that, "what is needed is to involve on an equal or a shared basis the traditions of Indian communities." Traditionally, indigenous peoples taught and learnt using different methods from

[9] "Bennett Keynotes Conference, Warrior Re-Elected Proxy," *ABC,* November 1967 pp. 1 – 4,

Western nations, and the absence of any of these methods in the classroom was hindering Indian students from learning. This is not to say that all indigenous teaching methods were the same however. Rather than take a "one size fits all" approach to educating Indian schoolchildren, as worked in white society, Dumont insisted that each school needed "to recognize, incorporate, and work with value tenets of the particular Indian community, utilizing how they define goals of learning and how one is to be taught and how one is to learn."[10]

Dumont committed the NIYC and other participants in the new project to ensuring that these goals we met. He explained that the process would involve "recognizing and validating the different intellectual traditions of Indian communities." This would require getting involved with the communities in a fully co-operative way. He insisted that, "involvement with meaning requires redefining, reordering, and restructuring from practical to ideological and philosophical levels." If the NIYC, Far West Labs, and chosen Indian communities could achieve this they would remove some of the fear and alienation that Indian schoolchildren felt in the classroom. From Warrior's perspective, achieving such a goal would also readjust the children's sense of what constituted worthiness, and they would look at their communities from a new, more appreciative, viewpoint.[11]

Dumont drew from the observations that he and his colleagues, namely the Warriors and Kathryn Red Corn, had made in Tahlequah. He asserted that Indian

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[10] Dumont, Robert, V., *The Quality of Indian Education and the Search For Tradition,* speech given at the annual meeting of the NIYC at the 90th annual Ponca Powwow. Box 12, Folder 482, Murray Wax Collection
[11] Ibid.

schoolchildren were overwhelmed when they first entered the public school classroom. This was a disconcerting message to the Ponca parents listening, as their 7th and 8th graders were scheduled to switch from White Eagle to Ponca City schools the following academic year. He told them that when the student first enters the classroom he is "met by an overwhelming an sometimes frightening pervasiveness of the American society with its power of socialization." Alluding to the earliest tenets of education as a tool of assimilation he argued that, "the cultural uniqueness, in fact, the whole life of the Indian child seems to be kept at a distance, to be kept out of the classroom and to be taught out of the child." Again echoing Warrior's comments about clashing worldviews undermining the education process, he asserted that, "the cultural distance between what the teacher wants and what the child will and can do seems too great for positive and effective education."[12]

Arguing against the mantra of "we treat them all the same" that Warrior had complained about so much in his Tahlequah field notes, Dumont insisted that sustained academic learning for an Indian student would occur if "there is a blending of the other two forms" of social and cultural learning" in a "socio-cultural set for academic learning. This would only work however, when a teacher "recognizes and implements the cultural differences of students." As vaunted as the western, and particularly, American education system was, especially in the wake of the great educational reforms made by successive presidents from Truman to Johnson, the issue of cultural bias was an accusation that lingered. Dumont insisted that these were "crucial issues in Indian education that are of fundamental

[12] Ibid.

importance not only to Indian people but to a good many others in this country and throughout the world."[13]

The issues raised by Dumont's paper, and the plans laid out in the Ford Proposals were well received by all parties concerned. Dumont, Warrior, and the NIYC pressed on with the educational reform projects and pursued grants totaling $122,000.00 to ensure that the schools and attendant research systems were implemented smoothly. In October, Dumont, Mel Thom, and Browning Pipestem were preparing for an October meeting in Berkeley with Glenn Nimnicht and Jack Forbes of the Far West Labs, to "hammer out" the finer points of the joint project and formally sign the contract that would allow work to begin.

As the debate over education continued to rage, the President's National Advisory Committee on Rural Poverty published its findings from the poverty conferences earlier that year. Titled *The People Left Behind,* the report, published in September 1967, made a series of recommendations for "major change" in the government's anti-poverty programs. Indian reservations were acknowledged as one area of concern among other poverty clusters across the country including, "the upper Great Lakes region in New England, in Appalachia, and in the Southwest." The report made no exception for reservations, however, when it declared that, "the community in rural poverty areas has all but disappeared as an effective institution." This was exactly the problem that Warrior and the NIYC were campaigning against, that the War on Poverty did not recognize the existence, or value of tribal structures. Indeed the report validated Warrior's complaint about the difference between how

[13] Ibid.

Indians and non-Indians viewed community. In the section titled *Community Organization,* the Commission argues that, "community must now be defined in terms of an area that encompasses several counties grouped about a town, city or metropolis." Warrior and the NIYC had vehemently argued the case that if the government and poverty campaigners continued to view Indian communities in such a manner, they would continue to create programs destined to fail those communities on even the most basic levels of support. The report also confirmed Warrior's accusation that Community Action Programs worked in conjunction with local 'power agencies' and county or state governments. Since the program's creation in 1965, it had funded one thousand and forty Community Action Agencies. Of these CAA's, 620 operated in rural areas. Of these six hundred and twenty, "most are organized along conventional political lines…half are based in single counties, and half in multicounties." As Warrior had testified, such was the level of racism towards the Ponca in the surrounding area, that they were part of Kay County, Oklahoma, "in name only." The Ponca were undoubtedly not alone, in having their 'needs' catered for by political entities that had no desire to help them economically, politically, or socially, in any way whatsoever. [14]

The report did state, however, that opportunities were available for communities to circumvent these political bodies, and that "CAA's may be formed to represent any urban or rural area…or any sufficiently homogenous area…without regard to political boundaries or subdivisions." In a series of recommendations to

[14] *The People Left Behind,* A Report by The President's national Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty, September 1967, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welpp.re pp. 12 & 121

ensure that people were made aware of this possibility, the report demanded that, "activities and projects undertaken must correspond to the basic needs of the community and to the expressed needs of the people." This was a statement that suggested to Warrior that the government was finally beginning to listen to the issues he, his cohorts, and other poor people were raising. The issue of tribal responsibility also appeared to be addressed in the call that "Community development should aim for increased participation of people in community affairs and revitalization of the existing forms of local government." While the statement undoubtedly referred to city, county and state governments, Warrior was convinced that there was enough leeway to include tribal governments in this category, especially as "the identification, encouragement, and training of local leadership should be a basic objective of any program." The report appeared to offer the chance of greater tribal ownership of Community Action Projects for the future, and Warrior sought the advice of his grandmother as to potential ways forward for the Ponca community.[15]

In the meantime, he continued with the education projects already set in motion by the NIYC. The encouraging reception of the education plans suggested that there was potential for real educational reform if the projects succeeded, especially in his home community of White Eagle. At this point, Warrior's drinking problem progressively worsened, however. This coincided with him spending greater amounts of time away from home, testifying before congressional committees, youth councils, discussing policy initiatives with the Commissioner of

[15] Ibid. pp. 126-127

Indian Affairs, and coordinating national education reform. He was not alone in his drinking, however, but did consume more than most. The 1960s were an age when business and politics were always conducted in bars, or conference halls where the beer was flowing, making it much harder for him to resist than when he was home with his family.

What was most remarkable about Warrior and his cohorts, from Mel Thom, Shirley Witt, Bob Dumont and others, was that none of them were trained for this life. The workshops and regional youth councils had given brief insights into the world of national tribal politics, but were not enough to prepare them for the scrutiny the were under as leading Indian tribal rights advocates. As comfortable as Warrior felt in these circles, he was still at heart, "an extremely traditional person speaking confidently before Congressional hearings the day after a ceremonial in White Eagle, and the pressure began to tell. Drinking alcohol evolved from a fun and social activity at the Boulder Workshops, to an almost necessary salve to ease the pressure and loneliness of the intense workload that he and the NIYC put themselves under, especially when he was away from Della and his daughters.[16]

Now based in Lawrence, Kansas, as a graduate student in the university's American Studies Program, Warrior's alcoholism reached the point where Della contacted his friend and "almost an adoptive father" Bill Center. Center sent him to a rehab center in Los Angeles that Della remembered was "some new kind of a

[16] Steve Pensoneau interview. *Idem*. Steve's comment was not made in relation to Warrior's alcoholism but to the scale of achievement that Warrior made in crossing both tribal and western worlds. It does, however, help to explain the amount of pressure that Warrior and his cohorts inflicted upon themselves and the way in which he sought to relieve that pressure.

treatment that the movie star went to." Murray Wax commented to Millie Dickeman that, "I think it's too late and that he has given up, and is ready, both psychologically and physiologically, to die." The treatment was a very aggressive technique where "they said very derogatory stuff about his mother and his Indian people." He called Della and asked her to collect him, telling her that "you just have to sit there and take it, and I guess not even show any facial expression." Knowing how jarring such treatment was to Warrior's worldview, Della travelled to collect him.[17]

The aggressiveness of the treatment did appear to work, however, and he returned to Lawrence, "looking chipper and healthy…and making a genuine try at graduate studies." It may have been the racist slurs against his mother and Indians in general that galvanized him, slurs that he had fought his entire adult life to disparage and counteract, for he threw himself back into his role as NIYC president. The following month he accepted a two day consulting commission in Washington D.C. from the Far West Laboratory. In keeping with the idea of encouraging the community to become involved with the project, he decided to seek help from within White Eagle. He also recognized that he had not lived in the community for almost a decade and wanted somebody "living here, being from the grassroots and knowing what we needed."

Many people within the tribe saw Warrior as a troublemaker and agitator who brought unnecessary attention to White Eagle, which meant that, "he needed

[17] Della Warrior interview with Robert Warrior *Idem*, Robert Warrior Papers, transcript in author's possession. Letter from Murray Wax to Millie Dickeman, dated 15 Oct, 1967, Box 17, Folder 483, Murray Wax Collection

support but could not get it". This attitude reflected the very insular idealism of the real world ending at the White Eagle 'borders' that Warrior had celebrated in his 1961 Workshops essay. To circumvent this community reticence, he sought advice from his grandmother, Metha Collins as to whom he should approach. Of the names she suggested, he deliberately chose Martha Grass because of the respect she, as a woman and an elder, had within the community. Despite the fears he expressed in his speech before the Poverty Commission about the way Ponca women were now being treated, elders like Grass still commanded huge respect within the community.

Martha's daughter, Thomasine, remembered that Warrior, complete with a cast-covered broken nose, "came to our home and asked our mother if she would join him and help him to go to a meeting in Washington D.C to speak on behalf of the Ponca people." Warrior talked to her for a "very long time" about "tribal rights and activism" to convince her to travel with him. Thomasine, who was left behind to babysit her younger siblings, recalled being very surprised that, "a little grandmother that stayed home all the time and got involved in small community activities down her in White Eagle," said yes, and agreed to accompany him to the capitol. Warrior's invitation led to Grass becoming a pivotal figure in American Indian activism in the following few years.[18]

In the same month, Warrior and Browning Pipestem pushed forward with NIYC plans for introducing their own summer workshops to supplant the Boulder Workshops. While AID still ran the Boulder Workshops, Warrior and Pipestem felt that the lessons learned there were no longer sufficient for the more culturally and

[18] Grass, Thomasine, Personal Interview, White Eagle, October 11th, 2010.

politically aware generation coming through the educational system. Neither were condemnatory of the Boulder Workshops and felt the served a valuable purpose, but they felt that they had not evolved quickly enough to keep up with the changing environment in Indian affairs since their inception in 1956. They acknowledged that the Boulder Workshops addressed the cultural differences inherent in the American learning environment, and bridged the gap between the standard "technical" American curriculum with an increased focus on social sciences that Indian students generally lacked. They also admitted that the Boulder version helped students address their feelings of marginality and helped them realize that this problem was "not just unique and personal to him. Then can he see his marginality in the total context of Indian-White relations and as part of an historical process."[19]

However, in a November 1967, letter to Warrior, Bob Dumont agreed with him that the one thing the Boulder Workshops lacked was an emphasis on "self-determination, responsibility and free choice for Indian students." Dumont argued that, "the Boulder Workshop never really provided this experience for students." For a program designed to "create new Indian leaders" to be so categorized by two such leading alumni was a damning assessment. He encouraged Warrior that an NIYC version could offer "this kind of experience" for students who had not "gotten this needed development either in their home communities or in their education." He also reminded Warrior that "you can make this point as well as I can." This assertion marked a major shift in the direction of the NIYC and Warrior. The decision signaled a break in relations with AID and D'Arcy McNickle who

[19] Letter, dated Nov 27, 1967 from Bob Dumont to Clyde Warrior, Box 1, Folder 6. Robert Dumont Papers

sponsored the Boulder Workshops. The council was already at odds with the NCAI for standing with tribal governments rather than tribal people. They viewed this as an attitude and approach diametrically opposed to theirs, as it was the people who continued and defined tribal identity rather than the governments.[20]

On December 11, Warrior sent a formal proposal for the NIYC Workshops to the OEO, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Dr. Tom Billings at Upward Bound, and Commissioner Robert Bennett. The proposal laid out a three phase program for Indian students which consisted of: four regional conferences to be held in the spring of 1968, followed by a six to eight week summer course, in the same size and format as the Boulder Workshops, and concluded with the development of a coordination and resource center for American Indian students. The resource center would focus upon "socio-cultural change in a historical and contemporary perspective, concentrating on issues and problems of American Indian community development." The ultimate goal of the planned workshops represented the concerns of the NIYC in general and highlighted by the words of Warrior and Dumont in particular. They were designed to "provide Indian students means toward developing tools and skills, both practical and abstract, to work effectively in their tribal-urban-technological society."[21]

The four regional conferences were to be organized under the direction of local Indian groups in Durango, Colorado, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, and a further, as yet to be decided region in the Northwest. These conferences would serve as

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[20] Ibid.
[21] December 11, 1967, Proposal of Programs for American Indian College Students, Box 17, Folder 485, Murray Wax Collection

recruiting posts for, and initial introductions to, the summer workshops, utilizing summer lecturers and curriculum to initiate a "framework for a continuing dialogue in issues of American Indian affairs. Unlike the Boulder Workshops, where students were recruited but offered no preparatory instruction, students in the NIYC version would already be contributing to, and learning from, the program before they arrived.[22]

Warrior and Pipestem identified the Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas as the ideal location for the summer workshop, both because of its long standing history in Indian education and its potential as the future resource center mentioned in phase three of the proposal. Warrior admitted, though, that the model for most of the "academic orientation" was the Boulder format, with many of the same instructors recruited as guest speakers. Where the two programs would differ was that, "there will be major revisions and innovations in (the) total program." Aside from undergraduates receiving six credit hours for participation, and the eligibility of graduate students, "Indian ethnohistory and socio-political issues of contemporary Indian and general U.S. history," constituted the majority of the coursework. This was a departure from the focus upon folk/urban societal contradictions that Bob Thomas favored in Boulder.[23]

The final phase of the proposal, under which the NIYC wished to add a continuing involvement for alumni beyond reunion conferences and occasional spots of guest lecturing, was a coordinating center and resource center. The initial

[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.

aim was for to create, within the second year, a "highly functioning training program…for people intending to work in Indian communities." Ultimately, the successful implantation of phase three would result in a "year round center and institute…that is devoted to the training of American Indian college students and others who will be working with American Indian communities." In short, this "Center of Indian Studies run by Indian people" was the prototype for the American Indian Studies Departments that later opened on college campuses across America.[24]

Three days after Warrior mailed the workshop proposals, Martha Grass appeared before the Oklahomans for Indian Opportunity conference in Norman, Oklahoma. Grass was growing into the role of spokesperson for the Ponca that Warrior had chosen for her. She was now the appointed president of the White Eagle Community Project, which at that point was ostensibly little more than a Parent Teacher Organization for the White Eagle School. As Warrior had predicted, Grass's immersion within the community allowed her a vision of local immediacy that his more inter-tribal vision would not pick up. Warrior, Dumont and the NIYC were campaigning generally against Indian education because of differences in western standards, styles and expectations and a normalized disregard for American Indian cultural norms and expectations. They were attacking a school system, which because of ignorance over these cultural norms, was leaving Indian children far behind. They were creating programs that would attempt to merge Western and tribal expectations and learning techniques to overcome these obstacles. Grass's

[24] Ibid.

testimony laid bare the sheer level of disinterest and disregard for Indian children existed even at the most formative stage of their development.

Rather than culturally indifferent lessons, Warrior's complaint of divergent worldviews, or Dumont's charge of the "pervasiveness of American society", Grass painted a harrowing picture of neglect in the classroom. On a single visit to the White Eagle School, she discovered that the children, from six years old to fifteen years old, had been locked outside in the cold, frosty morning while their teachers were "sat in the cafeteria, drinking their morning coffee, catching up on their newspapers, and letting the little children out there to just freeze to death." This was a minor complaint to what the children suffered once inside the building, however. She found first graders forced to "sit and color" while the teacher sat at the front reading her newspaper. The tragedy for Grass, was that this undermined the efforts she and other parents were doing at home preparing their children for the day by telling them that, "you are going to school to learn to read. You are going to learn to spell. You are going to learn to count." When she challenged the teacher, she also discovered that, aside from being nervous in the presence of a parent, one of the first to visit the school, most of the "second and third and fourth graders didn't know how to read" in the classroom.[25]

As horrifying as it was for Grass to learn that "up until fourth grade, they're just kindergarten" as far as this particular teacher was concerned, matters were no different in other classrooms. In the second classroom, the children were being

[25] "Remarks on Indian Education" by Mrs. Martha Grass, Ponca, White Eagle, Oklahoma, Box 5, Folder 38, NIYC Papers

ignored more overtly, with the teacher leaving them to run riot while she was elsewhere. When "she finally came in" she urged the children to take out their books but did nothing else. Noticing the same distractedness and 'zoning out' that Warrior had witnessed in Tahlequah, Grass challenged the fifth and sixth graders to a reading competition. To her dismay she discovered that this classroom was also academically delayed, with "fifth and sixth graders (who) were studying from their fourth grade book and yet, they couldn't do the work." In Tahlequah, Warrior had felt insulted and angry when teachers blamed the families for the poor academic development of Indian schoolchildren, and focused his anger on the education system. In his home community of White Eagle, Martha Grass was discovering that there was not even a system being used to attempt to educate the Ponca schoolchildren.[26]

The level of academic neglect she witnessed from Kindergarten to sixth grade did not prepare her for the scene she witnessed in the seventh and eighth grade classroom. The first thing she noticed was that some of the children were asleep and that there was an overpowering odor that "smelled like fingernail polish" in the room. Looking more closely at the children she saw that "their eyelids were puffed up until they were almost closed and lips were just hanging out." When she discovered that this was the result of the children sniffing "glue and gold spray paint" she reported the incident to the government and city doctors, who simply told

[26] Ibid.

her to "watch the children and if they cramp up and start to vomit and can't, rush them to the hospital."[27]

Grass told the conference that she came to the OIO meeting because the school board and the law "haven't done too much" to help the sixty three students who were "our future generation, but the doctors tell me what they're indulging in is effecting their minds, their hearts, their kidneys, their lungs." She told the OIO conference that, "they are our future generation and if we don't do something with them, they are not going to here very long." She was distraught at the idea that, "we'll soon be burying them at the rate they are sniffing this glue and gold paint." Such was her limited influence, beyond the community, however, and the indifference of the authorities, all she could, besides appear at the conference, was to exhort the parents to "go and see about their children because they're sniffing and the teachers are not a bit concerned about them. They are not teaching them to begin with and then they are jeopardizing their health."[28]

This was insight that Warrior knew that he and the NYC needed, as did the OEO and War on Poverty organizers. The search for such insight drove his, and the NIYC's campaign, for true 'grass roots' community action in Indian communities, rather than bureaucratically designed programs administered from above. While he and his cohorts were concerned about Indian schoolchildren growing up without respect for their elders, or knowledge of their traditions, however, Grass was worried about them growing up at all. She told the conference that there had to be

[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.

somebody who could help the Ponca community before "we are going to have funeral after funeral because they're young and cannot withstand it too much."[29]

On January 26th, 1968, Bob Dumont informed Iola Hayden of the OIO that the White Eagle situation was far more complex than had first been thought, especially in the creation of a parental educational organization other than the PTA. In order to devote his full attention to devote his full attention to finding possible solutions to the children's situation, Warrior dropped out of graduate school in Kansas and returned home. He realized that he be far help "in the field" than he would be by preparing for a future career "in the field" at graduate school. The NIYC funded Warrior for the following month to "see what he can dig out in terms of possible candidates, voters and program direction." Warrior was scheduled to meet Ponca parents immediately after Senate sub-committee meetings on Indian education had convened in Oklahoma to create "real programs and projects - educational in nature but not necessarily oriented to the school - that will take shape." The project was the rhetoric of Warrior's speeches made real, community action driven by the community to create their own programs and to stand by their success or failure. To Dumont, Warrior's success in this project was an absolute necessity for "from what little I know of Oklahoma and Indian education, the White Eagle case is one of those situations fundamentally important to further development of education in Oklahoma."[30]

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[29] Ibid.
[30] Letter, dated January 26, 1968, from Bob Dumont to Iola Hayden, Box 5, Folder 38, NIYC Papers

Warrior's research into the situation resulted in a brief resume of the White Eagle School in which he also made several suggestions of change that needed to be made. Warrior's report was every bit as damning as Martha Grass's testimony had been harrowing. Many of his findings substantiated observations he had made about his community as a callow twenty one year old student at the Boulder Workshops, and many of the examples he had raised about Indian Country in his subsequent speeches and articles about the effects of education on Indian children. The dropout rate from White Eagle for Ponca children was an astounding 87.8%, much of which he blamed on the school not being viewed as part of the community. From the position of 'outsider,' the school and its teachers were essentially excluded from any role except to "educate our children." This then led to the parents to avoid involvement, to the detriment of their children, because "I don't know what goes on over there or what they do, I don't want to interfere and get into it with the teachers." When parents did interfere, they discovered instances of "beatings on the kids, one in particular, the sixth grade teacher delights in kicking, pulling hair and calling the children names, such as jackass and other comparable names."[31]

Alarmingly, this distance was encouraged by teachers and administrators alike, as Warrior discovered, that "parents are very much "out of it" as to how a school is run" and "measures are subtly or openly taken to keep the parents naïve." The clerk of the school board exacerbated this situation because she "considers the school her domain and intimidates parents, fires teachers she dislikes and openly runs the school according to her own judgment." As Martha Grass attested, the

[31] Brief Resume of White Eagle School, Box 5, Folder 38, NIYC Papers

majority of parents had never visited the school or the teachers, and as the teachers did not visit parents, "no interaction takes place between parents and teachers." The parents viewed the school as a place they sent their children to be educated, but the "idea that a parent can influence a school is inconceivable to them." The extent to which these Ponca parents were manipulatively excluded was exposed when Warrior assessed the presence of one hundred and fifty eight eligible school board voters in the Indian community, compared to twelve in the white community. Despite every parent in the white community sending their child to Ponca City for an education, the White Eagle school board was an entirely white organization, because "these whites are property owners and pay taxes (and) they feel they should have the right to run the school and the Indians should have part in running the school as they do not pay taxes." Conversely, the Indian population of White Eagle was "uniformed of the functions of a school board, eligibility for a school board member, school elections, their power as parents in relation to their children's progress in school, and many other facts which are generally taken for granted." For Warrior, this situation exemplified all that was wrong with the power dynamics of the Indian/White relations and perfectly represented the fallacy of tribal sovereignty.[32]

As part of Warrior's month long project he and the NIYC had registered the Indian parents as voters on the PTA and "succeeded in getting the first Indian in over twenty years on the school board." He noted that when he and the NIYC had informed them of how easy the voting process was, that "several Indians were

[32] Ibid.

astonished at the simplicity of it all and at the same time resentful toward school officials and the local registrar for failing to inform them of their rights." The victory was one well savored by a community surrounded by racism for so much of its existence and "encouraged the Indian citizens of White Eagle district to work toward getting an all-Indian school board, and if possible, some Indian teachers." Unfortunately, as the Ponca began to assert their communal voice upon the school board, the Ponca City school district undertook a feasibility study investigating the benefits of closing the school and incorporating the students into the general populous.[33]

The High School experience of Ponca children was similar to his own and many of the Cherokee and Creek children he had observed in Tahlequah. He noted that many children "gave up on school" because they were made to feel like second-class citizens. He also noted the degree to which tribal-ness, of which in Western Oklahoma the Ponca were considered to the most "tribal" people, was considered to be a direct cause of dropping out of high school. As tribal-ness, which essentially meant cultural immersion or self-identification, was often viewed in the context of "rowdiness, stupidity and being dirty," then the "most tribal" Ponca were considered the rowdiest, most stupid and dirtiest of all the tribes. He admitted that "after a while they accept this definition of themselves and they eventually drop out and go home to act out of this definition of themselves."[34]

[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

Warrior's list of solutions to these issues was typically bellicose. His first idea was to sack the entire teaching and administrative staff and replace them with teachers "who have a genuine interest in teaching the Indian children." On a more pragmatic level he also encouraged the implementation of programs to inform Indian adults of their "power and role in the education of their children," while also finding ways to bring the school into the community to create a situation where the parents would feel comfortable visiting the school and having expectations acknowledged and met. More idealistically, given the long history of racism in Ponca City, he also wished to find a way for the Poncas to stop accepting the racial insults, such as "our two children were recently called "nigger babies" by two three-year old white children," which were "an everyday episode with Poncas in this town." His final recommendations were to create a tutorial program for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders to prepare them academically for life in the public school system that their confidence "would not be eroded by the white students and teachers in Ponca City, and to create a teen center for those children already enrolled there.[35]

Warrior felt that these recommendations would be "advantageous to Ponca Indian education," and on May 1, Della sent a "Proposed Tutorial Program" preparing Ponca children for the transition to the public school system, to Glenn Nimnicht, the Program Director of the Far West Laboratory, for his consideration. The idea was for the program to be a joint Far West and NIYC funded affair and the idea was drawn up from the observations and recommendations within Warrior's

[35] Ibid.

"Brief Resume of the White Eagle School." A second copy was sent to Bob Dumont and the NIYC to "formalize it and put it in proper form." Della had taken temporary responsibility for the continuation of the project while Clyde recovered from the sudden death of his mother Martha Collins, on April 13. The death hit him hard, and he began drinking heavily again, leaving Della in control of the White Eagle project and Browning Pipestem in charge of the summer workshops.[36]

At the same time Clyde and Della introduced Martha Grass to Tillie Walker and Mel Thom as they organized an Indian Delegation to take part in Martin Luther King's Poor People's Campaign. Thom had taken over from Warrior in organizing the Indian involvement in the campaign due to the latter's failing health and increasing commitment to resolving the White Eagle School issues. Grass quickly became an important and outspoken member of the Indian delegation of the Committee of 100, a group of people chosen by the president as representatives of the poor. She was as blunt and direct as Warrior had ever been, scolding Secretary of State Dean Rusk over the Vietnam War because, "we have no business in other countries affairs, when we have enough trouble of our own." She also upset the Ponca tribal government by telling the Senate Subcommittee on Employment, Manpower, and Poverty that, "we were very lenient with all the foreign people when they came to our country. We shared with you all. Now you took all of it and we are back there just starving and hungry and suffering." She continued, more forcefully, that "I'm not only talking of food in their stomachs, but of the hunger for

[36] Letter, dated My 1st, from Della Warrior to Robert Dumont, Box 5, Folder 38, NIYC Papers

housing, clothing and employment that has robbed the people of self-respect and confidence."[37]

Grass' concerns were not unique to the Ponca community and the previous month, President Johnson had issued a Special Message to the Congress on the Problems of the American Indian. The speech, titled *The Forgotten American,* addressed the problems created by generations of "defeat and exploitation, neglect and inadequate effort." Johnson's address contained definite echoes of Warrior's most recent rhetoric and especially the issues he had raised in the "We Are Not Free" speech before the Rural Poverty Commission. As president of the NIYC, which had grown in strength and stature since its inception in 1961 his words carried far more import than they had in previous years. His conversations with Commissioner Robert Bennett, who had attended the previous year's annual NIYC conference at White Eagle, were also productive in ensuring his message and agenda was heard in the White House. As such, Johnson's message suggested that the government was finally listening to Warrior and his cohorts. Johnson proposed a "new goal for our Indian programs" that "stresses self-determination," and erases old attitudes of paternalism and promotes partnership self-help." This was a welcome, if belated by several generations, message from the White House.[38]

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[37] Cobb, Daniel. M, *Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle For Sovereignty,* University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, pg. 165. Cobb gives a detailed discussion of the Poor People's Campaign and American Indian involvement in it. "Indian Problem More Complex Than Just Question of Food," *Ponca City News,* Box 5, Folder 38, NIYC Papers

[38] Johnson, Lyndon, B., *"Special Message to the Congress on the Problems of the American Indian: The Forgotten American,"* March 6, 1968, The American Presidency Project

Johnson's message covered a wide range of subjects, from education of Indian children, to tribal and community leadership, to economic self-help and self-determination. Many of his objectives could have been taken directly from Warrior's speeches and vindicated the time and effort he, and the NIYC, had spent over the past decade fighting on behalf of Indian communities. Johnson called for "greater freedom of choice," as had Warrior in Memphis. He called for "full participation in the life of modern America, with a full share of economic opportunity and social justice," as had Warrior in Memphis. Johnson proposed a "policy of maximum choice for the American Indian" as had Warrior in Memphis. He demanded that, "Indians must have a voice in melding the plans and decisions in programs which are important in their daily life." As had Warrior since his emergence on the national stage.[39]

With regard to education, Johnson followed the precedents set by the NIYC and NCAI as he declared "I am asking the Secretary of the Interior to establish a model community school system for Indians." This proposition married the program implemented across numerous reservations, including the White Eagle Complex. As innovative as Johnson's proposals appeared, they were simply catching up with locally oriented tribal initiatives. As Warrior had counseled for, Johnson requested "an enriched curriculum, special guidance and counseling programs, modern instruction materials and a second program to teach English as a second language." Warrior viewed this acceptance of English as a "second language" a monumental breakthrough in the attitude of the federal government towards Indians. Previously,

[39] Ibid.

his ancestors were "conditioned to speak only English." Now, children would learn English in addition to their native tongues rather than instead of. In regard to community control of their children's education, the NIYC received a major fillip in the form of Johnson's determination to "establish Indian school boards for Federal Indian schools." This was supplemented with a promise that newly elected Indian school board members "will receive whatever training is necessary to enable them to carry out their responsibilities." This was exactly the type of educational reform and community enabling legislation that Warrior, the NIYC and the White Eagle Community Association longed for.[40]

Back in White Eagle, however, Ponca tribal council members were still reacting badly to Grass' statement before the Senate hearing, reinforcing Warrior's opinion that they were a small-minded operation. One tribal council member's wife, Mrs. Thurmond Rhodd, insisted that "we're not starving and I don't appreciate the reflection. The statement was very humiliating to the Poncas. No one is that bad off." McKinley Eagle, son of "the last real chief of the tribe" also insisted that, "no one here is starving. It doesn't apply here. Of course we are all in need of something. Not only Indians, but lots of other races." As many had done before him, he pushed the blame for any depravation onto the individuals themselves, claiming that, "if the children are hungry, then the mother should get up and fix them something to eat. There's enough commodities and even money in most instances to feed the children, but they indulge in something else." By something else, he meant bingo and booze. However, when the Senators had defended themselves to Grass by

[40] Ibid.

mentioning food stamps and commodities she retorted that, "these commodities, these stamp things you are talking about, I don't know anything about the stamp program or whatever you are talking about." Such was the disinterest in Ponca welfare among the local city council and its related departments, that many Ponca were never made aware that such benefits as food stamps or unemployment benefit existed. This incident clearly revealed the chasm between tribal leaders and the tribal people that Warrior had been writing and talking about since his first Workshop essay in 1961. The council itself never looked beyond traditional commodities as a source of relief or sustenance for its people. Food stamps and unemployment benefits would have provided a welcome relief for families struggling to exist, and created at least a temporary respite in the abject poverty of the people of White Eagle. It also showed that he had chosen well in Martha Grass, whose daughter insisted would never have become involved in any form of life beyond White Eagle "if it was not for Clyde Warrior coming to our house to talk to her."[41]

In the White Eagle School project, Della was still confident of Warrior's ability to recover from the tragedy of his mother's death and told Dumont that he would be the Social Studies Instructor in the program. In her letter to Nimnicht, she said that, as well as having to find a new second grade teacher to replace one who had been fired, the program would focus on English, Mathematics and Social Studies, the three areas in which the Ponca schoolchildren were weakest. Aside from Warrior teaching Social Studies, the idea was to keep costs down by using

[41] Ponca City News. *Idem*. Cobb, Native Activism in Cold War America, *Idem*. Interview with Thomasine Grass, *Idem*.

local VISTA volunteers as well as qualified Indian parents as tutors. Clyde's role as Social Studies instructor would be to teach "Ponca tribal history, cultural differences, self pride, evaluation of white citizens attitudes and definitions of Ponca Indians, and topics of this sort." The couple felt that, with this instruction over a two-month period, the nineteen proposed students would find the transition into public school at least a little easier to negotiate.[42]

The Tutorial Program offered a more detailed breakdown of the lesson plans to be offered. The English classes would cover the basics of vocabulary, grammar, and literature, and the Math classes would entail basic arithmetic, fractions and problem solving. Social Studies would discuss the folk and urban world dynamics that Warrior had been schooled in at the Boulder Workshops, and a rather intriguing class, titled "The Art of Being Ponca in Ponca City." This class would teach the students the survival skills needed to withstand the daily reminds that they were social and racial outcasts to the white community that surrounded their own. The Warrior's estimated that the entire cost of the project, through using VISTA and college students as lecturers, would be as little as $490.00, especially if they used the White Eagle School as the meeting place.[43]

Within two weeks Far West had approved funding of the program and on May 16, Nimnicht offered Della a contract running until August 31, as a consultant on Indian Education. Two weeks later he made the same offer to Clyde Warrior, specifically for the White Eagle Project, at a rate of $26 per day. The pair

[42] Letter, dated May 1, from Della Warrior to Glenn Nimnicht, Box 5, Folder 28, NIYC Collection
[43] Proposed Tutorial Program, Box 5, Folder 38, NIYC Collection

immediately set the program in motion and within two weeks, teachers and cooks had been employed and field trips planned. The cost of the program rose from $490.00 to $2870.00 once salaries and transportation costs were included, although once calculated properly, Warrior's salary alone was $2392.00. The actual tutoring "revolves around three levels of thought; to prepare the students academically, to stimulate confidence and responsibility, and to realize the superficiality of Middle class values." From these three ideas they were confident that they could "enable these students to develop a suitable understanding, and reach some type of adjustment in todays world." The program, which was now housed in the Indian Baptist Church in White Eagle, was considered a great success. The summer weather contributed to a dropout rate that saw the number of students fall from twenty to twelve, with Della crediting the students who persevered for their sacrifice, "after all it is vacation time, and like other kids they want to stay outside and play too." Francis McKinley (Ute) associate director of the Far West Labs, and a long-time BIA employee who had previously chaired the 1964 and 1965 Task Force on Indian Poverty, also lauded the program and claimed that it was "something to start with and build on."[44]

Della's contract excluded the period from July 1st to August 10th when the Dilcon Project of the National Association on Early Childhood Education employed her. Shortly before they left for Arizona, Warrior attended the June Osage In-Losh-ka Ceremonial in his role as Hethuska Tail dancer, celebrating the event with his

[44] Abstract of the Program and Budget, sent with June 11 letter from Della Warrior to Glenn Nimnicht, "Educational Lab Official Visits White Eagle Tutoring program," *Ponca City News,* Thurs June 28, 1968. Both, Box 5. Folder 38, NIYC Papers.

uncle Sylvester and fellow tail dancer Abe Conklin. The project focused upon the expansion of the Dilcon Community School on the Navajo Reservation. The school was named after a mountain, "Tsejin Dilcon," which translated into Smooth Mountain. The project had begun in 1967 with the addition of twenty-six classrooms and nursery facilities to the school and Della was employed to oversee the kindergarten summer project. The couple left the White Eagle tutoring program in the capable hands of instructors Paul and Mary Jane Meier and headed to Dilkon, Arizona.[45]

No sooner had they settled in Arizona though, that Clyde fell seriously ill. He told Della that he wanted to go home, rather than to a hospital because "if I go to a hospital I am going to die." As he was in no real pain at that Della agreed, and the family began the twenty-hour drive back to White Eagle. They were just three hors from home when, because of Warrior's increasing pain, Della took the decision to take him to hospital. They stopped at the hospital in Enid, Oklahoma where the doctor "gave him some medication and he said he will be all right and he left." Moments later, on July 7, Warrior, aged just twenty-eight years, died from cirrhosis of the liver. The condition, which he had been warned about in early 1967, had accelerated quickly in the past seventeen months, Warrior's increased drinking after the death of his mother was the fatal last straw.[46]

His death left Della devastated, especially due to the abruptness of his care inside the hospital where she felt the doctor "should have stayed there." She was,

[45] http://www.dilconeagles.com/ Accessed August 17, 2011
[46] Interview between Della Warrior and Robert Warrior, *Idem*.

and remains, convinced that Warrior suffered additional undiagnosed conditions that exacerbated his liver condition. Her belief is bolstered by the high levels of poisonous sludge pumped into the Salt Fork and Arkansas rivers from the Conoco-Philips Refinery in Ponca City. This was the water that supplied the Collins family well. Warrior's funeral, held at his grandparents' small farm, due west of White Eagle, was a massive affair, with between three to four hundred mourners coming to play their last respects. For his grandparent's the tragedy was two-fold, having lost their daughter and grandson in just four short months. In keeping with Ponca tradition the funeral was a four-day event, with Ponca religious songs every night, lots of cooking and praying every night, with the burial occurring at two o'clock in the afternoon on Wednesday, July 10th. All of the four hundred mourners were fed, four meals a day for four days as was Ponca tradition. Many sat under the old cottonwood trees that stood next to the farmhouse, with others sitting "in the plowed field because there was not enough room for them where the trees where." The Hethuska Society provided the benches from the ceremonial grounds for mourners to sit on as they ate "corn soup, pork and hominy and chicken, fry bread, and coffee and Kool Aid, cakes and pies, fresh fruit, apples and oranges."[47]

Warrior's body was laid out for viewing in the farm's living room. He was dressed in his Hethuska regalia, "holding an Eagle feather" as was the Ponca tradition. His face was covered with a scarf and the man responsible for "lifting the face scarf" during the viewing was Warrior's oldest friend, Garland Kent (Otoe, Ponca). The pallbearers were Browning Pipestem, Bob Thomas, Mel Thom,

[47] Ibid. The Ponca and other tribes sued Conoco-Philips in the 1980s over the amount of poison found in the river water. The case has yet to be resolved.

Garland Kent, Tony Isaacs, and Frank Turley. A grief stricken Pipestem challenged Isaacs and Turley, the two non-Indian pallbearers as to "whether (they) should be allowed to carry the casket" Turley gratefully remembered that "the family stood up for us." At the burial site, in the Ponca ceremony, before the casket was lowered, Warrior's two daughters were helped as they walked over the suspended coffin in the old Ponca way, which served as a symbol of having Warrior "'move on' with his life and not look back." As the girls were helped along the length of the coffin the Ponca singers set up the drum and sang a warrior song, the song that was usually reserved as the closing song for the Hethuska. Despite it being the closing song, it was not a funereal song, but "a goodbye song and it says stand up, "Hethuska no jinga" means stand up, and then it says god gave us the war dance, loosely translated. It's a good song."[48]

After the burial, and the meal, the family conducted a giveaway, as was the custom among the Ponca, and indeed, most Plains tribes. The custom, which had been described a "wanton disregard for property" by Secretary of the Interior Henry Teller in 1883, was the way in which the family of the deceased 'repaid' the honor of those who mourned. Della remembered that the family gave away "a lot. A lot of people had given me, they sent money and wired money, and people brought things. Just baskets and baskets of blankets and shawls and groceries." The blankets represented shelter, while the groceries represented feeding and the money, to be used for gas or bus tickets, represented a safe journey home. Each of these were contemporary version of a tradition that in the pre-reservation days would see horses

[48] Idem. Interview with Frank Turley, *Idem*. Interview with Betty Primeaux. *Idem*.

given to someone in honor, a fest laid down, or a bed offered for as long as the person needed it. For someone as immersed in his culture as Warrior had been, a giveaway of this scale was a fitting tribute.

The eulogies for Warrior spoke of his strength, honor, courage, conviction, and vision. Those who honored him remembered his capacity for truth, belligerence, hope and despair. They acknowledged his flaws and celebrated his brilliance, mourned his departure and thanked him for his legacy. This was a legacy of trying, despite seemingly insurmountable odds, to change a system that had been engrained in Indian White relations over generations, and a legacy of almost succeeding, and at least planting the seeds of success.

Upward Bound Director Tom Billings described him as "a troubled, heartbroken, but determined man, listening for a response from the world which would be equal to the warmth and strength of his own good spirit." When that response was not forthcoming, when "the great emotional silence which surrounded him, the cold emotional emptiness which confronted him, hurt his heart and tormented his spirit. At such times, Clyde Warrior became thunder and lightning and tears." He concluded that Warrior "wanted, like few persons I have known, to believe in the integrity of this nation." Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Robert Bennett, remembered that, "I bridled at his criticism, and questioned his tactics, but of his basic philosophy I could find no argument."[49]

[49] Billings, Thomas A . 1968,J uly9 . "Eulogy for Clyde Warrior." "Indians" folder, box 481. Records of the Indian Division Relating to Public Relations, 1965-1970, Records of the Office of Operations, Records of the Office of Economic

His long time friend, colleague, and comrade, Mel Thom said simply "our leader is gone." He remembered "him teasing, laughing, cussing, singing, and talking as few men would." Thom spoke of the "new hope" that Warrior brought to Indian people talking of how "he frightened people with his fight against oppression of Indian people." He described Warrior as a "great American. Clyde was a great Indian patriot…He was free man in bondage." He lamented that "Clyde leaves us with out struggle just beginning" but thanking him for opening "the doors of self-realization for us." Describing the "white man's alcohol" as striking Warrior down as "surely as the assassin's bullet has struck down so many great men," Thom concluded that, "Clyde is gone but never forgotten."[50]

On July 10, when Warrior was buried, his grave was marked with flowers. To commemorate his friend's life and legacy, Thom sent out a request to "friends of the late Clyde Warrior" for help to purchase a headstone. He reminded people that Clyde died a "poor man," that "he never would have been independently wealthy as long as his Indian people remained poor." He asked that, "as a fitting tribute to our fallen leader, to dig into your pockets and contribute for a monument fitting of the man Clyde Warrior was, and fittingly, to have the monument in place by the time of the forthcoming Ponca Powwow. That monument bears the legend "A Fresh Air of New Indian Idealism."[51]

Opportunity, Record Group3 81, National Archives and Records Administration II, College Park, Maryland. Heerman, Charles, E., "The Ponca: A People in the Process of Becoming," *Journal of American Indian Education,* Vol. 14, No. 3, May 1975

[50] "A Tribute To Clyde Warrior" Box, 17, Folder, 483, Murray Wax Collection

[51] Letter, dated July 30, 1968, from Mel Thom to "Friends of the Late Clyde Warrior," Box 17. Folder 483, Murray Wax Collection.

CONCLUSION

"LEGACY"

Warrior's death, as sudden and unexpected as it was, despite his ailing health, had a profound effect upon the NIYC and around Indian Country. Thom's lament that "we have lost our leader" was more than mere rhetoric and Shirley Hill Witt, and Della Warrior both remember a sense of hopelessness. People wondered, "what are we going to do now? He was the type of person that, if he was there, everybody wanted to be around him." With Warrior gone, "there was such a great loss." For the NIYC, organizing the collection for his headstone was not enough of a tribute, and the organization named August 31st, his date of birth, as "Clyde Warrior Day," a paid holiday for all staff members. Browning Pipestem also renamed the summer workshops he and Warrior had been organizing as the Clyde Warrior Institute for American Indian Affairs.

The Community Action that Warrior had set in motion at White Eagle continued unabated though, and on July 20th, 1968 the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development presented an interim report on their eighteen-month study of Indian Education. Della Warrior was employed part time at the White Eagle School as a temporary field assistant to gather notes and interview students and parents to "ascertain attitudes to Indian education." Aside from gathering research 'Family Participation Programs' were introduced within the communities to involve the parents in "some meaningful educational activity." In these programs parents were expected to help prepare the students socially and

culturally and academically for the adjustment. This was in addition to the tutoring that Warrior and Della had been providing that summer.[1]

A September NIYC proposal to the Carnegie Foundation for further funding of their Indian Education Program presented separate Far West progress reports of the demonstration schools. The White Eagle report noted that the Ponca community "was known as one of the most difficult ones with which to work in the state of Oklahoma." In keeping with this notoriety they claimed that they had no success in establishing rapport with the residents "without antagonizing others." It was only when they began working with Warrior that they "took advantage of the strong sense of pride that the Ponca Indians have when operating in their own surroundings and within their own culture." The report noted that "this pride is seldom shown outside the context of their own culture and it is particularly absent in the dealings in Ponca City, where they show themselves as weak and submissive and assume a defeatist attitude." Warrior had done much to try and change this attitude, and turned his anger towards the American social system that precipitated such an attitude from his people. He was determined that not just Poncas, but all Indians should be as proud of their culture externally as they were internally. It was this determination that drove his continued calls for tribal self-determination.[2]

The report also noted that this defeatism among the Poncas was " reinforced by the way that most Ponca Indians are looked down upon by those few who are educated, and by the way members of other Indian tribes and white people in the

[1] Della Warrior interview with Robert Warrior *Idem*.
[2] "Proposal to the Carnegie Corporation for Funding Continuation of the Indian Education Survey Project." Box 1, Folder 7, Dumont Collection.

larger community look down on Poncas." This was not the case with Warrior, however. Revered for his sharp tongued attacked on Indian affairs, or feared because of his caustic wit, very few people looked down upon Warrior. And while he may not have been welcome at most dinner tables in conservative and racist Ponca City, he was very well thought of among most white people who encountered him also. The organization of a voter registration drive to elect a Ponca Indian to the school board was credited to Della, acknowledging the couple as powerful allies in driving the early success of the White Eagle School.[3]

This success was in stark contrast to many of the other schools in the project and the number had dwindled to just four from the original ten: White Eagle, Pine Ridge, the Crow Agency and the Mescalero Apache reservation. Ultimately the NIYC abandoned the project citing epistemological differences with Far West. For Mel Thom and Bob Dumont, the much vaunted attempts to integrate each Native communities learning strategies into the model school system, a ground breaking strategy had it been faithfully applied, was ignored as Far West focused on primarily Western ideas. The White Eagle Community Project continued the efforts until the school was closed in 1969. Building upon their early successes, Martha Grass and her cohorts were able to force the Ponca City school system to adopt Johnson O'Malley funding to employ Indian education tutors to help their children.

[3] Ibid

Previously the children had been expected to assimilate into the student body without such tutoring support.[4]

The White Eagle Community Association, this time led by Warrior's widow, Della, also decided to commemorate his life. To reflect his pride in being Ponca, and his desire to carry his people's history forward with future generations, they obtained a grant from the National Council of Arts and Humanities to pursue the Clyde Warrior Ponca History Project. Under the project they recorded the memories and stories of Warrior grandparents, his uncle, and other tribal members. The project recorded and preserved Ponca children's stories, much of the tribe's history since relocation from Nebraska, ancient tribal history, as well as the origins of tribal customs, ceremonies, dances, games, and prayers, many of which Warrior himself had listened to as a boy. For a man, who despite his national prominence in Indian affairs, was always happiest when "he was at home talking to his grandparents participating in the ceremonial dances that they have in May," this was a fitting tribute.[5]

Further afield, Stan Steiner wrote to Della in October 1969, describing the "incredible talk of Clyde by people, young people, who never knew him." He told her that Warrior was "becoming a legend, larger than life: but then he always was." The first step to ensuring that legend was taken with a bloodless coup of the NIYC leadership led by his close friend Browning Pipestem. Believing that the founder members of the NIYC had led the organization into "financial disarray," Pipestem

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[4] Ibid. Heerman, Charles, E. "The Poncas: A People in the Process of Becoming," *Journal of American Indian Education,* Vol. 13, No. 3, May 1975
[5] Della Warrior interview with Robert Warrior, *Idem*.

orchestrated the removal of the incumbent NIYC board members at the 1968 annual conference in Gallup, refusing them the opportunity to sit at the council, never mind speak. The annual election resulted in the entire board losing their positions to Pipestem's cohort. Perhaps fittingly, the coup was achieved with a group of student graduates from the Clyde Warrior Institute of American Indian Studies, over which Pipestem had assumed total control.[6]

According to the NIYC Quarterly Report for July 1 – September 30, 1968 "the Clyde Warrior Institute in American Indian Affairs had the most influence on the present status of NIYC." In keeping with Warrior and Pipestem's conviction that the old Workshops did not provide enough practical education in Indian affairs, the report attested that the Institute was "an experiment in self-determination and the operating of a modern institution responsive to Indian direction and aspiration." The statement continued that, "for the first time, Indian students were able to learn how to order, control, restructure and balance the cross-cultural experience." From this experience, the students "were able and willing to assume the responsibilities of the National Indian Youth Council." There was a certain symmetry with how the NIYC had originally been created that Warrior would have appreciated.[7]

The new leadership refocused their attention on expanding the NIYC's activities and focus beyond education, sovereignty and self-determination. The following year, aside from Executive Director Gerald Wilkinson and five other

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[6] Letter from Stan Steiner to Della Warrior, dated October 24, 1969. Box 3, Folder 32, NIYC Records. More of this coup and its repercussions can be found in Shreve's, *Red Power Rising:* Idem. pp. 178. 188

[7] National Indian Youth Council, "Third Quarter Report," July 1 – September 30, 1968, Box 1, Folder 38, NIYC Papers.

members, the new board included Warrior's cousin, Bill Pensoneau, as President, his best friend Browning Pipestem, his widow Della Warrior, and Stanley Snake, another Ponca whom Warrior had recruited to the cause. Under their guidance the NIYC organized three Clyde Warrior Institutes, at Boulder Colorado, the University of California at Los Angeles, and Stout State University in Wisconsin in an effort to reach as many Indian students as possible and cement Warrior's legacy in the process. In another move of which Warrior would have been proud, the organization held the first "protest Powwow" in objection to conditions on the Fort Totten Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. Six hundred Indians turned up to combine "traditional Indian culture" with "modern day methods of protest."[8]

Warrior himself had advocated "modern day methods of protest" for much of the 1960s, watching as other minorities and anti-war protests gained attention for their causes through violence and other methods. He wanted to build on the success of the "fish-ins" and push a much more aggressive agenda for Indian rights than organizations such as the NCAI were advocating. Gatecrashing the 1966 NCAI parade in Oklahoma City with a car decked out in 'Red Power' banners, and organizing a plane to fly over the Cherokee Village in Tahlequah in 1967 were two such aggressive gestures. 'Red Power' was a fight that began at home, and while Warrior acknowledged and often referenced the global push for freedom and independence, his primary concern was domestically, culturally, and community driven. Warrior was as quick to castigate tribal leaders, Indian Affairs personnel, and the leaders of other Indian organizations for their complicity in the subjugation

[8] Ibid. National Indian Youth Council Press Release, 22 December 1969, Box 2, Folder 29, NIYC Papers.

of his people, as he was to denounce the system of paternalism and colonialism that led to this subjugation.

Warrior's ideal scenario was for a system that would recognize the integrity of the tribal system by validating the true power of traditional elders rather than appointed political leaders. The most pertinent connection he saw with the wider civil rights movement in America and across the world was the commonality of poverty among the oppressed. He had marched with Martin Luther King in 1963 and planned to do so again before he died. He was happy to reach across the ethnic divide if and when it suited tribal causes to do so, but only if the integrity of his, and his cohorts, message remained intact. To Warrior and the NIYC the Indian fight for self-determination was a fight that had begun in 1492 and superseded the fights of other minorities, free speech activists, or anti-war protestors. As protestors across the world looked to Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and internationally, Mahatma Gandhi, as their roles models for revolution and independence, Warrior looked to Tecumseh, the early nineteenth century Shawnee leader, and his own tribe's Chief Standing Bear as role models to allude to. Warrior never called for the abolition of the BIA, the colonial overseer of Indian lands, but a restructuring of the system so that the BIA *served* Indian communities rather than *controlled* them.

As fast as Warrior's legend as the most militant of his generation of activists was growing in Indian Country, however, a chain of events he had long 'predicted' overshadowed it. In November 1969, with shades of "smashing the system" as he had described it to Stan Steiner, the "Indians of All Tribes" in San Francisco occupied Alcatraz Island in a bid to reclaim federally abandoned land for Indians.

This occupation saw a surge in militant activism from urban Indians that had been hitherto absent in Indian affairs, apart from the fish-ins of 1963 and the Cherokee Village protest in 1967. The propaganda success of the Alcatraz Occupation and the worldwide publicity it garnered encouraged the American Indian Movement to adopt similar inflammatory rhetoric and action.

Originally named Concerned Indian Americans, the group was formed in 1968, the year Warrior died. The group's purpose was to fight racism and police abuse in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. From 1969 to 1973, AIM cut a swathe across America and burned their way into the public, Indian, White and International consciousness. From "protests and picketing in Minneapolis, Albuquerque, Sacramento, Cleveland and Chicago" in 1970, the groups confrontational tactics escalated to include the 1972 occupation of BIA Headquarters in Washington D.C. and the 73 day armed siege at Wounded Knee in 1973. As AIM forced itself into the public eye, the massive publicity it generated allowed its leaders to rewrite history in their own image and cast the NIYC as ineffectual intellectuals. Claims by leaders such as Russell Means that "before AIM [American Indian Movement], Indians were dispirited, defeated and culturally dissolving. People were ashamed to be Indian. You didn't see the young people wearing braids or chokers or ribbon shirts in those days" have stood unchallenged until recently. Despite this dismissal of the role of the NIYC, AIM leaders actively sought their advice and counsel in the early years of the organization. After early overtures from AIM regarding an alliance were rejected, in the year following Pipestem's coup, Wilkinson's 'new' NIYC and AIM shared a common ideology.

From 1969 until the BIA takeover in 1972, the NIYC and AIM were allies, having joined together in Norman, Oklahoma to create the American Indian Task Force. The two groups eventually parted ways over tactical differences, when the NIYC refused to join AIM at Wounded Knee and sent only "words of support" instead.[9]

Such claims, however, dismissed Warrior and the NIYC, their work and their legacy to that of an afterthought. Red Power, a slogan created by Warrior and Thom, was decided to have started with Alcatraz rather than the NIYC. It is somewhat unfortunate that Aim did not acknowledge the debt of advice and example owed to the NIYC, whose foundations of direct action AIM built upon. Members of the previous board had fought against the two groups joining forces because of vastly different ideologies, suggesting the scale of changes that Wilkinson had brought to the NIYC.

At the Norman, Oklahoma meeting, Charlie Cambridge voted against joining forces with AIM for reasons that Warrior would have understood and supported. He recalled Dennis Banks "wearing a sports coat, he had short hair," explaining to the board what AIM was about. To Cambridge and others on the board, "the basic philosophy of the American Indian Movement was to establish an "Indian". I got into a lot of trouble with the American Indian Movement because I told them that you guys are trying to create an "Indian." The creation of a generic, or 'pan' Indian "is the same thing that the Bureau of Indian Affairs has been trying

[9] Again, far more information on the alliance between the NIYC and AIM is found inside Shreve's *Red Power Rising.* Shreve, Bradley, *Idem*. pg. 192. "Alcatraz Is Not an Island," *Indian Activism,* Russell Means, http://www.pbs.org/itvs/alcatrazisnotanisland/activism.html. Accessed March 7, 2010

to do for centuries." AIM's success in creating this concept of a generic "Indian" identity has allowed Thomas's theory of pan-Indianism to become the accepted norm. Pan-Indianism is recognized as the driving ideology of Red Power over the tribally oriented, culturally focused, and community based, identities of people like Warrior, Thom, Witt, Adams, Rickard, Eschief, Blatchford, Brown and Cambridge. The NIYC, for many of the old guard at least, "was closer to reservations," and an alliance with AIM "was something that just could not work because the basic philosophies were entirely different."[10]

In contrast to AIM, and their philosophy of loyalty to the collective, Warrior's legacy is born of his tribal identity and cultural upbringing. Rather than an urban Indian seeking affirmation of identity and reunion with his culture through militancy and rhetoric, Warrior used rhetoric and activism to protect the culture from which he came. To Warrior, and many of his cohorts, loyalty began first with family, then clan, then tribe, then NIYC, and only then Indian and American. All too often he questioned the validity of the terminology and asked "what is an American Indian?" He proudly proclaimed himself to be a tribal person who was part of a collective, which to borrow from the powwow world in which he was so immersed, was intertribal in nature. The NIYC collective recognized community and tribal identity, and the protection of tribal knowledge and traditions, as the driving force of their activism. The NIYC was a community based upon consensus, as were the communities from which its members came. Rather ironically, many of

[10] Interview with Charlie Cambridge. *Idem*.

the original AIM leaders are now respected community elders, having cast off Indian-ness in favor of embracing tribal identity and cultural traditions.[11]

Many of Warrior's speeches, essays, or addresses began with the words "I am full blood Ponca Indian from Oklahoma." It was the community-centered nature of his Ponca culture that gave Warrior his self-knowledge. Despite the material deprivation that accompanied tribal life, the Ponca community was his comfort zone, as Warrior proclaimed in 1964, "I know who I am. I am me, tribe warrior." This self-belief gave Warrior the conviction that his worldview, the Ponca worldview, was a valuable and essential contribution to the world. He was convinced that the communally focused cultures of American Indian nations were worth protecting and preserving. Each community had its own traditions, values, history, and culture, which identified it as distinct from the others. Warrior recognized this and elucidated upon it in many speeches when he rejected the concept of a single "Indian" identity. His fight for treaty rights recognized these cultural distinctions and was not rhetorical, or a method to castigate the federal government, but a crucial element of protecting and preserving his cultural, and his identity.[12]

In 1953, D'Arcy McNickle, as leader of the NCAI, issued the clarion call that "the fight for civil rights has not yet been won, but the fight for the right to be culturally different has not even started." Warrior, more than many others, epitomized this quote. For him, full bloodedness was an issue of cultural identity

[11] Warrior, *Social Movements,* Idem.
[12] Warrior, "Poverty, Power and Community" *Idem,* "Social Movements," *Idem*.

and immersion rather than federally stipulated blood quantum. Blood quantum measured Indian-ness as a federally mandated legal definition. To Warrior, this was irrelevant. Identity was tribal, and his worldview measured cultural identity by participation in, and fidelity to, traditional cultural practices within the framework of the tribal community. As distinct as each tribal community was, it was remained so while the people within that community retained its values and practices. His grandfather's quarter Irish blood was irrelevant to who he was or how he identified himself. Warrior had been raised with Ponca as his first language, with Ponca customs as his worldview, with Ponca songs in his head and on his lips from morning until night, and the sound of the drum beating every day. He was raised with the history of injustice that the federal, and then state and city governments, had meted out to his people, from forced removal from their ancestral homelands to literally stealing the legally owned land from underneath them. He was raised with the principals of the clans of the Ponca people being together and working together as one community, as represented by the seven eagle feathers and three teepees on the tribal seal. His immersion and celebration of this heritage and knowledge meant to Warrior that he was a full blood culturally participating Ponca Indian.[13]

Warrior used this background and knowledge to fight for the protection and preservation of his culture, history and identity. For Warrior, it was these three motifs that formed the cornerstone of his, and his cohorts, fight for self-determination. His activism, rhetoric, confidence, were immersed in his culture, community, and identity. His was a pro-active fight for Indian rights, from the

[13] Cowger, Thomas, W., *The National Congress of the American Indians:* Idem., pg. 113

grassroots of tribalism and community rather than a reactive fight against federal Indian policy from a political perspective. He was also far from the ineffective intellectual that the academy has portrayed for many years, full of stirring rhetoric yet part of an organization that ultimately achieved little. In 1970, Richard Nixon's Special Message on Indian Affairs, carried clear echoes of Warrior's words, as had President Johnson's in 1968. The speech was full of many of the same images and arguments that Warrior had been making for the past seven years. He, and the NIYC had reached from the reservation and the classroom to directly influence federal Indian policy in a promising new direction for Indian tribes and individuals.[14]

On the issue of self-determination, Nixon told the Congress that, "the Indian community is almost entirely run by outsiders who are responsible and responsive to Federal officials in Washington, D.C., rather than to the communities they are supposed to be serving." The result of this bureaucratic inequality was an "erosion of Indian initiative and moral." He also tackled the issue of community as a collective with the tribe as its focus, rather than a geographic location irrespective of the people within it. He argued that his policy was "to strengthen the Indian's sense of autonomy without threatening his sense of community. We must ensure the

[14] It is unfortunate that Stan Steiner's *New Indians* is out of print. According to Shirley Hill Witt it offered an extremely faithful account of events as they happened in the early NIYC years, and Warrior is a central figure in the text. Later texts such as Paul Chaat Smith & Robert Warrior's *Like A Hurricane* describe Warrior as being "pushed increasingly to the margins" by 1966. Troy Johnson, Joane Nagel and Duane Champaign, describe him and the NIYC as "a leading voice for younger Indian people during the 1961-1967 period" in *American Indian Activism*. In Nagel's *American Indian Ethnic Renewal,* Warrior is strikingly absent. It is only in very recent works by Daniel M Cobb's *Native Activism in Cold War America,* and Brad Shreve's *Red Power Rising,* that Warrior and the NIYC are finally receiving the full amount of credit that their work deserves.

Indian that he can assume control of his own life without being separated involuntarily from the tribal group." To do this Nixon proposed passing laws to ensure that "a tribe or a group of tribes or any other Indian community to take control or operation of any federally funded and administered programs in the Department of the Interior and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare whenever the tribal council or comparable community governing group voted to do so."[15]

While Nixon's self-determination policy was far from perfect, never removing the yoke of federal supervision of tribal laws, it was dramatically more far reaching that Johnson's Community Action Program had been for Indian nations. Community Action allowed for tribes to begin working towards economic independence and community control of tribal programs. Nixon's Self-Determination policy built upon these foundations and went much further, guaranteeing Indians that they could "assume control over [his] own life without being separated involuntarily from the tribal group." This promise was ultimately enshrined in law under the Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975. The Act answered many of the complaints that Warrior and his cohorts had levied against the federal government in their years of campaigning. There was a refrain to Nixon's proposed Indian Education policy that echoed, almost exactly, the rhetoric of many of Warrior's speeches. He, as Warrior had done, tied education to self-determination, explaining that, "consistent with our policy that the Indian

[15] Nixon, Richard, *Special Message to the Congress on Indian Affairs,* July 8, 1970. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=2573#axzz1e1Md80Rk Accessed April 6, 2010

community should have the right to take over the control and operation of federally funded programs, we believe every Indian community wishing to do so should be able to control his own Indian schools." As Warrior, Della, and Martha Grass had fought for in White Eagle, he proposed that, "this control should be exercised by school boards selected by Indians." Furthermore, technical help would be provided to Indian communities "wishing to establish school boards," while a nationwide review would be conducted on the educational status of all Indian schoolchildren, together with an annual report on "the status of Indian education, including the extent of local control." Unfortunately, the timing of Nixon's proposals was too late for the Ponca's White Eagle School, which had closed in 1969. When the proposals became law, with the passage of the Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, the Ponca did not take the president up on his offer, and the tribal children remain educated within the Ponca City school system.[16]

This paradox, of his ideas being adopted when it was too late for his own people, was typical of a man who represented so many paradoxes in his writing, activism and lifestyle. He argued bitterly against federal control of Indian affairs and Indian lives, and frequently lambasted the bureaucratic system as it currently stood. He was one of the most outspoken and militant activists of his generation yet, never, like so many militant leaders of previous generations, called for the abolition of the BIA. Instead, he recognized the value of the BIA, if it could be reformed to provide services to Indian communities on an individual basis rather than impose monolithic immutable bureaucratic oversight of those communities. He often

[16] Ibid.

predicted that the generation that followed his would dismiss them as ineffectual and strive to be bigger, bolder and louder than he ever was. And he was proven right, on all fronts. That a coup in the NIYC led the organization he helped create to be complicit in this rejection of his legacy, albeit temporary, is ironic. The irony doubles when one considers that his best friend orchestrated the coup in an effort to preserve his legacy. Warrior would have enjoyed the irony.

He would also have understood, and agreed with, the idea that, for many, his alcoholism taints his legacy. He described the addiction as "unconscious suicide where people really think within themselves "Man, life ain't worth it. Best we should stay drunk and die or best we should kill each other than have to live the life we have to live today." As much hope and pride as he instilled in those around him he never managed to shake that despair personally. However, Mel Thom, discussing Warrior's death with journalists, described that drinking as "almost an honorable way for an Indian to die. Because when an Indian drinks he is a free man."[17]

Generations later, as his words are gaining renewed prominence through the restructuring of Red Power to recognize Warrior, Thom, Witt, Noble, and the other NIYC members as its true architects, Warrior's words are as pertinent, and vibrant, now as they were then. And Warrior's legacy is now being recognized. As Gus Palmer Jr. remembered reading "Which One Are You? Five Types of American Indian" and finding parallels in each example with people he knew then, so do people now. As Warrior argued against the fallacy of tribal sovereignty, with the

[17] Warrior, Clyde, *Lecture on Social Movements*, Wayne State University, February 4, 1966, Transcript in author's possession. "Memorial Rites Recognize Indian Leader," *Gallup Independent,* July 10, 1968

ever-present oversight of the Secretary of the Interior, so people recognize his argument now. And at a time when the federal government is proposing to return control of Johnson O'Malley funds to the school districts rather than Indian education boards, his fears for the future education of Native schoolchildren are again vibrantly pertinent. A new generation of American Indian students are reading Warrior's words and identifying with them in the same way that their grandparent's generation did.

As much as his words are now reaching a new generation, Warrior's memory is still cherished by family and friends alike, forty-four years after his death. Della, who achieved personal success as Tribal Chairwoman of the Otoe-Missouria and President of the Institute of American Indian Arts, still displays the pain of loss that only a widow can know. His sister, Charmain Billy, faithfully presents a slideshow of Warrior's words and achievements to Ponca tribal elders every March 3rd, in honor of his marking that date as "truly historic for Native Americans" in the 1963 "fish ins". She is also striving to resurrect the summer workshops to educate the latest generation of American Indian college students to honor his name and memory. Shirley Witt, the last surviving founder member of the NIYC describes his energy, intellect, spirit and great humor as if she spoke to him just yesterday. Gerald Brown, Charlie Cambridge, Al Wahrhaftig and Gus Palmer Jr. still remain in awe of Warrior's intellect and powerful rhetoric, his ability to touch people, see their strength, and galvanize them into action. His sisters Charmain Billy, Darlene Harjo, and Betty Primeaux fondly remember a loving and playful older brother who teased them incessantly. His college roommates, Garrick

Bailey and Tony Isaacs each remember long and intense conversations about politics and Indian music respectively, Warrior catering to each of their tastes effortlessly, while his old hobbyist buddy Frank Turley still claims Warrior to be the "only man who ever whistled "forty nine" songs."" Turley also counts the piece of Warrior's straight dance regalia that the family gifted to him as one of his most reassured possessions. Hank Adams, whose determination to fight for is community's way of life led to Warrior's and the NIYC organizing the first direct action protest of the Red Power Movement, remembered Warrior's commitment to traditionalism as being so string that "his life was in the song." Each and every one of them also remembers the most graceful, fluid, and elegant dancer they have ever seen.[18]

The story of Clyde Warrior's life and legacy is a story that is long overdue. On December 19, 2007 Della Warrior hosted the grand opening ceremony of the Clyde Warrior Memorial Building in White Eagle. The building rests on the former site of the BIA's Ponca Boarding School, which closed its doors in 1924, after which the children of White Eagle were sent to Chilocco Indian School in nearby Newkirk, Oklahoma. The construction of "the facility is a key element of the strategic plan for the Ponca Tribe to strengthen the ability of the Tribal government to provide for the safety, health, social, cultural, and economic needs of its members." A year earlier, on August 26th, 2006 the tribe buried a time capsule, to be opened in 2136. The site chosen for the capsule was directly in front of the

[18] Interview with Frank Turley, *Idem*. Interview between Hank Adams and Robert Warrior, dated December 20, 1994. Transcript in author's possession.

impending Warrior Memorial.[19]

The building, shaped like a traditional Ponca roundhouse, contains the tribe's Child Protection Services Department, a media center, the tribal library, a conference center, and other meeting areas for tribal members. It proudly stands guard over the tribal time capsule, in a truly fitting testimony, and lasting monument, to Clyde Warrior's legacy of protecting and honoring the vitality and absolute necessity of tribal traditions, values, sovereignty, cultural integrity, and past, present, and future, history.

[19] Office of Native American Programs – Success Stories 2007 http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/ih/codetalk/onap/success07 Accessed January 12, 2012

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