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This is a rough draft
of the history chapter
(chapter 2).

Stephen

history--II

American colleges and universities have been educating Native Americans for over 350 years. From the beginning of permanent European settlement, ~~American~~ Indians have been encouraged to participate in this ritual of Western civilization. The goals of many early programs, however, were not focused on advancement of the individual, but on assimilation and control.

In 1619, for example, at the first Assembly held in James City, Virginia, "workman of all sorts," in this new colony were urged to contribute their skills "for the erecting of [a] university and college." Although the settlement was only a few years old and still tenuously attached to the Atlantic coastline, the East India School opened in 1621 and included among the student body a group of Indian children from the local tribe.

Religion was a key reason for enrolling the Native American students. While the school's charter called for the education of Indian boys "in the first elements of literature," missionary work was a more immediate motivation. It was hoped that students would accept the Christian faith while in school and then carry on "the work of conversion" after graduation. A commentator of the time described the benefits of an European education:

"It would be proper to draw the best disposed among the Indians to converse and labour with our people for a convenient reward that they might not only learn a civil way of life, but be brought to a knowledge of religion and become instruments in the

conversion of their countrymen."

The institution met an early end, however, when in 1622 the college's superintendent and some of its residents were killed during an Indian uprising.

Interest in Indian education continued despite this setback. When Harvard College was founded in 1636, listed among its goals was "the Education of the English and Indian youth of this country in knowledge and Goodness" (Fletcher, p. __) A special college within a college was founded for the Native students and a building large enough for twenty pupils was constructed (Fletcher, Crum, Personal Communication).

Even with this special attention, however, few Indian children enrolled and even fewer graduated. Illness, death, and the rigorous curriculum's emphasis on Latin and the Western classics weeded out all but the healthiest and most determined Indian scholars. A contemporary during Harvard's first years described the many roadblocks to academic achievement:

"For several of the said youth died, after they had been sundry years at learning, and made good proficiency therein. Others were disheartened and left learning, after they were almost ready for the college. And some returned to live among their countrymen. . ." (p.54).

Other efforts brought equally frustrating results. Dartmouth's foundings was also inspired by the desire to educate and Christianize the Indians. Similarly, the College of William and Mary was given the task "to teach the Indian boys to read and write, and vulgar arithmetic. And especially he is to teach them thoroughly the catechism and the principles of the Christian

religion" (Fletcher, p. 35).

But college officials were frustrated by their students' lack of enthusiasm for Western-style learning. By the early part of the eighteenth century, documents soberly describe that institution's efforts to actually buy children for instruction (Fletcher, p. 35)

By the start of the Revolutionary War the American colonies had spent over 150 years trying, without success, to incorporate the Native population into the transplanted European education system. Despite repeated and occasionally sustained efforts, there had been few positive results.

When English settlers first arrived on the North American coastline, education was a priority. To those who left Europe for the wilderness of a new continent, institutions of learning were a reassuring symbol of their own civilization and, perhaps more urgently, a route to the civilization of their new land. Through its influence, they mysterious and threatening territory would be tamed and Christianized. In this view, the Indians--not the institutions--were expected to adapt and be changed. If the native scholars could not meet the standards of European higher education, it was their fault, not the college's.

At the time of American Independence, then, the verdict of failure had already been passed. Many whites dismissed Indians unwilling--or unable--to adapt to White society. With cultural relativism not a recognized philosophy, Europeans judged the Indian population by their own standards and looked on with pity or contempt when the natives failed to accept the perceived

superiority of Western culture. While there was broad acceptance of Indians as inherently equal human beings, there was no such charity towards their values and beliefs (Prucha, pp. 6 - 8).

Thomas Jefferson perhaps most clearly reflected the mood of the era. In 1785 he declared that "the Indian to be be in body and mind equal to the white man" (Forbes, p. 19). Yet in a conversation with several Indian groups at the turn of the century, he was equally adamant in his promotion of the European's agrarian culture.

"We shall with great pleasure," he proposed, "see your people become disposed to cultivate the earth, to raise herds of useful animals and to spin and weave, for the food and clothing. These resources are certain, they will never disappoint you, while those of hunting may fail, and expose your women and children to th miseries of hunger and cold. We will with pleasure furnish you with implements of the most necessary arts, and with persons who may instruct [you] how to make and use them" (Prucha, p. 12).

Some tribes and individuals were open to such offers, willing to learn the trades that suggested parity with the increasingly dominant white population. Among many Native American leaders, however, there was also the understanding that failure was likely for Indians in white colleges, when their own values and cultural needs were not acknowledged.

In 1794, Benjamin Franklin recorded one Indian leader's analysis of Western education's poor performance. His insights-- a response to an offer to educate the children of his tribe-- summarized what many White educators would not realize or accept

for another century or more:

"But you, who are wise, must know that different Nations have different Conceptions of things; and you will therefore not take it amiss, if our ideas of this kind of Education happen not be the same with yours. We have had some Experience of it; Several of our young people were formerly brought up at the College of the Northern Provinces; they were instructed in all your Sciences; but, when they came back to us, they were bad Runners, ignorant of every mean of living in the Woods, unable to bear either Cold or Hunger, knew neither how to build a Cabin, take a Deer, or kill an Enemy, spoke our Language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for Hunter, Warriors, nor Counselors, they were totally good for nothing. We are however not the less oblig'd by your kind Offer, tho' we decline accepting it; and, to show our grateful Sense of it, if the Gentlemen of Virginia will send us a Dozen of their Sons, we will take great Care of the Education, instruct them in all we know, and make Men of them" (Fuchs, p. 3).

Such a proposal was not accepted, but neither could the native population be dismissed. As the nation pushed west, the United States continued to confront new Indian groups to be subdued. Military leaders and civilians following in the wake of conquest, were often in agreement on the poor quality of Indian civilization. In this era, even complements sounded more like insults.

Visiting a group of Apaches in 1856, a traveler named Frederick Olmsted was not impressed. "Here," he later wrote,

"was nothing but the most miserable squalor, foul obscenity and disgusting brutishness, if there be excepted the occasional evidence of a sly and impish keenness. We could not find even one man of dignity . . ." (Forbes, pp. 16 - 17).

Indian intelligence was a common area for criticism as the force of the Enlightenment gave way to simple contempt. Charles Maclaren, a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, reported in 1875, for example, that American Indians "are not only adverse to the restraints of education but are for the most part incapable of a continued process of reasoning on abstract subjects . . . Their inventive and imitative faculties appear to be of very humble capacity, nor have they the smallest taste for the arts and sciences" (Forbes, p. 17).

Not all shared these views. One commentator familiar with several tribes was unrestrained in his praise of Indian culture. "[T]hey display," he argued, "as great energy of mental powers . . . judgement and perceptions are clear and quick, and their arguments ingenious and cogent."

But as the nation pursued Manifest Destiny, such voices were not dominant and did not determine policy. Native American society was instead seen as inferior and the Indians themselves were often viewed as a threat. The goals of education, even when inspired by the most noble goals of paternalism, could not be separated from the larger goals of ^{exclusion of} ~~assimilation and civilization~~.

In a series of treaties signed during the 1850's with western tribes, the immediate goal was to gain control of ever increasing amounts of land for white settlement. But each

document also offered provisions intended to not only subdue the Indians, but also to fundamentally transform their cultures. Grants, for example, were given for the promotion of education and the artifacts of White civilization: mills, blacksmith shops, and other trades. Likewise, land parceled into farm-sized plots not only reduced the amount of Indian-controlled land, but also--according to the thinking of the day--promoted an agrarian lifestyle.

But as the land disappeared, few of the commitments for education were fulfilled. Schools were small, scattered, and rarely lasted for long. The responsibility for most formal education was given to missionaries.

However, as the frontier was pushed increasingly west and the Indians placed at a comfortable distance, a more benevolent attitude took root in America. Seeing the abuses of government administration and the decline of Indian tribal society, calls for complete integration were popular. Believing that Native Americans could be best served through total integration into the dominant society, schools were founded to provide the necessary bridge into the white world.

Assimilation as a positive activity was the central theme of the era. Old attitudes, especially attitudes about communal land, were to be altered by encouraging the adoption of Anglo values. This was something that could best be done in off-reservation boarding schools where the pull of their parent's culture would not be so strongly felt, it was argued (Szasz, p. __).

Champion of this philosophy was Richard Henry Pratt, an Army

captain who, in 1879, founded the Carlisle Indian School.

Advanced for his time, Pratt was among the few who believed the American Indian could benefit from formal education.

Granted use of an old army barracks in Pennsylvania by Congress, Pratt gathered together 200 Indian children and young adults from different western tribes for an academic as well as social education. In this strict military environment a rigid daily schedule was followed, with equal emphasis placed on mental and physical labor. The goal, according to Elaine Eastman, a sympathetic contemporary biographer, was "all-round preparation for life" (p. 85).

Advocating complete submersion in White culture, every effort was made to separate students from their own heritage, even their language. Use of English at all times was mandatory and violators were punished. "Pratt would accept no compromise as regard this obvious fundamental," his biographer wrote (Eastman, p. 85). Traditional dress was, of course, not acceptable and long hair on men was to be cut. Any evidence of continued attachment to their own cultures was viewed by administrators as an act of defiance.

Religion continued to maintain its allure as a tool and symbol of civilization. Continued Eastman: "Character-building through work and other wholesome disciplines was reinforced by simple, non-sectarian religious teaching, the girls in small groups by members of the school faculty, the boys dispatched on Sunday mornings to different churches in town for wider experience" (Eastman, p. 85).

For the era, these and similar boarding schools were institutions of hope. Amid White ignorance and fear, such schools argued that Native Americans deserved academic opportunity and could succeed, even excel, if motivated. With firm but kind guidance, Pratt believed "the mantle of citizenship will fit and sit comfortable upon [the American Indian]" (Eastman, p. 90).

At the turn of the century, Pratt's vision was enlightened. But within a few decades of the school's founding, the failure of assimilation's goals were increasingly clear. In the growing number of boarding schools--twenty-five by the turn of the century--living conditions and the quality of education were often very poor. Discipline could be very harsh and with limited federal funding, much of each student's day was occupied with manual labor. Pratt justified the work as character-building, but in 1915 Indian Affairs Commissioner Cato Sells admitted that the schools "could not possibly be maintained on the amounts appropriated by Congress" without the free labor of their students ("Tentative Course of Study", p. 5).

A similar philosophy was followed by many missionary schools of the time. One girl, a student at a Catholic mission school in western Montana during this era, recalled the structured daily routine followed there:

"With breakfast over, the long line of girls marched to the recreation room. From here each departed to perform her daily task. This duty was called 'our charge.' Depending on our age, it could be dusting the schoolrooms, or tearfully trying to build the fire with green cottonwood. There were long, cold

corridors to sweep; wide, winding stairways to polish; parlors to arrange; and a recreation room to put in order . . . These and many other undertakings were accomplished before the school bell rang at nine o'clock" (Patterson, pp. 90-91).

In the afternoon, classes were followed by more work. The impression given is of a school more concerned with its own hygienic self-preservation than education.

At this and other schools, the drop-out rate remained high. And for the minority that did graduate, there was little chance for social advancement in American society. Their education stressed basic work skills, not a general education that could lead to leadership positions. Trained as farmers, labors, mechanics, and Christians, they were always expected to follow, never lead.

For the academic curriculum that was offered, little effort was made to acknowledge the students' unique values and heritage. In a curriculum proposed in 1915 for all government-run Indian schools, the coursework offered almost no reenforcement of the students' world view and experiences. In the early grades there was time allotted for for English, arithmetic, geology, hygiene, and even breathing exercises, but only one reference was made to Native American culture. In the introduction, it was suggested that "Indian methods of hand weaving" could be incorporated into art lessons.

Among the suggested reading list, there were such Western classics as "Little Red Riding Hood," "The Three Bears," "Peter Rabbit," and "The Hare and the Tortoise." A full complement of

Mother Goose rhymes were also recommended. Missing was any mention of the rich tradition of story-telling in Native American culture.

The history curriculum must have been even more confusing to the young students. Beginning in 1492 with Columbus and his discovery, the focus remained solely on the development of European culture and settlement. Wars and territorial expansion were discussed in detail, but no mention was made of its impact on the Indian population.

Such courses of study did not emerge by accident. Thomas Morgan, commissioner of Indian affairs during the late 1800's, argued strongly that educators should to instill patriotism in their Native American pupils and "carefully avoid any unnecessary references to the fact that they are Indians" (Prucha, p. 257-259).

But, while now minimally prepared for life in the Anglo world, many paid a price when they returned home. Indians passing through these schools often found that they no longer were considered a part of their tribal culture. Moreover, there were few jobs for those who did return since most graduates were trained for work not available on reservations. After one hundred years, the complaints recorded by Benjamin Franklin remained unsolved.

Yet Anglo culture was critical of Native Americans who demonstrated their "Indianness." To live among whites, Indians were expected to become white. In an uncompromising society, former students were forced to choose either their Indian heritage--and completely renounce their schooling--or their

adopted European life, and deny their own culture. Not allowed to divide their loyalties, many remained torn between two worlds and suffered for the schism (Szasz, p. 10).

For the Indian student, then, government and mission schools were a failure. Frequently, they offered little more than marginal training in skills that were often not even useful on the reservations where most Indians lived. More devastating, many students were forced into cultural no-man's-land. At a time when divided loyalties were unacceptable, they became aliens to both societies.

The failures had a profound negative influence on all of Indian society. "At the beginning of the twentieth century," writes historian Margaret Szasz, "the status of the Indian was not only bleak, it was hovering on the edge of disaster." Loss of land and attempts at assimilation was demonstrating, she believed, their "ability to damage if not destroy a majority of the Indian people."

Unskilled and powerless, Native Americans fell into a pattern of dependency inadvertently supported by government education policies. Instead of promoting self-sufficiency, a pattern of reliance and--often--despair became dominant and seemingly unbreakable. Government agents who had moved Indians to arid tracts of land and offered inappropriate training would return years later to berate their charges for becoming despondent and dependent on government rations. They were puzzled but unwilling to see their own blame.

Self-sufficiency was the goal of education, but, according

to Francis Paul Prucha, a scholar of Indian policy, "[t]he result was destroyed, but the new was not fully accepted, leaving many Indians in a kind of limbo and fostering the spirit of dependency" (Prucha, p. 51).

Conditions only deteriorated during the first two decades of this century. Finally, in the 1920s, as the government's policies seemed to reach lowest depths of hypocrisy in inaction, a movement for fundamental reform at took root. Angered by the government's failures, a series of organizations emerged as supporters of Indian culture and self-determination.

The strongest attack came in 1928 with the release of the Meriam Report. Sponsored by the Brookings Institute, it took a comprehensive look at the status of Indians in American society and confirmed the emerging consensus that it had deteriorated horribly.

In an editorial two days after the report's release, the New York Times agreed with the document's central argument, lamenting that "in short . . . our relation with the Indians during the last few decades have been characterized by good intentions without a sympathetic understanding of the Indian's needs, and that we have done little of a practical nature to help them adapt themselves to the conditions which they have to face" (NYT, May 23, 1928, p. 34).

In education, the report focused on government-run boarding schools and proposed fundamental changes in how Native American children were taught there. Although boarding schools were only educating about one quarter of the total Indian student

population at the time, the report focused on these institutions as symbols of government's failure.

Directed by W. Carson Ryan, the Meriam Report's chapters on education offered detailed evidence of mismanagement and physical abuse. Children, it found, were at times provided a diet that guaranteed only slow starvation. Military order, harsh discipline, and poorly trained teachers were also criticised.

Looking at what was actually being taught, the report made two fundamental charges, refuting what had been until then the conventional wisdom in Native American education. First, and perhaps most critically, Ryan charged that schools were not providing skills relevant to Indians. Curriculums, he argued, were too uniform, stressed only white culture, and ignored the many cultural differences found between tribes.

Until then, the dominant belief was that local culture was irrelevant since assimilation was the ultimate goal of education. Ryan argued, however, that this view was, at best, poor education technique. "Indian tribes and individuals vary so greatly," he argued, "that standard content and method of education would be worse than futile" (Szasz, p. 23).

Next, the report attacked the school's emphasis on vocational training. Rather than providing opportunities, it found that such specialized training often closed doors. Not only were many of the trades offered in areas with little chance for employment, but its detachment from Indian culture left students isolated from their home and heritage. Recommendations for the addition of Indian culture in the curriculums would, the report's authors believed, reduce this unnecessary separation.

The report had instant impact on Indian policy and the nation's view of Native Americans. Six months after its release, the New York Times summarized the new mood. "Is it time to consider a question of principle," the editorial began. "Is it right to continue the policy of trying to de-Indianize the Indians and make white men out of them?" ("The Right to be an Indian," NYT, Dec. 2, III, 4, 1928).

By the early 1930s, results--although modest--were visible. Five years after the report's release, twelve boarding schools had closed or changed to day schools. Progressive programs encouraging Indians to teach native arts were included in some schools (Szasz, p.).

Critics charged, however, that the government was moving too slow. But when Roosevelt was elected in 1932, the pace did accelerate. With John Collier, an energetic reformer, appointed commissioner of Indian Affairs, the next dozen years brought the most sweeping changes ever felt in Indian education policy. A scholar of Indian culture and advocate of community-based education, he was among the first in Washington to base policies on the realities of Indian society, not on what white's wanted the Indians to become.

Collier focused first on redefining the federal government's relationship with Native Americans. Traditional values should be accepted and Indian society given true power, he argued, later writing that "Indian societies, whether ancient, regenerated or created anew, must be given status, responsibility and power," (Collier, p.).

In 1934, following this new policy, the Indian Reorganization Act was passed by Congress. Designed to reverse some of the devastation brought by past legislation, it focused, as Collier wished, on safeguarding Native American sovereignty. Among the four key provisions in the bill were commitments to Indian self-government and, with this, development of an Indian civil service.

Education, Collier recognized, was a central need. "The grant of freedom," he argued, "must be more . . . than a remission of enslavement" (Collier, p. 155). Trained not just to earn a living, he hoped Indians could now be given the skills to lead as well. No longer viewed as inevitable subordinates in white society, they were to be offered training needed to both sustain their traditional culture and negotiate increasingly complex government-Indian relationships.

In the years before World War II, more community schools were opened and became the focus of the Bureau's new philosophy. No longer institutions of uniform indoctrination, many became flexible centers for the community. In arid regions, drinking water and bath houses were accessible to all. Some had repair shops available for community use and patronage of the libraries were encouraged. In all schools, curricula became more flexible and some courses in Indian culture were introduced.

Some in-service training for Bureau teachers were also offered during this period. Although many educators had worked with Indian children for years, there was broad ignorance of the culture. Many instructors, in fact, had never been on a reservation (Szasz, p. 82). Such summer terms offered teachers

the opportunity to learn how they could be most responsive.

There was also a short-lived program to train Indians themselves as instructors. Working first as apprentices, the students were believed to offer the sensitivity and support that non-Indians were less able to provide. Innovative for its time, it was, however, cancelled during World War II after training only fifty Native American instructors.

It was, in all, a time of experimentation. However, there was limited time for action and restricted resources. The Depression limited the amount of money available for innovative programs and World War II brought an end to much of progressive education's energy. As the decade of the 1930s ended, important changes were made, but, in the end, many fundamental issues went unsolved.

While it was recognized, for example, that Indian participation in their education was essential, little progress had been made to increase the number of Native American educators and policy-makers. Efforts that were made, such as the program to apprentice Indian teachers, were seen as isolated programs, not needed policy for the nation.

Likewise, more flexible curricula allowed for innovation and the addition of some instruction in Native arts and heritage. But, despite these noble efforts, schools were still unable to reassure their students that it was acceptable to be Indian. It could not, according to historian Margaret Szasz, "begin to solve the problems of adjustment for a disoriented Indian child. A course in silverwork or in Indian history did not answer the

child's question: Who am I?" (Szasz, p. 78)

Concluded Szasz: "The child in boarding schools during the decade of the 1930 had to grapple with with the bits and pieces of Indian culture that might be included in his curriculum, interspersed with the primary coursework. The curriculum had improved, but often it lacked the cohesiveness that might have given the child the security that comes from simply knowing who one is" (p. 80).

Beyond these concerns, it was also true that throughout this period of change and debate, the Indian voice was still rarely heard. The policy leaders in government, on the reservations and in the schools were still largely controlled by white administrators. For those advocating reform, motivations were pure. But there is some irony in having whites promote programs for Indian self-determination.

But new understanding was gained, as well. It was realized that the Native American experience--their unique values and heritage--could not be discarded in the pursuit of complete assimilation. Instead, these policies had left only self-doubt and poverty in Indian communities. Disaffected and powerless, there was only fragmented ties to the past and little opportunity for the future.

For decades, the disappearance of Indian culture had been seen as inevitable. With this accepted as fact, it seemed more humane to make the transition as quick and painless as possible. But by the early years of this century, after three hundred years of contact with white culture, the prediction was at last accepted as false and the results of the failed policies

recognized.

With this understanding emerged a new set of policies based on the acceptance of cultural variation and Native American self-government. Specific programs in education did not fully meet the needs of Indian society or fully accept Indians and policy-making partners, but it was the beginning of a new era. The impact of Collier's vision and Roosevelt's Indian New Deal is still felt today.

Reformist energy was lost, however, as World War II shifted the nation's attention. Programs were cut and funding was reduced. Reflecting a manpower shortage throughout the country, the Indian Service suffered from a loss of both teachers and students as both went to work elsewhere or fight.

Postwar years saw the development of two new divergent trends. Assimilation theory briefly returned to favor while the Indians themselves were increasingly focused on participation in government policy-making, self-determination, and education.

Collier's resignation in 1945 marked the end of energetic reform and allowed for the Eisenhower administration's short-lived rival of nineteenth century policies. Like educators fifty years before, the federal government was again arguing that assimilation through vocational training was the most helpful route to promote. During this era, thousands of reservation-based Indians were encouraged to relocate in targeted urban areas--such as Denver and Oakland--for training and the start of a new life.

With this, termination--the effort to end the government's

relationship with reservations--also gained favor. For those advocating this dramatic policy reversal, it was believed reservation society was hindering assimilation and acceptance into the dominant society. As in the past, concern for the supportive influence of traditional culture was subordinated to the faith in complete integration.

The curriculum during the fifties and sixties did show an increased sensitivity to Native American beliefs, but remained uncompromisingly oriented towards one way integration. In 1952, the Indian Commissioner continued to insist that the ultimate objective of Indian education was "complete integration in the American way of life."

Others in government echoed this belief. Hildegard Thompson, head of the Bureau's education division during this era, wrote frequently on the role of Indian Service teachers and provided suggestions for instructors in the field. In one narrative on the life of these teachers, she offered evidence of her faith in a paternalistic ideal.

The teacher, Thompson wrote, "lives a satisfying life among her Indian neighbors. She holds them in high respect and in turn is respected by them. . . She explains the complexities of a modern world to them. She stands as a helper between the uneducated and the literate world with which they must deal. She patiently explains to non-educated parents the importance of education to their children. She insists that they keep their children in school" (Indian Education, Sept. 15, 1954, p. 2).

But as this philosophy reestablished itself, the Indians themselves were no longer accepting the role of passive

observers. Increasingly, they were demanding a voice as decisions about their future were made. With a growing understanding of how government works and holding increasingly sophisticated views of education, many tribes began to voice their own ideas.

Arguments for assimilation soon faced the persistent opposition Indian groups equipped with the knowledge and skills to present their own views. By the end of the 1960s, the government, pressed by increasingly sophisticated Native American organizations, backed away from its programs. In 1968, President Nixon recognized that the "right of self-determination of the Indian people will be respected and their participation in planning their own destiny will actively be encouraged" (Prucha, p. 83).

However, Nixon was careful, like each succeeding administration, to separate themselves from termination policies. Accepting the belief of continuing government responsibility, there remains strong Indian-government ties. The goal of many Indian groups was only that it would be a relationship among equals.

But in this increasingly complex era with new responsibilities, the restrictions of limited education was of growing concern. Given the task to work with the government, to run their own programs, and take-over institutions once run by non-Indians, the demand for highly trained tribal members grew quickly. Illiteracy could no longer be tolerated and vocational training could not run a tribe. There was now, more than ever

before, an urgent need for administrators, managers, educators, and policy-makers.

In this environment, the first tribally-controlled college was founded on the Navajo Reservation in 1969. Twenty years later, the number has grown to twenty-one. In addition, Haskell Indian Junior College, a government-run institution, should be included among this group as an innovative institution with a largely Native American staff and administration.

Together, these colleges stand out as the most significant and most successful development in Native American education in America's history. They are providing what no other program offered by white-controlled institutions has: a quality education that provides opportunities for advancement within the still important context of Native American culture and values.

Native American society today accepts that they do not live in isolation. Recognizing new responsibilities and unwilling to be led by the government, many tribes want the skills and expertise needed to determine their own futures. Tribal colleges are, then, not a retreat from the dominant white society, but a route to equality and greater interaction.

Yet, unlike nearly all earlier attempts at Indian education, tribal colleges argue that there is still a place for traditional culture. Rather than being a disruptive influence, these institutions have demonstrated eloquently that it is instead a supportive and nurturing influence. ~~Not a retreat from the dominant society, it is route to greater participation.~~

Firmly rooted in their own heritage, they are able to

participate in the complex modern world around them. In this, tribal colleges are "cultural translators," according to a counselor at one Indian college. "Many students need to learn how to fit into the the twentieth century and still be a Chippewa," he said (Pike, personal communication).

Nineteenth century educators were critical of former students who, as they said at the time, "returned to the blanket." These people did not consider the this was not always a deliberate act of defiance, but a search for the support that one's own cultural frame of reference could provide.

Education is inevitably cut from the fabric of culture. For white students, schools and colleges reinforced their beliefs; ^{such} these institutions were all part of the blanket of their culture. But for Indian students, it was, at best, a disorienting experience. Education for them has few connections to their past or future. Failure for these students was all but inevitable.

This reality is evident through time and is still visible today. Despite repeated attempts in many different institutions, graduation from college remained a largely unobtainable goal. Death and desertion was rampant at institutions in colonial America. Later, few colleges made serious efforts to provide higher education to Native Americans. Even today, with more money available and greater institutional interest, between 75 and 90 percent of Indians who enter a non-Indian college will eventually drop-out.

While American education policy towards Indians has matured considerably since the first students were enrolled at

Jamestown, it was not until Indians themselves became participants in their future that true advancement and integration emerged. Tribal colleges are a major part of this trend and their future success will, in a very real way, determine the continued emergence of a dynamic and self-sustaining Indian population.