

**Chemawa Indian Boarding School
The First One Hundred Years
1880 to 1980**

by
Sonciray Bonnell

ISBN: 1-58112-003-6

DISSERTATION.COM



1997

Copyright by
Sonciray Bonnell
1997

**Chemawa Indian Boarding School
The First One Hundred Years
1880 to 1980**

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

Master of Arts

in

Liberal Studies

by

Sonciray Bonnell

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE


Hanover, New Hampshire


May, 1997




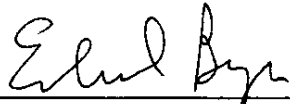
Department Chair - Augustus E. DeMaggio

Thesis Advisors:

1. 
Colin Calloway

2. 
Bruce Duthu

3. 
Brenda Schwab



Dean of Graduate Studies - Ed Berger

BLANK

Dartmouth College
Master of Arts in Liberal Studies Thesis Abstract

CHEMAWA INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL
1880 TO 1980: THE FIRST ONE HUNDRED YEARS
by Sonciray Bonnell

This study presents interviews with American Indian/ Alaska Native alumni who received some or all of their elementary and high school education at the Chemawa Indian Boarding School in Salem, Oregon between 1917 and 1985. A brief summary of Indian history, in particular Indian education, is presented as the context for many of the changes that occurred at Chemawa during its first one hundred years. The purpose of this study is to examine Chemawa alumni recollections of Chemawa within an imposed educational system.

My research process included library and archival research, academic classes and personal interviews. I interviewed alumni who had attended Chemawa between 1917 and 1985. Themes such as academics, vocational training, social life and general impressions of Chemawa are categorized in the different eras and serve as the body of the thesis.

Despite negative stereotypes of federal Indian boarding schools, the majority of Chemawa alumni interviewed for this thesis hold Chemawa in high regard. For many students Chemawa was an alternative to an orphanage, a respite from a dysfunctional family situation, an opportunity to gain an education and or vocational skills, or an opportunity to be with other Indians. Across generations, at least half of the students considered Chemawa's academic program inadequate; over half of the students interviewed found the vocational training, when it was available, to be very useful. Though most students acknowledge the downfalls of Chemawa, most alumni interviewed tended to overlook the negative and promote the positive.

Alumni were able to view Chemawa in a positive light because students molded their boarding school experiences to fit their needs. Students created their own families (friends), community (school) and resisted the institutional suppression of Indian boarding schools. As young people, many adapted their situation to suit their needs, regardless of any negative experiences they might have encountered at Chemawa.

Preface

Words fall short of expressing my gratitude for the opportunity to listen to Chemawa alumni and staff tell stories about a very special time in their lives. Deserving thanks to all the Chemawa alumni and staff who shared their memories with me in my search to understand the Chemawa Indian Boarding School. Your stories had a profound impact on my perceptions of Chemawa and reinforced all that I love about Indians. Your honesty, trust and humor are much appreciated. It is a shame that not everyone has the opportunity to listen to your memoirs, for everyone interviewed had something important to say. For all of you who took me into your homes (or offices) and made me feel welcome, thank you.

Much gratitude is owed to my thesis readers under which this study was conducted. The writer is most appreciative of Professor Colin Calloway, my primary thesis advisor, who was very supportive throughout my thesis journey. From the beginning, Professor Calloway guided me through the research and writing of this thesis. The writer owes thanks to Professor Bruce Duthu and Professor Brenda Schwab for completing my thesis advisory board. Special thanks to SuAnn Reddick, my "editor," for her endless support. For assistance with archival work, thanks to all the staff, and especially Joyce Justice, at the National Archives Sandpoint Branch in Seattle, Washington. Thanks to the librarians at the Oregon State Library. Last, but most definitely not least, the people who really made this happen - thanks to my family and friends who have always supported me in my endeavors. Your moral and technical support, patience, attitude adjusters and love, none of it went unnoticed.

Contents

Abstract	ii
Preface	iii
List of Tables & Illustrations	v
Part One: Introduction	
1. Introduction	1
2. Contact to 1880: Early Indian History	11
Part Two: Chemawa	
3. 1880 - 1920: Beginning Years of Chemawa	33
4. 1920 - 1928: Alumni Voices	43
5. 1928 - 1948: A Change in Point of View	55
6. 1948 - 1970: Termination Policy	85
7. 1970 - 1980s: Vicissitudes	107
8. Conclusions	127
Appendix A: Chemawa Alumni Interview Guidelines	133
Appendix B: Interview Permission/Release Letter	134
Appendix C: Meriam Report	135
Appendix D: 1928 Outing Rules for Girls	137
Appendix E: Complete Transcription	139
Bibliography	153

List of Tables & Illustrations

Location and Opening Date for Off-Reservation
Boarding Schools - 27

Chapter One Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the history of the Chemawa Indian Boarding School from the perspectives of its Indian alumni. The methodology employed to investigate the recollections of alumni was personal interviews. The taped interviews were categorized by era and further distinguished by subject to provide an outline for understanding Chemawa from alumni perspectives. First, a discussion of the thesis will be presented, followed by a general history of the relationship between Indians and the United States government, leading into the history of Indian boarding schools and finally the events that took place at Chemawa. The chapters are divided by eras and by events taking place in Indian Affairs and at Chemawa.

Started in 1880, Chemawa is now the oldest operating Indian boarding school in the United States, serving Indians from the Northwest, as well as from across the country. It has grown from five acres of leased land to 441 acres in 1915¹ to its current acreage. As a federal off-reservation boarding school, it has weathered policy and administrative changes, threats of closure and the monumental task of assimilating Indians. Although Indian boarding schools began with a hint of positive appraisal by their founders, their reputation became tarnished. The founders of Indian boarding schools were committed to casting their students into something they were not, nor necessarily wanted to be: Euroamerican Christians. The consistently negative descriptions of Indian boarding schools via articles, books, videos and personal stories illustrate the arrogance of Indian policy. Yet, there is another viewpoint that is not well

¹Samuel A. Elliot, "Report Upon the Conditions and Needs of Indians of the NW Coast." (Washington D.C.: Board of Indian Commissioners, 1915), 23.

known, nor well understood: the opinions and perspectives of Indian boarding school alumni. Despite the overwhelmingly negative viewpoints and harmful results of Indian boarding schools, Chemawa alumni display extraordinary resilience to such policy. Many alumni even have a family-like alliance to Chemawa. Where do such positive appraisals come from? Part of the answer lies within alumni stories of Chemawa.

The stories of Chemawa will contrast or support federal Indian policy set by Congress and influenced by politicians, states, lobby groups and social climates. The mind set of the different eras fueled the government effort to deal with Indians and ultimately fueled the changes that took place at Chemawa. As the quotations manifest, a foundation of federal Indian policy provides an insider's perspective to aid the reader in understanding Chemawa and the results of an imposed education policy. It is through alumni stories that I hope the reader will gain a new understanding of Chemawa.

Why Indian voices? Until the last three decades, documented Indian history has, for the most part, been recounted by non-Indians with a Eurocentric bias.² Early writers, such as politicians, teachers, missionaries, land surveyors and explorers affected federal Indian policy by providing an image of Americans Indians/ Alaskan Natives that society could absorb, stories often laced with an agenda, based on fabrications, or biased. The Indian image in the popular minds of society included images of "savages," "subhuman beings," and "heathens." Putting Indians in the category of "savage" helped justify keeping the Indian voice out of the history books. "Conceptions of what the natives had to be so they could satisfy the demands Europeans would make of them influenced, if not fostered, the descriptions explorers, missionaries, and settlers provided financial backers and policy makers."³ Indians come from oral cultures and many had established themselves as effective orators able to articulate their historical traditions and values, but because they were labeled "savages," their opinions and perspectives received little

²Oren R. Lyons and John C. Mohawk, editors. Exiled in the Land of the Free: Democracy, Indian Nations, and the United States Constitution. (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 1992), 3.

³Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr. The White Man's Indian. (New York: Random House, 1979), 118.

attention in most historical literature. More recently, movie makers, journalists, scholars and Indians themselves perpetuate the "Indian image."

It is impossible to generalize about two million people who belong to hundreds of different tribes, each with its own history, customs and perspectives. Still, Indian tribes do share one thing: a unique relationship with the United States government. While there are numerous perspectives on how well this special relationship has worked, Indian perspectives have seldom been heard or understood.

Some of the language used in this thesis is the language found in most of the books and articles researched for this paper. Terms such as "savage," "non-civilized," "devil," "heathen," and "warrior," used to describe American Indians and "ceded" used in federal Indian policy reflect an attitude of the time they were initially put to use to describe Indians. Why are they still in use today? This writer judges the above terms as inappropriate. Instead of offering an excuse in a footnote and making a single announcement that they will not appear in quotations for purposes of readability or for whatever reasons, the above terms and other terms reflecting similar inappropriateness are shown in quotations throughout the thesis. The quotations serve as a reminder of exactly the inappropriateness of the terms and as a reminder of the attitudes that once prevailed, but moreover, continue to exist as seen by the continued use of those very words.

Several personal experiences had an impact on why I chose Chemawa as my thesis topic, two of which are included here. Both speak to the need for Indian perspectives to be recorded and heard. The experience that has held my attention for some time happened at the University of Washington where I met "Indian experts," many of whom were not Indians. The situation of non-Indians interpreting to the public what Indians were about was strange indeed. Since that time I have searched for opportunities where Indians might tell about themselves. Another situation is more personal and occurred more recently. My mother, who is half Isleta Pueblo and half Sandia Pueblo,

shared with me her experiences at the Sandia Pueblo reservation day school. It was this story that sparked my interest in Indian boarding schools. This is my Mom's story:

I was about six years old when I first went to school. It was right in the Pueblo. Well, I didn't speak English and I didn't understand it. In class some of the students would interpret for me, but mostly I would wander around the classroom. If something caught my eye I went to investigate, or visit with the other students. The teacher was frustrated with me because I wouldn't stay in my desk. I didn't understand that I was supposed to just sit there. I didn't understand English. I think I was a bit much for her. She finally took to tying me to my desk. Oh, but it wasn't child abuse. Of course now you couldn't do that. So this one time she tied me to my desk and I had to go to the bathroom. I kept raising my hand, but she kept ignoring me. I'd wave and raise my hand, but she never noticed me. Finally, I somehow wriggled out of the ropes and went to the bathroom. Next thing I know she's yanking me off the toilet. She pulled up my pants, washed my hands, took my hand and took me back to class. I remember my little feet barely touching the ground. She was mad. She talked to Mom and Dad and said that I was too young to be there. I got kicked out at age six.

Although there was much laughter when my Mom shared this story, I could not help but wonder about other student perceptions of such a foreign mode of education. Moreover, the story-telling that I enjoy is a keen reminder that oral history was and is an integral part of many Indian cultures. With Chemawa forty miles from my home in Portland, Oregon my curiosity about Indian boarding schools was easily sated. Together these experiences led me to Chemawa Indian School.

This thesis is an endeavor to illustrate some Indian perspectives in hopes of better understanding Indian experiences at the Chemawa Indian Boarding School. There are many qualified, honorable and respected non-Indians who write Indian history; likewise, there are many qualified, honorable and respected Indians who can also contribute to Indian history. My goal is that others will learn about Chemawa as I have, through the words of Chemawa alumni and staff, though the focus of this thesis will remain on alumni stories. Many Indian cultures depend heavily on oral traditions as a way to educate and socialize their members. Barbara Myerhoff effectively presents the nature of oral history, or retrospection: "They become active participants in their own history;

they provide their own sharp, insistent definitions of themselves, their own explanations for their past and their destiny."⁴

Indian voices are the doorway to understanding why many Chemawa alumni interviewed hold their school in such high regard. When the reader has gained a perspective of Chemawa from the vantage point of some students who have been there, a broader perception of shared historical experiences enhance the understanding of Chemawa and alumni perceptions of their school, perceptions that are alumni truths.

Yet truth is elusive. Every individual's experience is their own reality, interpreted in their own unique way, permitting a myriad of interpretations for any single event. Are these stories the raw truth about Chemawa? How does one begin to sort out the stories? An interviewee may recount a particular situation, but the infinite causes that led to the incident are not considered, nor are other factors such as relationship, mood, family situation, or mental health. My attempt to sort out and organize the stories are topical at best and could be done several ways. The foundation of my "sorting" stories is the acceptance that human subjects and their stories make for precarious conclusions.

There is no such thing as objective interviewing when dealing with human beings. The people I interviewed either liked me, disliked me, or considered me neutral. All three responses affected the outcome of the interview, what they chose to say and what they chose to leave out. The interviewee/interviewer relationship also affects how I might interpret their words. Given the complexity of human nature, it is nearly impossible to determine exactly how the interviewee/interviewer relationship affects research. For those comfortable or caught up with definitives, this might be difficult to accept, but slotting human relationships into categories is slippery business.

Interviewees can tell you what they think you want to hear; or the interviewee might censor the interview; or the interviewee might consciously provide

⁴K. Tsianina Lomawaima, They Called It Prairie Light (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), xv. Barbara Myerhoff. "Telling Ones' Story." The Center Magazine 13 (2): 22-40.

misinformation. The first is the most elusive to track. Interviews were directed by the interviewees rather than guided exclusively by myself. After initial background questions, I allowed them to tell me about Chemawa. I was most interested in the subjects alumni deemed worthy to talk about and the memories that stood out for them. Instead of asking specific questions, interviewees spoke from their hearts. After a few interviews certain themes began to emerge. These themes are discussed in the body of this thesis. In cases where the interviewee did not feel comfortable just talking about Chemawa, I guided them with open ended questions.

Second, it is difficult to calculate the degree to which interviewees censored their stories. It is likely that interviewees felt more comfortable focusing on the positive aspects of their Chemawa experience, rather than broaching negative topics with a stranger. Deeply personal issues were usually avoided as well, most likely, for a number of reasons including differences in age, sex, tribe, or the fact that we had just met.

A third problem with oral history is the subject's desire to mislead the interviewer. The reasons are many and complex. Within Indian Country there are various stories of Indians providing misinformation to curious travelers or anthropologists. The long history of the exploitation of Indian cultures has certainly been a cause for Indians misleading the curious. Many Indians have become leery of interacting with non-Indians because of situations where outsiders have photographed sacred ceremonies, revealed spiritual secrets and attempted to sell Indian dances and stories. Another reason is the exploitative relationship between the researcher and Indians. The following joke gives a peculiar definition of a Navajo and illustrates a point: a Navajo must have a mother, father, extended family and have been interviewed by ten anthropologists by the age of fifteen. Indians recognize the relationship between researcher and themselves, and respond accordingly.

In addition to apprehension to outsiders there is a certain degree of privacy within many Native American cultures, my own included. Considering my background, I

cannot help empathizing with alumni stories and emotions, because their stories often represent me. I was, therefore, apprehensive about sharing that private information with the public. I have had to wrestle with respecting the privacy of interviewees and myself. Acknowledging the long relationship between researcher and Indians, between my community and myself, I have struggled to make conclusions and present interpretations about Chemawa alumni. I have often been at odds with studies about Native Americans because some studies have been exploitative and some did not reciprocate to the community or persons studied. Mostly, I do not want Indians to misrepresent me as the "other."

RESEARCH PROCESS

My research process will provide information about the reasoning behind my decisions to include or delete information, constraints under which I worked, and the biases that influenced my decisions. From January, 1996 to April, 1997 I conducted thirty-one interviews, eight with past or present Chemawa employees and twenty-three alumni. Gaining access to potential interviewees began with networking within the Native community in Portland, Oregon. My initial potential interviewee list was gathered with the help of friends and associates. My network expanded as I asked each interviewee whether they knew of any other alumni interested in being interviewed.

My interview protocol was as follows. During the initial encounter with interviewees I explained that the reasons for conducting this research were to allow Indians to tell their own stories about Chemawa, to produce a document that might be helpful to Chemawa, and the desire to know more about Chemawa from the people who lived there. I further explained that they would have every opportunity to stop the interview or choose not to discuss a particular subject; they would remain anonymous in the final text; and they would be required to sign an interview permission form. We then decided a time and place for the interview.

Since interviews are the essence of my study it was essential to gain the trust of the interviewees. I felt it was important to invite interviewees to ask me any questions about my background. I usually stated this before the interview, feeling that a mutual sharing of personal information provided a more fertile interview session.

The interviews were recorded and usually conducted in the home of the interviewee. The first part of the interview dealt with the general background of the interviewee. Initial questions also served as an ice breaker, as a way to ease the interview into a conversation. Then I allowed them to talk about Chemawa and the memories that stuck out for them. Instead of guiding the topics, the interviewees chose the topics. After a few interviews, certain themes began to emerge. These themes are discussed in the body of this thesis. If a subject arose that needed clarification during the interviewee monologue, I would ask questions. My interests included the interviewee's background, what brought them to Chemawa, description of Chemawa, what they thought of Chemawa and what impact Chemawa had on their lives. A guideline of the questions is included in the Appendix A. By the time the interviewee monologue subsided, they usually had answered most of the questions on my list. I ended each interview with the question, "Is there anything else that you would like to add?"

Transcribing the tapes was a tedious task. I enlisted one person to help with the transcriptions, although I proofread every single transcribed interview. One of the more difficult problems I encountered was the difficulty of understanding persons whose first language is not English. Heavy accents, non-standard English and pronunciation made transcribing laborious. I am committed to providing the words and intentions in their entirety, but it was often difficult to accomplish this because of the restrictions of the written word. The lack of context, body language, innuendoes and expressions made it even more crucial to provide accurate transcriptions.

Each narrative begins with information to help identify the speaker's background, though real names are not used. The entry "Harriet (tribe) year/age:/grade" identifies the

interviewee, their tribal affiliation, the year(s) they attended Chemawa, their age when they entered Chemawa and the grade upon entry. Editing of interviews followed the guidelines adopted from Dr. Lomawaima's book, *They Called It Prairie Light*.⁵

1. Extraneous interjections (uh, so, and, you know), false starts, and repeated words are not indicated in the text.
2. Elision of a few words is indicated by three dots, and longer elisions of one or more phrases or sentences are indicated by four dots.
3. When necessary to preserve sense, words are added: these are demarcated by brackets.
4. Explanatory notes of the editor are also enclosed in square brackets.
5. An asterisk in the line of text indicates a break in the narrative, that is, the sections preceding and following the asterisk come from separate portions of an individual's interview.

For those who have contributed stories and memories, this is essentially their story. It is a sampling of information, for there are numerous voiceless alumni not interviewed. The alumni who chose to participate in the interviews come from many different nations and from a variety of social, economic and political backgrounds. Their similarity is that they all chose to share their Chemawa memories with me. For the most part, there was general approval of Chemawa, but the interviewee pool was in no way representative of Chemawa's student body. Some alumni might disagree with my interpretations, but I hope the essence of Chemawa prevails. The purpose of my thesis is to impart the experiences of some students who went to Chemawa; it in no way attempts to create a single theory, solution, or conclusion. This is my presentation of the history of Chemawa Indian School, federal Indian policy, Indian education and the voices of Chemawa alumni.

⁵Lomawaima, xvii.

Chapter Two Contact to 1880 Early Indian History

I

To better understand Indian education policy, the effects it had at Chemawa, and Indian student reactions to such policy, a brief description of Indian history and pertinent policies is presented. Early Indian policy set the precedent for what was to come. Foremost is the arrogance of federal Indian policy imposed upon Indian individuals, communities and cultures. Reasons for the dictatorial Indian policy were differences in philosophy, religion, life styles and land use, which were and are the basis for many of the problems between Indians and non-Indians.

During the colonial period of America's history there were three foreign models of education provided to American Indians, all founded in the Christian idea of salvation. The Jesuits were active in the education of Indians between 1611-1700. It was their intention to Christianize Indians and to civilize them with academics, singing, agriculture, carpentry, handicrafts, and French language and customs. The Franciscans entered the South, gathering Indian pupils around their missions. Their curriculum included Spanish, but emphasized agriculture, carpentry, blacksmithing, masonry, spinning and weaving. Protestants conducted most of their early education of Indians in the East, starting around 1617. Again, the curriculum focused on Christianization and

culture according to colonial Protestant views.⁶ "Scholars have assigned many reasons for the failure of the English mission as compared to Spanish and French achievements: Protestant apathy versus Catholic zeal; Catholic, especially Jesuit, flexibility versus Protestant rigidity in the field; the ceremonialism of Catholicism versus the dull services of the Protestants; and even Latin racial sentiment versus Anglo-Saxon prejudices."⁷ Religious missionary efforts remained a constant, albeit secondary, influence in Indian education.

Yet, Indians had their own opinions of the education being offered to them. As recounted by Benjamin Franklin, the response of the Onondaga spokesman, Canasatego, regarding colonial education stated:

But you, who are wise, must know that different Nations have different Conceptions of things; and you will therefore not take it amiss, if our ideals of this kind of Education happen not to be the same with yours. We have had some Experience of it; Several of our young people were formerly brought up at the Colleges of the Northern Provinces; they were instructed in all your Sciences; but, when they came back to us, they were bad Runners, ignorant of every means of living in the Woods, unable to bear either Cold or Hunger, knew neither how to build a Cabin, take a Deer, or kill an Enemy, spoke our Language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for Hunters, Warriors, nor Counselors; they were totally good for nothing. We are however not the less oblig'd by your kind Offer, tho' we decline accepting it; and, to show our grateful Sense of it, if the Gentlemen of Virginia will send us a Dozen of their Sons, we will take great Care of their Education, instruct them in all we know, and make Men of them.⁸

Regardless of the different conceptions of education that Canasatego spoke of, colonial powers, and later the U.S. government forced their idea of education onto the indigenous peoples of America. The results in many instances were ruined tribal members. With little regard for the Indians, experimental education efforts sought formulas to transform Indians into prototypes of Euroamericans.

⁶Estelle Fuchs and Robert J. Havighurst, To Live On This Earth: American Indian Education (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1972), 2.

⁷Berkhofer, 133.

⁸Fuchs, 3.

At the beginning of the Indian-Euroamerican relationship European settlers recognized the position of power that many Indian tribes enjoyed. Colonists appreciated the military power of Indian tribes, their option to ally with other European nations, and the knowledge Indians could provide them regarding local food sources, terrain, and other tribes. Concerned with survival, settlers ironically required the valuable knowledge Indians possessed. Accordingly, on July 22, 1775, the Continental Congress inaugurated the following federal Indian policy: "securing and preserving the friendship of the Indian Nations, appears to be a subject of the utmost importance to these colonies."⁹ Settlers eventually became secure in their new homeland, acquired knowledge of the environment, established an agricultural base and developed a local economy. Ultimately, white reliance on Indian tribes faded away as settlers became stronger and more self sufficient.

In 1778, the Continental Congress began treaty-making with American Indian tribes, basing their treaties on earlier British models.¹⁰ Formal dealings with Indian tribes regarding trade, alliance and land were conducted primarily through treaty-making.¹¹ Treaties established the initial Indian policy in an effort to legally purchase Indian lands and to establish protocol between white settlers and Indians. When friendly sales pitches were not effective, settlers used coercion, force and graft. In the words of Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., in *The White Man's Indian*, "Colonial leaders thought the practice of buying tracts of land from the natives as a means of quieting Indian title claims cheaper than forceful seizure in warfare and equally effective in theory -- even though cajolery and coercion often entered into the actual negotiations."¹²

⁹Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and The American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 35-6. Hereafter referred to as *Great Father*.

¹⁰Prucha, *Great Father*, 4.

¹¹David H. Getches, Charles F. Wilkinson, and Robert A. Williams, Jr., *Federal Indian Law Cases and Materials* (St. Paul: West Publishing, 1993), 83.

¹²Berkhofer, 130.

Hypocritical as it was, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 stated the government's position: "The utmost good faith shall always be observed toward the Indians, their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and in their property, rights and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorised by Congress, but laws founded in justice and humanity shall from time to time be made, for preventing wrongs being done to them, and for preserving peace and friendship with them."¹³ Despite formal promises to treat the Indians with fairness and honor, the government failed to live up to its word. By the end of treaty making in 1871, the various Indian treaties "ceded" over a billion acres of land in "exchange" for reserved Indian lands and federal services including education, health, and technical and agricultural learning.¹⁴ (emphasis mine)

Even though land was the foundation of treaties, there existed a cultural difference in views of the land and how best to utilize the land. Indians did not typically view Euroamerican culture and values in a positive light. David Weber describes a Pueblo reaction to both Spanish and American colonists:

"Native Americans probably regarded Europe's discoverers as blind -- oblivious to meanings, observers of form instead of discoverers of function."¹⁵

The European disregard, disrespect and ignorance of "proper" attitudes toward fellow human beings and toward the land must have been inconceivable to the Indians. Instead of understanding the meaning and holistic function of the land, the colonists saw only the profit it could bring.

¹³Prucha, Great Father, 47.

¹⁴Fuchs, 4.

¹⁵David J. Weber, The Spanish Frontier in North America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 11.

Likewise, Native American communal ethics of reciprocity, land sharing, clan ties, and community harmony were at odds with European individual ownership of the land. "Waste" of potentially productive land became a strong argument in the acquisition of Indian land. In the minds of many settlers, it was their right to use the land because they believed the Indians did not use it "properly," whereas settlers did. Labeling Indian values as inferior and unimportant, even detrimental because they were "heathen," was an additional justification for the acquisition of Indian land. Inasmuch as civilization was defined by individualism, Indian communal values signified "savagism." Colonists could legitimize their exploration and colonization efforts because they often considered Indians as "barbaric," "natural slaves," without reasoning capabilities and outright different from themselves. According to many colonists, difference was not a virtue, certainly not tolerated, and the eradication of differences evolved into the cornerstone of United States government's Indian education policy.

II

Towards this end, Congress became an active agent in Indian education by passing an act known as the "Civilization Fund" in March of 1819.¹⁶ With formal education as the framework and under the guise of protection from extinction, the Civilization Fund's purpose was to impose a new set of values, beliefs and life styles on American Indians.

¹⁶Francis Paul Prucha, Documents of United States Indian Policy, ed. 2nd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press 1990), 33. Fifteenth Congress. Session. II. Ch. 86, 87. 1819.

The government appropriated \$10,000 in 1819 and \$214,000 in 1842 to the Civilization Fund.¹⁷ "The president and the secretary of war decided not to use the funds directly, but rather to spend it through the 'benevolent societies' that had already established schools for the education of Indian children or would do so in the future."¹⁸ The moneys went to religious organizations to fund their efforts in "civilizing" the Indian. It lasted into the late nineteenth century when "public protest against federal aid to sectarian schools and the unconstitutional nature of the practice led the government to discontinue the practice."¹⁹ By the turn of the century the government had almost weaned the religious organizations of financial support and had taken the responsibility for Indian education on itself. Although not all treaties had specific educational provisions, the United States government recognized its obligation to administer Indian education.

While the government accepted responsibility for Indian education, it chose to concentrate on other issues, contradictory though they were to the stated goals of Indian education. One such issue was the acquisition of Indian lands by way of the Indian Removal Act and the reservation system.

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 was an attempt to "solve the problem of alien groups claiming independence within established states and territories of the United States, the problem of groups of human beings with communal cultures still only partially dependent upon agriculture owning large areas of land that were coveted for the dynamic white agriculture systems of both north and south, and the problem of friction that occurred along the lines of contact between the two societies and the deleterious effect that contact almost universally had upon Indian individuals and Indian society."²⁰ It authorized the President to mark off Indian lands west of the Mississippi in exchange

¹⁷Lomawaima, 2.

¹⁸Prucha, Great Father, 151.

¹⁹Fuchs, 5-6.

²⁰Prucha, Great Father, 180.

for their homelands in the East, stated that the United States would forever secure and guarantee their new land, authorized payments for improvement made on the land and provided aid and assistance in emigrating. For all this, Congress appropriated five hundred thousand dollars.²¹

Removal policy encouraged the belief that Indians and non-Indians could remain separate, an admission that the speedy absorption of the Indians into white society had failed.²² According to author Frederick E. Hoxie in A Final Promise: "In the early nineteenth century, most Americans envisioned their society as homogeneous. People were either "citizens" or "savages."²³ The segregation provided by the Removal policy allowed Indians to maintain limited "political autonomy" and their cultures, but outside of white society.

The "out of sight, out of mind" attitude of Removal policy had established its roots well before the actual Indian Removal Act in 1830. More pressing than segregation was the problem of vast Native American land holdings within the borders of the newly formed United States. For years, there were problems of steady encroachment of Indian lands, violent relationships between Indians and non-Indians, and new treaty negotiations to validate the incursions.²⁴ Regardless of policy, settler expansion took its course. According to author David Wallace Adams in Education For Extinction: "In the 1840s Oregon land fever and dreams of California gold were sufficient motivations to prompt settlers, miners and other frontier types to breach the Indian barrier."²⁵

²¹Prucha, Great Father, 206.

²²Prucha, Great Father, 179.

²³Frederick E. Hoxie, A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), xiv.

²⁴Prucha, Great Father, 183.

²⁵David Wallace Adams, Education For Extinction: American Indians and The Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928 (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 7.