Beyond the Statistics: Indian Experiences in the Indian Student Placement Program

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BEYOND THE STATISTICS: INDIAN EXPERIENCES IN THE INDIAN STUDENT PLACEMENT PROGRAM

by

Jenny M. Smith

A Plan B thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE in

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Logan, Utah

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ABSTRACT

Beyond the Statistics: Indian Experiences In The Indian Student Placement Program

by

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These papers discuss how education is used as a tool by the dominate society to assimilate Native Americans. They discuss the events that led to the creation and later abandonment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) church’s Indian Student Placement Program (ISPP) circa 1947-1990. Participants took advantage of the opportunities granted them while in the program incorporating values they deemed worthwhile and adapted others to fit existing spiritual or cultural belief systems. Despite the church’s efforts however, this study finds that the ISPP failed to assimilate its participants. This study illuminates the void in the literature and recounts the personal anecdotes of thirteen Native American participants in the ISPP. Most existing studies focus on the administration of the ISPP and inadequately address the consequences of taking children from their parents and native culture. Others use culturally biased criteria to determine the assimilative effects of the ISPP. Statistical analysis and historical research delving into the
inner workings and administration of the ISPP tell one side of the story; these oral histories tell another.

An analysis of the literature concerned with how education has been used to assimilate Native American children begins with works discussing Mormon and Indian relations and ends with the state of education for Native American children today. This paper finds that existing scholarship provide interesting and at times, unique discussions regarding education to the forefront, but that there are definite gaps in the literature. A comprehensive study that moves beyond federal policy and examines the strengths and weaknesses of tribally controlled educational institutions is needed.

Finally, a comparative essay shows how education has been used against Native Americans since colonial times, and against the Japanese Americans during World War II, to force their assimilation. The paper finds that many of the same key personnel that were put in charge of "enemy aliens" during World War II were tasked with terminating the government’s wardship relationship with Native Americans. While Japanese Americans have become "model minorities," Native Americans remain faithful to their cultural heritage and fight for their autonomy.
In 1947, a young Navajo girl working the sugar beet fields in southern Utah decided she wanted to go to school.\(^1\) Although the federal government had boarding schools and on-reservation day schools she could attend, they were often understaffed and underfunded.\(^2\) Beyond this, her family needed her to work in the spring and fall and simply could not afford to have her attend school nine months of the year. In response to growing interest, the need for economic support, and in part to fulfill their own doctrinal directives, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) established the Indian Student Placement Program (ISPP).

The program's creators set out to provide foster homes with white, Mormon families for American Indian children during the school year.\(^3\) Formally instituted by the Mormon church in 1954, the ISPP had great success throughout the 1960s and 1970s, but enrollment declined rapidly in the 1980s. By the early 1990s, and in particular after the death of its greatest advocate, LDS President Spencer W. Kimball, the program was no longer officially administered by the church. By the time research for this paper was completed in 1999, the church placed no new

\(^3\) Birch, "Helen John," 119-20.
children and only those who needed to finish high school remained in
the program.4

This paper examines the social, political and religious atmosphere
that spawned the Indian Student Placement Program. Oral histories of
those who participated in the program provide a perspective not fully
explored by other researchers. This essay draws from thirteen Native
American accounts--eleven interviews, one autobiography and one
biography--of time spent as a foster child in Mormon homes. It is
about leaving home, adjusting to a new way of life, adopting new family
members, exploring their faith, adapting what they learned into their
lives, and sometimes leaving what they learned behind as they searched
for their own way in the world. While recognizing the limitations of
data from such a small, select cohort, this study broadens our
understanding of the individual experiences of Native American children
in the Indian Student Placement Program.

The subject of the ISPP has not been untouched by other scholars.
Several studies detail the administration of the program and rate its
"success" using the social values of the dominant white culture as
their template.5 Statistics gained from retention data indicate the

4. Tonja J. Hangen, "A Place to Call Home: Studying the Indian
Placement Program," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 30, (Spring
1997): 56. Larry Washburn, LDS Church Social Services Department,
telephone interviewed by author, 2 March 1998, Salt Lake City, Utah.

5. Lawrence George Coates, "A History of Indian Education by the
Mormons, 1830-1900," Ph.D. diss., Ball State University, 1969, 174-5;
Grant Hardy Taylor, "A Comparative Study of Former LDS Placement and
Non-Placement Navajo Students at Brigham Young University," Ph.D.
diss., Brigham Young University, 1981, 86; Clarence R. Bishop, "Indian
Placement: A History of the Indian Student Placement Program of the
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Master of Social Work
thesis, University of Utah, 1967, 74; Bruce A. Chadwick and Stan C.
Albrecht, "Mormons and Indians: Beliefs, Policies, Program, and
Practices," in Marie Cornwall, Tim B. Heaton and Lawrence A. Young,
eds. Contemporary Mormonism: Social Science Perspectives, (Chicago:
number of children who participated in the ISPP, where they were placed and how many completed the program. Questionnaires attempt to ascertain the overall success of students' assimilation into the dominant society based on whether or not participants kept jobs, moved away from the reservation, or maintained checking or savings accounts. They have focused on how being Native American and Mormon effects the psychology of the individual and the consequences of their faith in the Mormon doctrine on their perceptions of their own culture. Few researchers have attempted an analysis of this group's experiences based on the participant's own ideas of what the placement program meant to them. Only one study, Dorothy J. Schimmelpfennig's survey of Davis County, Utah's high school Indian students, could be found that gathered oral testimony about the children's experiences while they were in the Indian Student Placement Program.6

Six interviews conducted by the author and an additional five interviews collected from the LDS Native American Oral History Project at Brigham Young University serve as the foundation for this study. Those interviewed by the author gave their time freely and signed a consent form granting permission to use their name and archive copies of their interview at Utah State University in all but two cases. Often, an interview with one ISPP participant led to information about another who might be willing to speak with this researcher. Finding those who participated in the Indian Student Placement Program and were willing to talk about their experiences was restricted by time,

logistics, and financial resources. Other factors that may have influenced the willingness to grant an interview was the fact that the author is both white and non-Mormon. The limitations of such a small, unrepresentative group of oral histories used for this study are recognized. The interviewees remained in Utah and maintained close ties with foster families and with the Mormon church and therefore the probability of a highly biased viewpoint must be acknowledged. It is likely that they had relatively positive experiences with foster families, public schools, and the ISPP in general as evidenced by their decision, as adults, to not return to their former homes on or near their reservation. Also important is the influence that the passing of time had on the interviewees and their memories of their experiences.

The participants were asked to draw upon memories of childhood, memories that have lost clarity and focus that could not be fully explored in an hour or two. Although the questions asked by the author and by the interviewers for the BYU study were similar in some instances, the purpose and setting for those questions was different. However, these concerns do not take away from the value of the information presented here, they merely qualify it.

Most of those interviewed by both the author and the BYU study were in the placement program during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Only two were old enough to have been in the program in its early stages in

7. Appendix A and Appendix B contain a list of the questions asked of the informants by the author and the BYU study respectively. Both the author and the BYU study conducted interviews in similar locations: in homes, in empty classrooms on college campuses, and in some cases in the informant’s home. Both lists contained questions regarding the perceptions of the individual concerning their faith and its effect on the individual’s cultural beliefs. The BYU study however, was primarily concerned with how those interviewed fit in the Mormon culture as evidenced by the title of the project: “LDS Native American Oral History Project.”
the 1950s. These three decades represent the period of highest student participation, the rapid decline, and the final days of the Indian Student Placement Program respectively. There are a high number of Navajo participants represented in the interviews collected as well. This is due in large part to the fact that the majority of students enrolled in the ISPP came from the Navajo Nation. 8

This paper is not meant to be a quantitative analysis of the Native American experience in the Indian Student Placement Program, but rather a qualitative narrative of a range of "lived experiences" within the program. Those interviewed for this study are not representative of all of its participants. All of those interviewed lived away from their reservation homes at the time of their interview with one exception. All had graduated high school, most while continuing to live with their Mormon foster families. And most had gone on to get a college degree or were attending college at the time of their interview. Graduating high school, serving on Mormon missions, and going on to college were some of the yardsticks used by the Mormon church to measure the "success" of the assimilation that was to be the byproduct of the student's time spent in the placement program. It stands to reason then that the group studied in this essay would more closely match the definition of what the Mormon church called "successful participants" and therefore should be more highly acculturated and less likely to continue to hold on to their traditional lifestyles and cultural values. Instead, the interviewer found that, with one exception, this group never fully gave up their cultural heritage to embrace the Mormon culture, nor did they find it necessary to do so.

This investigation finds that despite hardships, initial setbacks, fear, and personal conflicts, participants took advantage of the opportunities they had while in the program, incorporated values they deemed worthwhile, and adapted others to fit their existing spiritual and cultural belief systems. But despite the best efforts of the church and its congregation, the Indian Student Placement Program failed to accomplish the cultural and spiritual assimilation of the participants in this study. In fact, in some instances, participation in the Indian Student Placement Program actually strengthened the connection between the Native American child and his or her cultural heritage.

The effort and sacrifices of the LDS Church to create and maintain this program must first be explained. Why would a religious group spend so much money and resources to assist Native American children to gain an education? Why was there such an effort to convert Native American peoples to Mormonism? Most of the answers can be found in the church's own teachings. However, there are larger political and cultural underpinnings that must be examined if we are to understand more fully why the LDS Church chose to begin an educational program of such magnitude beginning in the late 1940s.

From the earliest interactions between Euro-American and Native American peoples in the United States, education, in both the secular and spiritual sense, has been used as a tool to assimilate and acculturate. The role of Christian churches and their missionaries as a guiding force in the evolution of federal Indian policy is well documented. Put simply, the goal of both the government and the various Christian denominations was to change everything about Native
American society to conform to the standards of Western civilization.\(^9\) The Mormons however, were not allowed to participate in these missionary activities. In fact, the federal government did whatever it could to stop the Mormons from affecting Indian policy even within the Mormon church-controlled territory of Utah. The Latter-day Saints were marginalized in large part due to their continued adherence to polygamy, and the United States government was unsure Brigham Young and his followers recognized federal authority, and that of its Indian agents.\(^{10}\) When the government finally began in earnest to build its own schools for Native American children, Christian administrators and teachers—but not those that were Mormon—remained as the backbone of the slightly secularized programs.\(^{11}\) It was not until the twentieth century that the Mormon church was encouraged to work among the Indians and allowed to join with the proselytizing mix of Christian missionaries.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Mormon church undertook a massive campaign to revamp its image. Historian R. Warren Metcalf points out that "the church as a whole rigorously sought to achieve mainstream acceptability" and recover from


\(^{10}\) Prucha, \textit{The Great Father,} 127-128.

\(^{11}\) Coleman, \textit{American Indian Children at School,} 38.
"the anti-polygamy battles of the [nineteenth] century..."  
While LDS Church’s lore tells a tale of continual efforts to convert and civilize the Indians they came in contact with during the nineteenth century, the historical evidence shows that the church actually did little to convert or educate Native Americans after about 1865. If fact, it was not until 1947, with the tentative beginnings of what would become the Indian Student Placement Program, that the church dusted off its doctrinal imperative and pursued a dedicated course to convert and educate Native American children as mandated in the Book of Mormon.

The Mormon canon states that Native Americans descend from one of the lost tribes of Israel. In addition, Mormons hold that modern Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, and those natives of Central and South America are the descendants of Lehi, a Moses-like figure in their history. According to the Book of Mormon, Lehi and his descendents came to the Americas sometime around BC 600. One group of these settlers fell from God’s grace. After losing their faith and


allegiance to God, the fallen ones, called Lamanites, killed their faithful Nephite brethren. With the dead perished the oral histories and knowledge of the one true faith.\textsuperscript{15}

As time passed, all memory of what had happened was lost. Then in 1820, Joseph Smith Jr. reportedly received divine revelation, located and translated golden plates buried in upstate New York, and published this ancient record as the \textit{Book of Mormon}. Joseph Smith revealed to his followers that the indigenous peoples of the Americas were their long-lost brethren.\textsuperscript{16} According to Smith, Lamanites were to play a central leadership role in the church’s hierarchy during the last days. He and his followers believe that Lamanites need only be reintroduced to the word of God—contained in the \textit{Book of Mormon} and revealed by God to the church’s Prophets—in order to remember their long-forgotten ancestral faith. It is because of this doctrinal connection that Mormons believe they have a special responsibility to teach and convert the indigenous peoples of the world.\textsuperscript{17}

The idea that Indian ancestors had turned away from God and had killed those who had remained faithful did not always sit well with Indians recruited for the Indian Student Placement Program. One Navajo convert remarked:

\begin{quote}
I remember going to seminary and I had a hard time accepting the \textit{Book of Mormon}. Because in that [book] they called [the Indians] “Lamanites,” the ancestors of Native Americans, savages and backward and I didn’t
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Book of Mormon}, 1 Nephi. 13:30; 2 Nephi. 3:1-3; 9:53; Alma 45:13-14; and the \textit{Doctrine and Covenants} 3:16-19.

\textsuperscript{16} Joseph Smith, introduction to the \textit{Book of Mormon}; 1 Nephi 22:8; \textit{D&C} 19:27.

like that. So as far, I guess for most of my high school years, I just couldn't really accept that. There was a lot of inner-conflict with that because people were saying, "Okay, here are your ancestors" they saw these Lamanites pretty much in the same light as the early colonists saw the Indians. It was just...it didn't make sense. I guess I was angry—well not angry—just I didn't understand.18

Another placement student from Omaha, Nebraska remembers:

"[one of the current problems of LDS Native Americans is] the feeling of acceptance. Walking into a church and seeing all these white faces, they tell you, "This is your church. This [Book of Mormon] is a book about your people." But when you walk into church, do you see any of your people there? No, you don't. That's kind of tough for some Indians."19

Despite the racial tone of Mormon doctrine, many Native peoples still chose to become members of the LDS Church. However, they were not completely convinced of the necessity of changing their own beliefs and personal viewpoints to match what they were being taught.

You keep hearing you "will blossom as a rose." You get kind of frustrated sometimes thinking, "When is that going to happen? What does that mean?" I know quite a few that have been turned off by, "One day you'll be white just like those guys are. You'll be a delightful group." I sit back and think, "I like the color of my skin. I don't want to change."20

After World War II, the escalation of hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union culminating in the Cold War prompted a

18. Durinda Tom, interviewed by author, transcript from taped interview, pg. 4., Logan, Utah, 05 February 1999.


20. Ibid. The 1981 version of the Book of Mormon has been modified from the original 1952 version. Specifically, the 2 Nephi 30:6 passage reads "pure and delightful people." However, the 1952 version reads "white and delightful people." For a more detailed analysis of the textual change, please see Douglas Campbell, "'White' versus 'Pure': Five Vignettes," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 29 (Fall 1996): 119-136.
reactionary backlash against all things seen as socialistic. The reservation system established by treaty and executive order and administered through years of changing federal Indian policies, came to be seen as suspect. Instead of being economically self-sufficient, reservation Indians relied heavily on case settlement payments, federal aide, and church welfare programs to survive. Tribal ownership of land seemed dangerously similar in the eyes of some Americans to the Communist collective farms of the Soviet Union. It was a time where Americans demanded conformity not diversity, and Republican-controlled Congress was looking for ways to cut federal spending.\textsuperscript{21}

It was against this political backdrop that conservative members of Congress began to pursue a policy to terminate federal trust responsibility for tribes and to dismantle tribal governments and collective landholdings. The Termination Era had as its cornerstone the notion that America needed to get out of the "Indian business." One of the most vocal and powerful advocates of termination was Arthur V. Watkins, Republican senator from Utah and a member of the LDS Church. Deeply influenced by Mormon racial theology, Watkins helped push through House Concurrent Resolution 108, or the Termination Bill, in 1953.\textsuperscript{22} As the threat and reality of termination spread across Indian Country in the 1950s, "Indians were fading from public view as 'domestic dependent' nations, but they were emerging as one of a number

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}

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of deprived racial minorities who had at least a moral claim on American society."

And Mormons, now recognized as a part of the American mainstream, responded to that moral claim.

Although the Indian Student Placement Program’s beginning coincides with the dawn of the Termination Era, the influence of federal Indian policy had on the program must not be over-emphasized. In fact, the years of greatest participation from Native Americans in the ISPP took place in the late 1960s and 1970s, long after Termination was abandoned and the Self-Determination era began. Margaret Connell Szasz suggests that "[t]he fight against termination served as a unifying force and propelled Indians into an increasingly responsible role in controlling their futures." As for the Navajo, their wartime experiences had taught them a few things.

Whereas some tribes had been sending their children to public schools since the turn of the century, and in a few cases since the nineteenth century, the Navajos had had little use for white education...Suddenly they believed that the initial step toward the solution of their problems was adequate schooling for their young people. The fact that this tremendous shift had occurred in such a short period of time gave their new attitude an even greater authority.

This change in attitude toward the value of education for their children had a tremendous influence on the creation of the Indian Student Placement Program. Mormon doctrine had remained constant and federal Indian policy always contained an element of assimilation by means of education, so we must turn our attention to what factor or factors changed so dramatically as to spur such an interest in a...


“white-man’s” education. Clearly Indian desires for better education for their children was one of the driving forces behind the creation of the Indian Student Placement Program. With few real options for education on the reservations, Native American parents turned to whatever avenue offered the best options for their children.

In 1947, Golden Buchanan, an LDS Church leader from Richfield, Utah was approached by some neighbors who told him that Helen John, a Navajo girl, had asked to live with them so she could attend school. Buchanan sent a letter to Spencer W. Kimball, a long-time advocate of Native Americans, (and future LDS Church President), and asked his advice on how to begin a program for Native American children. Buchanan believed some families could be found to take a child into their homes for the purpose of educating them. Kimball encouraged Buchanan to help place John and several others into Mormon homes in Richfield and the neighboring community of Gunnison. 26 The demand for homes soon outstripped these early efforts, forcing the church to redouble its efforts. Out of this experiment grew the LDS Indian Student Placement Program.

Miles Jensen became ISPP’s first full-time employee in 1954 when the LDS Church formally adopted the program under the Relief Society’s Social Services license. Jensen worked from the church’s headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah to manage and expand the program. 27 The existing church hierarchy was used to disseminate information about the needs of Native American children and their families, and dynamic


27. Miles Herbert Jensen, interviewed by Gordon Irving, 18 May 1983 transcript from interview, pg. 3-8, James Moyle Oral History Program, Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
church leaders like Spencer W. Kimball reminded the faithful that they had a duty to convert American Indians so that the church could prepare for the final days.\textsuperscript{28}

As the program grew, the church obtained licenses in other states and was soon placing children in Mormon homes outside of Utah. Eventually, placement students resided in twenty-one states and Canadian provinces with children drawn from sixty-three different tribes.\textsuperscript{29} As well-meaning church members sought out needy children, concern over the legality and morality of taking children from their homes and families began to arise. Kimball and Buchanan recognized the need to establish guidelines to limit the number by regulating those who could be considered for placement.

One of the first things they did was raise the minimum age of children who could be fostered. Baptism into the Mormon church is traditionally done at the age of eight, so in the beginning this was the minimum age of participation for Indian children.\textsuperscript{30} That requirement was later raised to twelve and then fifteen. Further, the child had to have a proven academic record, a clean bill of health, and express the desire to learn more about the world and the Mormon faith. In addition, church leaders screened all potential foster families to


\textsuperscript{30} Jensen, interviewed by Irving, 18 May 1983, 8; \textit{D&C}, 68:27. Joseph Smith Jr. told his followers "...their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old, and receive the laying on of the hands."
ensure they had the necessary financial means to provide for another child. Once selected, the families were to meet once a month with trained program staff, and have a year to become acquainted with the differences in culture they would face. However, educating the white families about the culture of the child they were volunteering to foster was not always a top priority.

Some church members and even the children themselves voiced serious concern about beginning an education program with children who were already fifteen. Even those who had graduated from the ISPP expressed their apprehension saying that children who were fifteen years or older had already been “hurt” too much by reservation life. Many were pregnant or using drugs or were too deeply steeped in traditional cultures. But Mormon leaders pushed beyond these concerns, believing in the power of their religious community to effect positive change.

For some non-Mormon Native American parents, baptism into the church seemed a small price to pay for the educational and economic opportunities their children gained by being on placement. For those already members of the church, add to this a chance for the spiritual development of their children in their chosen faith. White families benefited as well by fulfilling doctrinal commandments to help their Lamanite brethren “blossom as a rose.” There were also economic benefits to fostering a Native American child. “Due to the concentrated efforts of the part of Utah Congressmen, the Internal


32. Zondajas, interviewed by Pappan, 7 April 1990, pg. 7.

Revenue Service" allowed Mormon families to claim "charitable"
exemptions for providing for the children's care. ³⁴

Although written guidelines were in place to aid in the smooth
transition between Indian and white cultures the rules were not always
followed. Members writing articles for church publications such as the
Ensign tell of stake presidents and bishops informed of how many
children they would have to find homes for only a few short weeks or
days before school started. According to Erdman Jake, a Navajo
placement student during the late 1960s and early 1970s:

I do feel strongly that the LDS church didn't do
enough to integrate the foster families to under-
stand where these Indian students were coming from
or do any training or do anything that might
provide an opportunity for the foster parents to
understand where these children were coming from...
A lot of these students came from single parent
families. Alcoholism was a very prevalent problem
there and substance abuse... and most of these child-
ren were raised by grandparents so it's totally
different to come from that kind of perspective and
[go] into a home that is stable and has the mother
and father there and not to understand where these
children came from. ³⁵

Many of the children were baptized just before leaving their homes
and had little or no indoctrination into the Mormon church or
experience with white culture. ³⁶ In his autobiography, former ISPP
success story George P. Lee reports that he had little formal
instruction in church doctrine before his parents allowed him to be
fostered with a Utah family. He remembers:

³⁴. Bishop, "Indian Placement," 74.
³⁵. Erdman Jake, interviewed by the author, transcript from taped
interview, pg. 7, Salt Lake City, Utah, 08 May 1999.
³⁶. "Indian Placement: The Three Most Common Questions," Ensign
6 (July 1976): 38; Mary Helen Powell, "Room for Calvin," Ensign 3
40-1; Tona J Hangen, A Place to Call Home, 54.
At the time I really did not know God very well. I had been baptized just that summer and had not been taught the gospel except in Primary and Sunday School classes. I was steeped in Indian tradition and understood little about the gospel of the church.37

Only months before, Lee’s father had been wary of the continued pressures of the local Mormon families and missionaries. When they would come to call on the Lee family his father would shout, “Quick son, tell all your brothers and sisters to run over the hill and hide. Tell them the Mormons are coming again. Hurry up before we get caught here and have to listen to more white man’s religion!”38

An anonymous informant reports that although she was baptized and sent on placement she never really learned anything about church doctrine until she was married:

My mother married at a very, very young age. She never finished any school at all so it just wasn’t that important. She was an alcoholic. Our money came from her prostitution. She lived on the reservation and she prostituted herself a lot. We scrambled whatever we could get, whatever we could find to eat or whatever we could steal to eat. They tried to get me into Head Start, I remember they tried to get me... [but] I didn’t want to go, I said that I would rather not go, I wasn’t a social type person.39

Emily Benedek’s biography of Ella Bedonie, a Navajo woman who participated in the ISPP, suggests that:

37. George P. Lee, Silent Courage: An Indian Story, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Books, 1987), 100-106. It is interesting to note that Lee was excommunicated from the Mormon church due in part to his outspoken criticism of church leaders for not ensuring that “Lamanites” were treated equally and given the opportunities for higher leadership roles within the church’s hierarchy. See “The Lee Letters,” Sunstone 13:4, 72, August 1989, 50-55; and “Press Coverage of Lee’s Excommunication Ambivalent,” Sunstone 13:4 72, August 1989, 47-49.

38. Lee, Silent Courage, 100.

39. Anonymous informant, interviewed by the author, transcript from taped interview, Logan, Utah, 13 April 1999, pg. 3.
Most of the children were taken to church and baptized—parents weren’t consulted; in fact, many have been baptized more than once, by different denominations. Most Navajo kids don’t remember much about the churches except which ones offered after-school basketball.40

Overall, this study found that informants had varying levels of familiarity with the Mormon faith by both themselves and their parents prior to participation in the ISPP. The issue of whether or not their faith in the Mormon doctrine came before or after their time on the placement program was of no concern to any of those interviewed for this study. Erdman Jake states that he was active in the church prior to placement:

...we had some missionaries from other denominations approach us and wanted us to attend their church and I felt like it was different from when the LDS missionaries came and I would attend church there [with the LDS]. For me it was a different experience which I felt comfortable with.41

In some cases, active participation in the church led the children’s parents to begin to go to services and attend church functions. Alvia Brown recalls:

I felt, as young as I was, that there was a spirit, that I kept being drawn to it. Before we were members [of the Mormon church], my parents forced us to go to the Baptist church, but they never came and as we started going to the Mormon church they started coming... They were never active members with the Baptist church; they just made sure that we went. It was kind of ironic that once we were involved with [Mormon] church activities, yet not members, they were interested so they became members.42

At age eight Orlando Tsosie, a Navajo, was unsure of his beliefs, but followed the example of his parents, attending church because:


41. Jake, interviewed by author, pg. 4.

42. Alvia Brown, interviewed by the author, transcript from taped interview, Salt Lake City, Utah, 8 May 1999, pg. 4.
My parents did it and I did it too. Later on it was good, I could see that it was good and I accepted the goodness of it and said, "okay, this is a good thing."

I don’t know if I strongly believed it, but I believed it enough to accept the possibilities and accept it and say, "well, okay I will go with it..." 43

In his study of a single Navajo community, anthropologist Kendall Blanchard suggests that baptism in the Mormon church never assumed that the new Indian converts clearly understood the tenants of Mormonism. The church never expected them to "...denounce the essential ideological and practical elements of Navajo religious life, the Mormons feel that the process of actually becoming a Latter-day Saint is an extended, educative one, considerably more involved than a simple, immediate act, such as conversion or baptism." 44

Ultimately, the decision whether or not to allow their children to become a part of the Mormon church and leave home rested with the parents or guardian of the child, and numerous factors influenced the decision. Those who witnessed others send their children on placement and saw the children return to the reservation unharmed seemed more likely to participate. Unlike Helen John who made her own decision to participate in the program, those interviewed by the author rarely had a part in determining whether they would go. Orlando Tsosie remarked:

To tell the truth, I really don’t know how the process [of deciding if I would be sent on placement] worked. I just remember meeting with the social workers and saying, "Okay, this is going to be your family." My mom just said, "This is going to be okay. It's going to be the best for you..." I think my aunts did go on the

43. Orlando Tsosie, interviewed by author, transcript from taped interview, Logan, Utah, 13 April 1999, pg. 4; see also Stephanie Chiquito, interviewed by Jim M. Dandy, Provo, Utah, 11 April, 1991, pg. 3. LDS Native American Oral History Project, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Brigham Young University.

placement program also so my family was somewhat affiliated with that through other members of my family, relatives and so forth. 45

Another informant remarked that going on placement:

... was mostly my older brother's doing. He was the first one to go on the placement program and had a pretty good experience. He'd write and call, and he seemed to enjoy it. He encouraged me to go with him the next year. I think I was nine or ten at the time. 46

Erdman Jake remembers that his parents were the ones who sought out the church's assistance and requested that their children go on placement. When asked who made the final decision he answered:

Parents...father, mother. And we actually approached them and the missionaries talked to our parents and our parents thought it would be a good opportunity for us so they chose to allow us to participate.

[My parents] were punished; they were whipped for speaking their language [when they attended boarding school]. I think that was one of the main reasons we were raised in public schools because of that experience that they didn't want [us] to go through that. 47

For others it was as if it were a natural progression to go on placement, their brothers or sisters or aunts and uncles had gone so they would go too. When asked what transpired to get her to go, Erdman's sister Celina shrugged her shoulders, gave a puzzled look and said quietly, "I think it was just assumed by my parents [that I would go on placement]." 48

The fact that economic and educational opportunities were greater in white communities than on the reservations also figured heavily in

45. Tsosie, interviewed by author, pg. 2-4.
46. Zondajas, interviewed by Pappan, pg. 2.
47. Jake, interviewed by author, pg. 3 and 12.
48. Celina Jake, interviewed by author, transcript from taped interview, Ogden, Utah, 05 May 1999, pg. 4.
the final decision of Indian families to send their children on placement. With threatened termination of government assistance, ISPP offered some tangible relief and viable options for a child's future. Later on after self-determination legislation put an end to the threat of termination, parents and children continued to rely upon the Mormon church's Indian Student Placement Program and the opportunities it provided. For some, it was a chance to get their children away from problems they had run into on the reservation. Durinda Tom recalled:

> We talked about it. One of the reasons why I came up here [to Logan, Utah] was to get away from a lot of the stuff that was going on down there [on the reservation] and I knew that if I didn't leave that, that I wouldn't be here today... I had started running with a rough crowd I guess. And I mean I was in the experimental stage, the rebellious stage I guess... whatever...fourteen [years old]. And I wanted to get away from that. And so I left.49

Once the decision was made to send the children on placement, even if the children were old enough to understand the family's rationale for that decision, children still felt some trepidation. Instead of returning home each night to their families, the children on placement were going away for the entire school year. They would not see their families again until summer returned. Erdman Jake went on placement first at age twelve. He recalled:

> It was difficult. I think the first time that I went, the first occasion, the first week or two weeks was a very difficult time for me, the transition. I think because it was very unfamiliar to me, I was very lonely, very homesick. It effected me very deeply for the first two weeks, I think from that experience I chose not to do it again until I was a little older. It was very difficult.

Erdman returned home for a few years, went to school near Gallup, New Mexico, then went back to Utah when he was older. He recalled:

49. Tom, interviewed by author, pg. 3.
...the second time [at age fifteen] it was with a little more apprehension and a little bit of homesickness. But it was more a sense of excitement as well knowing that it was a new adventure. I was a little older and I understood... Another reason why I chose not to come back the first time was to be with my family, to be with my parents. The second time they counseled me and said "you know you need to get a good education and this is your opportunity."50

Overall the participants in this study believed that what influenced them and their families to agree to participate in the ISPP was more a desire for education and exposure to the economic opportunities not available on the reservation, and less about conversion or adherence to religious directive.

Once selected for placement, most children arrived at a central assembly point on the day of their departure. After receiving a final medical screening, they boarded chartered buses that deposited children in church parking lots as they traveled through the countryside. Some children journeyed alone. Others were with siblings or friends. All were apprehensive about what would happen to them. For those who had been on placement before it was a time of happy reunion with school friends and well-known foster families. Tom recalled:

We got on a bus—it was a Lewis Brothers Stage Coach—I was kind of excited but then I was also scared. I mean I was really scared. I didn’t realize how scared I was until the bus pulled up and I could really see what was going to take me from one place to where I was going to be headed to. I think the hardest thing was to say good-bye to my family—I mean they were all there—my mom and dad—and it was really hard. It was hard to say good-bye and to get on the bus with other kids that I didn’t know that were headed to the same place. Some of the returning kids, (you could tell who they were because they were excited and they were talking), and then you could pick out the ones that were going for the first time, like me. And you could see that look of uncertainty on their faces. I remember it was scary and it was frightening.51

50. Jake, interviewed by author, pg. 3.

51. Tom, interviewed by author, pg. 2.
One little girl said good-bye to her grandmother and stepped into a car for the ride to the central assembly point. She sat quietly, wondering what to expect. She saw that children from all around had come to watch those who were being loaded on the big bus. She recalled:

> The kids in the neighborhood were there, everybody in the whole neighborhood came. They were kind of laughing at me. I remember, when I got out of the car I got my foot, my shoe got caught on the plastic [floor mat] in the car and I fell...Everybody started laughing and I was really, really embarrassed.\(^{52}\)

In dusty parking lots, in front of churches, on deserted stretches of road, the chartered buses rumbled along gathering up and depositing children. Alvia Brown said that:

> ...they set up an evening, probably a couple of evenings...and had Trailways buses come pick us up, and then they had our parents there...and then the kids that were already picked up--I guess from parts of Arizona and Southern parts of New Mexico. I was just like their next stop with the rest of us from the ward. They made it very comfortable so that our parents could say good-bye to us and said that we would be fine and to call them once we got up here to Utah.\(^{53}\)

At eight years old, Orlando Tsosie remembers his ride to Salt Lake City:

> ...the night we drove into Salt Lake City...it was, I remember the bus--it was the Lewis Brothers Charter bus--we drove in the [Salt Lake] valley and all we saw were lights and I couldn't believe it, I felt lost is what it was. I was glad I had a brother and sister that was [sic] with me. It was kind of weird. It was also weird to see white faces. Just tons of them...when I got off the bus.\(^{54}\)

Some of the children pressed their faces up against the bus windows and stared out at the sea of white faces staring back at them. Durinda Tom remarked:

> ...I knew the names of my foster family but I didn't really know what they looked like. So as the bus was pulling into the church parking lot over in West Logan, I

\(^{52}\) Anonymous informant, interviewed by author, pg. 2.

\(^{53}\) Brown, interviewed by author, pg. 3.

\(^{54}\) Tsosie, interviewed by author, pg. 2.
remember looking at all the families and trying to guess which one was mine...I was a little bit scared still, but my foster parents looked really nice and I guess I was happy about that and they had their two youngest there, Pride and Heather, and they loaded us up in the big old brown van and we headed home.\textsuperscript{55}

After a brief introduction to their new families, and a final medical evaluation, the children were released to their foster parents and left to go to their new homes. The next morning Orlando Tsosie arose to a strange, new world:

I remember my first [morning] I woke up, because normally on the reservation I wake up and walk around outside and do my little morning thing and a little prayer and stuff. But I woke up and I walked outside to the sound of lawn mowers and airplanes and that was really weird for me. But I think one of the first things I noticed was that everything was kind of green. I kind of thought it was paradise-ish [sic]. The big airplanes flying above me I just remember—they lived on a hill—a big hill that overlooked the valley, and there was big homes there. And nice cars and everything. I kind of thought it was paradise and I was like wow! I probably sat there for an hour, just looking at everything.\textsuperscript{56}

Without their families and in unfamiliar surroundings, it was a difficult first few days for many of the children:

The day of it I can remember exactly what I was wearing. I was wearing this little brown sweater that they gave me. They got me clothes, some new clothes. I think I was just really scared and when I went in they introduced me to a lot of people and I don't really remember how I felt. But my mom, my white mom, just tells me how that I always had a stomachache, I was always sick. But I do remember that I just stayed in my room most of that time I didn't want to go out. I just wanted to stay in there and hide for a little bit.\textsuperscript{57}

One man remembers his brave attempt to be strong when he was a little boy and to not let anyone see him cry:

\textsuperscript{55.} Tom, interviewed by author, pg. 2.
\textsuperscript{56.} Tsosie, interviewed by author, pg 2.
\textsuperscript{57.} Anonymous informant, interviewed by author, pg. 2.
I remember the first week I got there. I think my foster mother kind of understood what was going on a lot more than my foster father did. My dad gave me this watch he got at the pawn shop or something like that as a gift. I remember not crying that first week and wanting to because I was so homesick. My foster brother was in the room playing around with that watch and kind of threw it to me. It fell on the floor. Nothing really broke. I remember looking at it. It was a good excuse to let it go. I remember crying and blaming my crying on the fact that he had dropped my watch... [outside the door] my foster father was going, ‘But it was just a watch. There’s no big deal about that.’ I think my foster mother saw through what was going on.58

Celina Jake reminisced that, “my first day was hard. I was homesick. I remember going out to dinner in a restaurant with a bunch of blond people and wanting to go home. [It was] very hard.” 59

When asked to recall her first night away from home Alvia Brown said:

[I was] very scared. I cried the first night, probably the first week I was homesick. I felt that my foster family was trying to be very comforting, but it was hard being eight years old, or nine...

It was scary because I didn’t know if they would like me. That was probably my first impression, and also what type of brothers and sisters I would have. I think I was afraid of—maybe I don’t remember—but I don’t remember exactly if they told me [the name of] the family [I was being fostered with] or how many brothers and sisters, or exactly where I would live, or what type of household it was... Maybe they told my parents, but I don’t remember any of that. I just remember coming up just blind to the world and wondering what am I doing here! 60

The children who made it through the first few days with their foster families soon began to adjust and find their own place in their new family. As in any family, there were problems and personality conflicts that needed to be resolved. Sometimes family issues could

58. Zondajas, interviewed by Pappan, pg. 3.
59. Celina Jake, interviewed by author, pg. 1.
60. Brown, interviewed by author, pg. 3.
not be worked out and a child had to be moved from one family to
another until a proper match could be found. Orlando Tsosie was one
such child. He spoke at length about his experiences with the families
that fostered him:

As far as the families are concerned, some families were
very great, some just kind of had a hard time. It was
mostly with the mothers. I don't know why it was with
the mothers, but it tended to be always with the mothers.
The kids I don't remember any of them that I didn't get
along with, and I don't remember any of the fathers I
didn't get along with either, but it was the mothers I
don't know why.

My first foster family was great. I loved them to death
and I wish I would have stayed with them. I really did,
and I wanted to. I don't exactly remember the circumstances
behind it, but I was changed [to a different family].

My second foster family, [the problems were with] the
foster mom. I don't know exactly the conflicts, I don't
remember the conflicts that caused me to go, but I just
remember there was a lot of tension between me and my
foster mom.

Despite the problems, he remained quite positive about the
families he lived with:

But other than [those early problems] things were great
and I started collecting stuff. Stamps and coins with
that foster family.

Then I moved on to the next foster family. They were from
Alabama, so that kind of gave me a perspective on some of
the different things here in the states. They were
a wonderful family, they were fun, they were outgoing.
They started to teach me a lot about working. The work
ethic, because I was getting to that age when I had a paper
route and this and that, so that aspect was really great.

...the first part when I was really young it was: wake up
and read scriptures or kind of family time which I thought
was wonderful because I grew up not having that. My family
was close, but it was indirectly close. It was more--on the
reservation--it was more...I knew my parents loved me, but
they never came out and said, "Son, I love you." They gave
me hugs and stuff, a lot of things were physical rather
than verbal and there [with the foster families] everything
was physical and verbally and I was like "I kind of like
this." But the morning thing was kind of hard sometimes.

In each family that I had there is some good times
and some bad times as it is with any family. At times I
wish I was with my real family—my real family there is just some uniqueness to it. But I am grateful to each and every one of my families that I did have because each one of them played a role in who I am. Each one of them taught me something different about my family structure, about how families work. Certain families had different types of "time out" so to speak. So, I learned a lot about families and how they work. About how each of them value money for example. Some of [their ideas] worked, some of them don't...

...Not all white people are just white people. Some really do care about Natives, some really do want to affiliate with them. I understand that we are all the same and that I can be part of another family. Whether they are white or Native, or maybe even African-American.61

Even when the child and foster family did not seem to match in temperament, many stuck it out and worked through their problems. One informant explained how her negative experiences with her own mother lead to conflicts within her foster family:

I have a really unique family. My mom and dad are very passive also they are non-aggressive, non-violent. I think my mom swears very, very rarely. My dad is not physical in mannerisms or behavior or speech. They are both highly educated. My dad uses a lot of psychology, a lot! I think in my mind I never really did like my [foster] mom. Because I didn't have much of a mom, I kind of depended on myself for so long and taking care of my own mom I hated her. I really hated her. And I hated my [foster] sisters. I didn't like them, because they were [to my mind] my mom, I mean they were the same people. I never did differentiate between my sisters, my two sisters, and my mom they were the same and I didn't get along with them I didn't have anything in common with them so I kept my distance.

My dad on the other hand, was [a] different person. He analyzed so much, he saw the relationship problems and so he kind of took over. I was a different kind of a person after I got there for a while. My adjustments were really poor [and] I didn't fit in within the family unit. At school, away from home...I was fine, in the social setting I did real well, but in the home setting there was a lot of problems. A lot of arguments, a lot of fighting, I constantly tested my brothers and sisters. I think I was very abusive in respects to the way I manipulated them. I didn't manipulate verbally, but if I saw an opportunity to cause conflict, I did it

61. Tsosie, interviewed by author, pg. 10.
without doing it obviously. So nobody really knew—
I don't think people, except for us kids, knew it
was me—my mom and dad didn't ever grasp it. I was
young, and when I go back I don't think that any of
it was intentional. I think I was just acting the
best way I knew how for people who were trying to
love me and (I was) trying to say "I don't need this!
Go away!" I wasn't a verbal person. For a long time
I was an introverted, non-verbal, non-aggressive
person in respects to my behaviors and mannerisms and
voice. And so it was my only outlet of saying "I'm
not happy" by causing fights and causing trouble...I
enjoyed making one of my brothers as mad as he could
get just to see how mad he could get and how far I
could push him.62

Other participants had good experiences with their foster
families, even when circumstances caused them to be placed with
different foster families throughout their school years. Zondajas told
his interviewer that:

[My relationship with my foster siblings] was pretty
good. Most of the foster brothers and sisters that I
had [in four different families] were pretty good. I
got along well with all of them. I didn't have any
problems. There was just ordinary fighting over things.
There wasn't any resentment on the part of any of my
foster brothers and sisters about me being there, taking
attention from them, or being singled out for special
treatment. I never sensed any of that. I always had a
good relationship with all the families that I lived
with.63

The adjustments the children made when transferred from one family
to another coupled with cultural and religious differences were
difficult at times. For those Native American children who had not
attended church regularly with their biological families, the day-long
Mormon Sunday services were challenging. Zondajas said,

I guess I wasn't prepared for the lifestyle that LDS
families lived. Growing up we were used to going to
bed at ten-thirty, eleven or twelve o' clock at night.
We would wake up with our clothes on, jump out of bed,
and run to school. Up there [with my foster family]

62. Anonymous informant, interviewed by author, pg. 5.
63. Zondajas, interviewed by Pappan, pg. 4.
you'd have to take a bath or at least wash up. Pajamas were a different experience, too. So was having to brush your teeth.\(^\text{64}\)

Despite the homesickness and the trepidation faced by the informants when they were children participating in the ISPP, they were able to focus on their goal of attaining an education. They found some of the white cultural values to be beneficial and incorporated them into their own set of personal ideals. Some of what they experienced for the first time were things that their placement families took for granted. Zondajas pointed out that:

The concept of breakfast was kind of new. I didn't mind. It was nice to be able to wake up and have someone throw some eggs in front of you, or a bowl of cereal.

When I was at home, all the time I would hear the concept of three meals a day wondering where the third one was at. I remember getting free lunch at school, but sometimes we'd have to fix something for dinner. But we didn't have breakfast.\(^\text{65}\)

Some critics view Mormon culture as restrictive or even repressive, governed by strict moral guidelines. Church doctrine strongly prohibits sexual contact prior to marriage, and there are prohibitions against smoking and drinking alcohol, or drinking beverages containing caffeine. Many of the students had to give up freedoms they took for granted in their reservation homes. Spending Sundays in church from morning to evening was a new experience for most of the placement students. Others felt pressured to internalize Mormon teachings and balked at the idea. Zondajas recalled:

I got the impression from one foster family that being on the placement program and going to church every Sunday was suppose to give you your testimony. You were suppose

\(^{64}\) Ibid, pg. 3.

\(^{65}\) Ibid, pg. 3.
to gain that and be able to retain that when you went back home. I think they were disappointed when I came back after one summer. They said my attitude had changed. Being back in Omaha, you don’t have this strict supervision that you have on the placement program. It’s just that I had tasted a little bit of freedom.

I don’t think that kind of expectation should be placed on someone. “You live in a good LDS home, and you go to church every Sunday. We expect you to have a testimony by the end of nine months.” I think, like with most things, people have to come to terms with it individually. 66

Some of the participants were grateful for the structure they encountered by living with Mormon families. Some spoke candidly about what had happened to friends who had not gone on placement and remained on the reservation. Orlando Tsosie said:

I’ve been off the placement program, what nine years? Ten years? Right now I really don’t know where I would be without the placement program. Some of the kids I’ve grown up with ever since I was a little kid, we’ve played together they stayed on the reservation, [and] I came up here. Where are they at? Two of them are dead. One of them got in a car accident because he was drunk. One of them got drunk the night of his graduation and ran in front of a car. Some of my other friends committed suicide...

My brothers for example, to be honest with you, the brothers that didn’t come back on the placement program, one is an alcoholic, one is in prison. Those are the things I look at. I maybe don’t remember the language very well, but hey, I am willing to sacrifice some of the language so that I can have everything else. As long as I remember who I am and what I want to become, the placement program has been one of the most wonderful experiences. 67

Interactions at home with the foster families were only part of the ISPP experience. All of the children were placed with white

66. Ibid, pg. 6. Mormons referred to having or giving a “testimony” as evidence that they realize their own relationship with God. Feeling free to speak about their feelings in public, such as during the Sunday evening prayer sessions, called sacrament meetings, is indication that a person has “sure knowledge, received by revelation from the Holy Ghost, of the divinity of the great latter-day work.” from Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 14th edition, 1993, 785.

families for the purpose of going to school. Once in school, they faced challenges with fitting in among a nearly all-white student body. Yet all of the informants in this study reported a positive experience in the schools they attended. This was the first time some of them faced the concept of being a minority student. Durinda Tom remembers that, "[Going to high school] was an experience. I was coming from a high school where whites were the minority. I didn't know what it was to be a minority until I moved up here."^68

Many found that white students wanted to identify with the Native American children, were curious about tribal customs, and even thought it was "cool" to be a Native American:

I got accepted very well. I was pleased at how I was accepted. I think there was only one fight that I got into, a real fight, a person that literally hated me and I didn't like that person and got in one fight... In elementary school there were times when people said some things, but hey, it was just that, they said things and I said some things back... People were very curious of who I was and where I came from. Many of them told me "Man, I wish I was Native, I wish I was that" and they were more curious and they were very friendly. For me, I was a shy person, I was very shy and kind of scared and I tend to stay away from people and was in my own little world, but they were willing to accept me. In high school things were great. By that time, I kind of stayed in the same area so people got to know me, and that's when I came out of my shell. I started to interact a lot more with people, I broke that barrier between my shyness and I started dating a lot more.^69

Some found that thinking of themselves as part of the student body rather than thinking about themselves as a "placement student" was best for them. Alvia Brown indicates that:

I tried not to keep [my relationship with white students and other placement students] separate. I had lots of friends in the ward that were Anglo and

^68. Tom, interviewed by author, pg. 13.

^69. Tsosie, interviewed by author, pg. 6.
they would also be in the same classes as I in high school. Fortunately, there were also a lot of placement kids. Fortunately, there were some kids from my hometown in the same high school I was at and so to keep connected with that we had the Indian Club. I was trying to balance out both and it was easy for me. I find that some Indians they always had closure and they couldn't connect to a lot, but the longer they stayed on the placement program, the longer they realized that it wasn't that hard to balance out having non-Indian friends and Indian friends. 70

Erdman Jake believes that the background of the Native American student had a great deal to do with how they interacted socially and academically with other students. He remembers his high school life fondly and posits:

I don't believe I had any problems with anything racially or culturally [in school]. I think probably the reason why was because [of] my parents because they raised us in public schools. I think that there is a difference between boarding school—Indians that went to boarding schools—and the Indian students who went to the public schools. There is a demarcation or a fine line between the two. That's my opinion. Because generally most of the Indians that went to the boarding schools came from the reservation and Navajo was their first language. ...With me, English is my first language, and Navajo, I don't speak it fluently. I understand it, but I don't speak it. So for me it was difficult. But there in my high school...my experience was very positive. 71

The fact that some of the placement students began to think of themselves as different from other non-placement Indians, even those who had experienced a "white-man's" education, is an important distinction made by the informants. While it is clear that they recognized and associated with their own cultural heritage, being in a situation where they were a minority led them to define themselves in an increasingly narrow manner. They were Indians yes, and Navajo or

70. Brown, interviewed by author, pg. 6.
71. Jake, interviewed by author, pg. 6.
Apache or Sioux; but now they added "Mormon" and "Mormon placement student" to the list of descriptive terms they used to set themselves apart from other Indians and from other Indians who were Mormon. In their interactions with whites they continued to classify themselves as "Indian." In many ways they felt being Indian was a benefit to them, particularly when they needed additional help with their school work.

Teachers sometimes recognized the special needs the placement students: the need to be understood, the need to be challenged, and the right to the best education available. When asked about her teachers, Alvia Brown said:

Teachers and administrators [stand out in my mind].
I always find that once they found out you were Indian, they always seem to bond with you in a way, they always seem to want to connect. It was nice, it had some advantages. I think a lot of them understood that being on the reservation you didn't get the education as well as off the reservation so if you had difficulty in class they would go out of their way to help. There were a few classes that I had problems with and my teachers went out of their way and I could tell. Sometimes it had its advantages being an Indian. 72

Frequently, the schools Indian students had attended prior to placement had not prepared them for the level of classroom work going on in their placement schools. Two of the informants in this study left the program for a period of time and later returned, remarking how poorly reservation schools compared to those they attended on placement. Orlando Tsosie noted:

When I went to Oak Hills elementary they had a minority program there, I remember her name, Mrs. Page, she helped me out quite a bit. The learning process I think skyrocketed. I don't know what it is about reservation schools, it just seems like they look at me and say "Okay, he's a Native he's only able to learn this much." That was all you are limited to. But up here they set up special programs and say:

"Okay, you are Native, this is what you know and we will start from there," and they push you, they literally push your knowledge and they push who you are and you start to see the progression upwards to the point to where I was taking the upper math classes and stuff like that.

I did go home my sophomore year, I stayed one year down there and that year really brought out the goodness of the program. The educational standpoint, because as a sophomore I was supposed to take pre-calculus and upper division English classes so I could take all these AP classes when I became a senior. Got down there and they didn't have these classes...

...that's when I realized it was for my own good. As hard as it is to be away from them, be away from the culture, overall education is one of the most important things my mom ever said to me. That's when I realized and I said "Okay, I will go." Before that time, I was pushed to go...

While most of those interviewed in this study completed high school with a white foster family and even went on church missions or to college, some did not. Often the unspoken but generally acknowledged Mormon prohibition against dating outside the faith ran at odds with personal feelings. One of the thirteen was given an ultimatum to stop seeing a boy who was not Mormon or leave the foster home:

I was dating someone that wasn't Mormon, so my foster family didn't like it at first and then it got more serious. They basically gave me an ultimatum my senior year and said "You have to stop dating him or you can't live with us." So I chose not to live with them and by that time my parents, my biological parents, moved to Salt Lake so I lived with them my senior year. [I have] very minimal [contact with my foster family now.] They send me Christmas cards. I think that the last time I spoke to them was probably about a year ago.

During their time with their foster families, the students in the ISPP saw the world from two very different perspectives. Those who grew up on the reservations and had little contact with the white world

73. Tsosie, interviewed by author, pg. 6-7.
74. Celina Jake, interviewed by author, pg. 7.
learned new ways of thinking, believing, and even feeling about themselves, their people, and reservation life. Orlando Tsosie tells a poignant tale of what he grew up thinking a Native American was and how, after being on the placement program, his beliefs changed:

When I was younger I saw a lot of bad things about the reservation. My uncles, my grandfathers were alcoholics. I saw a lot of people who were alcoholics, my parents were even alcoholics... To be honest with you, when I was young, I thought being Native American was being an alcoholic...

But as I became more adult, I started to understand that [being] Native American is not being an alcoholic. So I started to accept that fact and so I came home and I started asking questions and I started spending more time on the reservation and I started wanting to learn about the language. Now I want everyone to know that I am Native.75

Another informant remarked:

I think coming off a reservation, it was kind of hard to step out of the traditional world and into the white world and so for a long time I was confused. The church taught me one thing and yet my traditions taught another thing. So for a long time I didn't know how to combine my two worlds to where they would work for me.76

Ella Bedonie had been raised on the Navajo Reservation, and in her fifth grade year decided for herself that she was going to go on placement. She consulted her parents, who went along with the idea. Eventually her other three sisters would also spend time in the ISPP. Ella didn't understand how other Navajo children had a hard time incorporating the white and Navajo worlds into their lives. She recalls that:

I found out that every time they came back during the summer, they would say they didn't understand Navajo. And people were interpreting for them. Or they would talk real funny Navajo. To me that was

75. Tsosie, interviewed by author, pg. 10-11.
76. Tom, interviewed by author, pg. 9.
stupid. I knew darn well they could speak Navajo as well as I did... I knew what was expected of me when I got home, and I just went right back into that role. When I got back on placement, I was able to make the transition back into that role. 77

Only one of the thirteen included in this study felt they had to abandoned their traditional beliefs and lifestyles and embraced Mormon culture. That individual raised her children in the church and refused to allow them the choice of knowing their own rich cultural heritage. For her the option was not whether to be white or Native American, but to be Mormon or Non-Mormon. Florence Billy said:

You can see something very special in my children, your children, and these young Lamanite boys and girls. They are the first generation in the church. They are being brought up from Primary. They go through the whole process and grow up in the church from Primary on. I know they’ll get a better education than we ever did. All they have known in their lives is the church. They don’t have hang-ups like some of us had because we were brought up with some of the traditions on the reservation. Some are good and some are bad. They have been brought up just strictly in the church from since they were babies. For my children it won’t be hard to adjust because all they’ve known is the church their whole lives. They are not brought up any different than from any of our Anglo kids in our ward. 78

Others who grew up and came of age in the placement environment, found that the ISPP actually assisted them in knowing their Native American traditions. Erdman Jake’s parents refused to allow him to learn Navajo ways when he was a child. Despite this, on the day that Erdman left to go on a mission for the Mormon church, his father revealed to him that Erdman’s grandfather, a medicine man, had a vision about Erdman long before he was born. Erdman recalled:

77. Benedek, Beyond the Four Corners of the World, 123-5.

78. Florence Billy, interviewed by Ernesteen Lynch, transcript from interview, Provo, Utah, pg. 6-7, LDS Native American Oral History Project, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Brigham Young University.
As a young man, my father spoke of being blessed by his father, that his posterity would be blessed by the people who live in the shadows of the great mountains. For me, to have my grandpa have that vision, who didn't know anything about the LDS Church, and to have that vision and to share that with us to me is a pearl of great price.  

Erdman now spends his time trying to help his Navajo people:

For me being a product of the Indian placement program, the foster program, I do see a dire need for those who are taken from their family, their Indian culture, and placed in a society that is foreign to them. They need an opportunity to re-connect. That is one of my goals, or a vision that I see, my wife and I and whoever else chooses to do so, is to provide them an opportunity for them to experience their own culture that they have been disconnected from. We are creating a company now where we will actually take people, and eventually I want to be able to be working with the youth, to be able to give them the opportunity for them to experience so that they are not afraid of who they are, that they are not embarrassed of speaking their language, that they are not embarrassed about being Native American.

If you look at our society today, many of the youth today, doesn't matter what culture you look at, they are looking for ritual in their lives, they are looking for opportunity and the only place they can find them is with the groups of friends that they have because their family is so dis-connected, so disorganized that the youth are trying to find that in gangs and substance abuse, whatever, what have you. So, what I would like to see for myself is to provide an opportunity for our Indian youth to be able to re-connect with who they are and why they are here and not be afraid of who they are or speaking their language.

When those, like Erdman, return to their reservations, they may encounter some suspicion from their people because of the time spent away and the experiences they had that changed them while they were on the placement program. Many of those interviewed found that after being on placement, they returned home to find that their outlook on what reservation life was like had changed. Their family members and

79. Jake, interviewed by author, pg. 11. "The great mountains" refers to the Wasatch Mountain range that runs through northern Utah.

80. Ibid.
friends who had not gone on placement looked upon many of them differently. Antoinette Dee said:

I know when I was on placement, especially during my high school years, I had people refer to me as an 'apple,' red on the outside and white on the inside. These were people who didn't fully understand what placement was. I learned to accept these kinds of criticism and they were few in number. I don't recall my relatives ever having a strong objection to my being on placement. 81

Durinda Tom recalled:

I remember going home sometimes and my aunts never verbalized what they said, but I could see in their actions, I mean they questioned why I didn't participate in the ceremonies... I could always feel the tension or just to read their eyes and hear them almost thinking "Well, what makes her think that she can't do this anymore?". I remember going on my mission, my immediate family knew what I was doing, by my cousins, my aunts, my uncles, a lot of them were not members and they didn't understand and I got made fun of a lot. That hurt, but inside I felt what I was doing was right, but it did confuse me because sometimes it seemed I was almost made fun of because I chose to go off [the reservation]. 82

Alvia Brown, who went off and then back on placement during both her eighth grade and sophomore years, also found that "trying to relate to my friends down at home--it was hard getting used to. They didn't see me as Indian sometimes, they only saw me as a non-Indian person." 83

Others, like Zondajas, had mixed family support and found that:

I always got a good reception from my family. They saw [the placement program] as something that was good for me. With other relatives, like aunts, uncles, and grandparents, I don't know if they say it as being all that good...I guess I was viewed as a white man in training." 84

81. Antoinette Dee, interviewed by Jim M. Dandy, transcript from interview, Monument Valley, Utah, 15 November 1990, pg. 3, LDS Native American Oral History Project, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Brigham Young University.

82. Tom, interviewed by author, pg. 9.

83. Brown, interviewed by author, pg. 7.

84. Zondajas, interviewed by Pappan, pg. 6-7.
Distrust among tribal members who had converted to Mormonism, but who had not participated in the placement program sometimes occurred. One reported that in her experience:

"...Non-placement Mormons and placement Mormons don’t usually get along, we don’t get along at all. [When they look at those who went on placement] they see a number of things: smart, intelligent, educated. They are assuming [we] take those traits from the white world and say “oh, we know how you got those things. Those [traits] were not innate, those aren’t something she learned because she lived on the reservation...now she thinks she is better than we are...” 85"

For one participant, the time spent on placement freed him from what he originally thought was his responsibility to his people for having the opportunity to obtain an education. Lemuel Pedro told his interviewer:

"It seems like the thing I was told most about placement was that I was to go and get an education. What I remember was I was to go back to the reservation and teach my people. But I see it differently now. I think I am doing a lot right now by not being on the reservation but living here, still going to school, to college.

On placement I learned a lot about myself, about how I can become a leader. It taught me to set goals in my life. I can be whatever I want myself to be. 86"

Alvia Brown decided who she was long before the placement program influenced her life. When asked how she thought the program impacted her identity as a Navajo she responded:

"It is not what the placement program will teach you, But it’s what your own family has taught you. My parents, it came from when I came from my parents at home, they have always told me that I was Navajo and to respect my values. I learned from them. From then on, from what I have learned from the placement

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85. Anonymous informant, interviewed by author, pg. 7.
86. Lemuel Pedro, interviewed by Malcolm T. Pappan, transcript from interview, Provo, Utah, 01 April 1990. LDS Native American Oral History Project, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Brigham Young University.
program or what I have learned from other people, it started with my family. I think it will always hold from my family. The placement program was more of just a cushion to help me to be more caring and supportive and respecting other, but fortunately, my family had that before we were members [of the Mormon church]. I think that was an advantage being on the placement program. 87

Still, several felt that time spent away from family and culture was harmful. While recognizing the benefits of education, the loss of cultural knowledge and connections was palatable. Tsosie said:

[The placement program] was one of the best things that ever happened to me, because I've learned a lot about people, I've learned a lot about myself, I've learned a lot about my culture, I've learned a lot about the educational standpoint, the advantages I have. But there are also some disadvantages. The disadvantages of staying away from a culture. Being up here nine months out of the year, I lost some of that Navajo language. I can still converse, I can still speak when I have to, and I understand, but I don't feel completely fluent in Navajo. I've forgotten some of the stories my grandmother told me. So the culture aspect, being away from that culture, from eight years old until your eighteen kind of takes a toll. 88

For most of those studied here, the decision to become Mormon in order to gain access to a better education was not a conscious choice to abandon their Indian heritage. Once they were in the program however, they found that they did have to reconcile some of their cultural beliefs with their new faith. For some it was a simple process; for others it was a painful one. Getting an education in white schools sometimes made them feel as if they were different from their family and friends left behind on the reservation. They began to draw distinctions between themselves and their own blood relatives

88. Tsosie, interviewed by author, pg. 8.
based solely on their experiences in the schools and their religion. Alexandra Harmon points out that this process is nothing new in Indian communities. She states that, "[w]ithin the framework of laws and federal policies, various descendants of aboriginal people have taken the initiative to define themselves, trying to fashion identities that make sense to them." 89 For those Indians who are also Mormon we must add to that "framework" the influence of Mormon doctrine and the time the spent in the Indian Student Placement Program on their identity.

This study also revealed how Indian Mormons who were not a part of the Indian Student Placement Program, perceive those who did spend time on placement. It is clear that those relatives and friends that remained behind on the reservation felt they were different from those who went on placement, but to say that they felt more "traditional" and perhaps more "Indian" than those that went on placement is not something that can be addressed by such a limited study. Exploring this element of cultural identity among Indian Student Placement Program participants would be an interesting topic for further research and add to a growing field of historical inquiry. 90

Despite the reception some received when they returned home, all those interviewed regarded their time spent on placement as a very


positive, life-changing experience. The participants themselves deemed the educational and economic benefits gained by participating in the Indian Student Placement Program as the most advantageous part of the program. And they believed that they personally had benefited from their experience. Of course, it must be recognized that these thirteen individuals successfully completed the program and therefore do not represent those who had negative experiences that drove them away from the ISPP, away from the church, and away from school. That story has yet to be told.

None of the participants in this study judged the "success" of the Indian Student Placement Program by how rewarding their current careers were, or by the amount of money in their savings account. Instead they talked about relationships they fostered, friends they made, and the education they received. They spoke about coming to terms with who they were and about learning that being Native American did not mean they had to make a choice between their culture and their religion--between their roots and their dreams.

The total number of students who spent time on placement is reported to be between 20,000 and 60,000. At its peak in 1971 the Indian Student Placement Program enrolled nearly 5,000 students. Some

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91. Taylor, "A Comparative Study," 85. In a letter dated 11 June 1980, William S. Bush, the Assistant Commissioner of the LDS Church Social Services, reported that between "1940 to present, approximately 17,000 Indian children have participated in Indian Student Placement Service for varying lengths of time; some for 12 years, others for only part of one year. Dennis B. Irving, placement director for the state of California, reported that some 60,000 Indian children had participated in the ISPP as of 1979. See Bob Gottlieb and Peter Wiley, "The Kids Go Out Navaho, Come Back Donny and Marie: The Mormon's Controversial Save-Our-Indians Program," Los Angeles Magazine, December 1979; 138-46.
studies indicate as few as 10 to 20 percent of students did not complete the program, while other studies claim a 75 percent failure rate. Unfortunately, the LDS Church would not grant the author access to the archived records that would have allowed a better accounting of participation and retention data. What is puzzling is how few historians have acknowledged or studied the affects of this LDS Church program on such a significant number of children.

It must be recognized that at the beginning of this research project, the author fully expected to uncover some dirty secrets—tragic stories about what happens when people start taking children away from their families and raising them away from their culture and heritage. While busy factoring in the influences of federal Indian policies and the pervasive nature of the Mormon church and its teaching, the author forgot to factor in the human element. Native American culture is not something that can be destroyed by federal Indian policies or church doctrine. It is dynamic and inventive. It remains part of who Native Americans are beyond what all the studies and statistics may show. Most importantly, it cannot be defined by using the social constructs of white society. Only Native Americans can define what their culture is and what it is not and how adapting to an ever-changing world affects their personal identities. As historians attempt to understand the meaning of what it is to be "Indian" it is crucial that we keep that point in mind. As Daniel

92. Bishop, "Indian Placement,"; Chadwick and Albrecht, "Mormons and Indians.". In Davis County, Utah high schools Schimmelpfennig found that nearly 75% of Indian students failed to complete the school year. Schimmelpfennig, "A Study of Cross-Cultural Problems."
Wildcat points out "...[W]e do not fit comfortably or conveniently within Western civilization. This is not a regret. It is an affirmation—a living testimony to the resilience of American Indian Culture." 93

APPENDICES
Appendix A

The following questions were asked of the interviewees during taped sessions with the author. These questions were used as a reference to ensure that particular data was gathered, but the participants were not held to a specific script. When the conversation led naturally to a subject that was not anticipated, the interviewer allowed the individual to continue to say whatever they wished. As the sessions progressed, it was found that this forum led to a more open and animated discussion of the participants' experiences while in the Indian Student Placement Program. Not all participants wanted to answer some of the questions, and when they displayed marked tentativeness or continued to stray from the question asked even after attempts to re-direct their testimony the interviewer went on to another question.

1. What is your name?
2. What are your Tribal affiliation(s).
3. What was your age now and at time of placement?
4. How do you remember learning about the Indian Student Placement Program?
5. As you recall, what were the educational opportunities on the reservation prior to you being placed?
6. What educational experiences had you had prior to placement? Boarding school? Public school?
7. Who decided you were going to be placed? Did you have any say over whether or not you would go? Did missionaries play a role in you and your parents decision?
8. When did you get baptized? Did you understand and believe in Mormon doctrine at that time? Did you grow to accept it?
9. Do you consider yourself an active member of the church now?
10. How long did you stay with your placement family or families?
11. Please describe your experiences in the placement program.
   a. Family ties to reservation? Homesickness? Other siblings in other Mormon families? Returning in the summer?
   b. Experiences with Mormon parents and foster siblings.
12. What do you believe was the greatest reason or reasons your parents decided to send you to live with another family?
13. Why do you think that the placement program is considered by some to be unsuccessful in converting Native American peoples?
14. Why do you believe the church has abandoned the program?
15. Are you in contact with your foster parents now? What role have they played in your life?
Appendix B

The purpose of the LDS Native American Oral History Project was to detail the Native American experiences as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. All respondents for this project were currently attending, or had attended Brigham Young University, a private Mormon run university in Provo, Utah. The researchers collected oral interviews from fifty Native American students over a period of time. They began in 1986, skipped three years for a reason that is not clear and began again in 1989. The project was completed in 1991. Some of these interviews contained information about time spent in the Indian Student Placement Program and the author randomly selected five such interviews to use in this study. The transcripts and original tape recordings can be found in the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies collection at Brigham Young University.

Like the questions asked in Appendix A, these questions were used as a baseline for discussion. Some more detailed questions were asked of the interviewees as they arose during the interviews. The provisions of "fair use" practices govern the utilization of these interviews.

1. Tell me about your early family life.
2. Were you a close family?
3. How many were in your family?
4. What kind of religious activity were you and the family involved in?
5. Did you have a lot of contact with non-Indians?
6. Tell about your decision to go on placement.
7. How active were you in the church before you left on placement?
8. Why did you want to go on placement?
9. What were some of your expectations on the placement program?
10. Tell me about your relationship with your foster family.
11. What was your relationship with the siblings?
12. What was your relationship with the ward?
13. Describe your school experiences and relationships with non-Indians.
14. What was your relationship with other placement students?
15. How did being on placement affect your testimony of the gospel?
16. How did being on placement affect your relationship with relatives and other Native Americans?
17. How did you feel returning home after being on placement?
18. Did placement influence your relationship with Indians?
19. What were some of the positive elements of the placement program?
20. How do you feel about the church's decision to limit the placement program?
21. Describe your conversion to the church.
22. What are your feelings about being in a Lamanite branch?
23. Compare the Lamanite branch or ward to an integrated ward as far as fellowshipping, callings, and missionary work.
24. Is there a lot more participation as far as active/inactive?
25. How did you meet your wife?
26. What was the courtship like?
27. How have LDS values influenced your marriage?
28. How many kids do you have?
29. What is your daily family life like now?
30. Do you have family prayer, scripture reading, home evening, and those types of activities?
31. Tell me about your current contact with relatives.
32. Are most of them LDS?
33. How have you been accepted by white Latter-day Saints?
34. Do you have any key friendships with white Latter-day Saints?
35. What are current problems of LDS Native Americans?
36. How have LDS values and doctrines influenced your outlook on the future of Native Americans?
37. Have you shared with white Latter-day Saints unique understandings that they have never realized before?
38. What role do your Indian traditions play in your life now?
39. Would you say there is a middle ground between LDS beliefs and Native American beliefs?
40. What things would improve the fellowshipping of Native American converts?
41. What things block more effective missionary work among Native Americans?
42. As you have observed them, what are the causes of Native American inactivity?
43. Do you have contact with non-LDS Native Americans?
44. What are your feelings about your membership?
45. Do you have any conflicts with non-LDS Native Americans?
46. Does your tribe influence your relationship with other Native Americans?
47. What are your feelings about brotherhood in the church and in the world? How do you feel about the black General Authority that was called at General Conference?
48. How do you think George Lee’s excommunication has affected other Indians?
49. What community and humanitarian service are you interested in?
50. How have LDS values influenced the role of money plays [sic] in your life?
51. What are your hopes and goals for the future?
52. Are there any thoughts and feelings you’d like to add to what’s been said?
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The Continuous Calamity: Native American Education in the West
Education is the tool used by all nations to indoctrinate its members into society. When Euro-Americans settlers came to North America they found a number of different peoples living on the continent not familiar with Western models of thought. Decades of disease, warfare, and treaties forced native peoples from their homes and onto desolate reservations scattered throughout the United States. Having dominated these native groups militarily, these conquerors, convinced of the superiority and benevolence of their own culture, sought to teach the "savages" the errors of their traditional lifestyles. Early mission were founded to educate and convert them to Christianity. Schools established to accomplish this task stripped Native American children of their languages and tore them from their homes in order to immerse them in American culture. Yet these actions have failed to fully assimilate Native Americans and they have clung tenaciously to their native cultures and languages. America has adopted many different policies to govern Indians in the United States, but there have been only two approaches to their education—assimilation and self-determination.

While the definition of the terms "assimilation" and "self-determination" implies that discontinuity exists, in reality little change occurred in the overarching purpose of schooling for Native Americans. The works included in the paper investigate the consequence of Western pedagogy on Native American children at the federal, state, and local levels. Examining the educational policies researched by the authors included here make it possible to look upon the history of education for Native Americans as a continuous process of assimilation employed by the dominate society to integrate them into mainstream American society.
The literature dealing with Native American education encompasses studies on federal policies, missions and missionary efforts, and detailed studies of individual boarding schools. Scholars have investigated these areas in an effort to better understand the complex cultural and personal affects of forced education on native children, their parents, and their futures. The texts considered here were chosen as examples of the different types of subjects examined by historians, but is in no way inclusive. Although several points of view exist in these five works there are elements they hold in common. First, the policy of the dominant society, be it the Mormon church or federal or state government, is recognized as a central force in education of Native Americans. Second, education has been used to promote assimilation and acculturation of native groups. And finally, native peoples have both resisted and accommodated the imposition of these authorities. The following examines each work individually, analyzes its main arguments, and compares them to one another in an effort to illuminate themes in Native American education in the West.

Federal and state governments are not the only institutions that have struggled to dominate native societies. From the beginning, various religious sects established schools and sent missionaries among Native Americans to both educate and convert them. In a 1969 dissertation entitled "A History of Indian Education by the Mormons, 1830-1900," Lawrence Coates argues that the church consistently provided educational opportunities to Native Americans and in so doing recruited many of them to the rolls of the church. In prose thick with racist and ethnocentric remarks, Coates attempts to defend this

1. Lawrence Coates, "A History of Indian Education by the Mormons, 1830-1900," (Ph.D. diss., Ball State University, 1969).
erroneous thesis by maintaining that Mormon settlement among the Native Americans served specifically to educate the "savages" and assimilate them into Mormon society and economy. In this way, the mere presence of "civilization is incorrectly used as "proof" of a concerted effort to educate Native Americans into the Mormon society. Coates cites early Latter-day Saint leader Brigham Young as saying: "If we secure the good will of the Indians by confering [sic] favors upon them, we not only secure peace for the time being but gradually bring them to depend upon us until they eventually will not be able to get along without us." This quotation exemplifies the motivation behind Mormon treatment of Native Americans, who they call Lamanites, of the Utah territory during the settlement period roughly 1847 to 1890. Unwilling to use force on the Native Americans among whom they settled, the Mormons resorted to gift giving and accommodation until the settlers' numbers allowed a more aggressive stance. The good lands taken, the dame depleted, Native Americans then became dependent on the settlers for subsistence.

Coates relies heavily on sources written by members of the LDS church which, regrettably, make up the bulk of all written accounts of Latter-day Saint settlement. Many of the letters, diaries, and church histories upon which he lays the foundation of his thesis are written for the purpose of promoting religious lore. When basing such research on sources from one religious institution it is necessary to at least acknowledge the inherent bias contained therein—something Coates does not do.

The idea that indigenous cultures are somehow inferior in and need

Ibid., 175.
of "assistance" by Mormon settlers is central to this book's argument. This ethnocentric point of view, permeates federal policy regarding education for Indians as well. From the beginning, this study claims that the Mormon church made a constant and unified effort to educate the Native Americans with whom they had contact. By including settlement among them as "education" Coates appears to muster strong evidence to support this claim. However, examination of the underlying purpose for church "missions" leads one to a different conclusion.

His own study states that missions were established in order to: 1) protect trade and immigration routes, and 2) establish new colonies on lands already occupied by native peoples. Educating the Indians in church doctrine or reading and writing proved to be a part-time endeavor, if done at all. The Great Basin's harsh environment provided a limited number of suitable sites for locating a colony, and the Saints found most of those seasonally occupied by various Native American groups. "Missionaries" sent to these lands sought first to establish claims by building settlements, planting fields, and constructing dams. To reassure the natives, they promised food and trade goods in return for the use of the land. Once firmly established, more missionaries arrived and the best hunting and gathering places became individually "owned" homesteads controlled by Mormon settlers and defended by Mormon guns. Settlement proved far more effective at dispossessing the Native Americans of their land than it did educating them.

By the 1850s, the Mormons stood as the dominant political and social force in Utah and began asking for the removal of the now

3. Ibid., 116 and 245.
troublesome Indians to reservation lands east of the Rocky Mountains.\(^4\)

In addition, Latter-day Saint settlements increased in Arizona and New Mexico, and it is during this time that Coates believes a fundamental change in the purpose for settlement occurred. According to the author, local stake leaders, granted authority from Salt Lake City, began to increase their attempts to teach the tribes in southern Utah and northern Arizona. Beyond the administrative reorganizations mentioned above, the settlers continued to make colonization their primary duty while they educated Native Americans on little more than a part-time basis. Men spending their days building railroads, "constructing homes, ranches and farms..." obviously had little time to devote to their Lamanite brethren.\(^5\)

On the other hand, the tribes seemed content to listen to sermons and become "baptized members" of the Mormon church as long as they could be assured a meal. Coates does provide the reader with reported numbers of converts to the Mormon religion at these different settlement sites. The underlying cause of these "mass conversions" however, is dependent upon the interpretation of the facts. One account made by a clerk for the Tuba Ward indicates: "...Though the Indians were not always friendly, they were in the habit of coming in occasionally for the purpose of being rebaptized and having a feast," after which Coates adds: "after nearly 100 years of mission work, the Mormons have gained the membership of 500 of the 3,630 Hopis, but many of these members are in name only."\(^6\) Clearly, it is necessary to define what the term "conversion" is and what the implications of it is.

\(^4\) Ibid., 175-6.
\(^5\) Ibid., 256-7.
\(^6\) Ibid., 249.
in regard to Latter-day Saint missionary work if only to point out its misrepresentation in the historical record. The "adoption" of Latter-day Saint membership is another example of the accommodation strategies used by native peoples to mitigate the dominant culture's influence.

A second conclusion drawn by the author is far more significant because it illuminates the roles played by Native Americans in their own education experiences. Coates writes, "Mormon efforts proved more successful when the natives, themselves, [sic] decided that innovations were needed in their culture." This revelation, heavily supported by the lack of success in converting Native Americans, attests to the strength of native cultures, and is also addressed by the other historians included in this paper. Faced with the options of enduring economic poverty on reservations coupled with ineffective government support, or voluntarily accepting inclusion in the Mormon church with its highly effective welfare programs, the Native Americans made the obvious choice. Far from proving a sudden, or even gradual, acceptance of Mormon doctrine or society, these decisions by Native Americans should be recognized as an attempt to provide for themselves and maintain some semblance of autonomy.

Despite Coates' attempts to prove otherwise, the Mormon church displayed an inability to maintain a concerted effort toward educating and converting Native Americans. Much like missionaries from other Christian sects, Mormons proved ineffective at making any long-lasting changes in the secular or spiritual habits of the indigenous peoples of North America. Discrimination, persecution, unwillingness on the part

7. Ibid., 325.
of the indigenous population to accept teachings, and the realities of frontier existence often interfered with attempts to "civilize" Native Americans. This work, unwittingly, provides evidence to disprove its own conclusions.

Beginning where Coates leaves off, the next text focuses on the secular aspects of education for Native Americans in a part of Utah. In "The Ute Indians and the Public School System: A Historical Analysis 1900-1985," a remarkably cogent study of federal programs implemented at the school district level, Kim Gruenwald examines Native American education in the Uintah and Duchesne counties of Utah. This monograph provides a well-balanced account of the frustrations of Native Americans as they respond to changing federal policies and confront consistent discrimination by the local population and school administrators. Initially finding that federal legislation can be effectively undermined by local white populations, Gruenwald goes on to discover that this process is bolstered by Indian resistance to integration in public schools. The end result is an inadequate education for Native American children who, despite everyone's best efforts, are unable to compete in "today's complex world."

Ambitious and thoughtful, this work relies on a variety of primary and secondary sources. School records are effectively balanced against federal mandates and oral interviews with tribal members. Her analysis of the data is fair-minded, but at times lacks the fortitude to tackle sensitive social elements which impact this study. Most evident, is


9. Ibid., 99.
Guenwald’s lack of analysis of the role of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the lives of its members and how their faith effects their attitude toward Native Americans. Unlike Coates’ book that places too much value on the influence of the church, this investigation does not address it enough. The LDS influence in the schools can not be denied and must at least be acknowledged.

Three main threads run through this study: 1) federal policy versus local results; 2) white resistance to integration; and 3) Native American obstruction of the desegregation of the schools. Gruenwald correctly understands that all of these elements are directly related to the problem of “separateness of Indian materials from the core curriculum.” She then assesses this separateness and its influence on education for Ute children. Noting the inability of Native American children to pass the classes offered by schools in the district, the author concentrates on the approaches to education taken by the schools. She finds that lack of changes to the basic curricula is mostly to blame for continued student failure.

Federal monies given to schools to encourage the integration of Ute children did not take into account the kind of education they had already been exposed to in their young lives. “The Ute children failed because they were hopelessly unprepared for the school work demanded of them. The boarding school had focused on vocation education and...its academic program did not function on par with the public school system.” Yet when federal auditors came to inspect the programs in

10. Ibid., 82.
11. Ibid., 99-100.
12. Ibid., 35-6.
1986, they reported: "...[A]dequate progress toward achieving the goals of the grant' was in evidence, and 'acceptable evaluative procedures are being followed'" despite the fact that "over half of Ute students were failing a majority of their classes." Clearly, as Gruenwald suggests, there was great disparity between what was being reported and what was actually being done to help Native American children receive even an average education in the public schools.

Community and individual resistance to education in the "white man's way" is partly to blame for the failure of the children. Opposition to Utes in the schools came from both white and Native Americans. Gruenwald reports:

Indians did not assimilate for two reasons--first, they resisted; and second, local non-Indians resisted. The Indians wanted to retain their culture, and although Uinta Basin whites wanted the Utes to change, non-Indians wanted to have nothing to do with the process of change. Indian enrollment in public schools took on a limited attraction in the 1940s and 1950s when the local whites needed federal money to build a new school, but attitudes toward the Utes did not change in any significant way.

Whites grasped the old issue of non-taxation of Native American lands as a way to bar Utes from the classrooms. Native peoples stressed the extant racism by teachers, white parents and school administrators as an excuse to keep their children home. Racism aside however, serious lack of cross-cultural communication and education proved the most effective barrier to education in Uintah and Duchesne counties. Rather than judging one group or the other, the author instead uses these problems to reinforce her thesis that education must be modified in America to respond to the needs of a multicultural world.

13. Ibid., 97.

Despite changes in federal policy, general acceptance of programs to assist Ute children in retaining their cultural heritage, and regular effort made by parents and school officials, Ute children continue to fail in public schools. Success then must lay in another, thus far unexplored, direction. Gruenwald suggests that: "...problems associated with multicultural education run deeper than simply describing racism in the school setting. The treatment of the Ute people in the two Basin school districts reveals that America needs to redefine the concept of education...educational systems which teach the young only to know and preserve their own culture is invalid in today's complex world."\(^{15}\) Perhaps this is correct. This work provides interesting insight into local level administration of federal legislation. The research is thought provoking and adds another dimension to the existing literature on Native American education.

Other scholars have focused their efforts on the effects of forced acculturation and assimilation through vocational and academic training available in boarding schools. The 1994 publication, *They Called it Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School*, by K. Tsianina Lomawaima successfully incorporates native voices into the existing historical record. Exhaustive oral interviews with sixty-one individuals, (53 alumni of the Oklahoma boarding school, 7 employees, and a husband of a former Chilocco student), adds depth and character to the school records.\(^{16}\) Lomawaima outlines the theme for each of the six chapters, but allows the interviewees to tell their own story.

Covert resistance to school authorities, pan-Indian models of

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solidarity, and the "antithetical...federal rhetoric of producing self-
sufficient, self-reliant citizens...[which was] more suited to producing
subservience" are all explored in the story of the boarding school.\textsuperscript{17}

The author focuses almost entirely on the 1920s and 1930s, finding that
while Chilocco was established to reinforce the transformation of
native children, it actually served to promote intertribal solidarity
based upon school affiliation. The overall affect was not
assimilation, bur rather a strengthened sense of "Indian" identity for
Native American children.

Student culture, so richly described in this text, included
remarkably complex methods of resisting federal control. Lomawaima
finds that Native American children "were not passive consumers of an
ideology or lifestyle imparted from above by federal administrators"
but instead had the ability to influence the school and its rules.\textsuperscript{18}

Just as in the Gruenwald and Coates studies, resistance to
acculturation is recognized and accentuated by the researcher. Unlike
the other studies however, Lomawaima sees this reaction as a foundation
for a pan-Indian identity. This intertribal phenomenon created by the
students actually strengthened their ability to resist assimilation
despite the government's best efforts. Of the students she writes:

They marshaled personal and shared skills and
resources to create a world within the confines
of boarding-school life, and they occasionally
stretched and penetrated school boundaries. In
the process, an institution founded and controlled
by the federal government was inhabited and
possessed by those whose identities the institution
was committed to erase. Indian people made Chilocco
their own. Chilocco was an Indian school.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 167-9.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 167.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
The students' cultural endurance strategies were indeed remarkable, but their acceptance of "blood quantum" to define group relationships tells another story. Blood quantum was a government policy adopted to "scientifically" assess the readiness of an individual to terminate his or her wardship status. Though put in place only a few short years before the time this book studies, it was readily accepted by these children even though its ultimate purpose was to measure the assimilation of Native Americans. Even the block quotations in this book have the informant identified by degree of blood, a social construct that has no traditional underpinnings in native society.

Although *Prairie Light* discusses only the events during the 1920s and 1930s, Lomawaima contends that schooling was a continuous process used to assimilate Indians. Her critical analysis of the lives of female students and the reliance on teaching the "cult of domesticity" is enlightening, funny, and sobering all at once. To many of the native girls the constant surveillance by school matrons, and the desire to thwart their authority, drew them together across tribal affiliation. Lomawaima reports:

Girls united in groups formed by dorm-room association, shared hometowns, native languages ties, company or work detain assignments, or similar personality. Loyalty to the group reigned supreme in the student code of ethical behavior, and groups also worked to cooperate—signaling the approach of a matron after lights out...

Lomawaima's study provides a richer native voice than that found in the other works looked at for this limited paper. *Prairie Light*

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also complements the finding of the other authors examined here through its use of student remembrances as opposed to the more common emphasis on government or institutional records. Lomawaima's book is an excellent source for Native American accounts of time spent in a boarding school.

From a study based on the native experience we move on to an analysis of a specific government policy and its effects on the education of Native Americans. In *Self-Determination and the Social Education of Native Americans*, Guy B. Senese shows the perpetuation of assimilationist attitudes through the change in government policy from termination toward self-determination.²² Other scholars, according to Senese, have failed to recognize the overall pattern of assimilationist techniques used by the government, finding that: "the feeling here is that, except for the interlude of renewed rapid termination feelings in the years immediately after World War II, progressive administration and social planning have proceeded haltingly apace toward a brighter day for Indian people--darkness to self-determination, from the dawn of progressive planning."²³ Senese however, discovers no "brighter day" in his research. Instead he contend that self-determination rhetoric was (and still is) the policy "of a totalizing federal structure to subsume the legitimate interests of Indian people under the umbrella of national social and educational planning."²⁴

Viewing the purpose of education in this way, Senese enlists the

²³. Ibid., xiv.
²⁴. Ibid., 190.
term "social education" to emphasize the inherent links between education and economic development of tribal resources. Simply put, educational institutions established by the federal government and purporting to preserve the sovereignty of Native Americans, have actually been meant to assimilate them. The self-determination bravado espoused by government officials has at its very core the idea that Native Americans must be educated in the "white man's way" to effectively govern their own resources. Senese argues that social education will thus assimilate and acculturate Indians enough to justify the removal of government "assistance." Elimination of this aid will then result in the effective denial of the wardship status for Native Americans.

Three thematically linked parts make up this work. The prose, laced heavily with jargon from the social sciences, educational theory, and obscure Western philosophers, is at times difficult to plough through. As a study of the origins and contemporary effects of liberal reforms that spawned the self-determination era, it is thoughtful and thorough research. After first exploring the evolution of this policy, Senese moves on to an analysis of its effects on tribal development, resource management, and sovereignty. The final section engages a discussion on what self-determination has come to mean to Americans of all races and how different definitions have fractured native groups "along class and ideological lines."

Gruenwald's and Lomawaima's findings that education for children has been an almost continuous process toward their eventual

25. Ibid., xi.

26. Ibid., xvi.
assimilation sustains many of Senese’s conclusions. The efforts (and failures of the Mormon church to convert and absorb native Utahans also lends support to Senese even if it focuses on a time period before the self-determination era. Despite changes in the administration, the overall result of self-determination has been to use schools to "prepare" native children for life in the greater American society.

Unlike these other authors who emphasize the durability of America’s native populations by studying resistance strategies and cultural retrenchment, Senese seems to downplay the ability of Native Americans to think and act for themselves. While it must be conceded that the federal government (particularly the Bureau of Indian Affairs) continues to dominate politically and economically through thick layers of bureaucracy, Native Americans are perfectly capable of resisting this power. The sum of court cases brought against states and the federal government for infringement on tribal resources or their sovereignty tells a story far different from the one Senese recounts.

Valuable for both its intense and thoughtful research and its concentration on a single issue, Self-Determination is a necessary tool for anyone interested in the history of education of Indians.

The relative scarcity of comprehensive works examining the broader topic of Native American education made the 1993 publication of Promises of the Past: A History of Indian Education in the United States a seemingly welcome addition to the field.27 Unfortunately, David H. DeJong’s book turned out to be a mere analysis of what already exists and offers nothing new to the scholarship. He does manage to

create a compilation of primary and secondary sources that is most useful as a reference book. He does not, however, create a new "history" of Native American education.

DeJong creates chapters in Promises by using huge extracts from federal documents, testimonies before Congress, and other scholars' work. The fourteen chapters detail relevant periods of education for Native Americans beginning with a most interesting account of traditional teaching techniques. The following chapters move chronologically from the colonial period and its mission schools to contemporary times and the implementation of tribal colleges.

Since an abridged version of Guy Senese's work makes up chapter twelve, it is not surprising the DeJong agrees with Senese's conclusions about the overall nature of self-determination and its goal to educate native children to prepare them to join the dominant society. Several other prominent historians, including Margaret Szasz, technically author other chapters of Promises. Beyond this, DeJong is dedicated to a central theme in this anthology--the undeniable legal and moral obligation of the United States government to provide schooling for Native American children.

Promises does contain a wonderfully organized chapter detailing the various treaty provisions for education for Native Americans. The author's selection of representative clauses from numerous agreements made by the government is a valuable tool for future research and is a topic not emphasized in the other books examined for this paper. DeJong reminds us that "treaty provisions relating to education reflect two important concepts: Indian tribes have legal rights to educational services provided by the U.S. Government, and the federal government
has a legal responsibility to fulfill those rights." 28 This legal responsibility requires special consideration by officials and legislators. Covenants made to aboriginal peoples by the United States, the same covenants that dispossessed them of their lands, must be used to remind the government of its promises.

Much of what Coates found in his study of Mormon relationships with Native Americans and the federal government is also encountered in the research for Promises. Like the Mormons, other religious sects were opposed by unfriendly local white populations or by the superintendents of reservations who resented their presence. Mission schools established by rival denominations resulted in a flurry of inflammatory reports sent to Washington to encourage the exile of the newcomers. Mormons experienced these same problems with regard to other religious groups. Failure of these churches to effectively convert the Indians is also reflected in Coates' account of missionary efforts among the indigenous groups. These investigations suggest that the adaptation and accommodation strategies of Indians include an effective resistance to organized religious teachings.

Beyond these similarities, DeJong's collection also echoes the findings of other scholars and illuminates a consensus in the existing research about the undeniable purpose of education in American society—to acculturate its citizens. Since the Citizenship Act of 1924 made all indigenous peoples citizens of the United States, how should native children be instructed so as to maintain their cultural foundations if they are expected to adopt Western standards of life? In a statement by the Coalition of Indian Controlled Schools cited in the forward of Promises, it becomes clear:

28. Ibid., 217.
We would like to see our children finish their formal education exemplifying those personal qualities we hold most dear—courage, generosity, wisdom, humility. On the other hand, we want our children to have the best of training in academic skills; to be prepared to choose a career in the professional, technical, vocational, or the creative arts arenas.29

Unfortunately, the general agreement among even these few scholars indicates that "prepar[ing] [the children] to choose a career" cannot help but socialize them in the dominant society. According to Gerald Wilkenson, another scholar whose work is used by DeJong:

> Education is the great massifier of America. Its goal is to break down distinctions between people, to teach people to live in a rootless society... Socialization is more important [in this type of education] that providing content...[it] seeks not to make the individual into a better member of his town, village, ethnic group or tribe, but to socialize him so that he can take his place in a corporate niche.30

Drawing on the combined discoveries of these authors indicates that there is general agreement among scholars about the history of Native American education. Beyond those themes already mentioned in the introduction of this paper, other related ideas have emerged in this analysis. First, education has been used by the government and religious groups to assimilate and acculturate indigenous peoples. Second, failure to incorporate Native American educational ideals and history into the curricula of public schools maintains the dominance of Anglo-American cultural concepts. And finally, this subordination of native heritage reinforces low self-images and exacerbates the problems overwhelming Native American children today. It is therefore the duty of the government to correct these past errors and to apply new methods toward educating native young people. This problem is complex and

29. Ibid., xii.

30. Ibid., x.
what methods which should be used to correct the problems is debated even among Native Americans. Clearly, "...America needs to redefine the concept of education...educational systems which teach the young only to know and preserve their own culture is invalid in today's complex world."  

A comprehensive study that moves beyond federal policies and examines the strengths and weaknesses of tribally controlled educational institutions is lacking in the literature. To date, only Margaret Szasz's 1974 book expanded and republished in 1977 and again in 1999, *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination, 1928-1973*, and David Wallace Adam's treatise published in 1995 entitled *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928*, provide a respectable—if limited—analysis of educational policies.  

These volumes, while well-researched and well-written, do not provide an entire picture of schooling for indigenous peoples in the United States. Further research into the area of local school board implementation of federal mandates is also desirable.

This paper analyzed five different studies and their findings regarding Native American education in the West. Each brought its own limited subject area and provided a different angle on the overall picture of education for Native Americans. Definite gaps exist in the scholarship on this important subject. Beyond the policies, beyond the schools, beyond the blame, lie the people whose lives have been


subjected to the whims of a government not responsive to their needs or desires. Native Americans must be given the management of their own affairs. They must be given the resources promised by the government by treaties and executive orders. They must also be encouraged to maintain their own cultures and direct the education of their own children.


Educating a Democracy
In February of 1942, speaking before the select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration James Matsumoto Omura remarked:

I would like to ask the Committee: Has the Gestapo come to America? Have we not risen in righteous anger at Hitler's mistreatment of the Jews? Then is it not incongruous that citizen Americans of Japanese descent should be similarly mistreated and persecuted?¹

A decade later a man stood before yet another committee and complained of similar mistreatment of his people. Thomas Main stated:

We Indians in Montana thought we were making real progress toward freedom until a couple of years ago. Then something happened...And during the last couple of years that attitude of paternalism, treating us like prisoners in a concentration camp, has become the attitude of the Indian Bureau.²

As these testimonies indicate, minorities in America have not always been afforded the same civil rights enjoyed by others.

Examining American's treatment of Japanese and Native Americans reveal interesting similarities in methods used by the dominant society to assimilate and acculturate those it perceived as un-American. This paper focuses on one tool, education, exploring how it is used to promote and stimulate adherence to American ideals. Secondly, it will examine how the employment of the same personnel among the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the War Relocation Authority (WRA) resulted in similar treatment of these federally dominated populations.

In 1942 over 110,000 Japanese Americans found themselves at the mercy of a federal government who questioned their loyalty and labeled them as enemy aliens.³ To ensure the nation's security and on the pretense of protecting them from other citizens, the Army, authorized by Franklin D. Roosevelt designated zones where they were to be excluded.⁴ The War Relocation Authority was charged with resettling and
incarcerating citizens into internment camps outside these zones. The person responsible for completing this forced removal was Dillon S. Myer director of the WRA from 1942 to 1946.

These actions had precedent in American history. Another minority had been subjected to forced removal at the hands of the military and been placed upon reservations. Once possessing all the lands now claimed by the United States, American Indians suffered segregation and economic destruction long before the Japanese Americans. After World War II, the federal government convinced that its programs actually impeded Native American progress toward "civilization" decided to terminate the wardship status of the Native peoples throughout the United States. Called upon to oversee this "termination" policy, Dillon S. Myer, fresh from his experiences with Japanese Americans, was asked by President Harry S. Truman to administer the removal of government-sponsored programs from American Indians. A pool of federal employees was formed among those who had experience in both the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the War Relocation Authority. This reserve of workers and policy makers had serious, long-lasting effects on both Japanese and American Indians and their futures.

Several federal employees of the Indian Service found themselves among the administrative hierarchy of the WRA during World War II. One of the most prominent figures was Dillon S. Myer. Myer rose in the ranks of the Department of Agriculture as the man most likely to finish what president Harry Truman called whatever "shitty ass job" he was assigned. Valuing loyalty in his employees, Myer took many of his staff with him when he made the move from the Agriculture department to the WRA and then on to the Indian Service. In Thomas James's Exile Within: The Schooling of Japanese Americans 1942-1945 it is found that:

The WRA's western regional director, E. R. Fryer,
came from being superintendent of the Navajo Indian reservation in Arizona. He brought with him, as the first acting head of the WRA’s Education Section, Lucy W. Adams, who had directed the school system at the Navaho Reservation [sic] in the late 1930s. Adams habitually reported progress on school planning to Willard Beatty, national director of education in the Office of Indian Affairs and a past president of the Progressive Education Association. 9

This sharing of personnel could not help but affect the way that both agencies dealt with Japanese and Native Americans.

One example of the sharing of ideas between these departments was the model for schools used in the internment camps. The WRA relied upon the example established by the Indian Service in its adoption of community schools such as those constructed for the Navajo during the 1930s.10 These educational institutions, they believed, would "integrate schooling with a planned community life..." and encourage the acceptance of American ideals.11 Borrowing programs from the Indian Service seemed perfectly logical to those employees of the WRA who had spent time in that department. As James points out "from the standpoint of the staff...the evacuated Japanese Americans were a familiar quantity: a dependent population under federal authority."12 Despite the fact the children already were Americans in every sense of the word, policy makers erroneously believed schools would "speed up the assimilation of Japanese Americans into the dominant patterns of American life."13 Education for the Japanese Americans, just as for the American Indians, became the tool used by the federal government to dominate, assimilate, and acculturate the minority children in order to excise undesirable cultural characteristics and replace them with truly "American" ideals.

The first generation Japanese immigrants, or Issei, were immensely proud of their heritage, but they understood early on the necessity of teaching their children, the Nisei, in a manner consistent with their
American citizenship. According to Toyotomi Morimoto’s study, meetings held as early as 1915 between Japanese language school instructors in California resulted in the formal recognition of the need to Americanize the Nisei children. To coordinate this task, a Committee on Americanization founded by the instructors formulated plans to emphasize the teaching of liberal democratic ideals in the established Japanese language schools throughout California and Hawaii. Later, when racial tensions cooled following World War I, the Nisei entered public schools in greater numbers and did well among their white peers. Those families who were wealthy enough sent their children on to colleges and universities, but most who returned with degrees found professional jobs closed to them because of discrimination. Despite the scholastic efforts made by both the Issei and the Nisei, Americans refused to accept them as equals.

Tensions in the Pacific soon rose and with the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, Japanese American children attending public schools and universities found themselves labeled as “enemies” by their classmates. Yoshiko Uchida, attending a university in California prior to her internment, wrote:

We were already familiar with social and economic discrimination, but now we learned what it was to be afraid because of our Japanese faces. We tried to go on living as normally as possible, behaving as other American citizens.

Indeed most Americans saw only the faces of these citizens of Japanese descent and allowed them to be sacrificed in the name of national security. No recognition of citizenship, no protestations by the Japanese American Citizens League, no attempts by the Issei to immerse their children in all that was American proved enough to stop their
forced removal and incarceration. Native peoples shared these kinds of experiences.

Despite losses to disease and warfare, most American Indians living in close proximity to European immigrants sought peaceful coexistence and accommodation with their new neighbors. Yet, as Robert Berkhofer suggests, to those whites who went among the indigenous Native peoples to exploit their lands, labor, or convert them to Christianity, "the only good Indian was a carbon copy of a good white man."20 Should a Native American choose to follow the ways of his white neighbors he still could not escape his native face. In his book, Killing the White Man's Indian, Fegus M. Bordewich describes the Cherokee and their attempts to assimilate into the white man's society reporting that there were:

Cherokee farmers who had taken up Euro-American farming methods cutivat[ing] orchards of apples and peaches. Others operated toll roads, blacksmith shops and taverns, and plantations that exploited the labor of black slaves.21

Although these were clear signs of assimilation, under the guise of Christian concern politicians became "[c]onvinced that the survival of the Indians depended upon their separation from the whites," and they were forcibly removed into the interior of the United States in 1830.22 Subsequent treaties and military actions eventually reduced all Native American land holdings to small reservations scattered throughout the United States. Some lands and monetary compensations have been awarded to some Native American tribes. However, the United States government has not conclusively addressed remuneration for lost lands and resources, such as that compensation given unilaterally to the surviving Japanese American internees.23
When the WRA set about the arduous task of resettling the Japanese Americans into guarded camps in the interior, it sought only to provide the internees with necessities that included "housing, hospitals, mess halls, and latrines." Until April of 1942, little thought was given to the needs of the 30,000 children that accompanied their parents. In July, a conference held in San Francisco determined the principles the newly appointed Director of Education Lester K. Ade would use in developing an educational program for the internees. The question on most minds was not how to design the curriculum, but instead whose authority, federal or state, the schools would run. In the end, the federally financed programs submitted to the accreditation and attendance rules of the state wherein the school was located.

By ensuring this federal program met state regulations, policy makers believed that once released, the children would be eligible to attend colleges and universities within the state they were interned. Administrators believed this fact would encourage Japanese Americans to relocate permanently into the interior rather than return to their coastal properties and homes. Although Myer called for schools for the children in the internment camps, he did so with the belief that the institutions should prepare them to leave the camps and become better members of the American society. When it came time to encourage them to leave the camps, Myer used the schools to gather intelligence about the internee's loyalty and to disseminate information about relocation.

WRA Questionnaire 1815, filled out by the students and filed in the child's personal records, was a device used to calculate the level of their family's assimilation. They included such questions as language usage and family background that were often used later by WRA officials in granting or denying release from the camps.
tactics did not go unnoticed by the Issei or their citizen offspring. The children themselves retaliated in various ways that included defying teachers and vandalizing classrooms. Others wrote out their frustration in essay form, making pointed statements like: "At Manzanar we had to skip the chapter [in the textbook] on civil liberties." Still, most students worked to maintain some semblance of a normal classroom life with what limited resources were available. To those that graduated high school, the next step was college. The Nisei who were ready to leave the camps faced a choice; they could abandon their families and social ties or as James suggests, they could "remain segregated in the slow, dispiriting, but nonetheless recognizably communal life of the camps." These decisions were heart wrenching for a group of people who valued family and community, but tens of thousands of American Indians have faced this same decision for several generations.

The government began contracting with public schools to take American Indian children as early as 1891 and by 1930, 53 percent of all Native children attending school did so in a state-run public institution. To policy makers, incorporating these children into white communities seemed the best way to assimilate them and keep them from returning to the reservations. Myer also believed in using education as a tool to assimilate minorities. Former BIA official William Zimmerman stated:

In connection with the Navaho [sic] education program, perhaps for the first time there appeared a flat statement by a Commissioner of Indian Affairs [Dillon Myer] that "the Federal off-reservation education of Navahos [sic] is directed entirely toward the preparation of these children for permanent off-reservation employment."
Although the decisions of these policy makers seem to be different in regard to where they sought to encourage settlement, they are in fact similar because they desired that the children did not return to their former homes. They are also similar in that they used schools to implement their programs of relocation and resettlement.

In 1882, Congress appropriated money to expand offreservation boarding school programs in the United States. Children often forced to attend these schools were stripped of their native languages and thrown into a military style educational institution. These children, like the Nisei, found themselves having to choose between family and the white man's world. Like the character in John Okada's novel No-No Boy, Ichiro, who found that "I am not Japanese and I am not American," Native American children realized that they were no longer accepted by those who remained on the reservation or by the whites who surrounded it. 38 After his graduation from the famous Hampton Institute, Thomas Alford reported:

My homecoming was a bitter disappointment to me [and there was] no happy gathering of family and friends, as I had so fondly dreamed there might be. Instead of being eager to learn the new ideas I had to teach them, they have me understand very plainly that they did not approve of me. 39

Parents were often torn between the knowledge that their children needed preparation to contend with the world outside the reservation and their desire to ground them in traditional heritage.

Japanese immigrants recognized the value of educating their children in the American way while working to maintain cultural ties with Japan. 40 When incarcerated during World War II, the Issei worried about the quality of education that the WRA would provide. 41 The children themselves were less than enthusiastic about attending a school where, as one student put it, "you could hear the class on both
sides and everything became just a jumble." Despite the substandard conditions however, the children participated in the same activities that white children did. In her novel Farewell to Manzanar, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston describes a yearbook filled with pictures that can be found in any other of the same period. Houston writes:

...you see school kids walking with armloads of books, walking past rows of tarpapered shacks. You see chubby girl yell leaders, pompons flying as they leap with glee... Clearly, these children were affected by their incarceration. They were American citizens held against their will and against their constitutional rights. Still, these children held on to their American ideals.

Native American parents also acknowledged the need for teaching their children about the white world. They too often worried about the kind of education their children received. The same community schools that became the model for those in the Japanese American internment camps were met with some criticism by Navajo parents. During the 1930s, Peter Iverson reports that:

Many Navajos questioned the day schools as too great a departure from the form of schooling they had come to identify as education. Even at the boarding schools... they worried over alterations that might deprive them of the kind of education they assumed white children were receiving.

Both Japanese and American Indian parents were concerned about the future of their children and worked hard to see they would have a better life in an uncertain world. However, neither the parents nor their children were prepared to abandon their cultural heritage completely.
Thomas James captures the essence of what it was to try and teach democratic ideals to a population surrounded by barbed wire and guard towers when he suggests:

The schools in the camps were, like community government, teaching people how to live in an administered democracy for citizens who had been deprived of their civil rights. The analogy between community schools and community government is instructive because it suggests the paradox of an overwhelming authority trying to cultivate self-determination in a dependent population. 45

The irony was not lost on the internees and many resented the blatant disregard of their rights as citizens.

Japanese Americans protested their internment in a variety of ways. Poetry "provided vehicles for mobilizing the emotions of the group and for developing forms of criticism as well as escape." 46 One such poem tells of the pain and anger caused by being thought of as an "enemy alien" by one's own people. Wakako Yamauchi translated this poem that simply states:

Loyalty, disloyalty, if one should ask I cannot answer. 47

Others, labeled as "troublemakers," were exiled to the penal colony in Tule Lake for their "radical" ideas. One such man, referred to only as Masao in Drinnon's Keeper of the Concentration Camps, failed to register for the Selected Service because: "I was put into camp despite my American citizenship and never got a full and equal rights as a citizen of America." 48

What is most apparent however, is that the Issei and Nisei chose to continue with their lives, making the most out of the time they spent behind barbed wire. Issei worked to learn more English, eagerly attending classes and encouraging their children to keep up with their
studies. Ironically, the Japanese Americans, despite the "Americanization" efforts of the education department, actually learned more about Japan and the Japanese language while in the camps than they would have had internment not happened. Despite a few "incidents" where residents clashed with authorities, the time spent in the internment camps was relatively free of strife. Education remained a highly prized institution for the Japanese Americans and most made every effort to take advantage of it in whatever form it came.

In contrast, educators met with strong opposition from both Native parents and their children when the yearly roundups commenced to meet the federally mandated quotas of child attendance in boarding schools. Parents in one Hopi community, "hid their children from roving Mormon missionaries bent upon gathering up the youngsters and shipping them off to what became the Intermountain School in Brigham City, Utah." Children themselves often ran away from the school and educators were forced to place them in jailhouses to ensure their presence in the next day's classes. One such incident reported by an educator involved kindergarten children who: "...using a log as a battering ram...had broken through the jail door, and the entire class had headed for the river bottom." The fierce desire of children to return to their homes seemed lost on the white educators who continued to try to force them to comply with school directives.

Another tactic used by Native peoples to limit the effectiveness of assimilative pressure included lobbying for legislation to establish classes to promote native heritage in public schools. The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 appeared to be the mechanism through which American Indians could at least influence the education their children received. Instead, white schoolteachers and administrators controlled the purse strings and easily overwhelmed the
advisory role relegated to parents. Covertly defied authorities by failing to register their children for school thus reducing the amount of money the public school received in grants from the federal government. In some cases, children themselves opposed the continuous assimilative pressures by purposely failing scholastically. Kim Gruenwald points out in her study that as late as 1986 "over half of Ute students [in Uintah and Duchesne counties of Utah] were failing a majority of their classes." While academic failure or success is based upon a multitude of factors, scholastic aptitude is nonetheless accepted as a measurement of acculturation. In this case then, assimilation and acculturation appeared a dismal failure.

When the government finally relinquished its hold upon the internees, it faced the problem of where to settle them. Protest on the West Coast made it clear that the Japanese Americans were not welcome to return to their former homes. Despite this, many Japanese Americans did return to California, Oregon and Washington. James found the main factor that determined where the internees settled was age; saying that "...the educated Nisei of working age tended to migrate east, while the old and the young tended to return to the West Coast...while about 35,000 Japanese Americans migrated away from the western states initially." Myer set up regulations to direct the relocation of Japanese Americans and, as in his later program for Native Americans, issued a grant of twenty-five dollars to facilitate their resettlement in an "approved" location.

Just as Myer established the protocol for the relocation of the Japanese Americans, so too did he direct the coerced evacuation of Native Americans in the decade following World War II. Under "Operation Relocation" Myer established a means by which to reduce
needed facilities on reservations to encourage Indians to move from tribal lands to places in the cities where they could find jobs.\textsuperscript{59} According to historian Donald Fixico, "by late 1954 approximately 6,200 Native Americans...had resettled in large cities."\textsuperscript{60} This combined with the Native American resettlement during the war for economic opportunities removed many of the best qualified leaders from the reservation and left behind the very old and the very young to fend for themselves.\textsuperscript{61} Just as he had used the internment camp schools, Myer used these institutions to disseminate information about relocation; casting it in the best light possible to encourage settlement away from the reservation.

After the war, Japanese Americans continued to encounter discrimination and racism in the communities in which they settled; however, they have emerged as what some researchers call America's "model minority."\textsuperscript{62} According to Morimoto's study:

Japanese Americans are generally viewed to have adapted to American values and ethics better than many other non-white immigrants, despite their cultural differences and the discrimination they have experienced. It has even been said that one can "scratch a Japanese American and find a white Anglo-Saxton Protestant."\textsuperscript{63}

This same acceptance is not afforded the Native peoples of America. Instead of achieving parity with their white neighbors, they continue to face discrimination, are denied access to equal education, maintain lower education goals, and have lower paying jobs.\textsuperscript{64} Why this inequality exists for Native Americans and not for the majority of Japanese Americans is outside the scope of this paper but deserves the attention of researchers.

Although similarities do exist in Japanese and Native American experiences in the United State, they must not be overstated. Native
Americans underwent forced removal, isolation, and relocation long before and long after the Japanese Americans were subjected to this indignity. American Indians have not risen in the public consciousness as a "model minority." Native Americans maintain a legal claim to their lands based upon treaties and executive orders not afforded to the Japanese Americans who lost property, businesses, and land during World War II. After relocation, Japanese Americans were given little assistance by the federal government to recoup their losses. Native Americans on the other hand were eligible for some federal assistance; especially after the shift in federal policy from termination to self-determination occurred.65

The experiences faced by Japanese and Native Americans are clear examples of racially motivated discriminatory actions perpetrated by what is suppose to be a democratic government. The methods by which the government strove to remove culturally distinct characteristics from these two groups have been used in much the same way against other minorities in the United States. The racism contributing to the forced removal of the Japanese Americans from the West Coast, and the wholesale theft of the best of Native American lands, is directed now at other minorities. Public resistance to dual language instruction and cross-cultural education has its roots deep in past discrimination and racism against other minorities. The education of this democracy is incomplete and we must all guard against further injustices.
NOTES


2. Ibid.


4. Ibid., 25.

5. Ibid.


7. Drinnon, Keeper of the Concentration Camps, 263.

8. Ibid., 19-20.

9. James, Exile Within, 37.


11. James, Exile Within, 37.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., 38.


15. Ibid., 43.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., 64-5.

18. Ibid.


25. Ibid., 46.

26. Ibid., 44.

27. Ibid., 53.


31. Ibid., 91.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., 63.

34. Ibid., 119.


42. Quoted in Ibid., 47.

44. Iverson, The Navajo Nation, 40-1.

45. James, Exile Within, 67.

46. Ibid., 107.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid., 84.

49. Ibid., 106.


51. Ibid.


54. Ibid.


56. James, Exile Within, 163.

57. Ibid., 164.

58. Drinnon, Keeper of the Concentration Camps, 52-5.

59. Ibid., 247.

60. Fixico, Termination and Relocation, 138.

61. Ibid., 134-5.

62. Morimoto, Japanese Americans, 142.

63. Ibid.


65. Fixico, Termination and Relocation, 179-81.
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