

Cultural Pluralism or Cultural Imposition? Examining the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Education Reforms during the Indian New Deal (1933–1945)

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In 2000 sociologist Jack D. Forbes warned of a growing movement towards the aggressive promotion of “English-language and Anglo-European perspectives” in education, which bore alarming similarity to “the assimilationist hysteria of the early part of the twentieth century.” Forbes cited the push for a standardized curriculum and the dominance of “Euroscience” as evidence of a monocultural educational agenda which, through prioritizing an “elitist” and Eurocentric approach to U.S. history, economics, and science, sought to maintain the educational and economic primacy of Euro-Americans and the continued peripheralization of ethnic minorities.¹ Scholars of American Indian education have also noted the persistence of a monocultural, Eurocentric outlook at the government schools which denigrates Native cultures and alienates Native children.² Bicultural education—a curriculum that successfully integrates key aspects of two cultures, values, and belief systems—remains an elusive goal for many such schools. This article examines an early attempt to introduce cultural tolerance to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) school system—the short-lived “Indian New Deal” of the 1930s and early 1940s, which succeeded a long period of government-directed coercive assimilation.

This article explores the implementation of the BIA school curriculum on the Navajo Reservation and United Pueblos Agency (UPA) in Arizona and New Mexico in the period 1933–1945. These communities received considerable BIA attention during the New Deal as testing grounds for “progressive” education techniques, soil conservation, prioritization of day schools, and the introduction of tribal cultures to government school

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curricula. The reforms took place against a backdrop of public health, sanitation, and ecological improvement campaigns in Arizona, in which academic experts and state officials emphasized the latest scientific solutions to the problems of rural living.³ After brief overviews of colonial education paradigms and the BIA education programs of the early twentieth century, I examine what was taught at the New Deal Indian schools—history, songs, science, and soil conservation—to see if and how Diné beliefs and values were included in the curricula, and who controlled the construction of academic narratives. The school lessons and activities reveal the tension between Diné and BIA conceptions of history, natural phenomena, religion, and indeed formal education itself, and thus demonstrate the considerable limitations of BIA cultural tolerance in the 1930s and 1940s. They also illustrate government paternalism towards rural communities in the Southwest in the policy arenas of public health and ecological “improvement” as well as the increasing prioritization of scientific expertise in this era.

In addition to exploring what was in the curriculum of the New Deal schools, this article seeks to understand the nature of BIA attitudes towards indigenous cultures in this period—in particular whether the New Deal represented a soft approach to assimilation, as argued by K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa McCarty, or a genuine, albeit flawed, attempt at biculturalism.⁴ I consider whether the Indian New Deal education program can be positioned within existing frameworks of colonial education and cultural domination, such as cultural invasion and cultural imperialism. While acknowledging the underlying colonialist slant of the New Deal education reforms, and the serious limitations of BIA biculturalism, I ultimately argue that the 1930s did witness a definitive break with earlier, avowedly assimilationist, BIA education policy, and that the New Deal lessons have much to tell us concerning conflicting perceptions of truth, authority, and culture.

INTRODUCING COLONIAL EDUCATION PARADIGMS AND BIA EDUCATION POLICY

Scholars of education and colonialism have long been interested in the education programs imposed by colonial and settler-colonial regimes which have sought the cultural assimilation of the colonized. Paulo Freire’s concept of cultural invasion, although derived from the

experiences of Brazilian rural and urban workers, arguably has resonance for historic American Indian education policy which sought the extinction of tribal cultures.⁵ Far from cultural tolerance, cultural invasion involves the invaders' bid to replace an existing culture with their own, and rests upon their belief in the invaders' cultural superiority. Such invasion need not be overtly aggressive, but cultural invaders are always the authors and principal directors: "The invaders mold; those they invade are molded. The invaders choose; those they invade follow that choice—or are expected to follow it."⁶ This echoes Edward Said's theory of cultural imperialism, which involves the imposition of colonizers' cultural and historical narratives and values upon the colonized, who are expected to adopt and internalize them.⁷ Francis Nyamnjoh offers a similar argument in his epistemicide thesis, by which colonial educators seek "the decimation or near complete killing and replacement of endogenous epistemologies with the epistemological paradigm of the conqueror."⁸ Acts of cultural invasion, epistemicide, and cultural imperialism therefore share three characteristics. Firstly, they seek total cultural replacement, at the cost of existing indigenous cultures. Secondly, they promote the invader-colonizers' culture as superior. Finally, cultural invasion/imperialism is designed purely to serve the invader-colonizers' needs—it is an inherently exploitative process.⁹ This article will test the Indian New Deal education program against these criteria.

A conceptual framework that has been applied directly to the Indian New Deal is historian K. Tsianina Lomawaima and education scholar Teresa McCarty's "safety zone" thesis. Lomawaima and McCarty argue that in both the "Assimilation" era (c. 1879–1933) and "New Deal" the BIA education program remained primarily assimilationist (i.e., imposing Euro-American values and narratives upon Native American students), but that the federal government permitted a narrow, tightly controlled "safety zone" of Native cultural expression, such as infants' lullabies and what were deemed female (and marketable) arts and crafts. These were allowed because policymakers considered them non-threatening to the assimilationist agenda of cultural replacement and acquiescence to government rule. Lomawaima and McCarty concede that the safety zone was expanded slightly in the 1930s to include bilingual primers and "Indian history and lore" courses at Chilocco and Haskell Boarding Schools. However, they note that the primers conveyed Euro-American interpretations of thrift and good housekeeping (thereby sugaring the pill of cultural change by presenting it in a recognizable

cultural context), while the “history and lore” boarding school courses reduced Native histories and religious beliefs to mere “mythology” and “games.”¹⁰ The safety zone suggests that the New Deal cultural reforms were purely cosmetic; that they failed to view Native cultures as living, viable cultures; and that far from biculturalism, the New Deal education program represented assimilation by stealth.

A contrasting interpretation of the New Deal education policy is offered by education scholar Jon Reyhner, who has grouped John Collier, commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1933–1945, alongside “culturally sensitive teachers...and the recent policy of Indian self-determination” as heralding a “forward-looking” approach to American Indian education.¹¹ This assessment appears to interpret the New Deal education policy as a precursor of the tribally controlled schools and colleges which originated in the 1960s, such as Rough Rock Community School and Diné College, which feature bicultural curricula and “view traditional culture as their social and intellectual frame of reference.”¹² It should be noted that the term “biculturalism” itself was not used by the BIA in the New Deal—policymakers instead referred to “cultural tolerance” and inclusion of Native cultural heritage. However, in her pioneering study of Indian education policy, *Education and the American Indian*, historian Margaret Connell-Szasz described the New Deal curriculum as bicultural in intent.¹³ Bicultural education today involves the inclusion of indigenous values and ways of understanding throughout a school’s program, with the aim of creating culturally competent pupils who can simultaneously know and practice both traditional and mainstream values.¹⁴ Back in the 1930s, reformers spoke in terms of a cross-cultural skills set, or rather the need “To choose wisely a scale of values for living in two cultures.”¹⁵ Writing in 1933 at the start of the New Deal, the Oglala Lakota author Luther Standing Bear called for Native American youth to be “doubly educated” in both “traditional” and “modern” life, so that “Without forsaking reverence for their ancestral teachings, they can be trained to take up modern duties that relate to tribal and reservation life.”¹⁶ E. R. Fryer, controversial superintendent of the Navajo Reservation in the late 1930s, appeared to echo this call when describing the education reforms: “The schools seek to preserve and strengthen Navajo cultural values, and at the same time fit the Navajo to make the adjustments to white civilization which are necessary if he is to function effectively in his contacts with it.”¹⁷ This article will explore whether the New Deal education program in the Southwest lived up to these cross-cultural aims.

*"Old Deal" and "New Deal" Education Policy Overviews:
Assimilation and Preservation*

The "assimilation era" (c. 1879–1933) in Native American–U.S. government relations, which directly preceded the New Deal, witnessed the attempted state-directed destruction of tribal cultures. Under the slogan "Kill the Indian to save the man," the BIA argued that Native American biological survival could only be achieved through the annihilation of Native cultures which were deemed incompatible with "civilized" American life. The BIA schools—many of them off-reservation boarding institutions where pupil behavior was tightly controlled and separated from parental influence—followed a Uniform Curriculum that emphasized manual labor, Christianity, and the capitalist work ethic. Tribal histories, languages, and religions held no place in this monocultural program.¹⁸ Some teachers did clandestinely incorporate tribal values into their lessons and some schools flirted briefly with Native art lessons—yet overall the schools' agenda was one of cultural destruction and replacement.¹⁹ As Shoshone teacher Esther Burnett Horne recalled, "The aim of the Indian Service was to divorce our people from our heritage and to assimilate us into the dominant culture."²⁰

In contrast to previous commissioners of Indian Affairs, John Collier, architect of the Indian New Deal (1933–1945), professed to admire Native American cultures, communities, and religions.²¹ In 1934 he issued a circular to all BIA staff stipulating that "the fullest constitutional liberty in all matters affecting religion, conscience and culture, is insisted on for all Indians. In addition, an affirmative, appreciative attitude toward Indian cultural values is desired in the Indian Service."²² Under Collier's director of Indian Education W. Carson Ryan, and his successor Willard Beatty, day schools were promoted for younger children, resulting in a major school construction program on the Navajo Reservation.²³ Native histories, arts and crafts, and cultural heritage were to be added to the curricula. As Ryan proudly (and paternalistically) informed the Diné in 1934: "You should have Navajo literature and history [at the schools]. Your children should know your history and the relation of that history to the rest of the world. They should help you in the preservation of your arts and crafts. The schools should be real Navajo schools."²⁴ Beatty reaffirmed this cultural commitment, noting that "One of the earliest errors of our Indian education program was to minimize the cultural contribution of the Indian racial heritage."²⁵ On paper at least, the New

Deal promised to put Native American cultures on the government school curriculum.

CULTURAL TOLERANCE AT OFF-RESERVATION BOARDING SCHOOLS IN THE 1930s

Significantly, some boarding school teachers whose careers spanned both the 1920s and 1930s did notice a cultural change in the direction of education in the mid-1930s. Esther Horne, who taught at Eufala Indian Boarding School, Oklahoma, and later at Wahpeton Indian Boarding School, North Dakota, had been covertly incorporating Native cultures into her lessons for years. She recalled of the 1930s that “We were now encouraged to include American Indian materials in the curriculum, and so we began to combat the negative stereotypes of Indian people so pervasive in school textbooks.”²⁶ Horne established an Indian club at Wahpeton in 1936, and promoted Native dances: “We discussed the fact that Indian dancing is the true folk dancing of the Americas and that it is a part of our unique heritage.” She enlisted the help of local Native dancers as instructors and costume advisors to the students, and the resulting dances held at the schools were enjoyed by pupils and staff. Horne’s appraisal of the New Deal approach was positive: “Those days were so exciting! Finally, we no longer had to hide the fact that we were incorporating our cultural values into the curriculum and student life.”²⁷ In other words, the New Deal had not *introduced* Native cultures to the curricula, but it permitted dedicated individuals like Horne to teach their cultures openly and to go beyond the school walls for consultation on the curriculum. In a similar vein, Hopi teacher Polingaysi Qoyawayma found that her method of incorporating Hopi songs, stories, and “the best of Hopi tradition” into her lessons was championed by Collier and Beatty.²⁸

Non-Native, Ohio-born Marguerite Bigler Stoltz taught at five government-run Indian boarding schools from 1928 through 1937. Accustomed to the uniform curriculum of the coercive assimilation era, in 1934 she suddenly found herself charged with devising lessons that reflected her pupils’ cultures. The curriculum was indeed ambitious: The Carson Indian School (Nevada) was to have arts and crafts instruction, a pageant and Indian dance program, and a wildflower show featuring “Indian medicinal plants, and information as to how they were used”—

activities Stoltz described as “worthwhile projects” which “bolstered our jaded spirits.”²⁹ The staff at Carson, at any rate, appeared to welcome the reforms.

The students’ responses were, according to Stoltz, more mixed. After several unsuccessful attempts to generate enthusiasm amongst pupils for her “Indian” cultural lessons, Stoltz found greater support for a weekly assignment to write “a story of long ago, one that perhaps their grandmother had told them.”³⁰ The short stories produced by the students of Carson Indian School and Seneca Indian School (Oklahoma) encompassed family histories, tribal histories, and coyote stories, and included “How the Indians Get Power,” “The Coyote Who Ate Himself,” and “Yellow Old Lady Who Made Good Teeth.”³¹ Stoltz did not detail the students’ research methods—perhaps some stories were examples of a pupil’s creative writing skills. However, the impression given by some of the writings is that they were told to the students by grandparents or elders, remembered, and then written down, resulting in a collection the students “took pride in.”³² This success perhaps echoes the observations of scholar Vine Deloria Jr., who, when discussing options for today’s classrooms, proposed that “Storytelling with the further requirement of being able to recite the story accurately after hearing it several times would make the accumulation of knowledge fun again.”³³

SONGS AND HISTORY

The storytelling encouraged by Stoltz may have had complex meanings for her students, including the recounting of—and therefore perpetuation of—religious beliefs and moral lessons. As historian Donald Fixico has noted, Coyote and other trickster figures “explain fate, irony, and folly in life” and therefore play a strong role in the transmission of cultural and moral guidelines.³⁴ For Stoltz however, the exercise was framed in the past tense—thereby promoting (for her) the “safety zone” historicizing of Native cultures just as the Chilocco “history and lore” course did. On the Navajo Reservation, however, some teachers recognized that non-European culture was a lived reality for their students and they actively sought to include material from their students’ homes into their classes. Take, for example, teacher Rhoda Hughes’s report of beginners’ class activities at Hunter’s Point Day School, dated June 7, 1941. Hughes at first detailed the children’s enthusiasm for Euro-American nursery

rhymes, such as “Jack Be Nimble” and “Little Boy Blue.” She claimed that singing these facilitated the adoption of unfamiliar English words and that parents enjoyed the recitations.³⁵ The extent to which such rhymes actually helped children to learn usable English is debatable given their often alien contexts and archaic words: As Adam Fortunate Eagle remembered of his kindergarten year at Pipestone Indian Boarding School (Minnesota) in 1935, Little Miss Muffet “ ‘sitting on her tuffet eating her curds and whey’ doesn’t make sense, just like saying a grace prayer before meals in words I don’t understand.” Indeed, Fortunate Eagle’s conclusion that “Nothing they teach us has anything to do with my family” suggests that, two years into the Indian New Deal, Pipestone was hardly promoting bicultural education.³⁶

Hughes, however, went on to outline another element of her curriculum: the singing of Diné songs. She noted:

Another thing we have enjoyed doing this year—was the singing of a group of Navajo songs which the children have brought in from their homes. We have been very careful not to sing songs concerning the work of healing and religious rites. Our Navajo assistants have been called in to listen to each song and approve it before it was included in our repertoire.... We took our children to Fort Defiance and made a few phonograph recordings of their Navajo songs. The children were greatly thrilled when they heard the recordings of their own voices.³⁷

Not only, then, were Diné songs included in the day school program, but by 1941 some teachers had learned that certain aspects of Diné culture were off limits to them. Hughes’s report indicates the importance of the Diné teaching assistants both in educating the non-Diné teacher and in protecting sacred culture from ignorant exposure by outsiders. Perhaps lessons had been learned from earlier New Deal blunders such as the introduction of taboo animals to the classroom environment.³⁸ The inclusion of Diné songs from the students’ homes, while appearing *after* American nursery rhymes in the school report, suggests that not everything in the New Deal school lessons was assimilationist. There is also nothing in the report to indicate that the Diné songs were just infants’ lullabies, as sporadically permitted under earlier policy.

Yet attempted cultural sensitivity and incorporation did not translate into the active inclusion of Diné interpretations and perceptions in the New Deal curriculum. In a report from June 1941, teacher Fred Richards

detailed at length the “Navajo history” unit he had devised for 8th-grade pupils in the Fort Defiance School District. The very existence of a Native history unit contrasts with Adam Fortunate Eagle’s experience at Pipestone, where he had to rely on the local trader, Mrs. Roe, and older students to learn about Native American histories which “I can’t find in our history books at school.”³⁹ The “Navajo history” module does not, however, appear to have been particularly Diné-focused. It commenced with Columbus and the Pilgrim Fathers—Richards defended this by claiming that “Identical elements in the history of the Pilgrims and the early settlers helped us to piece together the fragmentary information we found in legends, clan names, archaeological discoveries.” His next statement is particularly telling: “Largely because there is no recorded history of the Navajos until recent years, our prehistorical discussion on Hosteen had to be based on our imagination.”⁴⁰ The notion of inviting Diné historians to discuss such matters was evidently not contemplated. Indeed, Richards taught his Diné charges the Bering Strait theory concerning Native American origins, rather than Diné creationist interpretation. A similarly skewed narrative was taught at Albuquerque Indian School in 1935, where Pueblo students performed a teacher’s play based on the exploits of Coronado, and learned about him in history lessons. Although the focus was clearly the conquistador rather than the historical acts and actors of Pueblo communities, school superintendent Clyde Blair believed it was “creating interest in the student body in *their own* history.”⁴¹

What also emerges from Richards’s report is a dual interpretation of the purpose of the Navajo history unit. Although he created the module “to help my pupils in the eighth grade develop the power of correctly expressing their thoughts and to help the students organize informative data in preparation for oral report to the class,” he admitted that “the immediate aim of the students was to learn about Navajo history.” Clearly the Diné students were very interested in their community’s past and wanted to explore it in class. Unfortunately, Richards’s didactic approach did not permit community involvement: Whereas Stoltz had achieved her best results when encouraging children to ask their elders about their past, and Horne had successfully involved pupils’ families and local arts experts in her classes, Richards prioritized the printed word, referencing Richard Van Valkenburgh’s 1938 *A Short History of the Navajo People* as the key source for post-1846 Navajo history.⁴² This attempted control of indigenous histories appears to have more in common with cultural

imperialism than with cultural tolerance: As Edward Said argued, “The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them.”⁴³ True, there is nothing in Richards’s account to suggest he actively blocked or explicitly denigrated Diné historical narratives—but through ignoring their existence he implied that Euro-American theory constituted the accurate narrative. As sociologist Clayton W. Dumont Jr. notes, “the power to narrate truth is critical to the pursuit of native sovereignty.”⁴⁴ By elevating Euro-American scholarly arguments, and largely disregarding indigenous interpretations, New Deal-era educators therefore positioned Native histories within an overarching meta-narrative of U.S.-tribal relations beginning with “First Contact” and reflecting European concepts of history and the past, and so risked perpetuating the colonialist American history paradigm recently identified by historian Susan Miller.⁴⁵

SCIENCE AND SOIL CONSERVATION

If history proved to be an arena of competing interpretation, science was even more problematic for a fledgling bicultural curriculum. Take, for example, the science curriculum for Navajo schools circulated in February 1943 by the assistant supervisor of Indian Education, Norma Runyan. Runyan advised that

additional elementary science should include observations of and activities designed to build toward the understanding of natural phenomena, such as: causes of cloud formations, of changing seasons, of what becomes of rain that falls, of causes of snow, of the workings of the water cycle...of how the time of day changes and why....⁴⁶

Gertrude Giesen, in her science unit for beginners at Fort Defiance Boarding School, also included “Elementary water cycle—water forms—erosion—irrigation—growing season—resting season.”⁴⁷ These curricula suggest that Western scientific explanations of weather, seasons, time, and ecology were taught to Diné children at both day and boarding schools in the New Deal period. What does not appear in school reports and curriculum outlines from this time are Diné metaphysical explanations of natural phenomena—or even any acknowledgment that such

explanations exist. Indeed, the lessons bear a striking resemblance to the Arizona state course of study for science.⁴⁸ The imposition of a scientifically hegemonic curriculum upon students from a different cultural background is now widely recognized as problematic: The Ojibwe author Basil Johnston recalls the “family schism” created when a son, fresh from science education at a Canadian Indian residential school in the 1940s, challenged and dismissed his father’s spiritual interpretation of lightning.⁴⁹ More recently, Vine Deloria Jr. drew attention to the damaging cultural conflict caused by the continued dominance of science in the U.S. educational system:

One of the most painful experiences for American Indian students is to come into conflict with the teachings of science that purport to explain phenomena already explained by tribal knowledge and tradition. The assumption of the Western educational system is that the information dispensed by colleges is always correct, and that the beliefs and teachings of the tribe are always wrong.⁵⁰

Indeed, as sociologist and environment scholar Daniel Wildcat has noted, Native “students in science, engineering, and business programs often feel caught between two cultures” and experience “considerable disorientation.”⁵¹

Yet back in the 1930s attention *was* drawn—albeit very briefly—to the perils of culture clash inherent within the BIA school curriculum. In November 1938, while employed by the Indian Service as a “curriculum specialist in the field of mathematics,” future director of Navajo Education George Boyce conducted a series of research trips across the U.S., including the Navajo Reservation, with a view to devising “a program of economic education.”⁵² Boyce then had little practical experience of Indian Affairs—as Beatty confided to then Navajo Area Education director Lucy Wilcox Adams: “It is my present feeling that we need not expect any very concrete results from Mr. Boyce’s visit immediately. While he is accustomed to analyzing situations in terms of their mathematical implications he is, of course, completely foreign to the Indian Service and to Indian problems.”⁵³

Despite such low expectations, Boyce gave a prescient warning concerning what he perceived to be endemic contradictions within education policy. He noted:

The policy of the government, as the agent of society, seems to me to be aimed at a preservation of the inherent cultural values where

they still persist in a given group. Many of these may be preserved. In many instances, desirable new values may be introduced or absorbed which are both desirable and inevitable. At some points, however, there is a direct conflict. For example, the introduction of the "scientific" explanation of various phenomena. When this happens, there is no driving force which would hold together the main reason for Navajo ceremonial and spiritual life as it has traditionally existed. What substitute values may be added to take the place of the older spiritual values, I am not prepared to say. The point which I note here is that a carefully thought out philosophy of education, requiring considerable discussion, seems to be rather urgently needed.⁵⁴

What is striking is not just Boyce's Eurocentric and ill-founded pessimism regarding Diné religion's ability to survive the onslaught of Western science, but rather his perception that science, as it was then being taught in the BIA schools, was in direct conflict with Diné traditional worldviews and values, and that the education directors urgently needed to address this.

Boyce's recognition that the New Deal education program promoted profound cultural change, as well as cultural tolerance, was also valid. New Deal educators repeatedly spoke of the need to "improve" Diné and Pueblo health habits, agrarian and pastoral techniques, and homemaking skills. The 1942 catalogue for Tuba City Vocational High School, Arizona, proudly proclaimed that "A particular effort is made to interpret scientific information in such a way that the pupils will become conscious of and realize the need for improving in general their health habits."⁵⁵ When summarizing her 6th-grade curriculum at Fort Defiance, teacher Ora B. Medley declared "Health habits must be formed," and noted, "My main idea is to teach the child how to help his family; how to make his home a healthier and happier place in which to live; how to share what he has learned with all in his Community...."⁵⁶ This echoes a "health pageant" held at Albuquerque Indian School in 1930, in which the pupils recited "health songs" that conveyed government-approved medical ideals.⁵⁷ The implication is clear: BIA personnel considered Diné and Pueblo health habits to be inferior to mainstream American health practices—thus echoing the actions of Freire's cultural invaders. And not just health habits: One of the aims of the beginners' program at Fort Defiance was "to have children become conscious of social standards such as are helpful or necessary to group

life as it is organized by our average American communities for example—courtesy—honesty—property rights.”⁵⁸ Again, the implication is that courtesy and honesty were somehow alien to Diné culture and were instead desirable *American* values.

Some New Deal educators went further and attempted to distinguish between “good” and “bad” aspects of Diné culture. Clyde Blair, director of Navajo Schools until summer 1937, adopted a rather critical tone when describing Diné culture and history. Not only did he refer to “deep-rooted fears” stemming from religious beliefs, but he charged the practice of abandoning homes following a death with accentuating a “tendency to move about” which “prevented better homes and the attendant accumulation of personal property other than livestock.”⁵⁹ His successor, Lucy Wilcox Adams, promoted a slightly more nuanced approach which accepted Diné culture in principle, yet cautioned against unspecified detrimental elements. According to Adams:

The school should recognize and accept the importance of the learning that takes place in the home and the community, and not attempt to take over or duplicate it in the school. It should concern itself principally with strengthening and supplementing Navajo culture at those points where it is failing its own people, or where it does not control the knowledge necessary to manage its resources.⁶⁰

Somewhat unhelpfully for BIA teachers, Adams did not list any examples of “failing” cultural points. Indeed, New Deal Bureau personnel were remarkably vague on the subject of “undesirable” Native cultural practices. Fred Richards of Fort Defiance proclaimed, “We want them to have a greater familiarity with the cultural inheritance of their people (games, songs, arts, dances, history, customs, and folklore).” This sounds very similar to the Chilocco and Haskell “history and lore” courses. However, his follow-up assertion that “the practices which are inimical to their welfare ought to be destroyed”⁶¹ was not accompanied by a single example. It is significant that Richards did not describe the unspecified harmful practices as elements of Navajo “culture” but merely as “practices,” suggesting that for him “cultural inheritance” was confined to the artistic, recreational, and memorial (“history”) spheres, rather than economic, social, or political life.

The selective nature of the New Deal cultural curriculum on the Navajo reservation was, in fact, hardly surprising. As the 1930s progressed, BIA policy towards the Diné became increasingly dominated by an

aggressive soil conservation program. The negative impact of coerced stock reduction, both culturally and economically, has been well documented, and serves as a sober reminder of the perils of government autocracy and cultural insensitivity.⁶² In their zeal to respond to a severe environmental catastrophe affecting the land range of the Navajo Reservation, the Collier administration unabashedly prioritized Western soil conservation theory over Diné religious and cultural beliefs. Indeed, as Marsha Weisiger has shown, Bureau soil conservation policy even disregarded Diné societal systems, failing to recognize the vital role of women in herd management.⁶³ In the religio-cultural sphere the ideological divergence was severe: Whereas Diné metaphysical interpretation of the crisis posited drought, resulting from spiritual disharmony, as the prime originator, government soil conservationists ascribed the soil erosion to overgrazing by Diné herd animals. Their proposed remedy mandated a near-total overhaul of Diné pastoralism, encompassing herd reduction, sheep dips, revised breeding programs, and “modernized” irrigation—in short, a replacement of traditional Diné practices with Euro-American scientific techniques. These necessitated an acceptance of Western scientific explanations of natural events, such as water cycle, contagion theory, and genetic animal husbandry—and the schools were tasked with disseminating conservation education.

Soil conservation, or range management as it was often labeled, was a part of the Navajo government school curriculum from the inception of the Indian New Deal. However, from summer 1937 it gained an increased prominence owing to the appointment of Lucy Wilcox Adams as director of Navajo Schools. Adams transferred to the Indian Service from the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in 1936—and as reservation superintendent (and avowed soil conservation enthusiast) E. R. Fryer noted in a letter to Willard Beatty, “Her background in Soil Conservation Service would make her especially valuable in the adoption of curricula in this jurisdiction to meet the economic and environmental problems of the people.”⁶⁴ Adams’s dedication to soil conservation promotion was witnessed almost immediately; in August 1937 she secured the transfer of Clay Lockett from SCS to the BIA specifically to develop soil conservation education. As Fryer approvingly commented, “Mrs. Adams is anxious to emphasize, as early as possible, land management education.”⁶⁵

The primacy of soil conservation in the Navajo education program is perhaps best conveyed by the “Program for Navajo Schools” issued by

Adams in December 1937. “Land and Economics” occupies a primary position on page one, based upon Adams’s perception that the key “Navajo problem” was economic in nature (the need to make a living) and could be solved by “proper” land use—in other words that the majority of Diné would engage in a reservation-based pastoral and agricultural economy dependent upon a healthy land range. With this founding principle in mind, Adams went on to outline the key tasks of the school program:

The principal task of the educational system should be to give the student the knowledge and skills necessary for a better control of his environment and so raise his economic standards; to establish health habits and provide opportunity for the correction of physical defects; to develop understanding of and participation in a conservation program, in its broad sense; and to create in the new generation public opinion favorable to such a policy.⁶⁶

Not only was land management to be the prime focus of the education program, but the schools were actively to propagandize the unpopular soil conservation policy. With such a mandate any claims of a truly bicultural curriculum were nullified: 1930s soil conservation theory demanded the dissemination of Western scientific and economic ideals. It was all very well for BIA educators to assert that “schools should seek to preserve and strengthen Navajo cultural values”—with range management as the dominant focus any competing ideologies were simply disregarded. And soil conservation was not the preserve of the vocational high schools, but extended to the day schools which served the youngest pupils and the local community. Witness the primary qualification promoted for day school head teachers:

A sufficient grasp of problems of land management, agriculture and stock raising to cooperate in the government program for Navajo economic development. The school teacher is continually called upon to explain reservation policy in matters of stock raising, irrigation development, erosion control, etc and should at least know what these things mean.⁶⁷

Given the propagandist element of the day schools, coupled with their geographic and practical problems, it is small wonder that many Diné turned against the New Deal education program.

The problematic nature of the curriculum was hinted at in the Navajo

School Program 1938–1939, issued in September 1938. The tone of the document as a whole was less confident than its 1937 predecessor: Page one admits to “problems arising from the differences and conflicts of culture, and the rapidity of change in our own and the Navajo scene” and laments “the lack of trained observers to interpret them.” The first point of emphasis intended for the new school year was the “creation of greater knowledge of the Navajo reservation, its people, and their problems, among teachers and students”—a task complicated by a paucity of “reading and reference materials” concerning Diné geography and history.⁶⁸ The BIA’s preference for American academic knowledge over local Native knowledge continued unchecked throughout the New Deal era, again reflecting colonialist notions of indigenous intellectual inferiority. Furthermore, despite the tacit acknowledgment of “conflicts of culture,” soil conservation would remain a key feature of both child and adult education—indeed, in 1938 vocational training in agriculture and land management was extended to girls. Photographic series depicting stages of land management on the Navajo Reservation were circulated to the schools weekly, accompanied by mimeographed fact sheets to inform teachers “on the land management features to be emphasized in teaching.”⁶⁹ The deliberate use of the schools—both boarding and day—as vehicles of soil conservation propaganda thus continued unabated. Adams may have noted the potential for a high school’s social and athletic program to inadvertently “violate traditional mores” and cause “conflicts in the minds of many students,” but unlike Boyce, she did not extend this warning to the scientific or vocational curricula, suggesting she viewed science and culture as occupying distinct and wholly separate spheres.⁷⁰

THE PAGEANT OF NAVAJO HISTORY (1940)

The BIA Navajo education program was not confined to the classroom, but had a strong community focus also. In 1940 Superintendent E. R. Fryer issued a memorandum to “All Navajo Service Personnel” urging their support for the annual Navajo Tribal Fair which that year would feature “the presentation of a Pageant of Navajo History.”⁷¹ Fryer described the 1940 tribal fair as “this unmatched opportunity for mass education of the people for whom we work” and labeled it “a major factor in the Navajo Service program of education”—thereby confirming the BIA-controlled nature of the event at that time.⁷² The Navajo Service discussions surrounding the pageant offer an insight into Bureau concepts

of the role of history and culture in the education program, and also the continued bid to promote Western soil conservation and health-care ideals. It also reveals interesting comparisons with earlier American historical pageants which had been popular in towns across the U.S. in the 1910s and 1920s. Using the theatrical device of an elderly grandfather describing events of the past to his young grandson and granddaughter, the Pageant of Navajo History sought to depict the history of the Diné from 1625 to 1940, taking in such events as the 1846 treaty with the United States, the Kit Carson campaign and the 1863 Long Walk, the 1868 treaty and return to Dinétah, and culminating in 1940 with the Navajo Tribal Council's resolution pledging military allegiance to the U.S.⁷³ It featured an all-Diné cast, largely drawn from the school population but also including "non-pupil" members of each school community in "mass scenes."⁷⁴ In essence the pageant was intended to be a community affair and an "ambitious" event of considerable significance.⁷⁵

The official aims for the Navajo Pageant appear to have been twofold. Pageant organizer Earl Raines hoped it would boost "moral [sic] and pride"⁷⁶ and that the pageant was "something for the welfare of the tribe."⁷⁷ He also hoped it would "create a favorable interest in contemporary and historic Navajo life that will extend not only to thousands of Navajo people but far beyond the reservation as well."⁷⁸ To Raines, therefore, the pageant's key aims were to make Diné proudly aware of their ancestors—a celebration of selected aspects of "Navajo history"—and to stimulate an interest in Diné life amongst the wider public. This didactic function reflected the aims of the early-twentieth-century American Pageantry Association (APA), whose members proclaimed, "Pageantry is a useful art in the same sense that the schoolhouse is useful, teaching something [community history] that everyone ought to know."⁷⁹

Raines's paternalistic belief that pride in, and accurate knowledge of, Diné history was in limited supply on the reservation is shown by his continued reminders for staff to consult academic sources rather than contemporary Diné concerning authentic nineteenth-century costumes and hairstyles. Indeed, authenticity appears to have been a driving principle for Raines, as his memorandum to the Pageant Committee demonstrates:

No one needs to be reminded of the ludicrousness of someone's wearing an old-type squaw dress with oxfords and anklets in impersonating Navajo women of the 1800s.... You should not depend

too strongly upon the pupils or even an average middle-age Navajo to tell you what were authentic costumes of nearly a century ago. You, yourself, have probably already found much material in studies that have been made.⁸⁰

The prioritization of academic studies over community knowledge is striking. It strongly indicates that the “delegitimization” of indigenous perspectives by Euro-American academics, identified by Lomayumtewa C. Ishii in his research on early-twentieth-century anthropologists’ attitudes towards Hopi history, continued well into the 1940s.⁸¹ Interestingly, in dismissing the Diné community as a source of Diné historical knowledge, Raines distanced himself from the recommendations of the APA, which had urged local pageant directors to interview older community members and thus obtain information “not to be found upon the printed page, but genuine, homely, and traditional history.”⁸² This perhaps did not fit with the more grandiose narrative promoted by Raines—namely a story of great military and political events and prominent (and all male) leaders.

Raines did seek some Diné input for the pageant script—he requested that tribal council members Howard Gorman and Chic Sandoval read over it a day after academic Richard Van Valkenburgh had given his assessment. However, whereas the latter would provide “the standpoint of an historian,” Gorman and Sandoval’s advice was to form “the standpoint of a Navajo”—apparently Raines did not recognize the existence of Diné historians. The advisory membership of the Pageant Committee continued the paternalist theme: Gorman and Sandoval, the sole Diné representatives, were listed last, after Lucy Wilcox Adams, Norma Runyan, and teacher Orpha McPherson.⁸³ Gorman did check the script and had a suggestion to make—that the elderly grandfather character should not encourage the children to go to bed.⁸⁴ This advice was taken on board in the redrafting and Gorman also translated the pageant script into Navajo. In July Raines went even further in his zeal for “accuracy,” by urging that schools give preference in casting to descendants of the historical figures portrayed. However, in the same communiqué he stipulated that all roles, irrespective of race, be played by Diné. Not only were Diné to play the roles of white characters, but also the Zuni and Pueblo roles. Indeed, it is here that Raines appears to have cast authenticity by the wayside: Rather than involve Zuni and Santa Clara dancers he argued that “Navajos can and should learn these dances and songs and present them.” No concern for any possible religious or

cultural significance of these unnamed dances is evident in his letter.⁸⁵ Clearly, for Raines, the principle of mass participation could override the principle of cultural authenticity.

The content of the pageant is also revealing. It followed a rigidly linear historical structure, possibly reflecting the local pageants of the 1910s, which strove to depict a community's past as a chronological sequence demonstrating "orderly, stable progress" that could help the audience cope with present-day changes.⁸⁶ Episode I describes the origins of the Diné—yet presents only the Bering Strait theory rather than the Diné creation belief. In Episode II, which depicts the 1846 treaty and Diné raids on U.S. military supplies, the grandfather asks his grandson the year of the treaty—in an unobvious promotion of book learning, the boy replies, "Grandfather, the books tell us it was 1846." The U.S. military is portrayed as honorable and decent throughout: When speaking of General Carleton the narrator notes, "He told the Navajo chiefs he was tired of treaties *they* did not keep." Kit Carson is introduced, without a trace of irony, as "famed Indian fighter and frontiersman." In the aftermath of the Carson campaign kindly soldiers provide war-weary Diné with food and blankets, while Carson and Chief Barboncito shake hands in the foreground—indeed Carson commiserates with the Diné leader, saying, "It has been hard on all of us," before urging him to "Think of the American soldiers as friends."⁸⁷ The incalculable horrors of the Long Walk are dealt with very briefly—reflecting Raines's desire to avoid a "sob story all the way."⁸⁸ While the grandfather narrator acknowledges that many Diné died en route to Bosque Redondo, the U.S. soldiers overseeing the expulsion are again depicted as thoughtful and compassionate. This chimes with earlier American pageant representations of Native-U.S. relations: While some did depict Native attacks on settlers and soldiers, scenes of Euro-Americans attacking Native Americans were rare.⁸⁹ In contrast, Carson's Zuni allies are cast as the real villains of the piece, dehumanized as "wolves," and wildly reveling in the Navajos' defeat.⁹⁰

The remainder of the pageant depicts the return to Fort Defiance, the role of reservation-based traders, and finally, the Indian New Deal. Unsurprisingly the government is portrayed in a favorable light throughout. The 1868 treaty is presented as generous, with leader Ganado Mucho declaring, "Let us remember that Washington is kind to all of us." In a similar vein, the grandfather narrator notes that in the 1880s "The government helped us, too." In the present-day Epilogue section he lauds the benefits of irrigation, day school education, and

improved roads, declaring that "Soil conservation and good land management are fattening our sheep and restoring our land and saving it for our children."⁹¹ This is hardly surprising, given Adams's directive that "the floats should all emphasize what is being done now and the opportunities open for Navajos."⁹² The future for the Diné and the Navajo Reservation, as presented in the pageant, was indeed bright.

Yet not everyone was included in the happy denouement. The "medicine man," a stalwart of the earliest episodes, does not appear in the Epilogue as a named character, suggesting his total absence from the scene and—by implication—the BIA's vision of the ideal Diné future. This relegation of the "medicine man" to the past resonates with earlier American historical pageants, such as the Pageant of the Old Northwest (1911), which used generic "medicine man" characters to stoically lament the "inevitable" passing of Native Americans and the concomitant rise of Euro-American settlement and "modern" technology.⁹³ However, whereas the earlier depictions were largely passive characters whose brief function was to announce the "natural" decline of indigenous populations, the 1940 pageant "medicine man" serves primarily as an instigator of war with the U.S. Against an ominous backdrop of owl hoots he prepares Diné warriors for war by painting snakes on their moccasins and reassuring them that bullets cannot strike them. The next episode begins with their military defeat to Carson, thus demonstrating to the audience the apparent folly of the medicine man's efforts. Following this, active expressions of Diné cultural practice in the pageant are relegated to a three-minute "squaw dance" sequence and two instances of "squaw dance music" played in the background.⁹⁴ The message seems to have been that while traditional music, clothing, and dances had a future, Diné medicine and some aspects of ceremonial belief belonged to the unhappy past, as obsolete and as ultimately damaging as raiding and warfare.

The Navajo Pageant was hailed a success, attracting large crowds to the 1940 Navajo Tribal Fair. Indeed, it featured in the promotional material advertising the 1941 Flagstaff All-Indian Powwow, which claimed one thousand Diné had participated in the pageant.⁹⁵ Tribal chairman Jacob Morgan requested that a segment be performed for council members—unfortunately his reaction has not been included in the BIA records.⁹⁶ The pageant was supported by many Diné—both the schoolchildren and their communities as well as tribal council members. Children brought clothing and jewelery items from home to use as costumes, despite Raines's concerns. Clearly people at the time felt that there was something in the pageant which they could call their own, or

which they could refashion to their own interpretation. It also featured prominently in school curricula—8th-grade students at Fort Defiance were dramatizing parts of the pageant in 1941—thereby indicating its influence beyond the tribal fair.⁹⁷

And the pageant did represent a BIA attempt to depict actual events in Diné history—albeit largely restricted to Diné-U.S. relations. In this way it differed from earlier historical enactments at government Indian schools, which tended to celebrate colonial-era events such as the arrival of Columbus and the first Thanksgiving, or later romantic fictional tales like Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1855 *The Song of Hiawatha*.⁹⁸ Indeed, as Peter Iverson has noted, just four years prior to the pageant, the Diné pupils at Crownpoint Boarding School had to participate in a highly insensitive Thanksgiving "playlet" which featured settler child protagonists narrowly avoiding sacrifice by sinister forest-dwelling "Indians."⁹⁹ The Pageant of Navajo History was no generic "first contact" tale, nor was it a static portrayal of the past: It depicted the past in motion and traced its relation to the present.¹⁰⁰ Throughout the performance the historic Diné are depicted as honorable, if perhaps misguided in their raiding, and Barboncito, Manuelito and Ganado Mucho are characterized as politically astute, eloquent leaders. Diné community and identity are both championed, as well as federal government soil conservation and education initiatives.

Yet the exclusion of the medicine man from the present-day act and the attempted prioritization of American academic interpretations of tribal history and authentic dress betray the highly selective nature of New Deal cultural tolerance. The glossing over of the extreme suffering inflicted upon the Diné during the Long Walk and incarceration at Bosque Redondo suggests the pageant authors treated forced removal as just another past episode in "Navajo history," akin to an American or European community's memories of a historic military defeat, rather than understanding what it meant to the Diné to be separated from Dinétah.¹⁰¹ Ultimately the presentation of a U.S.-government-friendly past and present, and the continued elevation of U.S. academic authority over indigenous historical knowledge, both suggest the unequal federal government/tribal relationship that characterized the New Deal. In seeking to control the historical narrative, thus making New Deal innovations more palatable to the audience, the 1940 Pageant of Navajo History appears to contain elements of Said's cultural imperialist paradigm.

SCHOOLS AND RELIGION

Thus far the education initiatives pursued during the New Deal appear to fit the concept of cultural "safety zone." Native history (admittedly a version that emphasized good relations with a benevolent U.S. government), dress, music, art, and dances were decreed positive (i.e., "safe") cultural aspects, while Native environmental and medical theories were "unsafe" if they contradicted government policy, and were therefore ignored by policymakers. However, one aspect of New Deal education policy perhaps challenges the notion of "safe" and "unsafe" culture: the permitting of pupil absence from school for the attendance of ceremonies.

Religion was already a fraught subject regarding Native education during the New Deal, thanks to John Collier's inflammatory 1934 Order on Religious Instruction in the Indian schools. By stipulating that missionary (Christian) teaching at the government schools could continue "As a privilege but not as a right," and stating that "Intentional proselytizing in the Indian boarding schools is prohibited," Collier issued a challenge to the hitherto symbiotic and entrenched relationship between missionary organizations and the Indian Office which had existed since the days of President Ulysses S. Grant's "Peace Policy."¹⁰² The perceived threat to missionary influence stimulated a vociferous backlash and the creation of the National Fellowship of Indian Workers, composed largely of field missionaries fiercely opposed to the Indian New Deal *in toto*. David Daily has noted that, despite the bitterness of the backlash, the 1934 order achieved little in practice: It was easily circumvented and difficult to enforce over such a wide and diverse catchment area.¹⁰³ However, individual school records show that at some schools the restrictions on missionary teaching were applied. In 1936, Almira Franchville, associate supervisor of Education at the United Pueblos Agency (UPA), advised the teacher-in-charge at San Juan Day School that "it would be very unwise for you or your teachers to hold any of your students after school for religious instruction without first securing the written request of the children's parents. I should not solicit this request; but if they send you a request in writing, I would give them the necessary cooperation." The controversial nature of this regulation was conveyed by Franchville's opening statement: "I feel very strongly that the day schools and the day school personnel cannot afford to enter into any controversies over religious instruction, and I am very anxious that you be protected to as great an extent as possible."¹⁰⁴

A more conciliatory situation existed at Isleta Day School in 1938. The UPA general superintendent wrote Isleta governor Pasqual Abeita to ask if he approved one hour's teaching per week by the Catholic Sisters for children whose parents had provided written consent. Abeita replied in the affirmative.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, this arrangement appears to have been widespread across the UPA: In 1940 Franchville issued a circular to day school teachers noting that "It has been customary in the Pueblos area to allow one hour a week for religious instruction at the day school, provided that parents request such instruction for their children and provided that certain missionaries or priests have been requested by parents to give instruction."¹⁰⁶ It would therefore appear that parental consent for missionary teaching at Pueblo day schools was taken seriously through the 1930s.

The bid to curtail missionary influence at the government schools, based upon the New Deal administration's desire to preserve freedom of conscience, generated significant criticism both from missionaries—Native and non-Native—and proponents of a total assimilation policy towards Native Americans. As such, it hardly constituted a "safe" policy approach for the BIA. By seeking to bar Native children from unsolicited Christian indoctrination, Collier's 1934 order suggests that the BIA viewed Native religious beliefs as something which should be protected. If missionary proselytization was cast in the role of aggressor, then Native religious beliefs could hardly be viewed as threatening, thus possibly rendering them "safe." Yet the inclusion of religious practice within the "safety zone" had implications for the successful execution of the BIA school program—namely the requirement for children to be permitted leave from school for the attendance of ceremonies.

The extent to which such religio-cultural leave was actually implemented has been questioned: Lomawaima and McCarty rightly note the exaggerated depiction conveyed by the Bureau-commissioned bilingual reader *Sun Journey*, in which a Zuni boy, Ze-do, is permitted a year's leave from boarding school to experience religious training at Zuni Pueblo.¹⁰⁷ However, some day schools did permit leave for limited periods for the purpose of religious instruction. Taos Day School (UPA) reports indicate that in 1937 five boys, aged nine to sixteen, left school for an unspecified amount of time to enter religious training in the pueblo. The report for 1938 states that five boys aged ten and eleven were permitted leave for the same reason.¹⁰⁸ The reports do not indicate how long the boys expected to be away, nor whether they returned to

school. However, a letter from Superintendent Seth Wilson (Hopi Agency) to UPA General Superintendent Sophie Aberle, dated March 1940, offers more detail. Wilson refers to two students who were granted permission by Aberle to return home for initiation ceremonies at Chimopavy in November 1939; he notes that the boys were now ready to return to school and were happy to do so.¹⁰⁹ This may have been an isolated incident, but it does suggest that some pupils were permitted to leave school for several months in order to receive religious training in their home community.

Day and boarding school records indicate that both Diné and Pueblo schools in the 1930s and 1940s allowed pupils to attend ceremonials and festivals during term time. This contrasts sharply with the policy implemented at Santa Fe Indian School in the assimilation era: According to John Gram, students wishing to attend pueblo ceremonies had to run away and the scale of such activity “seems to have been a chronic problem.”¹¹⁰ In 1935 Zuni children could return home from Santa Fe Indian School to attend the Shalako ceremony.¹¹¹ Acoma children, at the request of the Acoma governor, were allowed time off from McCarty’s Day School to attend the annual fiesta at the pueblo.¹¹² Even Lucy Adams, in her “Program for Navajo Schools” (1937), appeared to indicate an appreciation of the importance of ceremonial dances: She suggested that school terms be flexible, and that the timing of school holidays could reflect Diné ceremonies.¹¹³

These examples were not isolated incidents. Pupil attendance at ceremonies and fiestas had a noticeable impact upon individual schools’ programs. Some UPA day schools, including Nutria, closed for the day of the Zuni Shalako ceremony.¹¹⁴ Mesita Day School reported that no pupils attended school for four days in February 1939 as they were attending the Governor’s Feast at Laguna Pueblo.¹¹⁵ In fall 1942 the teacher at Cochiti Day School complained of “unusually poor” attendance due to a high number of ceremonial dances.¹¹⁶ Adams acknowledged that attendance at the Navajo day schools fluctuated due to a series of factors including “dances and ceremonials”—an admission reiterated by her successor, George Boyce, in 1945.¹¹⁷ Indeed, an official commenting on enrollment at Navajo day schools in October 1943 noted that “our enrollment even in normal times fluctuates greatly due to migration caused by seasonal occupation and ceremonials.” He then expressed hope that enrollment would increase once the “Squaw Dance” season had ended as “children are often not enrolled until Squaw Dances are

over.”¹¹⁸ Similar sentiments were expressed at Seba Dalkai Day School the same year.¹¹⁹ Adams’s suggestion that the term be organized so as to reflect key ceremonial periods had apparently not been implemented.

As the New Deal program progressed, an exasperated tone emerged in teachers’ correspondence concerning absences for religious/cultural reasons. The author of Taos Day School’s quarterly report dated March 1938 exclaimed that attendance would be significantly higher if “there were not so many religious ceremonies in the pueblo.”¹²⁰ In November 1943 Crystal Day School reported that attendance at Diné dances had resulted in a small enrollment and an average daily attendance that was “only fair.”¹²¹ And, while such absences were still permitted, the tone became increasingly grudging.

Take, for example, the response from UPA Education Superintendent Virgil Whitaker to a Zuni parent’s request for the term-time return of her daughter from Santa Fe Indian School for seven to ten days to help with Shalako preparations. Whitaker permitted the absence but noted, “All this fall we have been making a special effort to cut down absences from school, since our teachers all agree that irregular attendance is the greatest handicap our Indian schools have to face. It keeps us from doing as good work with the children as we should like to.”¹²² Whitaker may have been exaggerating the position of irregular attendance as education enemy number one—indeed, education records from this period are replete with complaints (both staff and parental) concerning dangerously damaged school buildings, a paucity of school personnel due to wartime enrollment, and water shortages at day schools—all of which constituted serious practical obstacles to the successful delivery of classroom education. However, this incident does attest to a belief amongst BIA staff that term-time attendance at ceremonies actively damaged the education program.

Grudging tone was one thing; by 1945 some school principals were refusing permission for attendance at events whose religio-cultural significance they deemed tenuous, notably Thanksgiving and Hallowe’en.¹²³ When Santa Fe Indian School principal Lucia Page refused permission for fifty pupils to attend Hallowe’en celebrations she stated, “I must take some measure to stop the exodus”—thus indicating the frequency of such absences.¹²⁴ And attempts to formalize religio-cultural absences were not restricted to BIA personnel: In 1941 the governor of San Ildefonso, Julian Martinez, informed UPA General Superintendent Aberle that “in the future no children will be allowed to leave school

unless the person or persons has or have a written statement from the Governor.”¹²⁵

The issue of religious-related pupil absences does raise questions for the safety zone. Freedom to practice religious worship was regarded by Collier and Beatty as an important citizenship right, as well as an essential component of Native societies and intrinsic to community well-being, hence they upheld the principle of granting student leave to attend religio-cultural events. Whether this can be termed “safe” with regards to BIA policy, however, is contentious. Teachers, while largely implementing the policy, clearly felt that the volume and extent of such absences was actively harmful to the school program. The absences were not permitted for monetary value, nor were they viewed as harmless by those who sanctioned them—therefore they differ from earlier tolerance based on assumption of innuocuity or assimilation into the U.S. wage economy. Rather, the defense of religious-related school absences stemmed from a positive standpoint: the belief that attendance at ceremonies was an inherent right and was beneficial both to the individual pupil and to the wider community—in effect, that attendance at the ceremonies was not merely safe, it was vital.

Religio-cultural tolerance did not, however, equate to religio-cultural understanding by BIA personnel, nor was it always based upon accurate knowledge of Native beliefs. In December 1939 an adult short course was held at Wingate Vocational High School (Navajo). Fifty-five Diné men and women from the reservation were enrolled in a twelve-day training program at the school. According to Acting Principal S. Prock, the adults “were often able to offer valuable source of material and criticism” at the Navajo history classes—an experience that contrasts sharply with Raines’s dismissal of Diné historical knowledge for the Pageant of Navajo History a year later.¹²⁶ At the end of the course participants discussed what they had seen. Whilst there were many references to the need for better academic standards and more higher education opportunities for the students, criticism was also directed towards the cultural dimension of the curriculum. The report’s unnamed author summarized:

Some objections of the school and its teachings were that the girls were cooking the Indian way, teachers telling tales and legends of the Navajos. They seem to have the impression that some were not rightly told. Also that the students were talking too much in the native tongue. They say that all this Indian cooking, telling of tales

and legends, could easily and correctly be taught to them during the summer months while the students are at home.¹²⁷

Rather than praise for the supposedly “Indianized” curriculum, there was concern that BIA teachers were simply not up to the job of teaching Diné culture. Moreover, the criticisms suggest a deeper disconnect between community and policymaker conceptions of the schools’ purpose. Speaking at a Navajo Tribal Council meeting in 1942, District 13 delegate Yellowman condemned the use of textbooks containing Diné pictures and designs—he urged the teacher to “wrap those books up and use the books the white people use. That is what we want.” The statement was met with applause, indicating widespread approval.¹²⁸ In 1952 council delegate Hoskie Cronemeyer decried the teaching of Diné customs and the holding of tribal dances at the schools—arguing that they should teach “educational problems” rather than “customs we already know.” Indeed, Cronemeyer accused the schools of prioritizing the teaching of Diné customs *over* the teaching of English.¹²⁹ Delegate Lillie Neil (District 19) shared this concern: In 1947 she wrote Beatty to complain that the teaching of the Navajo language at the schools was confusing to the children. She charged that the children learned less English and so would be unable to compete with Euro-Americans, but also that they were being taught “to speak Navajo the broken White Mans [sic] way.”¹³⁰ And Etsitty Begay of Chin Lee (Chinle), a guest speaker and participant in the Wingate Adult School program in 1939, lamented, “Too many young students interested in doings outside such as: squaw dances, etc on the reservation.” He argued that the students “leave school to attend these dances and consequently lose interest in school.”¹³¹ The view that “the family should transmit the culture,” not the government schools, also came through in interviews conducted with Jemez and Tesuque Pueblo adults in the late 1960s.¹³²

These criticisms of the New Deal curriculum suggest two things. Firstly, that the cultural lessons were sometimes poorly constructed and inaccurate. Secondly, that they were viewed as a distraction from the teaching of English and other “school” subjects. Those who denounced the teaching of Diné customs and dance performances at the schools do not appear to have been rejecting traditional Diné culture—Cronemeyer demanded that at school children should “learn what we are sending them over there for,” rather than “customs we already know.”¹³³ This does not suggest such customs were considered outmoded—rather that they belonged to the home or community sphere where they were

expertly taught, in contrast to English-language skills which were at that time the specialty of the Euro-American teachers. In a similar vein, Etsitty Begay's view that "squaw dances" distracted the students from their studies does not, on its own, indicate he opposed such practices—rather that for him school was the place to learn "American" skills, home was the place for traditional Diné practices, and when taught together, one could distract from the other.

The divergent views on education held by Diné and the BIA education division reveal a fundamental flaw in the New Deal bicultural experiment. Ryan may have proudly described the schools as "real Navajo schools," based on the curricular inclusion of Diné history, songs, and arts—yet this was not what many contemporary Diné saw as the purpose of a formal school. For many Diné parents in the 1930s sending a child to school was no casual decision, but an economic sacrifice—for example, the loss of a herder. Parents naturally had keen expectations of what children would learn at school, with English-language fluency being the prime demand.¹³⁴ The Diné (and also the Hopi parents of Polingaysi Qoyawayma's day school pupils) had thus established their own systems for asserting and protecting their regime of knowledge in their family and community spheres, while the government schools, occupying a separate sphere, existed to impart potentially useful elements of colonial knowledge.¹³⁵ Indeed, the unsolicited inclusion of Diné cultural elements in the curricula was viewed at best as a poorly executed venture, and at worst as an assault on the epistemic boundary which the Diné had established between the colonial knowledge system and their own. The BIA's failure to involve Native communities in the development of culturally relevant school curricula therefore led directly to the failure of the New Deal bicultural education experiment.

CONCLUSIONS

The bicultural scope of the BIA education program in the 1930s was clearly limited. It contained elements of Native cultures, but curricula were not guided by the traditional principles or worldviews of the communities served by the schools. Tribal history, art, and songs did feature, but as isolated pedagogical units—no "bicultural lens" was implemented across all curriculum areas.¹³⁶ Whether the cultural program securely fits the safety zone thesis is, however, debatable. The BIA clearly

regarded “history,” “art,” “songs,” “stories,” and “language” as worthy areas of indigenous “culture,” while ignoring tribal scientific and ecological beliefs which contradicted Bureau land and health policy. Yet the attempt to safeguard religious freedom, while based on a very narrow interpretation of religious action as confined to the ceremonial sphere, suggests that *safety* was not Director of Indian Education W. Carson Ryan’s and his successor Willard Beatty’s prime concern. The insistence on granting pupils’ leave of absence to attend ceremonies actively hindered a school program which had not been designed to take such needs into account. Secondly, the safety zone implies an ordered framework in which Native cultural expression was tightly controlled—yet the New Deal curriculum can best be described as ad hoc, with scant control from above. Lesson plans were left up to individual teachers to devise, with predictably differing results. Some teachers taught Euro-American historical models, while some others drew upon the teachings of tribal elders. Unlike the uniform curriculum of the earlier assimilation era, with its rigid edicts and standardized textbooks, the New Deal education program was a grassroots affair, subject largely to the direction of local education directors and teaching staff.

The New Deal education program did, however, contain elements of cultural invasion and imperialism. Euro-American interpretations of science, health, and ecology were undeniably imposed during the 1930s. This echoes Freire’s cultural invaders who “penetrate the cultural context of another group” and “impose their own view of the world upon those they invade.”¹³⁷ Historical, medical, and scientific narratives were authored by BIA personnel and non-Native academics, thus, in the manner of Said’s cultural imperialists, depriving Diné and Pueblo communities of narrative-producing power. Attempted cultural replacement strongly suggests BIA-held notions of Euro-American cultural superiority. Yet what we do not see is systematic, active BIA denunciation of Diné or Pueblo cultures from the mid-1930s to the early 1940s. Whereas earlier administrators had banned tribal dances, openly denigrated Native religions, and encouraged active Christian proselytization at the BIA schools, the New Dealers were largely silent on the cultural aspects they disagreed with—they simply ignored them. In this sense, they committed epistemicide more by default, rather than by active design.

The contradictory nature of the New Deal education policy, with its simultaneous conveyance of Western science and championing of Native

American religious freedom, suggests that total cultural replacement was not the intended goal. Contemporary evaluations of Collier and his education policies indicate many Indian Service teachers believed his admiration for Native cultures to be sincere—indeed Boyce criticized his “mysticism and paradox” that led him to reject universal education and services “that he felt would destroy ‘Indian culture.’”¹³⁸ How, then, could the New Dealers impose Western science at the schools?

The answer perhaps lies outside BIA policy itself. The Arizona State Department of Education’s *Course of Study for Elementary Schools of Arizona: Elementary Science* (1938), while not aimed at Native American pupils, stipulated that “Among outcomes there should be evident on the part of the pupil a desire for the truth and a request for proof.”¹³⁹ Indeed, elementary pupils were to “acquire the ability to develop one’s character through an adequate conception of the truth and a working confidence in the law of cause and effect.”¹⁴⁰ This emphasis on scientific truth reflects Michel Foucault’s thesis on truth and power, whereby “Each society has its regime of truth” through which power is wielded. According to Foucault, in Western societies “‘Truth’ is centred on the form of scientific discourse and the institutions which produce it,” such as universities, schools, and media. The regime of truth is “essential to the structure and functioning of...society”—indeed “‘Truth’ is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and the effects of power which it induces and which extend it.”¹⁴¹ Discourses of truth are therefore not neutral but are culturally specific, and enmeshed in a society’s social, economic, and cultural hegemony. The New Deal educators largely failed to recognize that their scientific/environmental lessons actively contradicted their professed cultural tolerance—and they proved unable or unwilling to address the clash. Perhaps, then, they had themselves been so thoroughly indoctrinated with Euro-American scientific “truth” through their own education system and culture that they could not conceive of viable alternative truths but instead imposed their own upon Native communities. They thus resemble the “well-intentioned professionals” described by Freire, who “use [cultural] invasion not as deliberate ideology but as the expression of their own upbringing”—they imposed their medical and ecological ideals almost incidentally, not as a conscious attempt at total cultural dominance but as an unquestioning acceptance of a Western scientific, academic worldview which they assumed had no significant bearing on Native religions.¹⁴² The parallel with Forbes’s warning, sixty years later, of continued prioritization of Euroscience and

Anglo-European perspectives in U.S. school curricula is at once striking and sobering.

Whereas the policymakers of the early twentieth century had actively sought the annihilation of Native cultures and religions, Collier, Ryan, and Beatty followed a more indirect and incoherent path. They sought to protect, and indeed promote, what *they* perceived to be religion and traditional cultural expression (dances, ceremonies, languages), while assuming that the spheres of economic, medical, political, and environmental life were purely pragmatic/non-cultural and so could be “improved” according to Euro-American doctrines. Rather than attempting the total replacement of Native cultures, they *compartmentalized* them according to the existing structures of 1930s Euro-American society. The concept of cultural totality, whereby all aspects of a culture (religion, economy, ecology, politics, health, etc.) are linked within its structure, was not contemplated.¹⁴³ And this compartmentalization did not stop at Diné and Pueblo cultures but extended to Euro-American culture. Collier later summarized the New Deal’s dual objective as “Assimilation, *not into our culture but into modern life*, and preservation and intensification of heritage.”¹⁴⁴ He thus failed to understand that his own culture permeated what he perceived to be “modernity”—i.e., science—and that the two were inextricably interlinked.

The Indian New Deal education policy was therefore an uneven blend of cultural ignorance, cultural arrogance, *and* a smattering of attempted religio-cultural pluralism—an uneasy mix which could not work, but which nonetheless differed from the near-total cultural destruction attempted in previous decades. ✦

NOTES

1. J. D. Forbes, “The New Assimilation Movement: Standards, Tests, and Anglo-American Supremacy,” *Journal of American Indian Education* 39:2 (2000), pp. 7–28.

2. See K. James, “Identity, Cultural Values, and American Indians’ Perceptions of Science and Technology,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 30:3 (2006), pp. 45–58; G. D. Haukoos, L. Bordeaux, D. LeBeau, and S. Gunhammer, “Importance of American Indian Culture in Teaching School Science: A Follow-Up Study,” *Journal of American Indian Education* 34:2 (1995); C. Robinson-Zanartu and J. Majel-Dixon, “Parent Voices: American

Indian Relationships with Schools,” *Journal of American Indian Education* 36:1 (1996); M. Tlanusta Garrett, “‘Two People’: An American Indian Narrative of Bicultural Identity,” *Journal of American Indian Education* 36:1 (1996).

3. The Arizona State Board of Health issued a report in 1938 which called for sweeping improvements in rural sanitation, drainage, and health care. According to the report, “An educational program with an adequate number of well-trained, intelligent sanitarians should be able to make great inroads into this problem of rural sanitation, resulting in better living conditions, lower death and morbidity rates” and it noted that “A definite program for the protection of maternal and child health by means of public health education and nursing service is being carried on by the Division of Maternal and Child Health.” Concerns at poor rural sanitation and burgeoning rates of tuberculosis mirror the concerns raised by the Indian Service in the 1930s. See Arizona State Board of Health, *Public Health in Arizona* (Phoenix, 1938), pp. 18–19, 29, 38.

4. K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa L. McCarty, “*To Remain an Indian*”: *Lessons in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education* (New York, 2006), chapters 4 and 5.

5. Amelia Katanski has applied Paulo Freire’s “banking concept” of education to the BIA’s education program of the assimilation era (c. 1879–1933). The banking concept casts students as passive depositories for the knowledge and narratives delivered by teachers, and is thus a one-way transmission of knowledge. See Amelia Katanski, *Learning to Write “Indian”: The Boarding School Experience and American Indian Literature* (Norman, 2005), pp. 45–48.

6. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York, 1970; 1996 Penguin edition), pp. 133–134.

7. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, 1993), p. xiii.

8. F. Nyamnjoh, “‘Potted Plants in Greenhouses’: A Critical Reflection on the Resilience of Colonial Education in Africa,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 47:2 (2012), p. 129.

9. According to Freire, cultural invasion “serves the ends of conquest and the preservation of oppression.” See Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p. 141. Nyamnjoh concurs: “Colonial education, like colonialism itself, was not a selfless ‘mission civilisatrice.’ It was meant to provide colonialism with the local support staff it needed to achieve its hegemonic imperialist purpose.” See Nyamnjoh, “Potted Plants in Greenhouses,” p. 135.

10. Lomawaima and McCarty, “*To Remain an Indian*,” pp. 91–92 (primers); pp. 72–75 (history and lore courses). See also Rebecca C. Benes, *Native American Picture Books of Change: The Art of Historic Children’s Editions* (Santa Fe, 2004).

11. J. Reyhner, “American Indian Cultures and School Success,” *Journal of American Indian Education* 32:1 (October 1992), online edition.

12. Paul Boyer, *Tribal Colleges: Shaping the Future of Native America* (Princeton, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1989), p. 25.

13 Margaret Connell-Szasz argues that Collier and his director of Indian Education, Willard Beatty, sincerely aimed for a bicultural curriculum, which they believed would enable Native Americans to achieve a balance between tribal cultures and Euro-American culture. Szasz argues this venture was severely hampered by a lack of teachers trained in bicultural education, and a rushed, “piecemeal” approach to the curricular inclusion of Native cultures. Consequently, the curricula failed to aid cultural adjustment or strengthen bicultural identity, particularly for boarding school students who had been separated from their community. See Margaret Connell-Szasz, *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination since 1928* (Albuquerque, 1974: 3rd edition, 1999), pp. 76–80, 82–88.

14. For a useful discussion of bicultural curricula see R. Chaffey, M. Conole, and M. Harrington, “Bicultural Development in Early Childhood Education: Critical Reflections and the Humpty Dumpty Story,” *He Kupu* 5:2 (November 2017), online edition. For a perceptive analysis of bicultural identity see M. Tlanusta Garrett, “Two People.”

15. George Boyce, *When Navajos Had Too Many Sheep: the 1940s* (San Francisco, 1974), p. 91. Boyce, who served as director of Navajo Schools from 1941 to 1949, was referring to a report on Navajo education that he had helped to compile in 1938, which listed a number of specific education goals.

16. Luther Standing Bear, “What the Indian Means to America,” in *Land of the Spotted Eagle* (Boston, 1933).

17. E. R. Fryer, quoted in Orval Ricketts and John McPhee, *The Navajo Indians in a Changing World* (Window Rock, 1941), pp. 22–23.

18. See David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875–1928* (Lawrence, 1995); Jacqueline Fear-Segal, *White Man’s Club: Schools, Race and the Struggle of Indian Acculturation* (Lincoln, 2007); Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, *Education Beyond the Mesas: Hopi Students at Sherman Institute, 1902–1929* (Lincoln, 2010); Sally J. McBeth, *Ethnic Identity and the Boarding School Experience of West-Central Oklahoma Indians* (Washington, D.C., 1983); Devon Mihesuah, *Cultivating the Rosebuds: The Education of Women at the Cherokee Female Seminary, 1851–1909* (Urbana, 1993); Clyde Ellis, *“To Change Them Forever”: Indian Education at Rainy Mountain Boarding School, 1890–1920* (Norman, 1996); Robert Trennert, *The Phoenix Indian School: Forced Assimilation in Arizona, 1891–1935* (Norman, 1988); Scott Riney, *The Rapid City Indian School, 1898–1933* (Norman, 1999); John R. Gram, *Education at the Edge of Empire: Negotiating Pueblo Identity in New Mexico’s Indian Boarding Schools* (Seattle, 2015); Adrea Lawrence, *Lessons from an Indian Day School: Negotiating Colonization in Northern New Mexico, 1902–1907* (Lawrence, 2011). For boarding school case studies that transcend the coercive assimilation era see K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *“They Called It Prairie Light”: The Story of Chilocco Indian School* (Lincoln, 1994); Brenda Child, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900–1940* (Lincoln, 1998); Sally Hyer, *One House, One Voice, One Heart: Native American Education at Santa Fe Indian School* (Santa Fe, 1990).

19. Examples of Native American teachers who covertly incorporated tribal histories, literature, and values into their boarding school lessons during the assimilation era include Esther Burnett Horne (Shoshone), Polingaysi Qoyawayma (Hopi), and Ruth Muskrat Bronson (Cherokee). Lakota day school teacher Clarence Three Stars skillfully utilized the Lakota language to facilitate English-language learning. Some non-Native teachers, such as Marguerite Bigler Stoltz, turned a blind eye to students' speaking proscribed Native languages and cultural expression. See T. G. Andrews, "Turning the Tables on Assimilation: Oglala Lakotas and the Pine Ridge Day Schools, 1889–1920s," *Western Historical Quarterly* 33:4 (2002), pp. 407–30; Esther Burnett Horne and Sally J. McBeth, *Essie's Story* (Lincoln, 1998), p. 67; Polingaysi Qoyawayma quoted in Jon Reyhner and Jean Eder (eds.), *A History of Indian Education* (Billings, 1989), p. 105; Marguerite Bigler Stoltz, *The Dove Always Cried: Narratives of Indian School Life* (Blacksburg, 1994), p. 14.

20. Horne and McBeth, *Essie's Story*, pp. 57–58.

21. Anthropologist Thomas Biolsi argues that Collier had a "mystical fascination with native culture" that blinded him to the realities of life on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations and to the wishes and views of the Lakota communities. See Thomas Biolsi, *Organizing the Lakota: The Political Economy of the New Deal on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations* (Norman, 1992), p. 107.

22. Circular 2970, printed in J. Collier to B. Dwight, February 19, 1936, The Collier Papers (Roosevelt Study Center, Middelburg, Netherlands), Reel 14. Hereafter cited as Collier Papers (RSC). Collier, despite his many faults, was committed to upholding the principle of religious freedom for Native Americans, demonstrated by his lifting of the bans on certain tribal dances which had been imposed since the 1880s.

23. The pioneering overview study of the New Deal education program is Connell-Szasz, *Education and the American Indian*. See also K. Jensen, "Teachers and Progressives: The Navajo Day School Experiment, 1935–1945," *Arizona and the West* 25 (1983), pp. 49–62, and F. J. Stefon, "Willard Beatty and Progressive Indian Education," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 33:4 (2009), pp. 91–112.

24. W. C. Ryan, "Social and Educational Implications of the Navajo Program," paper presented at National Conference of Social Workers, Kansas City, May 25, 1934, Collier Papers (RSC), Reel 10.

25. W. Beatty, "Planning Indian Education in Terms of Pupil and Community Needs," *Indians at Work* 4:2 (September 1, 1936), p. 6.

26. Horne and McBeth, *Essie's Story*, pp. 69–70.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 85–86.

28. Polingaysi Qoyawayma, with Vada F. Carlson, *No Turning Back: A True Account of a Hopi Indian Girl's Struggle to Bridge the Gap between the World of Her People and the World of the White Man* (Albuquerque, 1964), pp. 125–27, 151. According to Qoyawayma, "It was Commissioner John Collier who

eventually gave her the greatest support. Overnight, and to the consternation of teachers confirmed in the old way of teaching Indian children, he changed the procedure.... Instead of thinking of Indian children as people whose natural state was one of 'moral and mental stupor,' he recognized the dynamic inner relationship of their own culture patterns and suggested that teaching should come from within instead of without" (p. 151). Qoyawayma, like Horne, was chosen to demonstrate her teaching methods at the Indian Service in-service summer schools.

29. Stoltz, *The Dove Always Cried*, p. 74.

30. Ibid., p. 75.

31. Ibid., pp. 125–148.

32. Ibid., p. 75.

33. V. Deloria Jr., "The Perpetual Education Report," in Vine Deloria Jr. and Daniel Wildcat (eds.), *Power and Place: Indian Education in America* (Golden, 2001), p. 154.

34. Donald Fixico, *The American Indian Mind in a Linear World* (New York, 2003), p. 90.

35. Report from Rhoda Hughes to George Boyce, June 7, 1941, Hunter's Point Day School, Records of the BIA, Record Group 75, Central Classified File (Navajo), Folder 807: Fort Defiance, Box 177 (Federal Record Center: Laguna Niguel). Hereafter cited as RG75-Navajo-Fldr-Bx-LN.

36. Adam Fortunate Eagle, *Pipestone: My Life in an Indian Boarding School* (Norman, 2010), p. 11. Adam attended Pipestone for ten years (1935–1945). It is possible that Diné children in the 1930s found Little Boy Blue, with its emphasis on herding, less alien than some of the other nursery rhymes, which may explain its apparent popularity.

37. Report from Hughes to Boyce, June 7, 1941, Hunter's Point Day School.

38. Norma Runyan began teaching at Tuba City Boarding School in 1937. In a bid to enliven a class on local flora and fauna she introduced owls to her pupils, who, in her own words, "either voiced objection or 'shut me out' by maintaining a stony silence." Owls are considered taboo in Diné culture. The situation was salvaged by Diné teacher George Hood, who assured the students that Runyan "had not known any better." For a fuller account of the incident see Hildegard Thompson, *The Navajos' Long Walk for Education* (Tsaiile Lake, 1975), pp. 45, 65.

39. Fortunate Eagle, *Pipestone*, p. 94.

40. Fred Richards to George Boyce, June 14, 1941, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 807: "Fort Defiance"-Bx 177-LN.

41. Clyde Blair, quoted in J. R. Gram, "Acting Out Assimilation: Playing Indian and Becoming American in the Federal Indian Boarding Schools," *American Indian Quarterly* 40:3 (Summer 2016), p. 268 (emphasis added).

42. Richards to Boyce, June 14, 1941. See also Horne and McBeth, *Essie's Story*, pp. 83, 85.

43. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. xiii.
44. C. W. Dumont Jr., "The Politics of Scientific Objections to Repatriation," *Wicazo Sa Review* 18:1 (Spring 2003), p. 109. Dumont presents a powerful critique of Western scientific objections to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and the repatriation of Native American remains.
45. See Susan A. Miller, "Native America Writes Back: The Origin of the Indigenous Paradigm in Historiography," *Wicazo Sa Review* 23:2 (2008), pp. 9–28, and Susan A. Miller, "Native Historians Write Back: The Indigenous Paradigm in American Indian Historiography," *Wicazo Sa Review* 24:1 (2009), pp. 25–45.
46. Memorandum: N. Runyan to G. Boyce, February 8, 1943, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 806: "1943"-Bx 176-LN.
47. Gertrude Giesen, "Work with Beginners, ages 5–8 inclusive" (June 1941?), RG75-Navajo-Fldr 807: "Fort Defiance"-Bx 177-LN.
48. See State Department of Education (AZ), *Course of Study for Elementary Schools of Arizona: Bulletin Number 12: Elementary Science* (Phoenix, 1938), especially lessons on nature and weather.
49. Basil Johnston, *Indian School Days* (Norman, 1988), pp. 186–188.
50. V. Deloria Jr., "American Indian Metaphysics" in Deloria and Wildcat, *Power and Place*, p. 4.
51. D. Wildcat, "Practical Professional Indigenous Education" in Deloria and Wildcat, *Power and Place*, p. 114.
52. G. Boyce to W. Beatty, November 25, 1938, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 800: "Education 1936–1938"-Bx 165-LN.
53. W. Beatty to L. Adams, September 22, 1938, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 806: "1935–39"-Bx 176-LN.
54. G. Boyce to W. Beatty, November 25, 1938, RG75-Navajo-Fldr: 800-LN.
55. n.a., "Tuba City: Material for School Catalogue" (January 13, 1942), p. 2, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 806: "1941–42,"-Bx 176-LN.
56. Ora Medley, "Summary of Work for the School Year, 1940–1941," May 1941, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 807: "Fort Defiance"-Bx 177-LN.
57. See Gram, "Acting Out Assimilation," pp. 259–60. Albuquerque Indian Boarding School primarily, but not exclusively, served Pueblo students.
58. Giesen, "Work with Beginners," RG75-Navajo-Fldr 807: "Fort Defiance"-Bx 177-LN.
59. C. Blair, "The Day School System of the Navajo Reservation, school year 1936–1937," pp. 3–6, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 800: "Education 1943–1946"-Bx 166-LN.
60. L. Adams, "Program for Navajo Schools," December 6, 1937, p. 2, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 800: "Education 1936–1938"-Bx 165-LN.

61. Richards to Boyce, June 14, 1941, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 807: "Fort Defiance"-LN.

62. For fuller discussions of the stock reduction policy and its impact upon Native communities see Rose Mitchell and Charlotte Frisbie, *Tall Woman: The Life Story of Rose Mitchell, A Navajo Woman, c. 1874-1977* (Albuquerque, 2001), pp. 211-212; Boyce, *When Navajos Had Too Many Sheep*; Peter Iverson, *The Navajo Nation* (Westport, 1981), pp. 27-65; Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency* (Lincoln, 1983), pp. 260-323; Donald Parman, *The Navajos and the New Deal* (New Haven, 1976); Marsha L. Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country* (Seattle, 2009).

63. M. Weisiger, "Gendered Injustice: Navajo Livestock Reduction in the New Deal Era," *Western Historical Quarterly* 38:4 (2007), pp. 437-457.

64. E. Fryer to W. Beatty, December 10, 1936, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 800: "Education 1936-1938,"-Bx 165-LN.

65. E. Fryer to H. G. Calkins, August 11, 1937, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 800: "Education 1936-1938"-Bx 165-LN. Clay Lockett was, in addition to his roles at the Soil Conservation Service and Indian Service, an anthropologist and archaeologist, who went on to run an Indian Arts and Crafts store in Tucson.

66. L. Adams, "Program for Navajo Schools," December 6, 1937, p. 1, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 800: "Education 1936-1938"-Bx 165-LN.

67. Ibid, p. 5.

68. Memorandum: L. Adams to E. Fryer, September 3, 1938, "Navajo School Program 1938-39: an outline of plans for Navajo Schools for the coming year," pp. 1-3, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 800: "Education 1936-1938"-Bx 165-LN.

69. Ibid, pp. 4-5.

70. Ibid, p. 6. For Boyce's recommendations see note 52.

71. The annual Navajo Tribal Fair began in September 1938. It featured livestock competitions, horse races, rodeos, arts and crafts exhibitions, and dances. See 1941 Flagstaff All-Indian Powwow Program (Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce, 1941), section on Navajo Tribal Fair, at <https://azmemory.azlibrary.gov>.

72. Memorandum: E. Fryer to All Personnel, April 22, 1940, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 894: "Pageants Indian Education [2/2]"-Bx 197-LN. Pageant organizer Earl Raines also promoted the educational aspect of the pageant, informing Navajo Service head teachers that it "has a great deal of educational value." See E. Raines to School Area Heads, August 26, 1940, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 894: "Pageants Indian Education [1/2]"-Bx 197-LN.

73. Pageant of Navajo History, final script, August 1940, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 894: "Pageants Indian Education [1/2]"-Bx 197-LN.

74. E. Raines to School Area Heads, August 26, 1940, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 894: "Pageants Indian Education [1/2]"-Bx 197-LN.

75. Memorandum: Fryer to All Personnel, April 22, 1940, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 894: "Pageants Indian Education [2/2]"-Bx 197-LN.

76. E. Raines to L. Adams, July 20, 1940, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 894: "Pageants Indian Education [1/2]"-Bx 197-LN.

77. E. Raines to School Area Heads, August 26, 1940, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 894: "Pageants Indian Education [1/2]"-Bx 197-LN.

78. Ibid.

79. R. Davol, "Pageantry as a Fine Art," *Art and Progress* 5:8 (June 1914), p. 299. Ralph Davol was the author of *A Handbook of American Pageantry* (1914). He argued that historical pageantry had a significant educational function, but that it also constituted a fine art.

80. Memorandum: E. Raines to Pageant Committee, May 18, 1940, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 894: "Pageants Indian Education [1/2]"-Bx 197-LN.

81. Lomayumtewa C. Ishii, "Western Science Comes to the Hopis: Critically Deconstructing the Origins of an Imperialist Canon," *Wicazo Sa Review* 25:2 (2010), pp. 65-88.

82. Virginia Tanner, quoted in David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (1990), p. 117. The American Pageantry Association was founded by Lotta Clark in 1913. Its peak (both membership and influence) was 1913-1916, though local historical pageants continued to be written and performed through the 1920s. Tanner, a dance director, served as vice president of the American Pageantry Association in the early 1920s.

83. E. Raines to L. Adams, May 4, 1940, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 894: "Pageants Indian Education [1/2]"-Bx 197-LN.

84. H. Gorman to L. Adams, May 13, 1940, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 894: "Pageants Indian Education [1/2]"-Bx 197-LN.

85. E. Raines to L. Adams, July 20, 1940, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 894: "Pageants Indian Education [1/2]"-Bx 197-LN.

86. Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, p. 139.

87. Pageant of Navajo History, final script (1940), in RG75-Navajo-Fldr 894: "Pageants Indian Education [1/2]," Bx 197-LN.

88. E. Raines to L. Adams, July 20, 1940, RG75: Navajo-Fldr 894: "Pageants Indian Education [1/2]," Bx 197 (LN).

89. Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, p. 140.

90. Pageant of Navajo History, final script.

91. Ibid.

92. L. Adams to E. Raines, June 20, 1940, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 894-LN. This idealized depiction of past and present, emphasizing unity, achievement, and harmony, reflects the urban pageants of the early twentieth century, such as the Boston Civic Pageant (1910), which depicted the smooth integration of immigrant communities and the happiness of workers. See Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, pp. 126, 131, 133.

93. Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, p. 139.

94. Pageant of Navajo History, final script.
95. See 1941 Flagstaff All-Indian Powwow Program at <https://azmemory.azlibrary.gov>.
96. L. Adams to E. Raines, May 9, 1940, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 894-LN.
97. Richards to Boyce, June 14, 1941, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 807: "Fort Defiance"-LN.
98. See Adams, *Education for Extinction*, pp. 191–206. See also B. Rader, "The Greatest Drama in Indian Life": Experiments in Native American Identity and Resistance at the Haskell Institute Homecoming of 1926," *Western Historical Quarterly* 35:4 (2004), pp. 429–453. For a discussion of the performance of *Hiawatha* and fictionalized portrayals of Pocahontas's life held at the Albuquerque and Santa Fe Indian Boarding Schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Gram, "Acting Out Assimilation," pp. 251–273.
99. Peter Iverson, *Diné: A History of the Navajos* (Albuquerque, 2002), p. 174.
100. For examples of earlier static presentations of historic Native American individuals and groups, see L. G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883–1933* (Albuquerque, 1996), p. 222.
101. Historian Susan Miller has argued that many non-indigenous historians have tended to downplay the severity of the forced relocations experienced by Native Americans, partly because of failure to understand the centrality of homeland and burial grounds to many Native cultures, whereas "Indigenous historians are clearer about the effects of forced relocation." Miller notes that "The removed tribes' resistance to forced relocation from their homelands makes greater sense as reluctance to leave one's terrestrial Mother and community of spirits." See note 45, Miller, "Native Historians Write Back," pp. 25–45 (for quotations see p. 34 and p. 29).
102. J. Collier, "Statement on Missionaries" (1934), Collier Papers (RSC), Reel 14. In a bid to counter accusations of corruption in Indian Affairs, President Grant encouraged the aggrandizement of missionary influence on Indian reservations, based on the belief that Christian workers would be immune to such vices as cronyism and exploitation.
103. David W. Daily, *Battle for the BIA: G. E. E. Lindquist and the Missionary Crusade against John Collier* (Tucson, 2004), pp. 65–74.
104. A. Franchville to L. Laroux, September 28, 1936, RG 75: United Pueblos Agency, Fldr 801.22: "San Juan Pueblo," Box 251 (FRC 163345-50), Denver. Hereafter cited as RG75-UPA-Fldr-Box-FRC-D.
105. General Superintendent (UPA) to Governor (Isleta), February 14, 1938; P. Abeita to S. Aberle, February 16, 1938, RG75-UPA-Fldr 801.4: "Isleta Day School 1/36–6/38"-Bx 256-FRC 163351-56-D.
106. A. Franchville and L. Wiberg: Circular 3 to Day School Teachers, August 31, 1940, RG75-UPA-Fldr 102c: "Day Schools: Circulars"-Bx 255-D.
107. See Lomawaima and McCarty, "To Remain an Indian," pp. 96–98. See also Ann Nolan Clark, *Sun Journey: A Story of Zuni Pueblo* (Lawrence, 1945).

108. Taos Day School Quarterly Report, April 1, 1937; March 31, 1938, RG75-UPA-Fldr 842: "Taos Day School Quarterly Reports: File 1"-Bx 258-D.

109. S. Wilson to S. Aberle, March 1, 1940, RG75-UPA-Fldr 810: "Students, 1938-43"-Bx 77-D.

110. Gram, *Education at the Edge of Empire*, p. 105.

111. S. Aberle to J. Vernon, December 6, 1935, RG75-UPA-Fldr 802.1: "Santa Fe Boarding School"-Bx 252-D.

112. A. Franchville to M. Deal, January 17, 1938, RG75-UPA-Fldr 801.8: "McCarty's Day School, January 1935-June 1938"-Bx 256-FRC 163351-56-D.

113. L. Adams, "Program for Navajo Schools," December 6, 1937, p. 5, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 800: "Education 1936-1938"-Bx 165-LN.

114. Nutria Day School Quarterly Report, December 31, 1936, RG75-UPA-Fldr 842.1: "General Correspondence File, 1935-43"-Bx 258-D.

115. L. Wiberg to M. Deal, February 7, 1939, RG75-UPA-Fldr 801.4-801.9: "Education, Schools, Miscellaneous, etc, 1938-44"-Bx 392-D.

116. Cochiti Day School Quarterly Report, November 30, 1942, RG75-UPA-Fldr 842: "File 1"-Bx 395-D.

117. L. Adams, "Program for Navajo Schools," December 6, 1937, p. 5, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 800: "Education 1936-1938"-Bx 165-LN; G. Boyce to G. S. Browne, March 9, 1945, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 800: "Education 1945-1946"-Bx 167-LN. Adams noted that "the scattered population, bad roads and weather, dances and ceremonials, and the economic activities of the children make attendance fluctuating." Boyce accepted the role played by poor road conditions, but also ascribed poor attendance to "the mobility of the people in their sheepherding and ceremonial life."

118. D. P. Trent (for J. M. Stewart) to Office of Indian Affairs (Attn: Beatty), October 5, 1943, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 806: "Schools 1943-1944"-Bx 177-LN.

119. Memorandum: D. Ellis to G. Boyce, September 28, 1943, "Report on Visit to Seba Dalkai Day School, September 16, 1943," RG75-Navajo-Fldr 806: "1943"-Bx 176-LN.

120. Taos Day School Quarterly Report, March 31, 1938, RG75-UPA-Fldr 842: "File 1"-Bx 258-D.

121. Memorandum: W. M. Stepp to G. Boyce, November 5, 1943, "Visit to Crystal Day School, November 3, 1943," RG75-Navajo-Fldr 806: "Schools 1943-1944"-Bx 177-LN.

122. V. Whitaker to W. Ondelacy, December 3, 1943, RG75-UPA-Fldr 802.1: "Santa Fe Boarding School"-Bx 76-FRC 163285-90-D. See also W. Ondelacy to Mrs. Brannon[?] [handwriting unclear], November 30, 1943, same file.

123. Education Superintendent Virgil Whitaker appears to have tried to curtail UPA pupil absences at Thanksgiving. See V. Whitaker to Mrs. S. Thompson, November 13, 1944, RG75-UPA-Fldr 802.1: "Santa Fe Boarding School"-Bx 76-FRC 193285-90-D. See also V. Whitaker to J. Beca, October 11, 1944, same file.

124. L. Page to Beggs, November 1, 1945, RG75-UPA-Fldr 802.1: "Santa Fe Boarding School"-Bx 76-FRC 193285-90-D.

125. J. Martinez to S. Aberle, February 1941, RG75-UPA-Fldr 061: "Dances, 1939-41"-Bx 112-FRC 163293-97-D.

126. S. Prock, "Report of Academic Department on Adult School Dec. 11-22 inclusive," n.d., RG75-Navajo-Fldr 800: "Education 1938-39"-Bx 166-LN. For Raines's dismissive attitude see Memorandum: Raines to Pageant Committee, May 18, 1940, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 894: "Pageants Indian Education [1/2]"-Bx 197-LN.

127. n.a., "Report of meeting held in the boys' sitting room, Fort Wingate" (December 17, 1939), p. 2, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 800: "Education, 1938-39"-Bx 166-LN.

128. Yellowman, quoted in Navajo Tribal Council Meeting, 22-24 June 1942, p. 18, Major Council Meetings of American Indian Tribes, 1914-1956 (held at Durham University Library, Durham, UK), Reel 3.

129. Hoskie Cronemeyer (1952), quoted in Peter Iverson (ed.), *"For Our Navajo People": Diné Letters, Speeches & Petitions, 1900-1960* (Albuquerque, 2002), pp. 107-108.

130. Lillie J. Neil (1947), quoted in *ibid*, p. 105.

131. n.a., "General Meeting for Boys," December 11, 1939, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 800: "Education, 1938-39"-Bx 166-LN.

132. Joe Sando, quoted in H. C. Ellis, "From the Battle in the Classroom to the Battle for the Classroom," *American Indian Quarterly* 11:3 (Summer 1987), p. 258. The interviews were conducted from 1967 to 1972 by the University of New Mexico as part of the American Indian Research Project (also known as the Doris Duke Collection).

133. Cronemeyer, quoted in Iverson, *"For Our Navajo People,"* pp. 107-108.

134. Hence parents' delight at children's recitation of Anglo nursery rhymes—see Report from Rhoda Hughes to George Boyce, June 7, 1941, Hunter's Point Day School, RG75-Navajo-Fldr 807: "Fort Defiance"-Bx 177-LN.

135. Parents from the Hotevilla community in the late 1920s were unimpressed by Qoyawayma's incorporation of traditional Hopi songs and stories in her day school lessons, noting, "We send them [children] to school to learn the white man's way, not Hopi. They can learn the Hopi way at home. Why should they go to school to learn about little squirrel picking pinyons? All Hopi children know about him." See Qoyawayma, with Carlson, *No Turning Back*, p. 126.

136. See Chaffey, Conole, and Harrington, "Bicultural Development in Early Childhood Education." In their analysis of bicultural education in New Zealand, Chaffey, Conole, and Harrington argue that "It is important for teachers to realise that bicultural development can be achieved by implementing a bicultural lens across all curriculum areas blending in te reo Maori me tikanga Maori into all aspects of their teaching." In this way, Maori values can be included throughout

the school program, reflecting the interpretation of biculturalism as two cultures in partnership.

137. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, pp. 133–134.

138. Boyce, *When Navajos Had Too Many Sheep*, p. 109. For sympathetic appraisals of the New Deal cultural tolerance in education, see Horne and McBeth, *Essie's Story*, pp. 75, 86; Qoyawayma, with Carlson, *No Turning Back*, p. 151; Fortunate Eagle, *Pipestone*, pp. 143–144.

139. H. E. Hendrix, "Foreword," in State Department of Education (AZ), *Course of Study for Elementary Schools of Arizona: Bulletin Number 12: Elementary Science* (Phoenix, 1938). Hendrix was the state superintendent of Public Instruction for Arizona.

140. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

141. M. Foucault, "Truth and Power" in Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (New York, 1980 edition), pp. 131–133. See also Nyamnjoh, "Potted Plants in Greenhouses," p. 131.

142. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p. 137.

143. For a discussion of cultural totality see Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness* (London, 1974), pp. 106–108. See also D. Fixico, "Ethics in Writing American Indian History," in Devon Mihesuah (ed.), *Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians* (Lincoln, 1998), pp. 87, 91.

144. John Collier, *From Every Zenith: A Memoir* (Denver, 1963), p. 203. Emphasis added.