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## “We Indians Will Be Indians All Our Lives,” 1890–1920

On the day after the massacre the blizzard came. Two days later the weather cleared and the young Dakota physician assumed charge of the 100 people, most of them Indians, who ventured forth to seek the living and the dead. He never forgot that scene:

Fully three miles from the scene of the massacre, we found the body of a woman completely covered with a blanket of snow, and from this point on we found them scattered along as they had been relentlessly hunted down and slaughtered while fleeing for their lives. Some of our people discovered relatives or friends among the dead, and there was much wailing and mourning. When we reached the spot where the Indian camp had stood, among the fragments of burned tents and other belongings we saw the frozen bodies lying close together or piled upon one another. I counted eighty bodies of men who had been in the council and who were almost as helpless as the women and babies when the deadly fire began, for nearly all their guns had been taken from them.

The doctor was Ohiyesa, or, as he was called as a student at Dartmouth College and the Boston University medical school,

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Charles Eastman. Eastman had departed from New England in 1890 to serve as physician on the Pine Ridge Reservation in western South Dakota. He was Wahpeton and Mdewakanton Dakota, rather than Oglala Lakota, who comprised most of the Pine Ridge population. Proud of his Native heritage and eager to serve a Native community, he had arrived in November in a dust storm that obscured what he later described as his "bleak and desolate" surroundings. By year's end, he confronted the harrowing assignment of retrieving the few survivors as well as the dead from the frozen earth near Wounded Knee.

The massacre occurred in the waning days of warfare on the northern Plains. The Lakotas formed the western portion of the peoples who came to be known as the Sioux, while the Dakotas, to the east, included the four bands of the Santee: Mdewakanton, Sisseton, Wahpekute, and Wahpeton. The Yankton and Yanktonai were between the Santee bands and the Lakota bands. The seven bands of western Lakotas (or Teton Sioux)—Hunkpapa, Itazipco (Sans Arc), Mnikowoju (Minniconjou), Oglala, Oohenunpa (Two Kettles), Sicangu (Brulé), and Sisasapa (Blackfeet)—had migrated westward centuries before. They had supplanted other Indian nations, claimed much of the northern Plains country as their own, and made the Black Hills into sacred ground. They thus had become Plains people, then emerged as the most powerful of them. The Lakotas vigorously defended their rights to what had become their homeland. By the mid-nineteenth century they were destined to conflict with the other expanding power in the region, the country called the United States, whose citizens had pushed into the heart of the northern Plains, demanding access to all of its resources.

In order to expedite the settlement by outsiders of Native land, and in the wake of the successful military campaign that Red Cloud (Oglala Lakota) had directed along the Bozeman Trail, the US government in 1868 had negotiated one of the last major treaties with Indian communities. Through the Treaty of Fort Laramie, the Lakotas had obtained what was called the Great Sioux Reservation, a substantial enclave that included the Black Hills. However, the discovery of gold in the Black Hills soon



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thereafter caused the US government to abandon promises it had just made. Federal officials never received the signatures of three-quarters of the adult Lakota population required to alter the Fort Laramie treaty, but they still approved the "Agreement" of 1876, which robbed the Lakotas of their sacred land.

Anger over federal actions sparked renewed resistance among the Lakotas. During the summer, just before the United States observed its centennial, the Lakotas and their allies had triumphed at the Little Bighorn over George Armstrong Custer and his men. Memories of Lakota military prowess remained vivid among the members of the Seventh Cavalry, Custer's unit. The era since the triumph on the Greasy Grass had been increasingly difficult for the Lakotas. In 1889 further pressure from intruders had prompted the US government to reduce and fracture the Great Sioux Reservation into fragments: Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Cheyenne River, Standing Rock, Lower Brule, and Crow Creek. Restricted in their movements, hungry, and embittered, many Lakotas as well as many Yanktons, Yanktonais, and Santees were receptive to the teachings of a Native prophet in distant Nevada. The Paiute prophet, Wovoka, had promised a new day, when the whites would disappear, the buffalo would reappear in great numbers, and the Indians would be reunited with their loved ones who had gone before. Lakota representatives traveled to Nevada to meet with Wovoka, and they brought home their own interpretations of the Ghost Dance. They believed that the shirts they wore in observing the ritual would make them invulnerable to bullets.

In 1890 a new federal agent, Daniel Royer, arrived at Pine Ridge. He proved to be ill-suited for this assignment. The Lakotas quickly gave him a name: Young Man Afraid of Indians. Royer panicked at the sight of the Ghost Dancers on Pine Ridge. Just days after he arrived, he began to appeal to the US Army for troops. Such military assistance was hardly necessary, but the army's own designs made a confrontation almost inevitable. The army brass, especially General Nelson Miles, was determined to put on a show of force. Miles believed that the army rather than the civilian agency, the Office (later Bureau) of Indian Affairs, should be in charge on the reservations. Taking control would



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provide a role for the western army in peacetime and would guarantee order in the chaos of the early reservation years. Miles thus acceded to Royer's request, and soon the bluecoats were in the field. Some of them hailed from the Seventh Cavalry.

In December two terrible confrontations occurred. One took place on Standing Rock on December 15. There, in a violent stand-off between some of his followers and Lakotas who had joined the agency police force, the old Hunkpapa leader, Tatanka Iyotanka (Sitting Bull) was killed. The other tragedy transpired two weeks later at Pine Ridge. Mnikowaju Lakotas under the leadership of Big Foot had left their home at Cheyenne River, both terrified by the news about Tatanka Iyotanka and anxious to visit Pine Ridge at the invitation of Red Cloud. However, Big Foot's band, riddled by hunger and illness, never made it to Red Cloud. Intercepted by the Seventh Cavalry, they were taken to Wounded Knee Creek, about 20 miles from the village of Pine Ridge. On the following morning of December 29, the Lakotas were ordered to surrender all their weapons and implements. Members of the cavalry took away nearly all of the Lakotas' weapons before an argument between a Lakota who refused to surrender his rifle and some soldiers almost instantaneously escalated into a hail of fire from the soldiers' rifles and the four Hotchkiss cannons that had been placed on a hill above the encampment. There are different estimates of how many of the Lakotas were killed, but at least 153, and probably scores more of them, died in the massacre. Twenty-five whites also perished, some of them fatally wounded by cross fire from within their ranks. Many of the Lakota dead were women and children who had been killed immediately or who had been shot down as they tried to flee into the countryside. The federal government later awarded the American soldiers present at Wounded Knee twenty congressional medals of honor.

### **Disappearing Peoples?**

Wounded Knee in time became a metaphor for the struggle between whites and Indians in the West. In his poem "American



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Names," Stephen Vincent Benet wrote, "bury my heart at Wounded Knee." Writer Dee Brown used the phrase in 1970 as the title for his history of the "Indian wars" in the American West. In 1973 Native protesters who took over the village of Wounded Knee briefly captured the attention of the national media. The year of the first Wounded Knee, 1890, was also used by the Superintendent of the US Census to declare the end of the frontier. The young historian Frederick Jackson Turner soon employed this census report to speak of the end of an era in American life.

Interpretations that used the 1890 massacre and census to denote the end of an era were overstated. Wounded Knee was forever carved in the Lakota memory. But the event did not have exactly the same meaning for all Indians. Many other Native nations had their own wars to remember. For those who resided east of the Mississippi River, South Dakota was distant, unknown land. So other occurrences took precedence in their memories and shaped separate tribal identities. Wounded Knee was ignored or conveniently forgotten by most non-Indians who lived in other parts of the country. If recalled, it became a "battle" rather than a "massacre." And 1890 did not signal the end of the frontier. Prospective farmers, ranchers, miners, and others continued to seek the natural resources of lands new to them, whether or not those lands already were occupied. They still found their way into the interior of the West and ventured north to Alaska.

However, it did appear in 1890 that a transition was well under way. Three years after the United States signed a series of treaties with Indian tribes in 1868, confident that the tide had turned in the wars to gain control of the West, Congress passed a law calling for an end to formal treaty-making. From now on any compact signed would be formally labeled an agreement rather than a treaty. Congressional representatives thus stated that the balance of power had shifted sufficiently that the United States no longer needed to enter into the same kinds of negotiations. Custer's defeat in 1876 suggested Congress had been premature in its declaration, but the completion of the transcontinental railroad, the growth of towns and cities, and the development of new



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industries to exploit the natural resources of the West all testified to increasing US control over Indian communities. Whether they were labeled treaties or agreements, these documents were taken more seriously by the Indians who signed their names or left their marks upon them. Non-Indians thought they knew better. They saw the pacts as convenient, bloodless means through which Native lands would be opened and their occupants confined. They perceived the treaties and agreements as legal documents that provided legitimate and permanent claims to lands that would hereafter be theirs.

Non-Indian Americans, after all, tended to portray American history as beginning with the arrival of their particular ancestors or with the landing of the first English-speaking immigrants. However, because Indians were here first and had every intention of remaining on their lands, various colonial and then US representatives had to confront the aboriginal nations. In the early years of the United States, the Supreme Court under Chief Justice John Marshall was forced to consider the nature of the Indian presence and the kinds of rights the Indians possessed. Law professor Charles F. Wilkinson has concluded: "Chief Justice Marshall's opinions made it clear that Indian tribes were sovereign before contact with Europeans and that some, but not all, sovereign powers continued in existence after relations with Europeans and the United States were established." In *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), Justice Marshall declared that before contact "America, separated from Europe by a wide ocean, was inhabited by a distinct people, divided into separate nations, independent of each other and of the rest of the world, having institutions of their own, and governing themselves by their own laws." He added: "The Indian nations had always been considered as distinct, independent political communities retaining their original natural rights, as the undisputed possessors of the soil, from time immemorial, with the single exception of that imposed by irresistible power."

Here were the roots of the "tribal sovereignty" that became the rallying cry of Indian peoples in the twentieth century. Marshall's court considered specifically the situation faced by the Cherokees



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of the southeastern United States. The state of Georgia, with the full support of President Andrew Jackson, was trying to justify its attempts to deny the Cherokees their rights to remain within Georgia's borders. Georgia, in essence, denied that the Cherokees had any right to exist as any kind of separate entity. Marshall's decision in *Worcester* did not prevent the removal of thousands of Cherokees from their home country. It did establish the legal foundation for the movement for modern Indian sovereignty through which tribes, as Wilkinson has written, attempt to achieve or maintain a form of self-rule that sustains self-determination and self-identity. Thus, sovereignty entails a governmental structure and a way of life "premised on a unity with the natural world, a stable existence, and a deep connection to place and family." These ideals, present 100, 200, 500, and more years ago, continue to inform the Native American presence on this continent. They provided a kind of anchor in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when nearly all non-Indians concluded that Indians were destined for disappearance.

Such a disappearance, non-Indians generally determined, was in everyone's best interest, including the Indians themselves. Non-Indians saw the reservations as little more than temporary enclaves. The Indians, said newcomers who wished to grow wheat and graze cattle on these lands, were not even using their remaining acreage to full advantage. The Indians, said Christian missionaries who wished to convert them to different, often competing, versions of a new faith, were not worshipping the proper God. The Indians, said federal officials who observed the onrush of immigrants past Ellis Island, were not speaking the correct language or adjusting to the ways of modern America. The Indians, they all determined, needed less land and more of everything else: more Christianity, more English, more private ownership. They needed "real" houses, "real" marriages, and "real" names.

The interested parties predicted that such a transition should not take long. Indian peoples' wills seemingly had been broken. One could see defeat and submission in the images of the day. One heard of Geronimo (Goyathlay) of the Chiricahua Apaches



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and Joseph (Heinmot Tooyalakeet) of the Nez Perces living in exile. The federal official in charge of the government bureau responsible for Indian policy, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas Jefferson Morgan, predicted that other than the Sioux, the Navajos, and the Pueblo communities, most tribes would disappear. "The great body of Indians," Morgan forecast, "will become merged in the indistinguishable mass of our population." The census takers in 1900 offered evidence in support of Morgan's prediction. When they counted the Indians in Vermont, they came up with a grand total of five. The Mashantucket Pequot population had dwindled to less than twenty. The photographer Edward Curtis believed that a way of life was coming to an end. He thus embarked upon an extended foray to portray on film what he termed "the vanishing race." In 1911, the last survivor of the Yahi people made his way out of the foothills in northeastern California. One by one, members of his tribe had been killed or had died from diseases brought in by newcomers. Anthropologists Alfred Kroeber and Thomas Waterman took this man from the town of Oroville to San Francisco. He became known as "Ishi," the word for "man" in the Yahi language. In the city, living within the confines of the University of California Museum of Anthropology, this quiet, gracious person offered Kroeber and Waterman the details of his people's history and culture. In 1916 he died from tuberculosis. During the previous year, sculptor James Earle Fraser had fashioned "The End of the Trail." This bronze of a slumped warrior on horseback was created for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. Fraser's statue demonstrated altered circumstances. He paired it with another of a pioneer confidently gazing into the future.

A group of non-Indian men and women had begun to address the status of American Indians in American life. These "Friends of the Indian," as they called themselves, had started to gather in 1883 for an annual meeting at a new hotel on Lake Mohonk, New York. The hotel's owners, Albert and Alfred Smiley, had a strong interest in the subject under consideration; Albert Smiley had been appointed in 1879 to the Board of Indian Commissioners, a group of wealthy philanthropists who advised the government





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on its policy toward Indians. Some of the people who came to Lake Mohonk also had joined the Indian Rights Association (IRA), organized in 1882 and already the most significant of the associations lobbying for reform of that policy. The IRA's leader, Herbert Welsh, spoke in 1886 at Lake Mohonk on "The Needs of the Time." He argued that such reform would "make the Indian a man among men, a citizen among citizens." Welsh knew that Indians could "be safely guided from the night of barbarism into the fair dawn of Christian civilization."

In Welsh's view, Indians were no different from other Americans. They should be treated just like everyone else; they should be expected to meet the same standards that society set for others. When given access to schooling, Christianity, private property, and the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship, Indians would compete equally in contemporary America. The reformers thus embarked upon a crusade to reach these objectives. This drive to assimilate the Indians—to make the Indians at home in America, as one proponent phrased it—dominated the federal agenda from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth century.

Nevertheless, contrary to the expectations of Edward Curtis, the Indians did not vanish. Their lands and their lives changed, to be sure. The assimilative assault of the period had severe consequences. Indians lost millions of acres of land to sale and cession; still more lands were leased to outsiders. Indian religious ceremonies were prohibited; Native children were compelled to attend school, often in institutions far from home. At the same time, the reservations did not entirely disappear and new ones were even established in the early years of the twentieth century. For those who inhabited them, these reservation lands began to take on new meaning and new significance. Indian religious observances may have been outlawed, but that did not mean they either stopped or were erased from memory. An emerging peyote religion also won thousands of Native adherents. Even in the matter of education, the results proved more complicated than one might have assumed. These additional developments are also central to an understanding of these decades.



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In the late 1970s, an old man looked back upon this time. Olney Runs After remembered the occasion as though it had taken place just the other day. He had traveled to Dupree, South Dakota, a new town constructed on land that had once been part of the Cheyenne River Reservation. In 1912 the future of the reservation seemed very much in doubt. Runs After recalled the words of a speaker at the fair, Congressman Henry L. Gandy: "... he said forty years from now there won't be no Indians. He come near make it ... . But we Indians will be Indians all our lives, we will never be white men. We can talk and work and go to school like the white people, but we're still Indians."

## Education

An examination of Native American education, religion, ties to the land, and identity helps clarify what Runs After meant. Providing schooling for American Indians represented a challenge, because public education remained out of reach for many Americans, especially those who were poor and who did not speak English as a first language. The states showed little, if any, interest in educating Native students. Indians on reservations lived far away from established schools for non-Indian children, and the reservations lacked a tax base to pay for school construction and operation. Moreover, many Indian parents distrusted the means and ends of non-Indians' kind of education.

The federal government and Christian denominations both believed that a proper education would lead Indian children to assimilate. And during this era most Native children who went to school did so at an institution operated by the government or by a Christian church. Many of these institutions boarded their students, requiring many of their charges to move far away from home. Proponents of these distant boarding schools argued that such isolation was necessary to remove children from the harmful, counterproductive influences of their homes and communities. The students, they contended, should even be encouraged never to return to their former residences. At the



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time, boarding schools in England and New England offered an exemplary education to the privileged sons and daughters of the wealthy, but the kind of tutelage students received in Indian boarding schools obviously was designed to meet other goals.

The Board of Indian Commissioners in 1880 had not minced words in proclaiming the need for such schooling: "The Indian, though a simple child of nature with mental faculties dwarfed and shriveled, while groping his way for generations in the darkness of barbarism, already sees the importance of education; bewildered by the glare of the civilization above and beyond his comprehension, he is nevertheless seeking to adjust himself to the new conditions by which he is encompassed." Commissioner of Indian Affairs J. D. C. Atkins stated in 1886 that instruction must be in English, "the language of the greatest, most powerful, and enterprising nationalities beneath the sun." Use of a common language would break down tribal distinctions and encourage the common bond of citizenship. Atkins understood the importance of the task. In 1887 he emphasized that the government "must remove the stumbling block of hereditary customs and manners, and of these language is one of the most important elements." He had made up his mind: "This language, which is good enough for a white man and a black man, ought to be good enough for the red man."

At Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, Richard Henry Pratt established a model for Indian education. Pratt had been a captain in the army, fought in the Civil War, and later worked with Indian scouts in the Red River war. At Fort Marion, Alabama, he sought to instruct Indian prisoners in English and generally to prepare them for assimilation into US society. Pratt had been in the Tenth Cavalry and had developed an interest in the African-American men who had served in his unit. He knew of the new school in Virginia, Hampton Institute, that another military man, General Samuel Armstrong, had founded for black students. Pratt took twenty-two of his Indian students from Fort Marion to Hampton in 1878 and recruited more Indian pupils from the West to the school. By the following year he had decided to found his own school at an abandoned military installation in Pennsylvania. At Carlisle, for a quarter of a century thereafter,



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Pratt directed what became the most prominent school for Indians in the United States. He was forced out eventually as superintendent in 1904, and Carlisle closed its doors permanently during World War I. In its time, however, the school had a significant influence on how Indians would be educated.

Part of that influence came through the efforts of the tireless Pratt. He appeared at the Lake Mohonk conferences and publicized his labors through endless correspondence and frequent speeches. Non-Indian Americans generally applauded the image of Carlisle. Captain Pratt appeared to be bringing discipline to young people who, it was assumed, previously had not known the commodity. Pratt pledged to "kill the Indian in him and save the man." He ordered that before-and-after photographs be taken of the pupils, so that even casual observers could see the effect of his program. These images vividly captured the spirit of the transformation Pratt hoped to realize. Long hair was shorn and tribal dress discarded, the after-image revealing students with neat haircuts and dressed in military school uniforms. In addition, new names were bestowed upon those enrolled. One of the first students at Carlisle recalled: "I was told to take a pointer and select a name for myself from the list written on the blackboard. I did, and as I could not distinguish any difference in them, I placed the pointer on the name Luther. I then learned to call myself by that name and got used to others calling me by it, too."

At the turn of the century, about 50 percent of Indian children were enrolled in school. Most attended schools west of the Mississippi that resembled Carlisle. After Carlisle's demise, Haskell, in Lawrence, Kansas, became the most prominent of these institutions. Other large schools, such as Chemawa (Oregon), Chilocco (Oklahoma), and Phoenix, attracted students from many different communities. Competition among the schools for students intensified to the point that Commissioner of Indian Affairs William Jones in 1902 banned all but the two most prominent, Carlisle and Haskell, from national recruitment campaigns. These schools at first bore considerable resemblance to each other in their insistence upon military uniforms and drill, their emphasis on vocational-technical training, their dedication



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to the eradication of Indian languages and cultures, and their separation of curriculum for boys and girls in attendance. The government, however, proved more committed to opening these Indian schools than it did to adequately funding their operation.

The emphasis on the practical mirrored the approach taken in Tuskegee Institute and other schools for peoples of color during the era. Unfortunately, underfunding and mismanagement meant that the Indian schools generally emphasized outmoded skills such as blacksmithing and expropriated student labor not for instructional purposes but simply as a ready and captive workforce. School officials assumed that young women were learning nothing of value in their communities. They had no sense of Indian societies in which young women customarily learned how to sow, tend, and gather useful plants, as well as weave, cook, and assist in the care of children. Girls and young women thus were subjected to heavy-handed attempts to prepare them to become housewives who would transmit appropriate middle-class values and behaviors within their households. Pratt once queried: "Of what avail is it that the man be hard-working and industrious...if the wife, unskilled in cookery, unused to the needle, with no habits of order or neatness, makes what might be a cheerful, happy home only a wretched abode of filth and squalor?" The curriculum for female students at the Morris Indian School in Minnesota, for example, stressed sewing, cooking, and doing the laundry. At Sherman Institute in California, by contrast, girls received instruction in the preparation of shrimp cocktails. Polingaysai Qoyawayma, a Hopi, learned at school how to bake cakes and pies and then returned home to discover that these dishes were undesirable additions to her family's fare.

The boarding schools also promoted sports among students of both sexes. Carlisle and other schools relied on their boy's athletic program to attract non-Indian attention and support. Because Carlisle attracted and recruited older students, it fielded teams that especially in football and track-and-field were competitive at the intercollegiate level. Jim Thorpe (Sac and Fox), a future Olympic pentathlon and decathlon champion and Pro Football Hall of Famer, attended Carlisle. So did two Anishinabe



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**Figure 1.1** Oneida students complete their assignments, with a recipe for baking powder biscuits on the blackboard. Oneida Indian School, Wisconsin, 1910. Source: Courtesy of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

(Chippewa) men from the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota: Charles A. "Chief" Bender and Joseph Guyon, who later entered, respectively, the baseball and pro football halls of fame. Another student, Lewis Tewanima (Hopi), represented the United States in track-and-field in two Olympics, winning a silver medal in the 10,000-meter run in 1912. Coached by Glenn "Pop" Warner from 1899 to 1914, Carlisle football teams routinely defeated their college opponents. In the 1907 season, Carlisle won ten out of eleven games, defeating Minnesota, and, at a time when it mattered, Chicago.

Principals and superintendents of other schools also recognized that successful athletic programs inspired enrollment and continuation by pupils. Upon occasion, students even became a bit too enthusiastic. James McCarthy, a Tohono O'odham (Papago), extended his education by moving from Santa Fe Indian School to



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Phoenix Indian School to Albuquerque Indian School, changing his name and running away from one place to the next, primarily so he could keep playing baseball and keep competing against the best teams. Boys and girls often found in sports the one dimension of their educational experience that they could remember with genuine fondness. They were particularly enthusiastic about the recently invented game of basketball, which became a premiere sport at the medium-sized and smaller Indian schools. Like other boarding school sports, basketball was intended to teach students life skills and make them better students, but young Indian men and women loved it for contrary reasons. Basketball helped them be who they were and escape the drudgery of school life. For Native students like the girls' basketball team from Fort Shaw Indian School in Montana, tournament champions of the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, school sports were a source of enduring tribal and Indian pride.

School officials also hoped that exposure to non-Indian musical styles and instrumentation would teach students to accept this form of musical culture and reject traditional tribal songs and dances from home. Students learned to perform classical music, Christian hymns, and the patriotic American music of the day, as well as original school songs like "Hail to Thee, Carlisle." Marching bands and other musical performance groups, just like Indian school sports teams, were meant to teach students discipline and publically advertise the schools' success in incorporating Indian children into the American mainstream. Student musicians, like student athletes, responded in unanticipated ways. Many of them enjoyed aspects of their musical training while still regarding the schools negatively. They retained a life-long affinity for non-Indian musical styles, some of them performing as professional musicians during the 1920s; but upon returning home, they embraced their tribal songs and dances.

Despite the positive experiences some students had with sports, music, or other aspects of boarding school life, a great many students, parents, and other relatives detested these schools. Family members wept as the children departed. Some of the students were older, but many were little ones for whom the



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sudden change of worlds was all the more traumatic. Boarding schools comprised an ongoing onslaught against Native families and Native belief systems. Students away from home could not participate in tribal ceremonies, including important rituals that marked puberty or other stages of life. Many boarded students were homesick, despised the particular routine, loathed the food, and resisted the prohibition of the use of Native language. More than a few students, at one time or another, attempted to run away. An Eastern Cherokee boy from North Carolina decided to return home from Haskell. One way or another he reached Knoxville, Tennessee, then walked through the Smoky Mountains. A Jemez Pueblo girl attending the Santa Fe Indian School was always hungry and missed the food of home. It took her and two other girls three days to complete the 80-mile trip back to Jemez, walking much of the way. Soon after she arrived, her father took her back to Santa Fe. Not all students survived their attempts at escape. Two boys who fled the Rapid City Indian School in South Dakota followed the railroad tracks out of town, fell asleep near the tracks, and were killed by a train. One boy who departed Santa Fe in the winter lost his legs to frostbite; another boy froze to death. Students who returned to school after running away generally faced some form of punishment, from incarceration to extra chores to the wearing of a gunnysack for two days. The disciplinarians often were Indians themselves, frequently graduates of the institution that now employed them. Having made it through the school, they now strictly enforced policies and rules. Schools discouraged students from returning home during the summer, instead often hiring their pupils out to farms and other industries seeking cheap labor. Parents and other relatives, of course, missed their children and agonized over their recurring illnesses. Indeed, a considerable number of students in those early years died and were buried far from home, "through," Luther Standing Bear observed, "with all earthly schools. In the graveyard at Carlisle most of the graves are those of little ones."

Even under such tragic and traumatic circumstances, however, some parents chose to send their children away to the only schools then available. They believed that the next generation





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had to obtain the means of coping with American society. Many students who became fluent in English were destined to play leadership roles on future tribal councils. For students who came from extremely poor dysfunctional families or had no family at all, the schools offered food, clothing, and shelter. Friendships and occasional opportunities for extracurricular adventures attracted some students to the schools. Anna Moore (Pima) was hardly the only person to meet a future spouse at a boarding school. She remembered the "first and only romance of my life began in 1912" at Phoenix Indian School when Ross Shaw (Pima) began to pay attention to her. They eventually married and enjoyed a long and happy life together.

In many families the success of one brother or sister at a particular institution encouraged the enrollment of younger siblings. Anna Bender of White Earth enrolled in Hampton Institute in 1902 and graduated in 1906. Four of her siblings followed her to Hampton, with three graduating from the school. A fourth stayed a year before transferring to and graduating from Roe Institute in Wichita, a school established in 1915 by Ho Chunk (Winnebago) educator Henry Roe Cloud. The Boutangs, the Brokers, and other families from White Earth followed the same, if not always equally successful, pattern, sending more than one son or daughter to Hampton or to Carlisle. Presence of a sibling at a school also increased one's chances for continuation, as did prior educational experience. By the time she enrolled at Hampton, Anna Bender had attended other off-reservation schools and had adjusted to life away from home. The attitudes of parents and extended family members also affected the student's perspective. Just as families and their circumstances might change over time, the schools also did not remain exactly the same, but evolved from one decade to the next.

Federal off-reservation schools could not remain the only alternative for Indian students. Many parents exerted pressure for their children, especially the youngest ones, to be able to attend school closer to home. It cost too much to transport students to distant institutions, and Christian missionaries



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wanted to have students attend schools run by their respective denominations. Sympathetic commissioners of Indian Affairs sometimes promoted contract schools. Under this arrangement, a particular denomination agreed to run a school for Indian students subsidized by funds from Washington.

The federal off-reservation schools ultimately failed to deliver what they had pledged to achieve: the assimilation of their students into American society. Too many of their students dropped out. Moreover, upon their return home many of them embraced again the customs and traditions of their communities. By 1900 the transition was well under way from heavy reliance on off-reservation schools. As of that date, 7,430 students attended the twenty-five federal off-reservation boarding schools, 9,600 students were enrolled in eighty-one federal reservation boarding schools, and about 5,000 attended reservation day schools.

In assessing the effect of schooling on young Indian people of this period, it is important to recognize that many students were scarred by their experiences, both by what happened to them at school and what they missed at home by being away. On the other hand, it is also necessary to point out that many children did not attend school at all and many others were enrolled only for a short period of time. In addition, attendance at the multitribal schools was as likely to reinforce tribal identity as dissolve it. Students finding themselves in unfamiliar surroundings tended to associate with others who spoke their particular Native language and who shared common experiences and memories, thereby proving the general theory that greater contact with another culture can strengthen one's loyalty to one's own, rather than promptly eliminate it. The students had loyalties and bonds that were too deep to be easily or quickly uprooted. The schools thus did not necessarily accomplish what Pratt and his colleagues wanted. The boarding schools even proved to be places where students became aware of new Indian institutions. For example, through contact with people of other tribes, it was at Carlisle that many Natives first learned about a new religious movement, the Native American Church.



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## Religions

In the late nineteenth century federal officials were determined to eradicate Native religious practices and advance Christianity among Indian peoples. Seizing upon Indian religious ceremonies as obstacles that had prevented the tide of assimilation from fully washing over Native peoples, federal officials prohibited the Sun Dance and other Indian ceremonies and empowered local agents to jail those who organized or attended such gatherings. Native spiritual practices were also challenged by Protestant and Catholic missionaries who seemed to be ubiquitous. Looking back on this period, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn of the Crow Creek Reservation wrote of "the Dominican priests who roamed the prairies, as much nomads as any Indians had ever been." The 1880s and 1890s immediately followed an era of rapid acceleration in mission activity. During the 1870s the Christian churches had been involved directly in the nomination, selection, and supervision of federal agents to many Indian communities, and individual denominations had been asked by the federal government to take primary responsibility for particular reservations in Indian country. This division of territory had favored "mainstream" Protestant churches. The more conservative pentecostal and evangelical denominations and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons) had been largely shut out by the process, although the Mormons did initiate a highly successful mission to the Catawbas in South Carolina.

In a few instances, Christian churches serving Native parishioners chose to incorporate Native languages or symbols. For example, a Baptist church service on the Eastern Cherokee Reservation in North Carolina featured sermons in Cherokee. Although missionaries sometimes attempted to learn the language of the people in Indian communities, they rarely succeeded, and even those who gained some degree of fluency utilized the skill for evangelical rather than pluralistic purposes. The Franciscans at St. Michael's in Navajo country were rare in their degree of interest in and knowledge of Navajo ceremonialism.



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Government repression and missionary activities interfered with tribal spiritual practices, but these ways proved too essential and resilient to stamp out. The Cheyennes, for example, maintained the Sun Dance by modifying it and conducting it on America's Independence Day to appease Indian agents, and by practicing it in secret. Many Indians also willingly joined established Christian denominations or accepted aspects of Christianity without forfeiting their tribal identities. Some Native peoples chose to develop worship services that combined Christian tenets with Native beliefs. Many Native Christians also wanted to be in charge of their own worship rather than have the process directed by outsiders. The Native American Church and the Indian Shaker Church were significant Indian-driven religious movements that involved some Christian aspects. A Squaxin from the lower Puget Sound area of Washington, John Slocum, established the Indian Shaker Church in 1883, after surviving two nearly fatal illnesses. He told others that he had, in fact, died, but come back to life in order to save Indians from the evils of gambling, drinking, smoking, and the traditional healers or shamans. Slocum asked relatives to build a church for him, wherein his followers soon became known as "shakers" for the trembling they experienced as they worshipped. Despite this name, they were not related to the Shaker communities founded earlier in eastern America. Although Slocum died in 1897, the church continued and was legally incorporated in 1910. It combined Christian and traditional Puget Sound area Native beliefs and practices. The church's message against the abuse of alcohol, together with the obvious devotion of its adherents and its willingness to permit local communities to establish autonomous congregations, helped it expand beyond the Puget Sound to the Olympic Peninsula and Yakama in Washington, southern British Columbia, Warm Springs, Umatilla, lower Siletz, and Klamath in Oregon, and Smith River and Hoopa Valley in far northern California. The Indian Shaker Church continues today in this area, with approximately twenty congregations and a few thousand members.

The Native American Church appealed to a wider membership. Its rituals employed the buttons or tops of the peyote cactus



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which grew primarily in northern Mexico and in the lower Rio Grande valley of south Texas. The bitter-tasting buttons contain alkaloids that produce psychedelic or hallucinogenic effects upon those who chew them, but peyote was regarded by adherents as sacred medicine, not as a "drug." Peyote had been employed for ceremonial use for hundreds of years by various aboriginal groups in Mexico. A number of the elements in the old Mexican peyote ritual continued in the version of it inaugurated in the United States, including the gourd rattle, cleansing in fire, smoke and incense, an all-night ceremony, cigarettes, and, above all, the spiritual power of peyote.

Bands of the Apaches most likely originated the peyote ritual in the United States, with the Lipan Apaches bringing the ceremony at the beginning of the 1870s to the Comanches, Kiowas, and Apaches in Indian Territory. These tribes resided in the area that later became a part of the state of Oklahoma, but at this time was reserved for Indians indigenous to the region and those who had been forcibly removed to this location. The railroad, that intruder that had bisected Indian country and contributed to the near extermination of the buffalo, aided in the spread of the new religion. When the railroad came to south Texas, it became possible to ship dried peyote by rail from Laredo north to Indian Territory, and from there all over Indian country. Diffusion of the peyote ritual also was hastened by the network of off-reservation boarding schools and by charismatic practitioners, road men, who spread the word about, and the details of, the new faith. By the middle years of the 1910s, the use of peyote had spread to Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

The peyote ritual varied somewhat from one community to another, but everywhere the ceremony contained certain elements that contributed to its acceptance. It incorporated both Christian and tribal symbols, thus representing a syncretic message of accommodation yet persistence of Indianness. It provided an opportunity for the people to congregate; in many instances it offered a substitute for other tribal rituals that



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had been repressed or abandoned. It employed symbols with common meaning: the earth, moon, and sun. And it took place in a tipi. The Native American Church perpetuated a tradition of seeking visions and finding power. For men on the Plains who had been denied the responsibility and attendant achievement of hunting and making war, practice of the new faith brought new opportunities for leadership. Adherents of the ritual preached abstinence from alcohol. As alcoholism had become a scourge in many Native communities, this dimension of the church proved especially important. In sum, the Native American Church offered a striking example of the ability of Indians to combine continuity and change in order to build a viable Native future.

The use of peyote, however, provoked a severe reaction from individuals and groups who saw it, to state it mildly, as a counter-productive addition to Indian life. Christian missionaries, federal officials, and more conservative Indians united to harass the peyotists. Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, or Zitkala-Sa, a Yankton Sioux writer and activist, lambasted the new faith, labeling peyote a drug. She claimed that it "excites the baser passions and is demoralizing—similar in its abnormal effects to that of opium, morphine, and cocaine." Congressman Henry L. Gandy and other elected representatives led the charge against peyote, introducing bills in Congress calling for its prohibition and for imprisoning those who persisted in using it.

In response, Indians who had found meaning in the new ritual counterattacked. In February 1915, for example, fifty-four Omahas signed a petition to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells, calling for religious freedom, including the freedom to conduct peyote ceremonies. Several Omahas also composed statements attesting to the positive impact that the peyote ritual had had on their lives, particularly in regard to helping them turn away from the abuse of alcohol. Francis La Flesche (Omaha) joined with ethnologist James Mooney to testify before Congress in 1916. La Flesche spoke of all the problems brought to his people by bootleggers. Now, he said, "Practically all of those of my people who have adopted the peyote religion do not drink . . . I have a respect



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for the peyote religion, because it has saved my people from the degradation which was produced by the use of the fiery drinks white people manufacture."

The strident opposition against them encouraged some peyotists to formally incorporate the ritual as the Native American Church. In El Reno, Oklahoma, in 1918, a group of spiritual leaders from multiple tribes in the area formed "a religious and benevolent association under the laws of the State of Oklahoma." They incorporated, they stated, "to foster and promote the religious belief of the several tribes of Indians in the State of Oklahoma, in the Christian religion with the practice of the Peyote Sacrament as commonly understood and used ... and to teach the Christian religion with morality, sobriety, industry, kindly charity and right living, and to cultivate a spirit of self-respect and brotherly union ...". At the close of the 1910s, the legality of the use of peyote for religious purposes remained in doubt, but the foundation had been established for the Native American Church's growth and prosperity. It became in time the largest and most significant Native association of the twentieth century.

## Land

The most powerful part of the assimilationist crusade was directed at Indian land holdings. Reservations consisted of lands set aside by the federal government for the occupation and use by Indian communities. They exemplified two contradictory strains in American thought about "minority" groups: segregation and assimilation. In order to accomplish the goal of assimilation, policy-makers had segregated Indians on separate enclaves. They assumed such arrangements were temporary. As Indians disappeared as separate, identifiable groups, then reservations would vanish as well.

Henry L. Dawes wanted to expedite the process. The senator from Massachusetts sponsored legislation that gained approval in 1887 as the General Allotment (or Dawes) Act. Allotment or division of Indian communal or tribal lands into individually owned



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parcels was an old idea, dating back to 1633 in New England. Given the importance of private property in the workings of American life, allotment boasted continuing currency. Americans also continued to pay homage to the agrarian ideal, even as small-scale farming became less viable and the national economy expanded through rapid industrialization. Versions of the General Allotment Act had been proposed in Congress for a generation prior to final approval of this particular piece of legislation. Under the Dawes Act, which resembled the Homestead Act of 1862, heads of families received 160 acres of land. Single persons aged eighteen years and over and orphans under eighteen years of age could claim 80-acre allotments. If land remained after such a division among tribal members, this "surplus" could be sold to non-Indian applicants. The Dawes Act furnished a temporary safeguard for these allotments; for twenty-five years they could not be sold or leased without federal approval. Not all tribes were affected equally by the Dawes Act. The Five Tribes of the Indian Territory—the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Muscogees (Creeks), and Seminoles—avoided allotment for the time being. So, too, did the Osages, Miamis, Peorias, and Sac and Foxes of Indian Territory. The Senecas of New York also were exempted. Other tribes might escape the Act's provisions, if the demand did not arise for division of their lands. In other words, the Indian reservations most directly in the path of non-Indian pressure would be the ones most likely to be allotted.

The Five Tribes had been excluded since these nations were perceived as more advanced. The "Five Civilized Tribes" had gained this appellation because so many of their members were well educated, attended Christian churches, and lived in substantial homes. However, they also received different treatment because their representatives had lobbied in Washington against passage of different versions of allotment. "The change to individual title," they argued, "would throw the whole of our domain in a few years into the hands of a few persons." In addition, they contended, "a large portion of our country, and at least two-thirds of the Indian Territory, are only suitable for grazing purposes. No man can afford to live by stockraising and





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herding who is restricted to 160 or even 320 acres, especially lands away from water."

The proponents of allotment believed that keeping the tribal estate tribal or communal held individual Indians back. Reformers such as Merrill Gates concluded that Indians had to become "more intelligently selfish." Too many Indians, he decided, had not been "touched by the wings of the divine angel of discontent." Gates thus conveyed in 1896 that it was time "to get the Indian out of the blanket and into trousers—and trousers with a pocket in them, and a pocket that aches to be filled with dollars!" Regarding land, most Native Americans persisted in honoring the old values of reciprocity and generosity. They saw the kind of personal acquisition lauded by Gates as hoarding; they generally shared their resources rather than keeping them solely for themselves.

Passage of the Dawes Act did not spell instantaneous disaster for all Indians. In the first eight years after the law went into effect, relatively few reservations were allotted. Leasing rarely occurred. This deliberate speed, however, soon accelerated as more western states joined the Union and gained additional representation in Washington. These men had no patience with patience. Just as they sought to open public lands for private exploitation by state citizens, in a related sense they wanted to open Indian lands. Thus pressure dramatically escalated to hasten the division and diminution of tribal lands. Congress began to tinker with allotment to make it easier for Indians to lease their lands. It also tried to cede blocks of remaining reservation land.

In the first decade of the new century the map of Indian country started to take on a new look. The Supreme Court decision of *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock* in 1903 had far-reaching implications. It involved, among other plaintiffs, Lone Wolf, a Kiowa man who had appealed the opening of the Kiowa, Apache, and Comanche lands in Oklahoma Territory because appropriate tribal consent had not been obtained, as specifically stipulated in the Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek of 1868. The Jerome Agreement, which permitted the opening of the lands, had been rejected by the Kiowas, Apaches, and Comanches in 1892 but had been approved by Congress in 1900. Secretary of the Interior Ethan



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Allan Hitchcock had concurred with congressional judgment, arguing that such an opening could take place without tribal consent. In *Lone Wolf*, the court ruled that the power existed for Congress "to abrogate the provisions of an Indian treaty."

*Lone Wolf* permitted a previously formed congressional commission charged with negotiating land cessions to proceed whether or not the Indians involved wish to make a deal. Reservation communities, in fact, were not necessarily unwilling to negotiate, but they insisted on a fair price for any lands they surrendered. Now they possessed little bargaining power. US Special Agent James McLaughlin was dispatched to carve out the cessions. Armed with the *Lone Wolf* decision, within two years McLaughlin had gained hundreds of thousands of acres to be opened for non-Indian settlement at Crow and Flathead in Montana, Rosebud in South Dakota, Uintah in Utah, and Wind River in Wyoming. McLaughlin argued that such reservations were larger than necessary for their Indian residents. Ironically, following the erosion of the tribal estate during these years, federal officials of the mid-twentieth century would claim that reservations were not large enough and did not contain sufficient resources to sustain Indian communities.

*Lone Wolf* also undermined the more altruistic intentions of allotment. It pressured the government to speed up the leasing and sale of Indian lands. The Burke Act of 1906 empowered the Secretary of the Interior to grant any "competent" allottee fee-simple title to his or her land, thus permitting the individual to lease or sell the acreage at any time. This designation of competency resembled the later policy of termination. Indians deemed able to fend for themselves were perceived as not needing federal protection; in the same sense, "competent" Indian tribes at mid-century would be subjected to withdrawal of trust status for their lands. The western states and various commercial interests discovered in commissioners of Indian Affairs Francis Leupp, Robert Valentine, and Cato Sells men who were willing to push vigorously for development of Indian lands. The commissioners placed more emphasis on leasing these lands to cattle companies and sugar beet companies than they



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did on promoting the evolution of sustaining, independent tribal economies. Indians often were caught in the vise of demand for their lands and the inadequacy of making a living on the relatively meager acreage granted to them. They frequently took the easy way out and leased their holdings. Leasing yielded small cash payments but it did not inspire people to work hard and become independent. Inheritance also complicated leasing. Parcels over time were subdivided into smaller entities, making it even more likely for leasing to occur.

By 1920 those reservations containing the most promising deposits of natural resources had become checkerboarded by non-Indian intrusions. The population of the United States grew from 63 million in 1890 to 106 million in 1920. Both immigrants and migrants sought to generate their fortunes on lands previously owned and occupied by Indians. The federal government clearly bowed to public pressure and relinquished its trust responsibility in its acquiescence to non-Indian demands. The northern Plains were particularly hard hit by allotment and subsequent sale, but other parts of Indian country were also affected. Timber and mineral leases as well as farming and ranching leases subdivided more and more Native land.

Oklahoma furnishes a good example of non-Indian goals taking precedence. Following removal to Indian Territory, the Five Tribes had rebuilt. They had developed their own schools, constructed capital cities, and made noteworthy progress in farming and ranching. Their very success in demonstrating the potential of their lands ultimately worked against them, for a horde of prospective settlers and speculators lobbied to open up this region to the rest of the American population. By 1893 these "Boomers" had convinced Congress to revoke the initial exemption the Five Tribes had received under the terms of the Dawes Act. A commission headed by the retired Senator Dawes then established tribal rolls despite tribal objections. The rolls provided specific lists of who officially was included as a member of a specific Indian community. The rolls were established as a prelude to dividing tribal lands among these individuals. The Curtis Act of 1898 denied the authority and legitimacy of existing



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tribal governments in Indian Territory and approved allotment of Native lands. Many of the original occupants of Indian Territory spoke of establishing a separate Indian state, which they proposed to name Sequoyah, after the man who developed the system for writing the Cherokee language. However, when allotment was carried out among the Five Tribes, hopes for Sequoyah evaporated. Instead Oklahoma became the forty-sixth state, gaining admission to the Union in 1907.

Allotment had targeted primarily the tribal lands of the West, but Indian communities outside of the region did not escape unscathed. The Choctaws of Mississippi and the White Earth Anishinabeg of Minnesota supply two examples. In 1898 the Dawes Commission concluded that Choctaws who had managed to remain in Mississippi and avoid removal earlier in the century now could participate in the allotment process if they agreed to migrate to Indian Territory and claim parcels of land following a three-year residence there. Two attorneys, Robert Owen and Charles F. Winton, spied a situation too lucrative to ignore. A thousand Choctaws signed contracts with them to serve as their claims lawyers, with Owen and Winton to obtain 50 percent of any awards. Other attorneys then vied for the attention of the Choctaws, while Protestant and Catholic missionaries took sides on the matters of migration and the claims process. In the segregated South, Christianity did not usually stand for assimilation; ministers often preached segregation and the Choctaw churches, with their prayers and hymns in the tribal language, evolved into central symbols of a persisting Choctaw identity. The Dawes Commission enrolled 2,240 Mississippi Choctaws, but others, especially in more remote communities, boycotted the procedure or simply were not included in the count.

By the first few years of the twentieth century hundreds of Mississippi Choctaws had been moved to Oklahoma. They did not all find happiness in this new location. Some of the lawyers did represent them well and the Oklahoma Choctaws fought against any addition to their rolls. Those who remained in Mississippi were bolstered by a \$75,000 appropriation from Congress in 1918, which provided not only badly needed financial assistance but



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also federal recognition of an existing Indian community in the state. This formal recognition was more than a formality. In a symbolic sense, it paid tribute to Choctaw perseverance. It emphasized the continuity of the Choctaw presence and increased the likelihood that Choctaw people would remain in the state. It also made the tribe eligible for other federal programs in the future.

In Minnesota, the Nelson Act of 1889, a law patterned after the Dawes Act, drastically changed life on the White Earth Reservation. The Anishinabeg lived here in a transitional zone between prairie and forest, which allowed the people to have choices in their economy and permitted development of both agricultural and timber resources. The residents of White Earth comprised migrants from different bands from the northern part of the state and Metis, or mixed-bloods, the descendants of marriages between Anishinabe women and English and French fur traders. This latter group, with names such as Fairbanks and Beaulieu, brought bilingual skills and greater awareness of the workings of the larger American society.

The Nelson Act not only divided White Earth, it also opened the reservation to subsequent legislation that additionally harmed the people. Minnesota representatives Moses E. Clapp and Halvor Steenerson sponsored a bill that Congress passed giving lumber interests the ability to purchase timber from holders of individual allotments. Passage of the Burke Act inspired Clapp and Steenerson to gain congressional approval not to limit the sale, encumbrance, or taxation of allotted lands on White Earth. Subjected to new taxes and confronted by escalating demands for their lands, the people of White Earth began to sell off parcels of real estate. Soon much of White Earth was now owned or controlled by outsiders. In turn, the Anishinabe people were increasingly limited in their access to wild rice, maple sap, and berries, as well as in hunting deer and fishing. These restrictions affected the reservation economy, but they also had social and cultural repercussions. Traditionally, women had completed most of the harvesting and men had accomplished most of the hunting and fishing. Denied access to many of their traditional sites, the people became less cohesive. Women and men were



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less able to teach these skills to their children, and children grew up without the benefit of learning such customary practices. Extended families thus were less likely to carry out seasonal work together, and families separated as individuals left the reservation to try to find more lucrative opportunities elsewhere.

## **Identities**

Such a reversal of fortune sometimes encouraged overt or covert forms of resistance. In eastern Oklahoma, the Redbird Smith movement and the so-called Crazy Snake rebellion symbolized widespread resentment as well as reaffirmation of traditional identities. Born July 19, 1850, at the edge of Cherokee country, Redbird Little Pig Smith was a member of the Keetowah Society. The Keetowahs were cultural conservatives who had been an organized unit for centuries. They saw in allotment a tool that non-Indians might use to destroy Cherokee life. Redbird Smith attempted to lead the Cherokees toward a more complete recognition of traditional tribal values and practices. His followers sought to follow what they called the White Path, a balanced life that promoted personal harmony; they tried to keep the Sacred Fires burning at the sites for ceremonies. When Smith and others resisted allotment and the official tribal enrollment demanded by the Dawes Commission, they were arrested and forced to enroll. After Congress dissolved the Cherokee government in 1906, conservative "fullbloods" named Smith as their new chief. (In many Indian communities people of mixed ancestry were termed "mixed-bloods"; they were often, but not always, more willing to incorporate new social, cultural, and economic elements into their lives. "Fullbloods," whose ancestry was completely or almost fully within the tribe, tended to be more conservative in such choices.) Smith opposed allotment until his death in 1918, but the Keetowahs ultimately split over the issue, with some grimly accepting the land division as inevitable. Denied Smith's dream of a separate conservative Cherokee community, many fullbloods retreated into the eastern Oklahoma hill country and



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observed traditional ways, having as little contact as possible with others who disagreed with them. In 1912 two thousand land allotments went unclaimed. Keetowah fires continued to burn.

Chitto Harjo, called Crazy Snake, led conservative Muscogee political revitalization in the Indian Territory at the turn of the century. He also resisted the kinds of changes being imposed upon his people. Like Smith, he denied the authority of the federal government to negate the sovereignty of the Native community. The acceptance of an allotment, Chitto Harjo contended, was a break with tribal custom, and those who did so would no longer be members of the Muscogee nation. Accordingly, his followers harassed and punished those who did take allotments. Finally federal officials, supported by US cavalry, stepped in to quash resistance and for a time imprisoned in Leavenworth the man who had reasserted the power of traditional Native law. If overt resistance ceased, the sentiments in support of traditional authority remained present, even after Harjo's death in 1911. The Muscogee poet Alexander Posey paid tribute to him:

... Such will! such courage to defy  
The powerful makers of his fate! ...  
Condemn him and his kind to shame!  
I bow to him, exalt his name!

Contemporary observers of Indian communities in the early twentieth century could be excused for gloomy prognostications. Federal policy had shown little shift in direction. Most Christian missionaries remained inflexible in their attitudes toward Native religious ceremonies. A rapidly expanding non-Indian population challenged and often appropriated Indian resources. In the lower forty-eight states, roughly 2 out of every 3 acres that Indians had owned or controlled prior to passage of the Dawes Act had been removed from the tribal estate. Even with those dilemmas, Indians resolved not to simply accede to the customary assumptions of the day. They were determined to weather this era and to move forward. The period did include victimization and despair, but also, ultimately, reasons for hope.



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Native women and men searched for ways to make their constrained surroundings into meaningful and viable environments. To borrow historian Frederick Hoxie's useful concept, they sought to turn prisons into homelands. Such terminology is not overly melodramatic. Federal agents on the reservations served heavy-handedly. A colonial mentality persisted. Indian peoples hated being dependent for rations, being told where they could live, and being commanded how they should worship. They turned to the elders and to younger leaders and to family relationships to find ways to continue to observe traditional values.

No magical, instantaneous unity appeared on the reservations. The first generation or two of reservation life prompted different opinions about the future. Where allotment had taken place, for example, people were likely to reside in a more dispersed pattern. Many reservations now encompassed members of more than one band or even more than one tribe. For example, four of the seven western Lakota bands lived on Cheyenne River. At Fort Belknap, the Gros Ventres shared acreage with the Assiniboines. Although band and tribal distinctions and divisions remained, circumstances dictated the need for some degree of accommodation. How could the people save the land that they still held? Many communities concluded they had little choice other than to try to employ an imposed political system to work toward certain goals. To be effective the leaders of a tribal council or business council had to embody customary virtues, including wisdom, generosity, and the ability to speak well.

Cheyenne River revealed the kind of partial success that could be realized. The reservation was established in 1889. In 1900 the allotment process began, and eventually it pushed people to spread out across the reservation. A business council and a police force of Cheyenne River residents started to function. This initial version of a tribal council was comprised of representatives from different districts of the reservation. The federal government treated the reservation as a unit. The people living on Cheyenne River began to see themselves not only as Mnikowaju or Sihasapa but also as Cheyenne River Sioux. One should not overstate this point at Cheyenne River or elsewhere, for such identification





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depended upon how new institutions affected daily life. If the new political unit challenged the authority of an existing traditional governing system, especially one combining secular and religious power, then it was unlikely to succeed. If the council or committee did not consider the residents of an important area or was in some other way not wholly representative, then it decreased its chances of acceptance. If the unit did not seek goals upon which the community had reached consensus, then it shackled its promise.

At Cheyenne River, the new business council confronted an immediate threat. Non-Indian interests, well represented in Congress by Senator Robert Gamble and Congressman Philo Hall, wanted to reduce or eliminate the reservation. Special Agent McLaughlin tried to engineer such a reduction, while Gamble and Hall introduced bills toward that end. The political leaders at Cheyenne River could not fight off one cession of land. But other attempts failed to further reduce the reservation in size. Increasingly experienced negotiators from the business council such as Ed Swan and Percy Phillips traveled more than once to Washington, stalled, offered counterproposals, and manipulated, seizing upon the inefficiency of the Indian Office. Like their counterparts all over Indian country, these people battled against the odds to preserve some kind of land base for the future. These challenges could encourage the election of individuals who spoke English more fluently and who could represent tribal interests more effectively in this new era. These representatives often were younger men who had obtained more schooling.

The Indian Office tried to accomplish two conflicting goals. It preached self-sufficiency for the Indians and at the same time it placated non-Indians who wanted access to Native lands. Federal officials embraced agriculture as a way to use those lands productively and to teach Indians the value of toil. More than a few Indian communities had rich and long-standing agricultural traditions. However, other groups had not emphasized farming or had perceived it to be work to be done by women rather than men; in these locales, the men balked at assuming a task they thought women should undertake. In addition, many reservations were ill-suited for agriculture. Aridity, short



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growing seasons, and the small size of allotments all conspired against successful farming. Under these circumstances, agents or superintendents—as head federal officials for a particular locale started to be called—faced severe challenges. The Reclamation Act of 1902 was designed to help non-Indians in the West, through funding for substantial dams and extended canals to be constructed throughout the region. Although non-Indian citizens often complained about federal assistance to Indians, they did not hesitate to take advantage of this aid for themselves. Indian communities that could have benefited greatly from such help struggled to obtain even small amounts of federal aid for similar but much more limited projects on their lands.

On the Fort Belknap Reservation in northern Montana, the Assiniboines and Gros Ventres complained about off-reservation farmers and ranchers who diverted water from the Milk River before it could flow through their lands. Superintendent William R. Logan complained to the commissioner of Indian affairs on June 3, 1905: "So far this spring, we have had no water in our ditch whatever. Our meadows are now rapidly parching up. The Indians have planted large crops and a great deal of grain. All will be lost unless some radical action is taken at once to make the settlers above the Reservation respect our rights. To the Indians it means either good crops this fall or starvation this winter."

Logan's complaint eventually brought the matter to court, where he pleaded his case on the basis of prior appropriation. This doctrine, recognized in Montana, held that the first users of water had the senior rights to the resource. Judge William Hunt of the US district court decided that in agreeing to the terms of the treaty which confined them to the lands of Fort Belknap, the Indians were entitled to sufficient water to fulfill the purposes of that agreement. The treaty clearly indicated that the occupants of the reservation should "become 'self-supporting as a pastoral and agricultural people.'" It did not matter whether non-Indian farmers and ranchers such as Henry Winter (whose name was entered as "Winters" in court documents) had a prior claim to the water.

After the Ninth Circuit Court affirmed Judge Hunt's decision, the US Supreme Court ruled on *Winters v. United States* on



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January 6, 1908. Justice Joseph McKenna spoke for the court in his opinion. He stated: "The Indians had command of the lands and the waters—command of all their beneficial use, whether kept for hunting, and grazing, roving herds of stock, or turned to agricultural and the arts of civilization." McKenna then asked: "Did they give up all this? Did they reduce the area of their occupation and give up the waters which made it valuable or adequate?" He declared they did not. This declaration of water rights for Fort Belknap, which became known as the *Winters* doctrine, marked a fundamental turning point in the national Native struggle to remain on their land. Not only did *Winters* buttress Indian claims to water rights, it offered additional testimony that Native peoples were not going to disappear.

The decision had lasting significance, but it made less of a difference at Fort Belknap than one might have anticipated. Superintendent Logan had encouraged non-Indians to reside on the reservation in order, he said, to encourage greater Indian productivity. Logan also built up a sizable cattle herd of his own, even appropriating Indian cattle to bolster that enterprise. Therefore Logan had not been concerned just about Indian well-being when he complained about the diversion of water from the river. Moreover, five years after *Winters*, the Matador Land and Cattle Company of Texas gained a lease to most of the reservation and held that lease until 1927. Thus the hopes for continuing economic development by and for Natives at Fort Belknap proved largely unfounded, even though Gros Ventre and Assiniboine farmers and ranchers had made a promising start in the decade before the Supreme Court decision.

Cattle ranching elsewhere produced better results. Prevailing federal policies often worked against Native initiatives, but many reservations witnessed the emergence of an industry that made social and cultural as well as economic sense. Much of the remaining estate was well-suited for the grazing of livestock. In the Great Basin country, the Plateau area of the Northwest, in Oklahoma, on the northern Plains and in the Southwest, Indians began to work as cowboys and as ranchers. Becoming cowboys allowed them to remain Indians. That is to say, cattle



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ranching permitted them to stay on the land and to practice time-honored values. They fed relatives and strangers; they gave cattle as gifts. They formed ranching associations based on family and band ties.

Difficult winters, the leasing of ranges to non-Indians, and varying market conditions worked against full development of Indian cattle ranching, but some success stories could be reported. On the White Mountain Apache (or Fort Apache) Reservation in central Arizona, Wallace Atlanta, known also by his brand of R-14, became the most famous Indian cattleman of the region. By 1918 he owned 10,000 head of cattle, allowing him to purchase \$25,000 worth of liberty bonds. Superintendent C. W. Crouse helped develop the industry by importing Herefords, which became the mainstay of Apache cattle ranching. The existence of Indian cattle raising also helped maintain or add to Native land bases. The creation of the main Tohono O'odham reservation in southern Arizona in 1916 was justified based on the need for more land for the expanding cattle herds of the people.

Women participated in cattle ranching as individual ranchers, as spouses who worked with their husbands, and as members of extended families who raised cattle. Historian Clifford Trafzer's research on the Yakama Reservation suggests that Yakama women generally played a larger role in the working of the tribal economy than previously had been assumed. From 1909 to 1912, for example, the women purchased more household goods, wagons, buggies, and hacks than did the men. They also bought more horses and more cattle. On the reservations in general, men certainly outnumbered women in their ownership of cattle and played the dominant role in livestock associations, but women were not absent from the picture. At Navajo, where the people primarily raised sheep rather than cattle, ownership of the flocks was vested in the women. The raising of sheep also empowered Navajo women because of their ability to weave wool. The raising of sheep or cattle throughout the Indian West also offered children (often charged with tending the flock) responsibility and taught them discipline, while it underscored their importance as contributors to their families' welfare.



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Raising livestock presented an opportunity for independent choice and action during an era in which the memory of military defeat, the reality of confinement, and the policy of forced assimilation all rankled. The sale of Indian-owned cattle might necessitate a trip away from the reservation. Such a journey was as likely to reinforce tribal identity as it was to diminish it. When the Hidatsa ranchers from Fort Berthold, North Dakota, traveled to St. Paul and Chicago in 1900 they saw surprising dimensions of the non-Indian world. Wolf Chief later recalled that in Chicago, in back of a hotel, "they threw away old foods they did not want any more on their tables." He saw "some poor women dirty and in rags take off the covers of cans, and they took the food to eat." The Hidatsas professed astonishment at this demonstration of a lack of generosity and caring among the whites. "If an Indian man is hungry," mused Wolf Chief, "no matter what he has done or how foolish he has acted, we will always give him food."

Indian cowboys also sought fame and fortune in rodeo. The best-known Indian rodeo cowboy of this generation was a Nez Perce man, Jackson Sundown, who earned renown for his bronc-riding ability at such major events as the Pendleton Roundup. Sam Bird-in-Ground (Crow) and George Defender (Standing Rock Sioux) also gained acclaim for their exploits. Will Rogers, the son of Cherokee rancher Clem Rogers, participated as a roper in rodeos at Madison Square Garden and elsewhere. Rogers later said the excitement of the rodeo encouraged him to try his luck in the world of entertainment, where his probing and amusing commentary made him a beloved national figure.

Cattle ranching provided a positive alternative to farming for many tribes of the interior; for coastal peoples the ocean offered another option to agriculture. The Makahs of the Olympic Peninsula in Washington state were successful whalers long before the United States became a country. They proved quite willing to incorporate useful new technology as they pursued not only whales but also fur seals. By the late nineteenth century they prospered sufficiently to employ white labor for their schooners. They dutifully planted a few potatoes, but potatoes seemed a



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luxury; the Makahs observed that it seemed much easier to obtain food from the ocean than from the earth. Money from sealing permitted Makahs in 1892 to buy Neah Bay's two food stores, the local trading post, and the one hotel. As US laws began to severely restrict Native sealing, the Makahs moved into fishing for halibut. Despite massive numbers of competing non-Indian fishermen and additional restrictions on their participation in this maritime activity, the Makah people still fared quite well in the industry throughout the remainder of this period.

Indians seized upon various new institutions and tried to utilize them for their own purposes. For example, federal agents inaugurated a version of the county fair on reservations in order to advertise Native agricultural accomplishment. Thus in 1904 Samuel Reynolds started a fair in Crow country, but the Crows quickly realized such occasions could provide more than a procession of potatoes. They could also include parades, horse races, and rodeos. Crow Fair allowed the Crows a fine opportunity to be together and to have a great time. Of course such gatherings could serve commercial purposes as well. In North Carolina, the Eastern Cherokee fair started in 1914 and soon provided the people with a useful venue for the sale of their crafts to neighboring non-Indians.

The Fourth of July also offered an opportunity for community celebration. Indians quickly realized that festivities organized ostensibly for patriotic purposes had a better chance of being endorsed than communal religious observances. At Rosebud in South Dakota, for example, a six-day spectacle in 1897 encompassed everything from Corn and White Buffalo dances to music by the Rosebud Cornet Band and a reading of the Declaration of Independence. For good measure, spectators observed bronc and steer riding and a mock reenactment of the Custer battle. Federal policy may have prohibited tribal religious rituals, but the program noted: "These dances having been prohibited, special permission has been granted to have these occur on this day for the last time." Employing the Fourth of July for their own purposes allowed Indian communities another occasion to establish their own priorities and to define who they were.



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The Wild West shows yielded another avenue for travel and adventure during this transitional age. From the time Buffalo Bill Cody and his associates organized the first of these productions in 1883, critics assailed them as demeaning to Indian participants. Most of the Native individuals who joined the shows disagreed with this assessment. They relished the chance not only to travel and see new places, but also to ride horses and make more money than they likely would have made on the reservation. Some of the "show Indians," as they became known, journeyed more than once to Europe and visited many of the major cities in the United States. Most of them actually liked Cody, who demonstrated more respect for them than other show entrepreneurs. Defeating Custer one more time in reenactments, portraying Indian cowboys and cowgirls, and taking part in rodeo-like events all evoked enthusiasm from the show Indians, most of whom hailed from the Plains region. They saw the shows usually as an adventure and as a new possibility to exhibit honor and courage. Like the Hidatsas who traveled to Chicago, their contact with the non-Indian world promoted rather than diminished their own sense of identity as Indians.

On the local and national level, more than a few Indians perceived the last years of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth not as the end of an era but as the start of a period filled with promise. Quanah, or, as he was generally called, Quanah Parker, exemplified this sentiment in Oklahoma. He seized upon changing times for his own benefit and for the benefit of his people, the Comanches. Parker's surname came from his mother, Cynthia Ann Parker, who at nine years of age had been captured by the Comanches in 1836 and who had remained with them, becoming a member of the tribe. Quanah's father, Peta Nocona, a war chief, was not in camp on the day in 1861 when Texas Rangers recaptured Cynthia Ann Parker and returned her and her daughter to white relatives. Quanah never saw his mother and sister again. They both had died by 1870, three years after the Comanches had signed the Treaty of Medicine Lodge, which confined the tribe to a reservation in what became southwestern Oklahoma.



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These lands, shared with the Kiowas and the Apaches, were in the path of the expanding Texas cattle industry. Quanah rose to a position of leadership on the reservation and by 1885 served as primary spokesperson for his people. In some ways, he remained a "traditional." Like a number of prosperous Comanche men, he was married to more than one woman. A cultural broker, Quanah interpreted the ways of one culture to another and tried to find means to realize mutual understanding and advantage. As principal chief, he negotiated with the Texas cattlemen, acknowledged their power, and attempted to strike the best leasing deals he could. Before the Jerome Agreement went into effect in 1900, he and the Comanches enjoyed a brief interlude of prosperity. Quanah practiced the politics of delay, hoping to retard the ratification of the agreement as long as possible. However, as a pragmatist, he realized that he and others would have to adapt to changing circumstances. Quanah thus accumulated a substantial cattle herd of his own and did not hesitate to try to find means to improve his personal finances. He built a fine home with a big porch and stars painted on its roof. Yet as he adjusted to an economic order, he also played a vital role in promoting the expansion of the Native American Church. Over the course of his career, Quanah traveled to Washington nearly twenty times to represent the Comanches. He was appointed a tribal judge to rule on criminal offenses at a time when being married to more than one woman represented a criminal offense. A charismatic and complicated person, he is but one of many examples of Indian people during this era who utilized the new, often imposed, institutions in creative ways to maintain or establish flexible, viable contemporary Native identities.

There were other Indians who remained hopeful about the future. They appreciated their heritage, but they also believed Indians as individuals and as a group could realize bright tomorrows. Many were college graduates whose education and professional experiences had empowered them. Henry Roe Cloud, for example, did not see the world as Henry Dawes did, though they both had graduated from Yale University. In fact Roe Cloud also had gained a master's degree in anthropology





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from Yale as well as a degree in divinity from Auburn Theological Seminary. Roe Cloud and his colleagues recognized that all Indians had things in common and they understood that asserting a broader Indian identity did not have to conflict with individuals' identification with their bands or tribes. Using the model of the Indian Rights Association, they decided to form an organization not only for Native peoples, but with full membership limited to Indians. Assisted by Fayette McKenzie, who taught at Ohio State University, an original committee of six Native Americans met in Columbus, Ohio, in April 1911, to plan a conference for an association that would consider the needs and issues facing Indian peoples. The committee members were Laura Cornelius (Oneida), Charles Daganett (Peoria), Charles Eastman, Carlos Montezuma (Yavapai), Thomas Sloan (Omaha), and Henry Standing Bear (Sicangu Lakota). The group called itself the Society of American Indians (SAI). The group of six quickly expanded to eighteen, including Marie Baldwin (Anishinabe), Rosa B. La Flesche (Omaha), Arthur C. Parker (Seneca), and Henry Roe Cloud.

The Society of American Indians appeared to present a valuable forum for Indians to meet and consider the Native present and future. Nonetheless, certain issues surfaced that divided the society's modest membership. Should the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) be abolished? Should Indians work for the bureau? Should peyote be prohibited? Montezuma argued that the bureau was beyond salvation and must be abolished immediately, whereas Parker initially was more moderate in his criticism. Sloan was an active member of the Native American Church, while Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, as mentioned, wanted peyote outlawed. Philip Gordon (Anishinabe), a Catholic priest, censured those who worked for the bureau; Sherman Coolidge (Northern Arapaho) was a minister, but disagreed with Gordon about the matter of employment. Almost from one annual conference to the next, the SAI's stance seemed to shift on some of these hotly contested points.

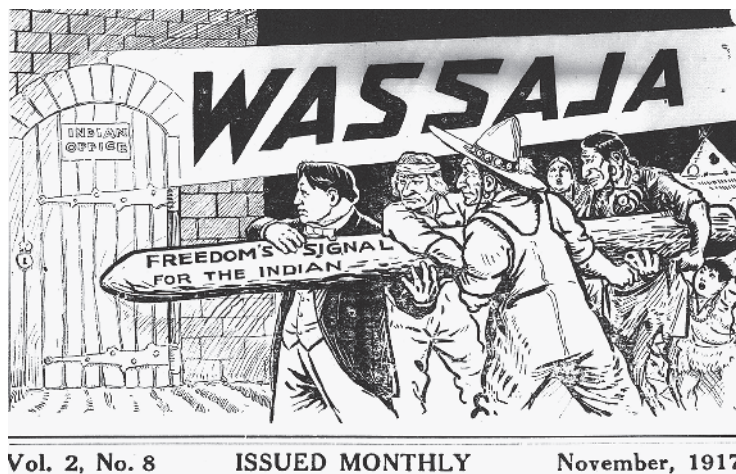
Such internal divisions limited the SAI's development. It had not built a membership base beyond several hundred people. It had not succeeded in developing grassroots support from



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reservation communities. Most of its members remained people who had had access to more education and who had enjoyed more opportunities than the majority of Native Americans. Lacking a sufficient foundation either of adherents or financial benefactors, it could not directly engage in extended campaigns to right contemporary wrongs. Although it persisted into the 1920s, the SAI did not survive the decade. Such limitations frustrated Montezuma, among others. After the annual meeting in 1915 in Lawrence, Kansas, he muttered in his newsletter, *Wassaja*: "The sky is clear and we meet only to discuss. It is so nice to meet and discuss. There is nothing wrong. We meet only to discuss. It is so nice to meet and discuss. We can meet and discuss as well as the Mohonk Conference . . . Meeting and discussing is so soothing and smoothing. Sh—! Sh—! Don't whisper about the Indian Bureau."

During World War I, Arthur C. Parker, the editor of the SAI's journal, the *American Indian Magazine*, as well as the society's



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**Figure 1.2** Carlos Montezuma (Yavapai), MD, started a newsletter, *Wassaja*, to call for the abolition of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. From his home in Chicago, Montezuma sent the publication throughout the United States. Source: Courtesy of the Carlos Montezuma Collection, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries.



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current president, joined the armed forces and thus could not attend the 1918 conference in Minneapolis. In his absence, the SAI voted in favor of abolishing the BIA. It also elected Charles Eastman as president, retaining Parker as journal editor. When Parker did not reply immediately to new SAI secretary Gertrude Simmons Bonnin's query about whether he wished to continue as editor, she promptly extended her own duties to include editing the journal.

The society's leadership was primarily male, but women also assumed important responsibilities. Bonnin was one of the most articulate voices of Indian America in the early twentieth century. Born February 22, 1876, on the Yankton Reservation, she accompanied Quaker missionaries to White's Indiana Manual Labor Institute in Wabash, where she enrolled for three years. Although she had been unhappy at the school, she returned to it at the age of fourteen to further her education. She then attended Earlham College; leaving because of illness before she graduated, she still obtained a teaching post at Carlisle and then attended the New England Conservatory of Music. A talented violinist, she also published a collection of essays and a separate collection of short stories. Bonnin detested Pratt, whom she once labeled "pig-headed," and others who pushed for rapid assimilation. She also fought for women, first to be included in the Society of American Indians, and then for them to take on major tasks within its workings.

Parker was also a significant figure. A member of a distinguished Seneca family, he had grown up on the Cattaraugus Reservation (in upstate New York) and in New York City, where he studied with anthropologist Franz Boas at Columbia. Parker left the university before receiving his undergraduate degree, yet went on to become a well-regarded scholar, contributing studies of Iroquois history and culture. Parker never lost sight of his identity both as a Seneca and as an American Indian. He, like others in SAI, appreciated some of the ironies of the present day. English now presented a common language for Indian peoples. Development of regional and national transportation networks and mail systems increased the chances for Indians to see and



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**Figure 1.3** Gertrude Simmons Bonnin (Yankton Dakota), musician and writer, served as an officer in the Society of American Indians and later founded the National Council of American Indians. Source: Courtesy of the Institute of American Indian Studies, University of South Dakota.

communicate with each other. In other words, developments that initially seemed to hasten assimilation did not necessarily further that prospect.

## World War I

Service in World War I created another bond among many Indian men and women. Native participation in the war had been encouraged by federal officials and assimilationists who believed the war would accelerate assimilation and permit Indians to demonstrate their ability to contribute to American society. Although many Indians had not yet been granted citizenship and were not eligible for the draft, they were asked to register with



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the selective service, and over 16,000 Indians served in the war, a rate twice that of other eligible Americans. Those who went overseas encountered commanding officers whose reading of history convinced them that Indians were "natural" scouts. General John Pershing remembered the service of Apaches as scouts against other Apaches and more recently as trackers in the campaign against Pancho Villa. Indians also had served in the Oklahoma National Guard on the south Texas border in that same campaign. Pershing thus formed a unit of Apaches to scout in France.

Pratt and SAI leaders argued against such segregated entities, contending that Native soldiers could best exhibit their talents and their patriotism in integrated units. Why not permit Indians to be bakers, teamsters, sharpshooters, aviators, engineers, artillerymen, and hospital aides? Native soldiers served alongside other Americans in the war, but they also filled such units as the 36th Division, which included many Indians from Texas and Oklahoma, especially from the Five Tribes. Company "E" of the 142nd Infantry Regiment was almost all-Indian.

Indian soldiers gained many awards for heroism. Sergeant Alfred Bailey (Cherokee) received posthumously the Distinguished Service Cross. Corporal Nicholas E. Brown (Choctaw) also died in battle and received a Croix de Guerre. Private Joseph Oklahombi (Choctaw) had the Croix de Guerre bestowed upon him by Marshal Henri Pétain. Historian Michael Tate wrote that Pétain praised Oklahombi "for single-handedly crossing 210 yards of barbed wire entanglements, wrenching a machine gun away from its German crew, and capturing 171 German prisoners with the same gun," then holding the position for four days. In addition, two Choctaws from the 142nd Infantry pioneered the use of an Indian language for coded radio communications. Their success inspired the formation of a unit of Indian code talkers, with twenty-six different Native languages at their disposal. The *American Indian Magazine* in 1919 reported with great glee upon this development in an article entitled, "Played Joke on the Huns."

As they would in later wars, Indians debated about fighting for a country that had treated Native peoples shamefully. Those who did enlist frequently spoke to the need to prove Indian patriotism



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and capabilities. Still others saw in the conflict a different opportunity. Plains Indian soldiers earned honor by counting coup in battle through touching or striking the enemy. Others participated in appropriate tribal ceremonies upon their return home. Some WWI veterans were welcomed as warriors into the old, traditional warrior societies. Historian Tom Holm (Cherokee-Muscogee), a veteran of the war in Vietnam, argued that such a person "abided by the treaties signed between his people and the federal government; most importantly he had taken part in those time-honored tribal traditions linked to warfare. In short," Holm concluded, "he was a warrior and whether clad in traditional dress or olive drab, he had reaffirmed his tribal identity."

Not all Indians endorsed the war effort. Some reaffirmed their tribal identity, they said, through opposing registration for the selective service or conscription. For example, Parker reported "a systematic attempt on the part of some Indians to discourage the idea of registering on the ground that Federal law or ruling requiring registration did not apply to wards." The Indians to whom Parker referred were Iroquois, who did not oppose war but opposed any infringement upon Iroquois sovereignty. Unhappy with leases that had eroded their land base, these Iroquois saw registration as the latest in a series of assaults upon their own control of their lives. If individual Iroquois wanted to volunteer, they reasoned, that was up to them, but service should be voluntary. In the same sense, when the Oneidas and Onondagas of the Six Nations chose to declare war on Germany, that action also should be permitted.

In eastern Oklahoma the war ignited new and reignited long-standing grievances over federal and non-Indian treatment of Indians. Some members of the Five Tribes angrily joined the Green Corn Rebellion, an agrarian uprising organized by unionists and socialists. The rebellion protested against people being uprooted from the land, but it also expressed the view that poor men should not fight in a war that would benefit rich men. Near Henryetta, Oklahoma, about 200 Muscogees participated in a protest over the issue of conscription. One of their leaders, Ellen Perryman, contended: "The Indians are not going to the



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slaughter fields of France." "To Hell with the Government and the Allies ...," she added. "They are nothing but a bunch of Grafters and Sons of Bitches." Although she was not imprisoned, Perryman was charged with violating the Espionage Act for advising Indians not to register for and to resist the draft.

Ellen Perryman and Joseph Oklahombi both hailed from the same part of Indian America. Their varied responses to World War I underlined the various ways in which different Native Americans could react not only to the war but to this entire era, which had brought so much social and economic change. In the end, the first two decades of the twentieth century verified what Indians, regardless of their perspectives, had known all along. They were not going to disappear, and they would be Indians all of their lives.

