

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Faculty Publications, Department of History

History, Department of

---

December 2006

## Indian Boarding Schools in Comparative Perspective: The Removal of Indigenous Children in the United States and Australia, 1880-1940

Margaret D. Jacobs

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, [mjacob3@unl.edu](mailto:mjacobs3@unl.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/historyfacpub>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

---

Jacobs, Margaret D., "Indian Boarding Schools in Comparative Perspective: The Removal of Indigenous Children in the United States and Australia, 1880-1940" (2006). *Faculty Publications, Department of History*. 20.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/historyfacpub/20>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the History, Department of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications, Department of History by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

## 9. Indian Boarding Schools in Comparative Perspective

The Removal of Indigenous Children in the  
United States and Australia, 1880–1940

Margaret D. Jacobs

Margaret D. Jacobs, a professor of history at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, is known for her innovative comparative research about race and gender. Her book *Engendered Encounters: Feminism and Pueblo Cultures, 1879–1934* is a remarkable study of women in the West. In the present essay she compares the forced removal of American Indian and Aboriginal children in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, arguing that governments intentionally removed indigenous children to institutions as acts of colonial control, not assimilation. Since colonial governments in the United States and Australia did not value traditional cultures of American Indians and Aborigines, they sought to destroy them.

Jacobs argues that non-Natives purposely removed indigenous children to make them “useful” to non-Natives. As a result, indigenous children’s institutions taught a curriculum designed to be of benefit to employers who could exploit Native labor. Every state in Australia had a policy of removing children of lighter skin, the mixed-bloods or half-castes that white people feared might threaten the racial and social order. Government officials in both countries created myths about the removal of Native children, saying they acted out of concern, kindness, and Christian duty. In reality, governments actively and aggressively destroyed families, clans, kinships, and cultures as acts of colonialism.

*This is a history that must live now for us.*

MARJORIE WOODROW

When she was growing up, Rose recalls, “the agents were sending out police on horseback to locate children to enroll [in school]. The stories we heard frightened us; I guess some children were snatched up and hauled over there

because the policemen came across them while they were out herding, hauling water, or doing other things for the family. So we started to hide ourselves in different places whenever we saw strangers coming toward where we were living.”<sup>1</sup> Iris remembers a similar situation in her community: “[A Sister] would visit the mission every month or so in a shiny black car with two other officials and always leave with one or two of the fairer-skinned children. . . . [W]e wised up! Each time that car pulled into the mission, our aunties, uncles and grandparents would warn the older children and they grabbed the little ones and ran into the scrub.”<sup>2</sup> Although adults in Rose’s and Iris’s communities tried to hide the children, the authorities eventually found many of them and spirited them away to schools, missions, or other institutions. “I shed tears when I remember how those children were ripped from their families, shoved into that car and driven away,” Iris writes. “The distraught mothers would be powerless and screaming, ‘Don’t take my baby!’”<sup>3</sup>

Although these two stories sound remarkably and disturbingly similar, they took place in almost opposite corners of the world in the early twentieth century. Rose Mitchell, or Tall Woman, a Navajo (Diné) girl, grew up in northeastern Arizona, while Iris Burgoyne, a Mirning-Kokatha woman, came of age in South Australia. Despite being poles apart, Rose and Iris, as well as their indigenous communities, shared a common experience at the hands of white governmental authorities and the missionaries and local police forces that carried out their bidding. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in both the United States and Australia, state officials developed and carried out policies of indigenous child removal. In Australia, authorities claimed that removing children of part-Aboriginal descent from their families and communities would lead to their gradual absorption into white Australia. In the United States, officials promoted assimilation for Indian children through separating them from their communities and educating them at distant boarding schools.<sup>4</sup>

The subject of these boarding schools has long attracted attention from many American Indian scholars, authors, and activists as well as non-indigenous scholars. Early studies examined the origins of the government’s assimilation policy and its boarding school system, largely portraying it as a well-intentioned but misguided effort.<sup>5</sup> Another generation of scholars emphasized the oppressive nature of the schools, exemplified best in Da-

vid Wallace Adams's *Education for Extinction*.<sup>6</sup> Of late, scholars have focused on the unintended and seemingly positive consequences of the boarding schools—the fostering of a strong peer culture and the accompanying emergence of a pan-Indian identity. All-Indian organizations designed to confront and challenge discriminatory government practices, scholars have argued, partly grew out of the boarding school experience. Other scholars have focused on the way in which Indian communities began to embrace and use some of the boarding schools for their own benefit and purpose.<sup>7</sup> This scholarship has had a significant impact in moving the field away from seeing Indian peoples as simply passive and reactive victims of government policy. We know that not all Indian children's journeys to the boarding schools were forced like the children Rose described, and that not all children's experiences within the schools were tales of unrelenting oppression. Rose relates in her autobiography, in fact, that she begged her parents to let her attend school, and she describes in later chapters her willingness to allow some of her own children to attend boarding schools.<sup>8</sup> Many Indian authors also recount their Indian school days with a degree of nostalgia and fondness for certain aspects of their experience.<sup>9</sup>

Yet the fact that some Indian children and parents adapted to a coercive government policy and seized and reshaped it to meet their needs should not lead scholars to neglect an analysis of that policy or to conclude that it was benign. At its heart, U.S. assimilation policy and its promotion of boarding schools demanded the removal of Indian children from their families during crucial periods of their development and socialization. By examining the boarding schools per se, scholars have often overlooked this central element of their purpose. Studying the boarding schools in relation to other practices of indigenous child removal in Australia helps bring into focus the ways in which governments removed indigenous children not simply as a means to assimilate them but also as an official strategy of colonial control and subjugation.

In Australia, policies of indigenous child removal originated in the late 1860s, when Australian colonies began to appoint official Aborigines Protection Boards and Chief Protectors of Aborigines to oversee indigenous affairs. These entities almost immediately began to make distinctions between “full-blood” Aborigines and “half-castes.” Most white Australians

believed that “full-blood” Aboriginals were doomed to extinction and that the government could but ease their inevitable passing on isolated reserves.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, popular Australian discourse portrayed “half-castes,” who were actually increasing in numbers, to be a threat to the racial and social order. Neither Aboriginal nor white in Australian officials’ minds, such children represented a racial anomaly and a threat to their vision of a “White Australia.”<sup>11</sup> Government officials recommended that “half-castes” could be gradually absorbed into the white population by removing such children from Aboriginal communities. By 1911 every Australian state (except Tasmania, which claimed it had no Aboriginal population and therefore no “problem”) had adopted special legislation enabling the forcible removal of Aboriginal children to homes and missions. Authorities in Australia did not target every Aboriginal child for removal, but primarily those who were lighter-skinned. They also intended removal to be a permanent separation of a child from its family and community. Up until World War II, most Australian states removed Aboriginal children to institutions. Thereafter, state governments turned instead to placing them in foster or adoptive families. Since the 1980s, many Aboriginal people who were separated from their families, often calling themselves “the Stolen Generations,” have bitterly condemned this policy and sought reparations, government services to help reunite and rebuild Aboriginal families, or at the very least, an official apology.<sup>12</sup>

Beginning about 1880, the U.S. government began to promote boarding schools for American Indian children, modeled on Colonel Richard Henry Pratt’s Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, as a primary means to assimilate Indian children.<sup>13</sup> By 1902, according to David Wallace Adams, the government was operating 154 boarding schools (including 25 off-reservation schools) as well as 154 day schools for about 21,500 Native American children.<sup>14</sup> Officials sought to remove every Indian child (“mixed-blood” and “full-blood” alike) to a boarding school for a period of at least three years. Assimilation policy, including the policy of removing children to boarding schools, fell out of favor for a brief time period from 1934 to 1945 under Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier, but it was revived under a new name—termination and relocation—after World War II. Although many boarding schools remained in operation after the 1930s, Indian child removal after World War II followed the same model as Aus-

tralian policy. Up until the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, it more often manifested itself in the form of social workers who removed Indian children from families they deemed unfit, to be raised in foster homes or adoptive families.<sup>15</sup>

Although both nations developed similar policies toward indigenous children, there is little evidence of any direct influence of one administration upon the other or of contact between officials. U.S. administrators did not cite other countries as examples or models for their policy. Australian authorities appear to have been generally aware of American Indian policy, but they demonstrated no direct knowledge of specific U.S. policies such as the boarding schools. Perhaps, most tellingly, when Australian officials did refer to racial policy in other colonial contexts, they commonly cited South Africa and U.S. experience with African Americans. This may help to explain their eugenic orientation, their fixation with questions of blood, and their use of terms such as “half-castes,” “quadroons,” and “octoroons” to refer to Aboriginals.<sup>16</sup>

Both the United States and Australia developed powerful national myths regarding their policies of indigenous child removal. Government authorities in both countries represented the removal as a kind and benevolent policy designed to rescue and protect indigenous children. A member of the Aborigines Protection Board in New South Wales asserted, for example, “These black children must be rescued from danger to themselves.”<sup>17</sup> Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan characterized the boarding schools as “rescuing the children and youth from barbarism or savagery.”<sup>18</sup>

This myth of rescue rested on a discourse in both countries that equated indigeneity with backwardness, poverty, immorality, and parental neglect. In 1911, for example, the agent to the Hopis, Leo Crane, removed fifty-one girls and eighteen boys from the Hopi village of Hotevilla on Third Mesa. Of the children taken, Crane wrote, “nearly all had trachoma. It was winter, and not one of those children had clothing above rags; some were nude.”<sup>19</sup> Crane deemed the children’s diseased and bedraggled condition as proof of parental neglect and Hopi pathology; therefore he claimed his actions of removing the children from their families to be a necessary and humane act of rescue. Crane seemed unaware of the role that colonialism played in bringing disease, poverty, and starvation to the Hopi villages.

White authorities on both sides of the Pacific used a surprisingly com-

mon vocabulary to create an association between indigeneity and neglect. As Jan McKinley Wilson has observed, authorities in New South Wales constantly invoked the specter of Aboriginal “camps” as places of iniquity and backwardness that did not provide a proper atmosphere for indigenous children.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, one finds similar rhetoric regarding Indian “camps” among the writings of American officials and reformers. For example, the missionary John C. Lowrie argued that civilization “can only be effectually accomplished by taking them [Indian children] away from the demoralizing & enervating atmosphere of camp life & Res[ervation] surroundings & Concomitants.”<sup>21</sup> Consider one of the most common other uses of the term in the nineteenth century: mining camps. In this case, the word signified a temporary, makeshift, ramshackle community full of lawlessness and immorality. By representing indigenous communities as “camps,” white observers pathologized them as impermanent, unstable, and disorderly.

Furthermore, white officials made careful distinctions between white “towns” and indigenous “camps.” Donna Meehan, an Aboriginal woman, remembers the train ride on which she and her brothers were taken away from her mother and community. “We were on that train for a very long time,” she recalls. “I had run out of tears to cry. The flat country from home that was covered with warm red dirt was now very hilly and layered with trees, and the camps which were situated alongside the train track became more frequent and visible. The white woman corrected Barry [Donna’s brother] as she overheard him telling . . . me that they were the camps of the white man, and said: ‘They are called towns.’”<sup>22</sup> This incident further illustrates the ways in which both official and popular discourse demonized indigeneity by contrasting it unfavorably with “civilization.”

In addition to portraying the removal of indigenous children as “rescue,” American officials and some Australian authorities created national myths that such removal served a noble goal of providing education and opportunity. For example, the famed nineteenth-century author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe, declared, “We have tried fighting and killing the Indians, and gained little by it. We have tried feeding them as paupers in their savage state, and the result has been dishonest contractors, and invitation and provocation to war. Suppose we try education? . . . Might not the money now constantly spent on armies, forts and frontiers be better invested in educating young men who shall return and teach

their people to live like civilized beings?"<sup>23</sup> Like the myth of rescue, this notion characterizes the removal of indigenous children as an act of kindness toward the children.

Yet it was a particular kind of education that white officials promoted, for indigenous peoples already possessed their own complex systems of transmitting knowledge. Despite their unique cultures and perspectives, indigenous communities seemed to share in common an emphasis on communal child rearing and education through example. In her novel *Waterlily*, Dakota anthropologist Ella Cara Deloria conveys the importance of extended family: "Any family could maintain itself adequately as long as the father was a good hunter and the mother an industrious woman. But socially that was not enough; ideally it must be part of a larger family, constituted of related households, called a *tiyospaye* ('group of tipis')." Deloria explains, "In the atmosphere of that larger group, all adults were responsible for the safety and happiness of their collective children. The effect on the growing child was a feeling of security and self-assurance, and that was all to the good. . . . To be cast out from one's relatives was literally to be lost. To return to them was to recover one's rightful haven."<sup>24</sup> Within such a community, all members played a role in the education and upbringing of children. Many Native authors single out the role of grandmothers in instructing children. For example, Lame Deer, a Lakota, noted, "As with most Indian children, much of my upbringing was done by my grandparents. . . . Among our people the relationship to one's grandparents is as strong as to one's own father and mother."<sup>25</sup>

Within indigenous communities, education did not take place within fixed spaces and at fixed times but constituted an ongoing process of learning by example and through modeling. As Deloria writes, *Waterlily's* grandmother "did not lecture" the little girl "all the time. Instead she stated the rules of behavior toward one another and pointed out examples."<sup>26</sup> Buludga, a Mungari person of the Northern Territory in Australia, explained that "it is during . . . games . . . when we are children, that we black people are taught many things which are useful to us when we grow up and which we must know in order to live in this land. What we learn from our play white children learn from books."<sup>27</sup> Such indigenous systems of education prepared indigenous children to take their place within their own societies.

Yet, by the late nineteenth century, both the U.S. government and Aus-



tralian state governments regarded the persistence of indigenous communities as problematic and in need of transformation. Authorities failed to acknowledge indigenous educational systems and considered indigenous “curricula” incapable of preparing indigenous children for their new roles in the colonial system. Thus government officials in both countries sought to replace indigenous education with formal institutional systems of colonial education as well as to supplant teachers within indigenous communities with government employees.

Although reformers such as Stowe portrayed education as a benevolent policy designed for the good of indigenous children, the ubiquitous rhetoric of government officials regarding the need to make indigenous people “*useful*” reveals a more practical motivation for “education.” In a typical comment, one official in South Australia declared, “There are not only black children of a school-going age but half-castes and quadroons that should be taken from the camps and taught to become useful members of society.”<sup>28</sup> The concept of “usefulness” functioned in a similar way to the use of the term “camps.” It suggested that, if left unreformed by a colonial education, indigenous children were *useless*, lacking a purpose in the colonial regime. Few reformers recognized an inherent value in the existence of indigenous people and their cultures. And the idea of supposedly primitive peoples living independently in the midst of industrializing, modern nations who needed cheap sources of labor seemed to pose an affront to white Americans and Australians.

In the new institutions to which indigenous children were sent, they would be trained to become “useful” members of white society, that is, primarily domestic servants in white households and laborers on farm and ranches. Missions and homes in Australia routinely apprenticed their Aboriginal inmates out to white families, most of their earnings deposited in trust funds that more often than not mysteriously disappeared.<sup>29</sup> Similarly in the United States, many boarding schools adopted Pratt’s “outing” program, placing Indian children as field hands and servants among white American families for part of each school day and in the summers. As in Australia, many Indian children received only a fraction of their earnings; the rest was collected and controlled by their agents and superintendents.<sup>30</sup>

One does not have to look far below the rhetoric of benevolent rescue to find base economic motives lurking. Sir Baldwin Spencer concluded that

Aboriginals would disappear if not completely segregated from whites, and “that was regrettable, as without them, it would be difficult to work the land.”<sup>31</sup> With this desire to “fit them for that station of life in which they are to live,” institutions for indigenous children became virtual labor recruiters for local white families who sought cheap laborers.<sup>32</sup> According to Pratt, “so great is the demand [by local white families] for the Indian boys and girls that more than twice as many applications for pupils as can be supplied are received.” This led the Carlisle Indian School newspaper to rhapsodize, “Think of the splendid opportunity these girls have to become good housekeepers.”<sup>33</sup> Indigenous children were thus trained to become menial “useful” laborers, not educated to assume equal status and citizenship with the white colonists of their countries.

Even if the major goal of each government was to educate indigenous people to become useful to their new conquerors, however, such education could have taken place within indigenous communities. After all, within the United States, white reformers, missionaries, and officials routinely established schools among the people they deemed in need of colonial education—African Americans, Mexican Americans, and prior to this era, Native Americans. Some missionaries and reformers within Australia had also founded schools among Aboriginal communities.

Despite the fact that such education conflicted with their own systems of teaching their children, Indian communities often welcomed such endeavors, especially when faced with the alternative of removing their children. In one particularly poignant plea, the Kiowa man Kicking Bird explained his point of view to Thomas Battey, a Quaker teacher who taught among the Caddos on a neighboring reservation in Indian Territory. Battey wrote that Kicking Bird and his wife informed him that “they had come to ask me to be a father to their little girl. I told them that if they would bring her here, and leave her with me, I would be a father to her, and treat her as I would one of my own children. Kicking Bird said, ‘We cannot leave her; we have lost five children; she is all we have; we cannot leave her here; but we want you to be a father to her, as you are to these children here.’” Battey then asked the Kiowa leader if he wanted Battey to come live among the Kiowa and to teach their children. Kicking Bird replied “yes.”<sup>34</sup>

Some Native leaders tried to convince the government to establish schools on the reservation rather than shipping their children away from them. John

Grass, a Lakota leader, explained, "It will not cost so much to give us schools at home on our own lands, and it will be better for our children and our people, too. You now educate our children in the East, and fit them for your life full of civilization, and then send them back to us, who have no civilization. You spend a great deal of money, and make our people very unhappy."<sup>35</sup> Some tribes consented to or even promoted on-reservation boarding schools, especially on reservations where the great distances between settlements made day schools impractical. For example, the Pit River Indians in northern California asked the government "to establish an Indian boarding school at or near [the] village (Fall River Mills), it being a common centre to which they could all, within a circuit of fifty miles, send their children. If such a school cannot be had they earnestly desire two district schools about fourteen miles apart."<sup>36</sup> The Navajos, according to Women's National Indian Association president Amelia Stone Quinton, favored on-reservation boarding schools, where they "can see their children when hungry for the sight of their faces, . . . while the plan of taking the children off the reservation meets their utter disapproval and bitter hostility."<sup>37</sup> In fact, when Quinton spoke with Navajo soldiers at Fort Wingate in 1891, they were cordial with her until she brought up the education of their children. This "revealed the angry fear of a non-reservation school, or the suspicion that I had come to steal their children for one of the latter."<sup>38</sup>

Thus if education were the primary goal of U.S. and Australian authorities, even for such a limited program of "usefulness," removal of indigenous children would not have been necessary. Clearly, deeper and more sinister motivations played a role in the decisions of administrators to take the drastic step of separating indigenous children from their families and communities. In the United States, government desires to squelch Indian resistance on a large, collective scale played a major role in adopting child removal as policy. For example, white authorities in the United States often remarked on the inverse connection between child removal to boarding schools and wars with the Indians. The Women's National Indian Association newsletter, *The Indian's Friend*, cleverly asserted, "The Indians at Carlisle and Hampton [Institute] are rising; and the more they rise there, the less uprising there will be on the Plains." General Thomas Morgan, commissioner of Indian Affairs in the late 1800s, concurred. "It is cheaper to educate a man

and to raise him to self-support," he asserted, "than to raise another generation of savages and fight them."<sup>39</sup>

White authorities also perceived that removing Indian children rendered the children's parents more docile. This strategy can be seen particularly in the story of Geronimo and the Chiricahua Apaches. In April 1886 the U.S. government arrested 77 Chiricahua Apaches for breaking the terms of their surrender. Late in August 1886, military officials rounded up 383 more Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apaches and boarded them on a train bound for prison at Fort Marion, Florida. In the meantime, General Nelson A. Miles had also defeated the Apache leader Geronimo and sent him and his followers into exile near Fort Marion at Fort Pickens.<sup>40</sup> Among the pows at Fort Marion and Fort Pickens there were more than 165 Apache children.<sup>41</sup>

Originally, white authorities believed the entire group of pows should be educated and rehabilitated to prevent them from ever returning to the warpath. Colonel Loomis Langdon, commander at Fort Marion, filed a report in August 1886 that promoted this solution: "What is to be done with the prisoners?' In the nature of things they cannot remain prisoners here till they all die. This is as good a time as any to make a permanent disposition for them. . . . Nor can they very well always remain at Fort Marion without necessitating the constant retention at this post of a battalion of troops." Therefore, Langdon recommended that the "*whole* party of prisoners be sent as soon as possible to Carlisle, Pa." Langdon proposed this solution because he asserted that the Apache prisoners had been promised that they would never be separated from their children. "A breach of faith in this respect—a separation—is what they constantly dread."<sup>42</sup>

Yet the government did just that. Although a local order of nuns, the Sisters of St. Joseph, started to voluntarily teach some of the children and promoted the opening of an industrial school for the Indians in the vicinity of Fort Marion, government officials decided instead to remove most of the Apache children from their imprisoned parents. In October 1886 officials identified thirty-two boys and twelve girls to be sent to Carlisle.<sup>43</sup> A year later Pratt boasted that the forty-four Apache children had arrived "as wild, untrained, filthy savages" but had been transformed into peaceable scholars by Carlisle's "civilizing atmosphere."<sup>44</sup>

Later in the spring of 1887, Pratt "recruited" sixty-four more students for Carlisle from among the exiled Apaches. Jason Betzinez was one of those

“recruited” when Pratt lined up all the younger Apache pawns. “No one volunteered,” Betzinez remembered, but when Pratt came to Betzinez, “he stopped, looked me up and down, and smiled. Then he seized my hand, held it up to show that I volunteered. I only scowled; I didn’t want to go at all.”<sup>45</sup> The remaining Apache prisoners were slated to be removed to Mount Vernon, Alabama. The prisoners protested both the taking of their children and their own removal to yet another location by holding nightly dances atop the fort. Nevertheless, the U.S. government carried out its plans to take their children and to remove the Apache adults yet again.<sup>46</sup> Government officials, missionaries, and reformers all conceived of the removal of children for the stated purposes of education as a means to fully pacify the pawns. The fact that the government broke its promise to the Apaches and went ahead and separated the children from their families and tribes suggests that the government used the tactic to compel obedience and docility, as a powerful means of control. The Apache children were essentially kidnapped; in order to ever hope to see their children again, their families had to pay ransom through their compliance with government wishes.

In another instance, the purpose of Pratt’s scheme becomes clear as well. In a letter to the editor of the *New York Daily Tribune*, Episcopal bishop Henry Benjamin Whipple observed that Pratt’s prisoners at Fort Marion had “learned by heart life’s first lesson, ‘to obey.’ ” He further asserted, “Here were men who had committed murder upon helpless women and children sitting like docile children at the feet of women learning to read.”<sup>47</sup> Reformers and government officials conceived of institutions for Indian children to have a similarly pacifying effect on Indian people’s resistance. The Quaker Indian agent, John Miles, for example, wrote to Pratt, “There are so many points gained in placing Indian children in school. . . . 1st. The child being in school the parents are much easier managed; are loyal to the Government, to the Agent, and take an interest in the affairs of the Agency, and never dare, or desire, to commit a serious wrong.”<sup>48</sup> Authorities made such policies explicit, as, for example, when the commissioner of Indian Affairs expressly ordered Pratt to obtain children from two reservations with hostile Indians, the Spotted Tail and Red Cloud agencies, “saying that the children, if brought east, would become hostages for tribal good behavior.”<sup>49</sup>

In Australia, similar desires to control indigenous people influenced policy. Yet in this case, in contrast to the United States, the eugenics movement

heavily influenced government officials; they were especially concerned with “miscegenation” between white men and Aboriginal women and the “half-caste menace” that resulted from such liaisons. In South Australia, officials began to remove a few “half-caste” children in the early 1900s under the provisions of the 1895 State Children’s Act. The Protector of Aborigines defended his policies by arguing that all “half-caste” children should be regarded as neglected, yet he also divulged his belief that by removing “half-caste” children “it should not be forgotten that each succeeding generation will undoubtedly become whiter, as the children of half-castes are as a rule much lighter than their parents, and no doubt the process will continue until the blacks will altogether disappear.”<sup>50</sup> In Western Australia and the Northern Territory, each of the Chief Protectors of Aborigines also recommended “breeding out the colour” of part-Aboriginal people by encouraging marriages and sexual liaisons between “half-caste” women and white men. Interestingly, though some white women’s groups suggested that this “menace” could be eliminated simply by regulating white men’s access to Aboriginal women, white male officials never seriously entertained such a proposition.<sup>51</sup> The control of white male sexuality seemed unthinkable to them; the regulation of Aboriginal women’s sexuality and the taking of their children, however, seemed natural and desirable.

Thus it was officials’ and reformers’ desire to control indigenous populations that drove the policy of indigenous child removal. Although many authorities touted the policy as a means to absorb or assimilate indigenous people into the mainstream, we must look beyond stated justifications to ask what purpose assimilation served. By comparing the boarding school system with Australia’s policy of removing children, we are forced to look deeper, to examine the underlying purpose of boarding school education and why assimilation appealed to government officials. Ultimately, assimilation and its requirement of indigenous child removal were designed to render indigenous people more dependent and compliant.

Furthermore, the means by which authorities removed indigenous children were intended to illustrate to indigenous people their powerlessness against the hegemony of the state. In Australia, state laws gave Aborigines Protection Boards and Chief Protectors broad powers to take Aboriginal children away without a court hearing to prove neglect or abuse (as was required for the state to remove white children from their families). In

the United States, laws were more ambiguous. In 1891 Congress prevented “educational expulsion from the reservation without the consent of parents,” though it did allow for compulsory attendance for boarding or day schools *on* the reservation.<sup>52</sup> Government authorities took advantage of this exception by literally forcing many Indian children to attend on-reservation boarding schools at gunpoint. Helen Sekaquaptewa, a Hopi woman, remembers that “very early one morning toward the end of October, 1906, we awoke to find our camp surrounded by troops who had come during the night from Keams Canyon. Superintendent Lemmon . . . told the men . . . that the government had reached the limit of its patience; that the children would have to go to school. . . . All children of school age were lined up to be registered and taken away to school. . . . We were taken to the schoolhouse in New Oraibi, with military escort.” The next day government authorities along with a military escort loaded Helen and eighty-one other Hopi children onto wagons and took them to Keams Canyon Boarding School.<sup>53</sup>

Additionally, authorities found other ways to circumvent the law when Indian people resisted attempts to remove their children. The acting Indian agent at the reservation of the Mescalero Apaches in New Mexico described his experience: “The greatest opposition came from the objection of the men to having their hair cut, and from that of the women to having their children compelled to attend school. . . . The deprivation of supplies and the arrest of the old women soon worked a change. Willing or unwilling every child five years of age was forced into school.”<sup>54</sup> Withholding annuity goods—including food—developed into a common method whereby government agents compelled Indian parents to send their children to school.<sup>55</sup> Such heavy-handed methods created great hardship and terror in indigenous communities and ironically fostered the very conditions—poverty, hunger, and disease—that authorities claimed as justification for removing indigenous children in the first place.

Over time, as many scholars have shown, some Indian communities in the United States began to willingly send their children to the schools, even to claim the schools as their own.<sup>56</sup> Such a process does not seem to have occurred as commonly in Australia, perhaps because the government intended separation to be permanent and because so few children returned to their communities from the schools. Although some Indian peoples grew to accept the schools, we should not lose sight of the initial motivation for the

schools and the coercive ways in which the government forced many Indian children to attend them.

Through exploring the experience of indigenous children within institutions, we can also come to a greater understanding of how the removal and institutionalization of indigenous children dramatically altered indigenous lifeways. Upon arrival at their new institutions, indigenous children endured a hauntingly similar initiation ritual on both sides of the Pacific. First, authorities bathed them, then cut or shaved off their hair. At the Forrest River Mission in Western Australia, Connie Nungulla McDonald recalls how, when the children “first came in, they were introduced to a western-style bath, that had hot water, soap and towels instead of a fresh running stream, dried acacia blossoms and a warm sunny rock.”<sup>57</sup> Jean Carter, taken as a child to Cootamundra Home in New South Wales, remembers being “whisked away really quickly” from her home. “Next thing I remember we were in this place, it was a shelter sort of thing, and this big bath, huge bath, in the middle of the room, and all the smell of disinfectant, getting me [*sic*] hair cut, and getting this really scalding hot bath.”<sup>58</sup>

Zitkala-Sa, a Lakota woman, devoted an entire chapter of her memoirs to the trauma of having her long hair cut by boarding school officials on her first day at school. When she learned what was to be done, she hid under a bed.

*I remember being dragged out, though I resisted by kicking and scratching wildly. In spite of myself, I was carried downstairs and tied fast in a chair.*

*I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. . . . Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do; for now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder.<sup>59</sup>*

Cutting hair represented a particular indignity to many Native American children. As Zitkala-Sa put it, “Our mother had taught us that only unskilled warriors who were captured had their hair shingled by the enemy. Among our people, short hair was worn by mourners, and shingled hair by cowards!”<sup>60</sup> Thus at Carlisle, when barbers cropped the hair of the first group of Indian boys, one boy woke Mrs. Pratt from sleep with “dis-



cordant wailing.” He told her that “his people always wailed after cutting their hair, as it was an evidence of mourning, and he had come out on the parade ground to show his grief.” Mrs. Pratt recalled that “his voice had awakened the girls, who joined with their shrill voices, then other boys joined and hence the commotion.”<sup>61</sup> Mrs. Pratt understood the boy’s actions as a quaint but superstitious act. We might better understand it as an act of mourning for being uprooted and being shorn of one’s identity, both literally and figuratively.

Through changing the children’s mode of dress, institutions also aimed to reshape them. In the United States, following Pratt’s model, many schools issued military uniforms to Indian boys and simple uniforms to Indian girls.<sup>62</sup> At least one Native American leader balked at such a practice. According to Pratt, Spotted Tail (Lakota) “found fault with the school because we were using soldier uniforms for the boys. He said he did not like to have their boys drilled, because they did not want them to become soldiers.”<sup>63</sup> Connie McDonald recalls that at Forrest River Mission in Western Australia the missionaries sought to replace their nakedness or minimal clothing with government-issued clothes. “Most of our everyday clothes were made from materials from government stores, mainly flour bags, dungaree, calico, and khaki material,” McDonald writes. “To our great embarrassment dresses made out of flour bags always had the brand stamp right in the middle of our sit-me-downs.”<sup>64</sup>

Institutional authorities also sought to strip indigenous children of their identity by forbidding their inmates (as they called them) from speaking their own languages. Simon Ortiz from Acoma Pueblo writes: “In my childhood, the language we all spoke was Acoma, and it was a struggle to maintain it against the outright threats of corporal punishment, ostracism, and the invocation that it would impede our progress towards Americanization. Children in school were punished and looked upon with disdain if they did not speak and learn English quickly and smoothly, and so I learned it.”<sup>65</sup>

Officials also attempted to remake the identities of indigenous children by renaming them. Daklugie, a Chiricahua Apache taken to Carlisle, recalls, “They marched us into a room and our interpreter ordered us to line up with our backs to a wall. . . . Then a man went down it. Starting with me he began: ‘Asa, Benjamin, Charles, Daniel, Eli, Frank.’ . . . I became Asa Daklugie. We didn’t know till later that they’d even imposed meaningless

new names on us, . . . I've always hated that name. It was forced on me as though I had been an animal."<sup>66</sup> Connie McDonald remarks that "although I had a name when I arrived at the [Forrest River] mission, I now became Constance."<sup>67</sup> Marjorie Woodrow, removed to Cootamundra Home in New South Wales as a young teen, remembered that the Aboriginal girls there were given and addressed by numbers, "like a prison camp."<sup>68</sup>

Schools, missions, and homes resembled prison camps in other ways as well. Lane Deer recalls that "in those days the Indian schools were like jails and run along military lines, with roll calls four times a day. We had to stand at attention, or march in step."<sup>69</sup> Connie McDonald had a similar experience: "Morning and evening, we were marched to church like soldiers. In fact, wherever we went, we marched in military style with the matron 'bringing up the rear.'<sup>70</sup> Such conditions led Doris Pilkington, who was removed to Moore River Settlement in Western Australia, to conclude that the conditions there were "more like a concentration camp than a residential school for Aboriginal children."<sup>71</sup>

To maintain order and inculcate discipline, nearly every institution enacted a strict regimen. At an Episcopal school for Indian girls on the Fort Hall reservation in Idaho, twenty-six girls between five and sixteen years of age were "kept busy at work or play from 6:30 in the morning until 7:30 in the evening for the smaller ones, and 8:30 for the larger girls."<sup>72</sup> At Moore River, Alice Nannup remembers, "They always had me working, never left me free."<sup>73</sup> With such a schedule "there was no time for play or recreation," as Connie McDonald puts it.<sup>74</sup>

As part of their effort to transform and control children, all the institutions emphasized Christian training. Many indigenous children found these teachings mystifying. Connie McDonald wrestled with the contradictions she saw within the teachings of Christian missionaries:

*I could see that for the tribal people in the camp, nudity was a way of life. One day I asked one of the missionaries, "Did God say we have to wear clothes? When God made Adam and Eve they were naked so whose rule is it that we wear clothes?"*

*I was told, "Everybody wears clothes. It is society's rule."<sup>75</sup>*

Officials intended such Christian teachings to replace the "heathen" beliefs of their inmates. In so doing, officials often frightened children with the

idea that indigenous religions were demonic. Barbara Cummings from the Northern Territory writes that small children were “inculcated with a deep fear of the ‘blackfella’ through Christian indoctrination that equated blackness and darkness with sin and whiteness with purity and goodness.”<sup>76</sup>

Despite government administrators’ assertions that they were rescuing indigenous children from “camps” in which they suffered neglect, some institutions failed to satisfy the most basic needs of their inmates. Alicia Adams, while institutionalized at Bomaderry in New South Wales, attended the local public school. “We used to walk, with no shoes on you know, . . . barefoot, even in winter.”<sup>77</sup> Many Aboriginal people remember insufficient or spoiled food at the institutions. “We used to have this weevily porridge that I couldn’t eat,” Daisy Ruddick recounts. “I just couldn’t eat that sort of food. But I tell you what! After the third day I was into everything! In the end I had to eat.”<sup>78</sup> Unfamiliar and insufficient food as well as what Zitkala-Sa called “eating by formula” dismayed many Indian children as well.<sup>79</sup> Yet conditions varied by institution in both countries. Joy Williams, at Luntanda Children’s Home in New South Wales, remembered, “I think I was converted six million times—was saved. That entailed another piece of cake on Sunday! Had nice clothes, always had plenty of food.”<sup>80</sup> Elsie Roughsey, institutionalized at a mission in Queensland, recalled, “We were well fed. . . . We’d have porridge with fresh milk. At noon we’d have a big meal of rice with meat and things from the garden: pumpkin, cabbage, carrots, beets, beans, shallots, tomatoes, pineapples, custard apples, lemons, papaws.”<sup>81</sup>

Poor conditions as well as the harsh regimens and homesickness led some children to run away. To prevent them from running away, officials often locked them in dormitories overnight with inadequate sanitation facilities. Daisy Ruddick recalls that at Kahlin Compound in Darwin, “We were locked up at night. . . . We had to take the kerosene tin to use it as a toilet in the building. Just imagine! At summer time, somebody had diarrhoea or something—well you can imagine what the smell was like!”<sup>82</sup> Edmund Nequatewa, a Hopi taken to Keams Canyon Boarding School, wrote in his memoir that the dormitories were always locked at night, and “no toilet facilities were provided.” If they had to urinate at night, the boys tried to go through holes in the floorboards. One night, several desperate boys taught officials a lesson; they “decided that they will just crap all over the floor.”

This act of rebellion resulted not in unlocking the dormitories but in supplying the children with buckets.<sup>83</sup>

Teachers, superintendents, disciplinarians, and matrons also often used harsh disciplinary tactics against indigenous children who failed to comply with all the new rules. Omaha Indian Francis La Flesche witnessed and experienced firsthand many incidents of brutality on the part of his missionary schoolmaster. In one instance, his teacher, whom he referred to as "Gray-beard," took the hand of Francis's friend Joe and beat it with a board. "Gray-beard dealt blow after blow on the visibly swelling hand. The man seemed to lose all self-control, gritting his teeth and breathing heavily, while the child writhed with pain, turned blue, and lost his breath." Francis could not forget the savagery of Gray-beard: "The vengeful way in which he fell upon that innocent boy created in my heart a hatred that was hard to conquer." Francis remarked, "I tried to reconcile the act of Gray-beard with the teachings of the Missionaries, but I could not do so from any point of view."<sup>84</sup>

Punishment was equally harsh for Aboriginal children. Alice Nannup remembers that when a young couple ran away from Moore River, "they brought [the girl] Linda to the middle of the main street right in front of the office. They made her kneel, then they cut all her hair off. . . . Then they took [the boy] Norman down to the shed, stripped him and tarred and feathered him. The trackers brought him up to the compound and paraded him around to show everybody . . . [W]hen they'd finished they took Norman away and locked him up in the boob [jail]."<sup>85</sup>

In addition to the sanctioned physical abuse of children in the guise of discipline, authorities also engaged in other unsanctioned forms of abuse, namely sexual abuse. Of the Aboriginal witnesses called before Australia's National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families, "almost one in ten boys and just over one in ten girls allege they were sexually abused in a children's institution." The report of the inquiry carefully noted that "witnesses were not asked whether they had had this experience," so they estimate that many more Aboriginal people may have been abused but chose not to disclose this.<sup>86</sup> American Indian children also experienced sexual abuse. Helen Sekaquaptewa described a male teacher, "who when the class came up to 'read,' always called one of the girls to stand by him at the desk and look on the book with him. . . . He

would put his arms around and fondle this girl, sometimes taking her on his lap.” When it was Helen’s turn and this teacher rubbed her arm and “put his strong whiskers on my face,” she screamed until he put her down.<sup>87</sup>

Abuse, neglect, and the strict and unfamiliar regimen of institutional life were hard enough for children. When disease struck the schools, as it did all too frequently, a baffling experience could be made fatal. Disease, particularly tuberculosis, killed off large numbers of indigenous children in institutions in both areas of the world. Parents especially suffered when their children were struck by diseases within the schools. Rose Mitchell experienced the devastation of an illness among her children at boarding school, when school officials from Chinle Boarding School came to inform her that her daughter had died there:

*We had heard there was a sickness over at that school. . . . But because we had gotten no word, we thought our daughter, Pauline, wasn't one of the ones affected by that. Here, these men had come to tell us this sickness had already killed her and some of the other children. We didn't even know she was sick since they didn't let the children come home on weekends. . . . The officials had never notified us about any of it. The same was true with the other parents whose children passed away at that time; they weren't notified, either. So, lots of people got angry. . . . The officials said they had already buried the children who had passed away. That, too, upset us. We should have been asked about it, to see if we wanted to do it according to our own ways. But it was too late. . . . That made both of us very sad, and also angry at the schools and the way they treated parents of the children who were enrolled there.*<sup>88</sup>

Rose’s pain at the loss of her child was compounded by the callous manner in which officials dealt with her daughter’s life. Her experience reveals that indigenous parents had little recourse against the apparatus of the state, even when it was truly neglecting and abusing their children.

Rose’s experience makes clear that officials worked hard to ensure as little contact as possible between children and their families and communities. Such policies dealt a devastating blow to indigenous parents and communities, as is evidenced in the desperate letters from distraught parents that can be found in archives in the United States and Australia. In 1912, for example, an Aboriginal woman wrote to officials in Victoria:

Dear Sir,

*Please I wont [sic] you to do me a favour if you could help me to get my two girls out of the Homes as they were sent there as neglected children. . . . When they were sent away it was said by the Police Magistrate that they were to be sent to the Homes till we were ready to go on to a Mission Station. They were to be transferred . . . as it was no place of ours to be roaming about with so many children. . . . I then come out to Coranderrk Mission Station with a broken heart not seeing my own flesh and blood which God has given to me as a comfort & I would like them to live with me till death does part us. . . . Trusting in your help and in the Grace of God help [sic] I may be able to see my too [sic] dear girls again.<sup>89</sup>*

In 1914 this woman wrote again to the Aborigines Protection Board in Victoria: "I wish to ask if I could have my two girls who were sent to the Homes. Now that I have a home on Coranderrk where I am well able to look after them . . . they were promised to me as soon as I got a home." The archives also reveal that Australian officials rarely granted such requests. On this woman's plea they scribbled, "I consider the girls are much better off where they are," "No promise has been made to return them and it is better they should learn to earn their living outside," and "It is not advisable to remove the girls."<sup>90</sup>

When they could not get their children returned, many parents sought to at least visit them. Australian archives are also replete with letters like the following:

Sir,

*I wish to ask the Board's Permission for a pass to see my two daughters which are in Melbourne. I have not seen them for a long time. Sir I would be very pleased if the Board could grant my request. . . . It hurts my feelings very much to know that they are so far away from me. A mother feels for her children.<sup>91</sup>*

In this case and in many others, Australian officials denied this mother the opportunity to see her children.

In the United States we find similar pleas from traumatized parents. After their daughter Alice died at Carlisle, Omaha parents James and Lena Springer wrote an anguished letter to Pratt:

*We feel very sorry that we did not hear about the sickness of our daughter, in time to have her come home. . . . We feel that those who profess to have the management here of our children, feel but little interest in their welfare. . . . We would like the body of our daughter Alice sent to us. . . . We also want [our other children] Elsie and Willie sent home, as we have good schools here on the reserve. . . . We are anxious to have our children educated, but do not see the necessity of sending them so far away to be educated, when we have good schools at home, where we can see them when we wish, and attend to them when sick. Please send them as soon as possible, so as to get them home before cold weather. . . . Please do not deny our request, if you have any regard to a Father's and Mother's feelings.<sup>92</sup>*

At first Pratt refused to send the other Springer children home, but after many more exchanges he finally agreed as long as the parents themselves paid for the expense of transporting their children home. Such letters reveal that policies of indigenous child removal not only transformed the experience of childhood for thousands of indigenous children but also exacted a heavy toll on indigenous communities.

By segregating indigenous children so thoroughly from their parents and communities, government officials effectively undermined the authority of indigenous parents. This was more pronounced in Australia than in the United States because officials sought to permanently separate children from their parents and therefore told children that they had been removed because their parents did not want them or had hurt them. For example, Pauline McLeod “was told that they’d [her parents] abused me, and that because of that abuse I was taken away, and that if they really cared or really loved [me], they would have contacted [me].” Later, when McLeod was able to obtain her file, she learned that “I had been taken away because we had no fixed place of abode. Totally contradicting . . . what I’d been told and believed all these years.”<sup>93</sup> Even after reuniting with her mother after decades apart, Joy Williams says frankly, “Part of me still believes what the Home says that she didn’t want me.”<sup>94</sup>

While institutions sought to replace parental with government authority, they proved to be unsuccessful in this endeavor; instead, indigenous children came to rely on each other for socialization, and a new indigenous peer

culture evolved. This had devastating consequences for the cohesion of indigenous communities, as older ways of transmitting cultural values and knowledge through elders were eroded and some cultural knowledge was lost. Within the institutions, however, these new peer cultures could provide solace and comfort to children who were separated from their loved ones. In *The Middle Five*, Francis La Flesche describes the close camaraderie that developed between himself and four other Omaha schoolboys when they attended a mission school in Nebraska.<sup>95</sup> Ruth Elizabeth Hegarty, taken with her family to Cherbourg in Queensland (but then separated from her mother and other family members), recalls that in the dormitory, “I grew up with all these girls. The thing is, I think, whilst it was the government’s policy to institute us, we became one family. We became a family of all of us in there. We still take care of each other.” Hegarty found it frightening to have to leave the dormitory and mission and her new family at the age of fourteen when she was sent out to work. “It might have been an institution,” she says, “but at least it provided me with some comfort, when you knew that there were people around you that supported you.”<sup>96</sup>

Yet the peer cultures of the institutional dormitories also could be cruel and ruthless. Daisy Ruddick remembers that the big girls “were nearly as bad as the Matron. They used to call us their little maid. ‘Get the water, wash me this, go and get me that.’ If you didn’t do it, you’d get a hiding.”<sup>97</sup> Helen Sekaquaptewa recalled how the Navajos and the older Hopi children at Keams Canyon Boarding School always got more food than the younger children. “It seemed . . . the Navajos would have their plates heaping full, while little Hopi girls just got a teaspoonful of everything. I was always hungry and wanted to cry because I didn’t get enough food.” Helen further recalled that “sometimes the big boys would even take bread away from the little ones.” In the girls’ dormitory, too, older girls were “detailed to come and braid the hair of the little girls.” While this could be a pleasant bonding experience for some of the girls, in Helen’s case the older girl demanded that she give her some of her food or she would pull Helen’s hair as she combed it.<sup>98</sup> The peer culture of the boarding schools thus could be both an empowering and an oppressive component in indigenous children’s lives. Whatever its impact on children, however, the replacement of indigenous systems of education with colonial institutionalization and the substitution



of white officials for indigenous elders contributed to a breakdown of indigenous ways of transmitting knowledge.

In the name of “civilizing” and “assimilating” indigenous people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, governments in both the United States and Australia carried out a drastic scheme of removing indigenous children from their families and communities for a number of crucial years in their development. In the United States, some scholars have been too willing to excuse this policy as a misguided but well-meaning attempt to move away from the more violent policies that preceded it. The most recent focus in the scholarship on the unintended positive consequences of the boarding schools has also contributed to a benign view of the U.S. government’s assimilation policy. A comparative study, however, between U.S. and Australian policies and practices leads us to a more sobering view of Indian boarding schools. Assimilation and absorption emerge not as the true aims of these policies but rather as their justification. Instead, through a deeper analysis of government practices, it becomes clear that colonial control of indigenous peoples provided the primary motivation for removing indigenous children. Through taking indigenous children hostage, government officials sought to compel indigenous parents to cooperate more fully with government wishes and to render their children more “useful” to colonial aims.

## Notes

The epigraph is from an interview with Marjorie Woodrow by Colleen Hattersley, September 29, 1999, TRC 5000/43, p. 13, Bringing Them Home Oral History Project, National Library of Australia, Canberra. The author wishes to thank Doreen Mellor and the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project for permission to quote from Woodrow’s interview.

1. Rose Mitchell, *Tall Woman: The Life Story of Rose Mitchell, a Navajo Woman, c. 1874–1977*, ed. Charlotte Frisbie (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 61–62.
2. Iris Yumadoo Kochallalya Burgoyne, *The Mirning We Are the Whales* (Broome, Western Australia: Magabala Books, 2000), 65–66.
3. Burgoyne, *The Mirning*, 66.
4. Canada also practiced indigenous child removal in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but a comparison with Canada is beyond the scope of this essay.

- For more on Canada's policy toward indigenous children see J. R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).
5. See, e.g., Richard Henry Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867–1904*, ed. Robert Utley (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964); Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984); Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, 2 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).
  6. David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875–1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995); Robert A. Trennert Jr., *The Phoenix Indian School: Forced Assimilation in Arizona, 1891–1935* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988). More general histories of Indian education that include material on the boarding schools include Margaret Connell Szasz, *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination, 1928–1973* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974); David H. DeJong, *Promises of the Past: A History of Indian Education in the United States* (Golden CO: Fulcrum, 1993).
  7. See, e.g., Brenda Child, *Boarding School Seasons* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); Tsianina Lomawaima, *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of the Chilocco Indian School* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Clyde Ellis, *To Change Them Forever: Indian Education at the Rainy Mountain Boarding School, 1893–1920* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996); Scott Riney, *The Rapid City Indian School, 1898–1933* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999); Michael Coleman, *American Indian Children at School, 1850–1930* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993); Hazel Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 1971). For a beautifully produced and moving book that represents all these approaches see Margaret Archuleta, Brenda Child, and Tsianina Lomawaima, eds., *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences, 1879–2000* (Phoenix: Heard Museum, 2000).
  8. Mitchell, *Tall Woman*.
  9. See, e.g., Francis La Flesche, *The Middle Five: Indian Schoolboys of the Omaha Tribe*, foreword by David Baerreis (1900; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978); Helen Sekaquaptewa, *Me and Mine: The Life Story of Helen Sekaquaptewa*, as told to Louise Udall (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1969); Polingaysi Qoyawayma (Elizabeth Q. White), *No Turning Back: A Hopi Indian Woman's Struggle to Live in Two Worlds*, as told to Vada Carlson (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1964).
  10. See, e.g., Russell McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory, 1880–1939* (Melbourne [Victoria, Australia]: Melbourne University Press, 1997).
  11. For more on White Australia policy and its concern with people of mixed European and Aboriginal descent, see Anna Haebich, *Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indig-*

- enous Families, 1800–2000* (Fremantle, Western Australia: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2000), 132–37, 156–58.
12. Within the Australian historiography, scholars capitalize Homes and Missions to distinguish them from individual homes, but for the purposes of this volume the words appear in lowercase. The literature on the Stolen Generations is vast. A sampling includes Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Bringing Them Home: A Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997); Peter Read, *A Rape of the Soul So Profound: The Return of the Stolen Generations* (St. Leonards, New South Wales, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1999); Haebich, *Broken Circles*; Anna Haebich, *For Their Own Good: Aborigines and Government in the Southwest of Western Australia, 1900–1940* (Nedlands, Western Australia: University of Western Australia Press, 1988); Link-Up and Tikka Jan Wilson, *In the Best Interest of the Child? Stolen Children: Aboriginal Pain/White Shame* (Canberra, Australia: Link-Up New South Wales and Aboriginal History, 1997); Rowena MacDonald and Australian Archives, *Between Two Worlds: The Commonwealth Government and the Removal of Aboriginal Children of Part Descent in the Northern Territory* (Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia: IAD Press, 1995). To date, although some state officials have expressed regret for Aboriginal child removal policies and many white Australians have participated in “Sorry Days,” the Commonwealth government has refused to issue an apology.
  13. Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*.
  14. Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 57–58.
  15. See, e.g., Marc Mannes, “Factors and Events Leading to the Passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act,” *Child Welfare* 74, no. 1 (1995): 39; Joan Heifetz Hollinger, “Beyond the Best Interests of the Tribe: The Indian Child Welfare Act and the Adoption of Indian Children,” *University of Detroit Law Review* 66 (1989): 451–501.
  16. For an example of an Australian official’s general reference to policy in other countries, see Testimony of A. O. Neville, November 18, 1927, in Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Report of the Royal Commission on the Constitution (Canberra: Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1929), 488.
  17. Quoted in Victoria Haskins, “The Apprenticing of Aboriginal Girls to Domestic Service in New South Wales between the Wars: Eugenic Preoccupations and the Feminist Response,” *2000 History and Sociology of Eugenics Conference Abstracts* (University of Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia, April 27–28, 2000), 191. Haskins notes a “shift from philanthropic discourse to an obsession with eliminating an allegedly unhealthy and morally contaminating sector of society” among white Australian officials.
  18. T. J. Morgan, “Indian Contract Schools,” *Baptist Home Mission Monthly* 18, no. 2 (1896): 392.
  19. Harry C. James, *Pages from Hopi History* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974), 166; Leo Crane, *Indians of the Enchanted Desert* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1925), 157–80; quotes from 173.
  20. Jan McKinley Wilson, “‘You Took Our Children’: Aboriginal Autobiographical

- Narratives of Separation in New South Wales, 1977–1997” (Ph.D. diss., Australian National University, 2001), 70.
21. Quoted in Carol Devens, “If We Get the Girls, We Get the Race’: Missionary Education of Native American Girls,” in *American Nations: Encounters in Indian Country, 1850 to the Present*, ed. Frederick E. Hoxie, Peter C. Mancall, and James H. Merrell (New York: Routledge, 2001), 158.
  22. “Donna’s Story,” in *The Stolen Children: Their Stories*, ed. Carmel Bird (Sydney: Random House, 1998), 100.
  23. Quoted in Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, 162.
  24. Ella Cara Deloria, *Waterlily* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 20.
  25. Lame Deer and Richard Erdoes, *Lame Deer: Seeker of Visions* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1972), 13.
  26. Deloria, *Waterlily*, 34.
  27. H. E. Thonemann, ed., *Tell the White Man: The Life Story of an Aboriginal Lubra* (Sydney: Collins, 1949), 34. “Lubra” is a derogatory term for an Aboriginal woman, akin to “squaw.”
  28. Sub-Protector of Aborigines Besley, 1892, quoted in Andrew Hall, *A Brief History of the Laws, Policies, and Practices in South Australia Which Led to the Removal of Many Aboriginal Children: A Contribution to Reconciliation*, 2nd ed. (Adelaide, South Australia: Department of Human Services, 1998), 7. Wilson also notes in her dissertation the ubiquity of the term “usefulness.” Wilson, “‘You Took Our Children,’ ” 68.
  29. Heather Goodall, “‘Saving the Children’: Gender and the Colonization of Aboriginal Children in New South Wales, 1788 to 1990,” *Aboriginal Law Bulletin* 2, no. 44 (1990): 6–9; Inara Walden, “‘To Send Her to Service’: Aboriginal Domestic Servants,” *Aboriginal Law Bulletin* 3, no. 76 (1995): 12–14; Walden, “‘That Was Slavery Days’: Aboriginal Domestic Servants in New South Wales in the Twentieth Century,” in *Labour History: Aboriginal Workers*, no. 69, ed. Ann McGrath and Kay Saunders (Sydney: Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, 1995), 196–207; Victoria Haskins, “My One Bright Spot: A Personal Insight into Relationships between White Women and Aboriginal Women under the New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board Apprenticeship Policy, 1920–1942” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Sydney, 1998); Raymond Evans and Joanne Scutt, “‘Fallen among Thieves’: Aboriginal Labour and State Control in Inter-War Queensland,” in McGrath and Saunders, *Labour History: Aboriginal Workers*, 115–31; Loretta de Plevitz, “Working for the Man: Wages Lost to Queensland Workers ‘Under the Act,’” *Aboriginal Law Bulletin* 3, no. 81 (1996): 4–8; Rosalind Kidd, *The Way We Civilise: Aboriginal Affairs—The Untold Story* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1997).
  30. Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*; Lomawaima, *They Called It Prairie Light*; Archuleta, Child, and Lomawaima, *Away from Home*.
  31. “Central Australia, Sir Baldwin Spencer’s Visit,” *Melbourne Age*, July 14, 1923, Commonwealth Record Series A1 1930/1542, Australian Archives, Australian Capital Territory, Canberra.
  32. “The Indians of Idaho,” *Woman’s Auxiliary* 76, no. 6 (1914): 470–71, in Box 64, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Idaho, MSS 91, Special Collections, Boise State University, Idaho.

33. Richard Henry Pratt, "The Outing System," from an address at the Annual Lake Mohonk Conference, reprinted in *Indian's Friend* (the journal of the Women's National Indian Association) 4, no. 4 (1891): 18; "Sketch of a Prominent Indian Educational Institution," *Indian Craftsman* (Carlisle Indian School's journal, which later became *The Red Man*) 1, no. 2 (1909): 36–37; see also Jason Betzinez with Wilbur Sturtevant Nye, *I Fought with Geronimo* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1959), 156–59; Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 54.
34. Thomas C. Battey, *The Life and Adventures of a Quaker among the Indians* (Boston: Less and Shepard, 1875), 60.
35. *Indian's Friend* 2, no. 5 (1890): 2.
36. *Indian's Friend* 9, no. 8 (1897): 10.
37. *Indian's Friend* 3, no. 10 (1891): 4.
38. *Indian's Friend* 3, no. 11 (1891): 2.
39. *Indian's Friend* 3, no. 4 (1890): 4; Morgan quoted in *Indian's Friend* 4, no. 5 (1892): 1.
40. Woodward B. Skinner, *The Apache Rock Crumbles: The Captivity of Geronimo's People* (Pensacola FL: Skinner Publications, 1987), 52, 56, 73, 75–77, 105; Betzinez, *I Fought with Geronimo*, 140–42. The U.S. government made no distinction between so-called hostile and friendly Indians. Even those Apaches who had opposed Geronimo's military resistance or who had even helped to track him down in the Sierra Madre of Mexico were sent into exile.
41. Henrietta Stockel, *Survival of the Spirit: Chiricahua Apaches in Captivity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1993), 113.
42. Quoted in Eve Ball, with Nora Henn and Lynda A. Sánchez, *Indeh: An Apache Odyssey* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 130.
43. Skinner, *The Apache Rock Crumbles*, 137–38; Stockel, *Survival of the Spirit*, 114–17.
44. Quoted in Skinner, *The Apache Rock Crumbles*, 138.
45. Betzinez, *I Fought with Geronimo*, 149.
46. Skinner, *The Apache Rock Crumbles*, 161–92, 208–20. Later in 1887, Geronimo and his followers who were imprisoned at Fort Pickens were reunited with the rest of their tribe at Mount Vernon.
47. Quoted in Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, 163.
48. Quoted in Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, 244.
49. Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, 202; also see 220 and 227.
50. Quoted in Peggy Brock, "Aboriginal Families and the Law in the Era of Segregation and Assimilation, 1890s–1950s," in *Sex Power and Justice: Historical Perspectives of Law in Australia*, ed. Diane Kirkby (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1995), 137; see also Hall, *A Brief History of the Laws*, 7.
51. See, e.g., the endeavors of Olive Pink, as detailed in McGregor, *Imagined Destinies*, 242–43.
52. *Indian's Friend* 3, no. 10 (1891): 2; Quinton quoted in *Indian's Friend* 3, no. 11 (1891): 2.
53. Sekaquaptewa, *Me and Mine*, 91–92.
54. *Indian's Friend* 10, no. 1 (1897): 10. See also Ball, *Indeh*, 219. Ball notes that at Mes-calero, after building a boarding school on the reservation in 1884, agents took

- children forcibly to school and “incarcerated” them there. “To prevent their escape the windows were nailed shut” (219).
55. See, e.g., Crane, *Indians of the Enchanted Desert*; Henrietta Mann, *Cheyenne-Arapaho Education, 1871–1982* (Niwot CO: University Press of Colorado, 1997).
  56. See, e.g., Child, *Boarding School Seasons*; Lomawaima, *They Called It Prairie Light*; Ellis, *To Change Them Forever*; Riney, *Rapid City Indian School*.
  57. Connie Nungulla McDonald with Jill Finnane, *When You Grow Up* (Broome, Western Australia: Magabala Books, 1996), 26.
  58. Jean Carter, interview in Coral Edwards and Peter Read, *The Lost Children: Thirteen Australians Taken from Their Aboriginal Families Tell of the Struggle to Find Their Natural Parents* (Sydney: Doubleday, 1989), 5.
  59. Zitkala-Sa, *American Indian Stories*, foreword by Dexter Fisher (1921; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 55–56.
  60. Zitkala-Sa, *American Indian Stories*, 54.
  61. Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, 232.
  62. See, e.g., Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, 233; Trennert, *The Phoenix Indian School*, 115.
  63. Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, 237.
  64. McDonald, *When You Grow Up*, 27.
  65. Simon Ortiz, “The Language We Know,” in *Growing Up Native American*, ed. Patricia Riley (New York: Avon Books, 1993), 30.
  66. Quoted in Ball, *Indeh*, 144.
  67. McDonald, *When You Grow Up*, 4.
  68. Marjorie Woodrow, interview, p. 11.
  69. Lame Deer, *Seeker of Visions*, 23.
  70. McDonald, *When You Grow Up*, 25.
  71. Quoted in Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Bringing Them Home*, 159.
  72. Alice M. Larery, “My Indian Children,” *Woman’s Auxiliary* 87 (October 1922): 655, in Box 64, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Idaho.
  73. Alice Nannup, Lauren Marsh, and Stephen Kinnane, *When the Pelican Laughed* (Fremantle, Western Australia: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1992), 71.
  74. McDonald, *When You Grow Up*, 15.
  75. McDonald, *When You Grow Up*, 27.
  76. Barbara Cummings, *Take This Child . . . From Kahlin Compound to the Retta Dixon Children’s Home* (Canberra, Australia: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1990), 84.
  77. Alicia Adams, interview in Edwards and Read, *The Lost Children*, 44.
  78. Daisy Ruddick as told to Kathy Mills and Tony Austin, “Talking about Cruel Things’: Girls’ Life in the Kahlin Compound,” *Hecate* 15, no. 1 (1989): 16. See also Marjorie Woodrow, interview, p. 9, and Ruth Elizabeth Hegarty, interview by Helen Curzon-Siggers, December 14, 1999, TRC-5000/79, *Bringing Them Home Oral History Project*, for two more examples. Many other interviewees in this project as well as many Aboriginal autobiographers mention the inadequate food.
  79. Zitkala-Sa, *American Indian Stories*, 54.

80. Joy Williams, interview in Edwards and Read, *The Lost Children*, 50.
81. Quoted in Virginia Huffer, *The Sweetness of the Fig: Aboriginal Women in Transition* (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1980), 36–37.
82. Ruddick, “‘Talking about Cruel Things,’” 15.
83. David Seaman, ed., *Born a Chief: The Nineteenth Century Hopi Boyhood of Edmund Nequatewa*, as told to Alfred Whiting (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993), 91–92.
84. La Flesche, *The Middle Five*, 138.
85. Nannup, Marsh, and Kinnane, *When the Pelican Laughed*, 75.
86. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Bringing Them Home*, 163, 162.
87. Sekaquaptewa, *Me and Mine*, 106.
88. Mitchell, *Tall Woman*, 178–79.
89. K.M. to Secretary of the Board of Protection of Aborigines, July 1, 1912, Victorian Public Record Series [VPRS] 1694, Unit 5, Public Record Office of Victoria [PROV], Melbourne, Australia.
90. K.M. to Secretary of the Board of Protection of Aborigines, March 10, 1914, VPRS 1694, Unit 5, PROV.
91. R.F. to “Sir,” June 20, 1918, VPRS 1694, Unit 6, PROV.
92. James Springer and Lena [signed Lenora] Springer to Pratt, November 20, 1883, Box 1, MS 4558, Alice Cunningham Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC.
93. Pauline McCleod, interview in Edwards and Read, *The Lost Children*, 16, 21.
94. Joy Williams, interview in Edwards and Read, *The Lost Children*, 55.
95. La Flesche, *The Middle Five*.
96. Ruth Elizabeth Hegarty, interview, 15, 22. The author wishes to thank Doreen Mellor and the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project for permission to quote from Hegarty’s interview.
97. Ruddick, “‘Talking about Cruel Things,’” 19, 21.
98. Sekaquaptewa, *Me and Mine*, 94, 103–4.

Published in ***Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences***, edited and with an introduction by Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006. Copyright © 2006 Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc. Used by permission.

<http://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/bookinfo/5068.html>



### **Additional note from the author:**

This article has benefited greatly from my long-term intellectual collaboration and friendship with Australian historian Victoria Haskins. This essay builds, in part, on our joint article, "Stolen Generations and Vanishing Indians: The Removal of Indigenous Children as a Weapon of War in the United States and Australia, 1870-1940," in *Children and War*, ed. James Marten (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 227-241, which is available at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/historyfacpub/10>

