“KILL THE INDIAN AND SAVE THE MAN”
1870–1924

AMERICANIZING THE AMERICAN INDIAN

As the wars for the West came to an end, Indian people found themselves subjected to attacks of a different kind. For some fifty years between 1870 and 1920, influential groups in American society combined with the federal government in a sustained campaign to remake Indians in the image of white American citizens. Like earlier generations of Euro-Americans, they wanted to "civilize" Indians and have them lead sedentary lives on fixed plots of land, be self-supporting, and practice Christianity. As the first step in this transformation, American reformers believed it was necessary to eradicate all vestiges of tribal life and culture—to "destroy the Indian and save the man." Powerful forces acted to suppress Indian culture, undermine tribal ways, and destroy the economic base of tribal life. The American government and reformers sought to apply a single model of transformation to all tribes, regardless of their differences. Like the European immigrants who were streaming into eastern cities, the first Americans were to be made into "Americans."

Striking at the Core of Culture

The result was tremendous suffering and hardship for Indian peoples who saw their land domains diminish, their heritage distorted, and their certainties questioned. But tribal culture and society proved more resilient than the reformers imagined. For example, in American eyes, conversion to Christianity required that rituals such as the Sun Dance be suppressed, and for generations Indians were forced to practice their religious ceremonies illegally and covertly. As the practice of Native ceremonies on reservations today indicates, the government's attempts at "cultural genocide" and religious oppression were partially successful at best.

With the defeat of the resolute groups, many of the Indian "ringleaders" were rounded up and sent away as prisoners of war, while their people were herded onto reservations. Seventy-two southern Plains war leaders were incarcerated in Fort Marion, a military prison in Florida. There Captain Richard Henry Pratt subjected them to an experimental program of "civilization by immersion." Pratt took off their shackles, cut their hair, gave them army uniforms, and attempted to impose rapid and complete assimilation. Joseph's Nez Percé were held in Indian Territory until 1885. After Geronimo and his band of Chiricahua Apache holdouts surrendered in September 1886, they were sent to Fort Pickens, Florida. The rest of the Chiricahuas, most of whom had not supported Geronimo's war and some of whom had served the United States army as scouts against him, were also loaded on to trains to Fort Marion. Martine and Kaytah, who had risked their lives to bring peace, were thrown on the train still wearing their army uniforms. Crowded into the rundown old fortress

Ration Day on the Pine Ridge Reservation, 1891
With the buffalo herds gone, Plains Indians were reduced to unaccustomed poverty and dependence on government rations. Here, Oglala people wait in line to receive their supplies. Western History Department, Denver Public Library.
were accustomed to dry heat," said James Kayveryka, "but in Florida the dampness and the mosquitoes took toll of us until it seemed that none would be left. Perhaps we were taken to Florida for that purpose..."

Army officers who had fought alongside the Apache scouts and the Indian Rights Association took up the Chiricahua's cause, but succeeded only in having them removed to Alabama. In 1894, the surviving Chiricahuas were relocated to the Kiowa and Comanche reservation in Indian Territory. There Gerontino died of pneumonia in 1909. Not until 1913 were the Chiricahuas allowed to return to the Southwest, many of them joining the Mescalero Apaches in New Mexico.

At the same time, the government in the late nineteenth century refined its policies for dealing with the Indians on the reservations. The hierarchy of command ran from the Department of the Interior, down through the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the regional superintendents, and to the Indian agents on the reservations. The reservation was the context in which the process of detribalization was to occur. But in the long-term policy of assimilating Indians, reservations were regarded as temporary, a stage on the road to incorporating Indians into mainstream American society. The agents were the key figures in the administration and enforcement of the government's Indian policies on the reservations. They relied for assistance on the clerks, doctors, field marshals, teachers, and blacksmiths who worked on the agencies; they also relied on the reservation police and the Courts of Indian Offenses, both of which were staffed by Indians and assigned with the suppression of tribal culture and traditional activities. In this way, resentment against government policies at the community level often became channeled against Indians charged with implementing those policies rather than against the federal government or its agents. If the system failed and resentment erupted in open resistance, the army could be called in to restore order and enforce compliance.

Some agents were dedicated and honest men who worked hard to ease the Indians' transition to a new way of life and who displayed genuine sympathy for their charges. Many were not. Often, agents were political appointees in a system that encouraged graft and corruption, and they made matters worse for the people they were supposed to administer. Sarah Winnemucca saw her Paiute people decline into poverty after they were confined to a reservation in Nevada in 1860 and then relocated to Oregon in 1879. Indians will "never be civilized," she wrote for a white audience in 1883. "If you keep on sending us such agents as have been sent to us year after year, who do nothing but fill their pockets, and the pockets of their wives and sisters, who are always put in as teachers, and yet they do not teach," Indians complained regularly to the government about corrupt agents, "Yet it goes on, just the same, as if they did not know." Sarah Winnemucca went on the lecture circuit, dressed as a Paiute "princess," to denounce the government's policies and call attention to her people's plight, but died in 1891 without seeing the Paiutes receive justice.

As Indian peoples confronted a painful readjustment to new constraints, they found ways to shield their own ways and values from the prying eyes of Indian agents and maintained ties of family, clan, and community. Indian officials sometimes evaded or diluted the impact of the laws they were supposed to enforce: Wooden Leg, a Northern Cheyenne who fought at the Little Big Horn and later served as a tribal judge, sent away one of his two wives in compliance with the government's ban on polygamy, but when he heard that some of the older men refused to obey the order he "just listened, said nothing, and did nothing." The government originally conceived of Indian judges as men who would simply enforce the rules, but many judges had other ideas. In time, notes historian Frederick E. Hoxie, Crow judges evolved into "government-sanctioned elders who worked to reconcile their oaths of office with individual behavior and the standards of their communities."

Reformers realized that, despite the massive assaults on Indian life and cultures, the reservations were falling in one of their primary purposes: Indians were not abandoning the old ways; they refused to stop being Indians. Reservations were supposed to be crucibles of change where tribalism would perish and "civilization" flourish, but Indians made them into homelands where tribal ways refused to die. In the eyes of reformers determined to save Indians from themselves, the reservations came to be "obstacles to progress."

Rethinking the Reservations

Various organizations mobilized in the late 1870s and 1880s for a reform of Indian policies. President Grant had established precedent by using churchmen as officials and agents as part of his "peace policy," and some of his appointees had brought an element of humanitarianism to Indian affairs. In later years, groups which saw themselves as the "friends of the Indians" attempted to take things further. Tragic events such as the pursuit and relocation of the Nez Perces in 1877, the uprooting of the Ponca tribe to make room for new Sioux reservations the same year, and the desperate flight in 1878 of some three hundred Northern Cheyennes from a reservation in Indian Territory—all described in moving terms by reformer Helen Hunt Jackson in her 1881 book, A Century of Dishonor—left an ugly taste in the mouths of those who believed the United States should be extending the blessings of civilization to Indian people, not shooting them down in the snow. The need for a thorough reform of Indian affairs was clear. The Board of Indian Commissioners, established by Congress in 1869 to curb mismanagement in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, investigated conditions on reservations where corruption was notorious. The Indian Rights Association, founded in 1882, pledged to protect the rights and interests of the Indians; its reformers attended annual conferences at Lake Mohonk resort in upstate New York where they discussed what was best for "the Indian." The Indian Rights Association did champion Indian causes and on occasion backed
THE EDUCATIONAL ASSAULT ON INDIAN CHILDREN

While allotment tried to break up the reservations as obstacles to progress, education was seen as the key to making progress and saving the Indian. In the eyes of reformers like Merrill Gates, allotment and education went hand in hand (see the document on pages 379–87). If necessary, both would be forced upon Indians. Like the children of European immigrants, Indian children were expected to jettison their old ways and language and become English-speaking “Americans.” The Board of Indian Commissioners in 1880 outlined its view of the Indian:

As a savage we cannot tolerate him any more than a half-civilized parasite, wanderer or vagabond. The only alternative left is to fit him by education for civilized life. 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. . . .

Removing Children from the Tribe

Reformers aimed to educate Indian adults. Captain Richard Henry Pratt imposed his program of civilization on the Plains Indian prisoners of war in Fort Marion, attempting to immerse them in white culture. But Indian children became the main targets of American education efforts. Congress in 1877 appropriated $20,000 for the express purpose of Indian education. Funding rose and reached almost $3 million by 1900. The numbers of students enrolling in school also increased: 3,596 in 1877; 21,568 in 1900. Some children attended day schools on the reservations, but reformers preferred off-reservation boarding schools where children could be isolated from the “contaminating” influences of parents, friends, and family.

Hampton Institute, established in 1868 as a school for former slaves, admitted Indian students ten years later. In 1879, Pratt opened Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. These schools became famous, or infamous, and served as models for other Indian educational facilities in their curriculum, discipline, regimen, and goals. Two dozen more boarding schools were opened in the next twenty-three years.

Attendance was mandatory. In 1891, Congress authorized the Commissioner of Indian Affairs “to make and enforce by proper means” rules and reg-
A Crow Indian Girl Wearing an Elks'-tooth Dress and Riding a Richly Bedecked Horse, c. 1905–1910

When this photograph was taken, government policy aimed to separate children from their families and to educate them out of their Indian ways. Richard Throssel (1885–1933), who took this photograph, was of Cree heritage and an adopted Crow. He worked on the Crow reservation in Montana for the U.S. Indian Service from 1902 to 1911 and took more than a thousand photographs, compiling an invaluable visual record of the Crow during a era of tremendous change. Thousand Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

A new school year was beginning. A rare unusual proceeding created quite an outcry. The men were sullen and muttering, the women loud in their lamentations, and the children almost out of their wits with fright.15

When the government built a boarding school at Keams Canyon, Arizona, in 1887, the Hopis at first refused to send their children there. In 1890, the government established a quota system for the attendance of Hopi children in schools, and in the next year sent African American troops to round up children. Don Talayesva, a Hopi, remembered hearing about it as a child: “The people said it was a terrible sight to see Negro soldiers come and take our children away from their parents.” Using African American troops to round up Native American children may have been a deliberate policy to pit one oppressed group against another, but Hopis recognized who was responsible. Talayesva “grew up believing that Whites are wicked, deceitful people.” Helen Sekaquaptewa, a Hopi woman, recalled in 1969 the bewilderment she and other children felt in 1906 when they were lined up, loaded into wagons, and taken from their families under military escort:

It was after dark when we reached the Keams Canyon boarding school and were unloaded and taken into the big dormitory, lighted with electricity. I had never seen so much light at night. . . . Evenings we would gather in a corner and cry softly so the matron would not hear and scold or spank us. . . . I can still hear the plaintive little voices saying, “I want to go home. I want my mother.” We didn’t understand a word of English and didn’t know what to say or do. . . . We were a group of homesick, lonesome, little girls. . . .”16

New Lives at School

When Indian children arrived at the boarding schools, they were given new Anglo-American names. The boys had their hair cut, and all students had to wear stiff uniforms in place of their native clothing. Writing in the 1930s Luther Standing Bear, a Lakota and one of the first students to attend Carlisle, remembered the discomfort of high collars, stiff shirts, and leather boots; then the students were issued red flannel underwear for the winter and “discomfort grew into actual torture.”17 They ate a monotonous diet, endured harsh discipline, and followed daily routines to acquire systematic habits. Most suffered from homesickness. Basil Johnston, a Canadian Anishinaabeg who attended a Jesuit school in Ontario, remembered the emotional toll on the youngest children. They “babies” clung to one of the Jesuit priests or huddled in the corner; they “seldom laughed or smiled and often cried and whimpered during the day and at night.” Some of the older students carved toys for them but the children did not play with them; “they just held on to them, hugged them and took them to bed at night, for that was all they had in the world when the lights
Many students suffered from trachoma, a contagious viral disease of the eye. Many died of tuberculosis, coughing up blood as the disease attacked their lungs. "The change in clothing, housing, food, and confinement combined with lonesomeness was too much," recalled Standing Bear. "In the graveyard at Carlisle most of the graves are those of little ones."

The ravages of disease were not confined to boarding schools far from home, of course. Don Talaveva attended school at New Oraibi on the Hopi reservation and recalled hearing just before Christmas, 1899, that smallpox was spreading west across Hopi country. "Within a few weeks news came to us that on Second Mesa the people were dying so fast that the Hopi did not have time to bury them, but just pitched their bodies over the cliff." The government employees and some of the teachers fled Oraibi. Another Hopi, Edmund Nequatewa, was at the Kauns Canyon boarding school when the epidemic struck: "the whole reservation was condemned," he remembered, "They had to draw the line between the school and the Hopi village. There were guards going back and forth day and night. No one could come in to the school from the Hopi villages." For several months, students at the school were cut off from news of their relatives in the disease-ridden villages. When Nequatewa was allowed home in the spring, he found his parents alive but two aunts dead, "Some of those people that had had smallpox were very hard to recognize," he recalled, "Their faces were all speckled and they looked awful."

In the classroom, teachers taught reading and writing by rote, pushed "American" values on the children, and taught patriotism and a version of American history that distorted or ignored the Indians' role. Teachers punished those caught speaking their native language. Many parents who had attended missionary or government boarding schools refused to teach their children their native tongue in order to save them from having the language beaten out of them in school. Eleven-year-old Elsie Allen, a Pomo girl, was beaten with a strap for speaking her language at the Covedale boarding school in California. "Every night I cried and then I'd lay awake and think and think and think. I'd think to myself, 'If I ever get married and have children I'll never teach the children the language or all the Indian things that I know. I'll never teach them that, I don't want my children to be treated like they treated me.' That's the way I raised my children."

Boys acquired vocational and manual skills; girls were taught the domestic skills thought appropriate for a Victorian mother and homemaker, or trained for work as maids in middle-class families. In fact, many students found themselves in a twilight world: they were not equipped or allowed to enter American society as equals, yet they had been subjected to sufficient change as to make returning to the reservations difficult and sometimes traumatic.

*In 1998 the Canadian government issued a formal apology to the victims of sexual and physical abuse in the residential school system and committed $350 million to support the development of community-based healing to help deal with the legacy of that abuse.*

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**Surviving the Schools, Using the Education**

After the turn of the century, the Bureau of Indian Affairs relaxed its policy of sending Indians away to boarding schools, and more students attended schools on the reservations. The boarding school experience and the educational philosophy of the government left a legacy of bitterness, confusion, and heartbreak that continues to affect Indian people, as they struggle to revive languages that were almost destroyed and restore pride in a heritage that was denied any worth for so long.

But the boarding schools were also places where young Indian people found ways of resisting the educational crusade intended to transform them. They often engaged in acts of subversion and rebellion against petty authority, built bonds of loyalty and friendship with other students, and found humor and humanity in the midst of loneliness, hardship, and regimentation. Interviews with alumni from the Choctaw Indian School in northeastern Oklahoma convinced Tsamina Lomawaima, an anthropologist and daughter of a former Choctaw student, that Indians at boarding schools "actively created an ongoing educational and social process." They built their own world within the confines of boarding-school life, and in the process, they turned an institution founded and controlled by the federal government into an Indian school. Some students even had pride in their school, and most found ways to enjoy themselves. Indian people, she concludes, "made Choctaw their own."

Many Indian students took the knowledge, experience, and literacy acquired during their school years and applied it in their work, their lives, and their understanding of the world. Like Luther Standing Bear (see the document on pages 391–96), they saw Western education and traditional education as two systems of knowledge. They tried to combine the best of both systems in adapting to the demands of a rapidly changing world. Many boarding school alumni returned to reservations as teachers themselves—in 1899, 45 percent of the United States Indian School Service employees were Indians. For Wolf Chief, a Hidatsa who went to school for the first time when he was thirty years old, education was a source of power. He learned arithmetic so he could check traders' weights and later operate his own store on the Fort Berthold reservation in North Dakota. He also employed his literary skills to bombard the Office of Indian Affairs with complaints and concerns: "He has contacted the letter writing habit and cannot be suppressed," said one exasperated agent in 1886. He wrote to newspapers and magazines and even wrote to the president, and his letters got results. Anna Moore Shaw, a Pima who attended school with Helen Sekaquaptewa and became the first Indian woman high-school graduate in Arizona, wrote that her generation was "the first to be educated in two cultures, the Pima and the white. Sometimes the values were in conflict, but we were learning to put them together to make a way of life different from anything the early Pimas ever dreamed of."

Two Omaha sisters, Susan and Suzette LaFlesche, used their education in the non-Indian world to champion Indian rights, lecturing and lobbying Congress, while their brother, Francis, became one of the first Indian anthropolo-
gallows by President Lincoln's pardon and instead had served three years in jail in Davenport, Iowa. He then converted to Christianity and took the surname of his deceased wife's father, calling himself Jacob Eastman. He named his son Charles Eastman and urged him to learn white Americans' ways. "We have now entered upon this life, and there is no going back," he told his son. "Besides, one would be like a hobbled pony without learning to live like those among whom we must live."  

Jacob Eastman sent his son to school. "It is the same as if I sent you on your first warpath," he told him. "I shall expect you to conquer." Charles first attended Santee Normal Training School in Nebraska. "I hardly think I was ever tired in my life until those first days of boarding school," he wrote later. "All day things seemed to come and pass with a wearisome regularity, like walking railroad ties—the step was too short for me. At times I felt something of the fascination of the new life, and again there would arise in me a dogged resistance, and a voice seemed to be saying, 'It is cowardly to depart from the old things.'"  

In September 1876, just months after the Battle of the Little Big Horn, Eastman entered Beloit College in Wisconsin. "I was now a stranger in a strange country," he recalled, "and deep in a strange life from which I could not retreat." After stints at Knox College in Illinois and Kinball Union in New Hampshire, he graduated from Dartmouth College, and then earned his M.D. degree at Boston University.

Committed to using his education and skills for the benefit of his people, Eastman became the agency physician at the Pine Ridge reservation in 1890, just as the tensions revolving around the Ghost Dance (see pages 295–96) were reaching a breaking point. There he met Elaine Goodale, a young New England woman who was teaching on the reservation and who spoke Sioux. They married in 1891 and had six children. But their courtship had been overshadowed by the tragedy at Wounded Knee. Eastman treated wounded and mutilated Indians and went over the field searching for survivors. He found a woman's body three miles from the scene of the massacre and from this point on we found them scattered along as they had been relentlessly hunted down and slaughtered while fleeing for their lives. He stood, stunned, amid the fragments of burned tepees and the frozen bodies of old men, women, and children. It was, he wrote, "a severe ordeal for one who had so lately put all his faith in the Christian love and lofty ideals of the white man."  

Nevertheless, Eastman remained a staunch advocate of educating the Sioux in American ways. Many of his later writings reflected the ideas of the Social Darwinism of the time that asserted that unchanging Indians were a vanishing race. "The North American Indian was the highest type of pagan and uncivilized man," he wrote in 1902. "But the Indian no longer exists as a natural and free man. Those remnants which now dwell upon the reservations present only a sort of tableau—a fictitious copy of the past." He became prominent as a "Red Progressive," supported the Dawes Allotment Act, and worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In the age of the self-made man, reformers held him up as a model for what Indians could achieve if they would only abandon their Indian ways and learn to live like other Americans.

But Charles Eastman never entirely stopped being Ohiyesa. Although he

The Two Worlds of Ohiyesa and Charles Eastman

Perhaps no individual better personified the changing times in which Indians lived than did Charles Alexander Eastman. Eastman was born in Minnesota in 1858, the youngest of five children. His father, Many Lightnings, was a Wahpeton Dakota Sioux; his mother, who died soon after his birth, was Mary Eastman, daughter of soldier-turned-artist Seth Eastman. Named Hakadah, "the pitiful last," at birth, the boy earned the name Ohiyesa, "the winner," in a lacrosse game. Raised in traditional Dakota ways by his paternal grandfather, as an adult Ohiyesa lived in two worlds and earned distinction in American society as Dr. Charles Eastman, physician, writer, and reformer. After the Minnesota Sioux uprising of 1862, Many Lightnings was imprisoned and the family fled to Ontario, Canada, where Ohiyesa lived until the age of fifteen. Ohiyesa believed his father had been hanged in the mass execution of Santee Sioux warriors at Mankato, but in 1873, Many Lightnings returned. He had escaped the
SURVIVAL AND ENDURANCE

In 1900, the United States census estimated there were a mere 250,000 Indians in the country. Their count was low—the census takers decided who was or was not Indian, and recorded many Indians as black, mulatto, or colored, while Indians who could pass as white often found that safer to do than attracting racist attention by proclaiming their Indian identity. Nevertheless the figures reflected four hundred years of demographic decline. In the eyes of most Americans, Indians were doomed to extinction, “a vanishing race.”

At the same time, Indians found themselves with declining legal protection and subjected to increasing state and federal legislation. After the Supreme Court decision in Ex Parte Crow Dog in 1883 assured tribes some autonomy in settlement of criminal cases, Congress in 1885 passed the Major Crimes Act making it a federal crime for Indians to commit rape, murder, manslaughter, assault with intent to kill, arson, or larceny against another Indian on a reservation. (In later years, the list of crimes was expanded to fourteen, adding kidnapping, incest, assault with a dangerous weapon, assault resulting in serious bodily injury, burglary, robbery, and sexual relations with a female under sixteen years of age.) In United States v. Kagama (1886), a case involving the murder of an Indian by another Indian on the Hoopa Valley Reservation in California, the Supreme Court affirmed the constitutionality of the Major Crimes Act. In 1903, with the support of the Indian Rights Association, the Kiowas sued the Secretary of the Interior to stop the transfer of their lands by a fraudulent agreement that blatantly contravened the Treaty of Medicine Lodge.

Wolf v. Hitchcock (1903), the Supreme Court declared that Congress had complete constitutional authority over Indian affairs and could abrogate its own treaties. The Supreme Court in Winters v. United States (1908) recognized Indians as having federally reserved water rights, but on the whole, Congress had the power to dispose of Indian lands as it saw fit.

“I Still Live”: Indians Adapt to New Conditions

In spite of past population losses and legal constraints, the twentieth century was to be a time of endurance and survival, not decline and disappearance, in Indian country and in Indian communities. Surviving the dark years of the
late nineteenth and early twentieth century built resources for later resurgence in a different social and political climate.

With their traditional economies in ruins, many Indian peoples found that they had to find new ways of making a living. Mohawk men from Kahnawake near Montreal began working as steelworkers on high-rise projects at the end of the nineteenth century. Many traveled south to New York during the city's building boom in the 1920s, working on the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, and the George Washington Bridge. In Alaska, Tlingit people continued the subsistence economies of old but also joined the labor market. Tlingit men fished for the canneries and worked in mining and lumbering operations; women sold baskets and handicrafts to tourists on the streets of Sitka or processed fish alongside Chinese immigrant workers.55

In New England, Indian women continued to make baskets, but now they sold them door-to-door or to tourists. Many young Indian women found employment in textile mills in Lowell, Massachusetts, or Manchester, New Hampshire. Native American men continued, as they had since the eighteenth century, to go to sea, while others found work closer to home as trappers, as guides (Henry David Thoreau had hired Penobscot guides for journeys through Maine), or in the logging industry. Some migrated to the Mac Indians from northern Maine and the Maritime Provinces of worked as seasonal laborers, picking potatoes and blueberries. Some went to work on building the Canadian Pacific Railroad. Others moved to the logging industry. Native people in New England maintained important kinship and community and began to develop regional networks and organizations. In 1923, when most white Americans assumed In-34

At home, some individuals forged new roles for themselves and found new ways to represent their people. Quanah Parker, a Comanche warrior and son of captive Cynthia Ann Parker, fought against the Americans in the Red River War of 1874-75 but then rose to prominence as the principal Comanche chief and a savvy politician after his people were confined to the reservation. He made himself useful to the U.S. government as a chief who would comply with the new policies being implemented on the reservation. He leased grazing rights on Comanche lands to local cattlemen. He achieved wealth and position, owning a large herd of cattle and living in an impressive house. He sent his children away to receive an American education. But he also used his position to represent his people; he refused to cut his hair or to comply with the government's rules forbidding polygyny, and he became a leader in the Peyote religion.57
A New Native American Religion: The Spread of Peyote

Peyote buttons had been used in Mexico and in religious rituals along the Rio Grande for centuries. Now, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a new religion based on the use of peyote entered Indian territory in the United States and then spread north across the Plains. It grew to become the Native American Church of the twentieth century. Though some of the rituals differed among regions and tribes, the religion had widespread appeal because it combined Christian elements with ancient tribal roots and provided "a bridge between traditional faiths and the realities of contemporary life."** Whereas many older ceremonies, such as the Sun Dance, took place in the open during the day, peyote ceremonies were performed quietly at night and could more easily escape the prying eyes of Indian agents intent on suppressing tribal religions. The religion was opposed by many non-Indians—and by some Indians. But in 1918 the Native American Church was formally organized in Oklahoma. Its declared purpose was to promote Christian religious belief using "the practices of the peyote sacrament" and to teach Christian morality and self-respect. The church prohibited alcohol and advocated monogamy, family responsibility, and hard work as means of combating the social problems that plagued many Indian communities. The use of peyote in ceremonies continued to draw opposition: fourteen states outlawed the drug by 1923; the Navajo tribal council banned it from the reservation in 1940; it was the subject of a Supreme Court case and new federal legislation in the 1990s. Nevertheless, the Native American Church of the United States was organized in 1944 and functions as an important element in the lives of thousands of Indian people today.

A New Generation of Leaders

A new generation of Indians, schooled in American ways, united for the first time by a common language, English, and aware of the challenges confronting their people, founded the Society of American Indians in 1911. The members included some of the more influential Indians of the day: Charles Eastman; the Rev. Sherman Coolidge, an Arapaho Episcopal minister who had been captured at the age of seven by American troops, raised by an army captain, and lived many years in New York City; Carlos Montezuma, a Yavapai Apache who had been captured by Pima Indians as a boy, sold to an itinerant Italian photographer who gave him his exotic name, later earned a medical degree and became a respected physician in Chicago; Henry Roe Cloud, a Winnebago who obtained bachelor's and master's degrees from Yale and became a Presbyterian minister; Arthur S. Parker, a Seneca anthropologist; the Sioux writer Gertrude Bonnin (see the document on pages 396–402). These people became known as the "Red Progressives." According to Sherman Coolidge, the establishment of the Society of American Indians, an organization "managed solely for and by the Indians," meant that "the hour has struck when the best educated and most cultured of the race should come together to voice the common demands, to interpret correctly the Indians' heart, and to contribute in a more united way their influence and exertion with the rest of the citizens of the United States in all lines of progress and reform, for the welfare of the Indian race in particular, and all humanity in general." The Society favored assimilation but also lobbied for citizenship, improved health care on reservations, a special court of claims for Indians, and other reform issues. Disputes over the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Native American Church caused it to decline by the 1920s, but it represented a first step toward the kind of pan-Indian unity that would play a vital role in the protection of Indian rights and the preservation of Indian culture in later years. Far to the north, Tlingit and other Alaska communities formed the Alaskan Native Brotherhood in 1912, and lobbied to protect Native resources and rights, and to end discrimination.

For a few Indians, sports provided access to temporary fame and fortune. Louis Francis Sockalexis, a Penobscot from Maine, played baseball at Holy Cross College and Notre Dame. In 1897, he broke into the major leagues, playing for the Cleveland Spiders. In his first season, he played the outfield, batted .338, and stole sixteen bases, but alcoholism cut short his career and he died at the age of forty-two in 1913. The Cleveland franchise changed its name to the Cleveland Indians in honor of Louis Sockalexis, and adopted the Indian logo that has since been such a contentious issue. A more famous Indian athlete, Jim Thorpe, was born on the Sauk and Fox reservation in Oklahoma in 1887, the year the Allotment Act was passed. In 1898, his father sent him to the Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas, where the eleven-year-old learned to play football. But Jim was an indifferent student at best, and in 1904 his father sent him to Carlisle, partly because it was too far for the youth to run away to home. At Carlisle, he found his niche in athletics and
earned varsity letters in eleven sports: football, track, baseball, boxing, wrestling, lacrosse, gymnastics, swimming, hockey, handball, and basketball. In 1912, he competed for the United States in the Olympic Games in Stockholm, winning gold medals in both the pentathlon and the decathlon, an achievement still unequaled in Olympic history. A year later, however, the U.S. Amateur Athletic Union stripped him of his medals and erased his name from the record books after discovering that he had once played baseball for a minor league team in North Carolina for $25 a week and was therefore a professional. Thorpe went on to play baseball for the New York Giants and other teams and then played professional football. In 1920, he became the first president of the American Professional Football Association (now the National Football League). Press polls judged Thorpe the greatest athlete of the first half of the twentieth century, but after he quit football in 1928 his life was marked by failed marriage, struggles with alcohol, and odd jobs, including bit roles in "cowboy and Indian" movies. Thirty years after his death in 1953, a court ruled that he had been unjustly stripped of his medals and duplicate medals were restored.

**Soldiers and Citizens**

In 1917, the United States entered the First World War, which had begun in Europe since 1914. About sixteen thousand Indians served in the forces, and many more contributed to the cause on the home front. Society, and the press in particular, interpreted the Indians' participation in World War I as evidence of their assimilation: "It may seem strange to see an Apache in a blue uniform," said one paper, "but it merely shows that he has become an American and has passed the tribal stage." That Indians were now fi...
the United States and defending Western values and democracy constituted, in the words of one scholar, "the ultimate vindication of U.S. expansionism, since it proved that the vanquished were better off for having been conquered." Indians pointed to their patriotism and sacrifice as evidence of their readiness for full citizenship: "Challenged, the Indian has responded and shown himself a citizen of the world," said Seneca Arthur C. Parker, president of the Society for American Indians.41

Although many Indians volunteered, some resisted the draft on the basis that they were not citizens and could not vote or be drafted, since they saw it as an infringement of their tribal sovereignty and treaty rights. The Iroquois Confederacy made a separate declaration of war against Germany, emphasizing that they were independent nations and fighting the war as allies, not as subjects, of the United States. In 1924, Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act, extending citizenship and suffrage to all American Indians. Roughly two-thirds of Indian people, including those who had taken allotments or served in World War I, had already been accorded citizenship, but passage of the act affirmed the belief that America's first peoples had become sufficiently assimilated to take up their role as participating American citizens. But things were not that simple. Some states continued to place obstacles in the way of Indian voting, and not all Indians eagerly embraced their new status. "The law of 1924 cannot apply to Indians," declared one Mohawk, "since they are independent nations. Congress may as well pass a law making Mexicans citizens."42 As events throughout the twentieth century would demonstrate, the place of American Indians in American society and the relations of Indian nations with the United States were far from resolved.

References


*The Six Nations of Canada sent a delegation to London in 1921 and to the League of Nations in Geneva in 1923 to argue their case that as a sovereign nation they were exempt from Canada's laws.

16. Sekaquaptewa, Me and Mine, 92-93, 96.
19. Luther Standing Bear, Land of the Spotted Eagle, 234.
The courts, but they shared the commitment of other reformers wanted to grant Indians citizenship and to educate them in Christian and American ways. They rejected the notion that Indians were different; they should dissolve tribal ties and assimilate into American society like everyone else. Reformers and federal officials shifted their support from a policy based on reservations to a policy based on breaking up reservations.

The Dawes Allotment Act

In 1887, Congress passed the Dawes or General Allotment Act to abolish reservations and allot lands to individual Indians as private property. Reformers saw these provisions as the way to radically change federal Indian policy and initiate a new era for American Indians. Like the Indian removal policy of the 1830s, allotment was a program on which both pro- and anti-Indian groups could agree as a “solution” to the “Indian problem.” The new policy would terminate communal ownership, push Indians into mainstream society, and offer for sale “surplus” land not used by Indians. The law was an attempt to impose a revolution on Indian societies. Allotment, its advocates believed, would liberate Indians from the stifling hold of community and instill individual ambition, American ideas of property rights, habits of thrift and industry. It would also break up extended families and undermine leaders who worked for the collective good. Indians could progress no further as long as they held land in common, said Senator Henry Dawes of Massachusetts, the main proponent of the Allotment Act. “There is no selfishness, which is at the bottom of civilization.” Thus the acquisition of private property was vital if an Indian was to become a fully participating and competing member of American society. “The wish for a home of his own awakens him...
to new efforts," declared Merrill Gates, a member of the Board of Indian Commissioners. "Discontent with the tepee and the starving rations of the Indian camp in winter is needed to get the Indian out of the blanket and into trousers,—and trousers with a pocket in them, and with a pocket that ache to be filled with dollars." Theodore Roosevelt put it more bluntly: allotment, he said, was "a vast pulverizing engine to break up the tribal mass."

The Dawes Allotment Act passed through Congress and was implemented with speed. It contained the following provisions:

1. The president was authorized to assign allotments of 160 acres to heads of families, with lesser amounts to younger persons and orphans.
2. Indians were to select their own lands, but if they failed to do so, the agent would make the selection for them. Reservations were to be surveyed and rolls of tribal members prepared prior to allotment.
3. The government was to hold title to the land in trust for twenty-five years, preventing its sale until allottees could learn to treat it as real estate.
4. All allottees and all Indians who abandoned their tribal ways and became "civilized" were to be granted citizenship.
5. "Surplus" reservation lands could be sold.

The law remained in force from 1887 to 1934. Its main effect was to strip Indian people of millions of acres of land. The provisions provided to Indian allottees were steadily whittled away. In 1902, Congress allowed Indian heirs to sell inherited land without approval from the Secretary of the Interior. In 1906, the Burke Act declared that Indians whom the Secretary of the Interior deemed "competent" to manage their own affairs could be granted patents in fee simple, which meant they no longer had to wait twenty-five years before they could sell their allotments.

On the White Earth reservation in northern Minnesota, American businessmen and speculators steadily eroded the land base of the Anishinaabe residents. The U.S. government established White Earth in 1867 as a reservation for all Anishinaabe people, and the various bands who lived there made a promising start. But the rich timber lands in the eastern part of the reservation and fertile farm lands to the west attracted the attention of outsiders. In 1899, the Nelson Act mandated that all the land be allotted under the terms of the Dawes Act. In 1906, Minnesota Senator Moses A. Clapp, a former lumber baron, attached a rider to the annual Indian appropriations bill stating that "mixed-blood" adults on White Earth were "competent" to dispose of their land parcels immediately. One Anishinaabe, a school superintendent from 1903 to 1911, said that the Clapp rider "brought grief and happiness to many people." Speculators approached Indian people who knew nothing about the legislation and got witnesses to "subscribe to affidavits that the Indian in question had white blood in his veins and in many cases the white blood ran through the branches of the family for many generations to some remote Canaanian Frenchman." Powerful lumber interests bought up timber-rich allotments for a fraction of their value. As reservation lands and resources dwindled, social and political conflicts within Anishinaabe society increased. Before the 1906 Clapp rider, the people of White Earth had been adapting relatively well to life on the reservation and to the demands and opportunities of a market economy; an investigation in 1909 found them with "no lands, no money." By 1920, "most of the reservation land base had been transferred to Euroamerican hands," and by 1994, "only 7 percent of White Earth's land base remains under Indian control."

Indian Territory Becomes Oklahoma

The "Five Civilized Tribes" in Indian Territory were originally excluded from the provisions of the Allotment Act. The Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Seminoles had rebuilt their economies, political, and social structures after removal, had weathered the divisive effects of the Civil War, and continued to function as autonomous societies. In 1889, Congress provided for allotment of the lands of all Indians in the area except for the five tribes. But in 1890, Indian Territory was divided into Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory, and in 1893 Congress appointed a commission to negotiate allotment agreements with the five tribes. Many tribal leaders opposed allotment, but the Curtis Act of 1898 terminated the Indian governments and allotment proceeded in the remainder of Indian Territory. In 1907, Congress combined Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory to create the new state of Oklahoma. Although the Muscogee (Creek) National Council agreed to allotment, some Creeks followed the lead of Chitto Harjo, or Crazy Snake, in resisting allotment. After violence erupted with whites, the Oklahoma Indian National Guard was called out in 1909 to quell the "uprising." In the meantime, fraud and chicanery characterized the allotment process in Oklahoma. Non-Indians married Indians to get on the tribal rolls and thereby become eligible for allotments, cheated them out of their allotments with words or whiskey, and, in the view of one Oklahoma historian, "turdled about the Indian nations, a predacious wolf pack hustling for the last.