

Evolving Indian Policies in the U.S. Southwest

Steven Bonin

Faculty Sponsor: Víctor Macías-González, History Department

ABSTRACT

This research is about Spanish, Mexican and American Indian policies in the present day southwestern United States. This research determines if the US government adjusted its general Indian policies to better accommodate for southwestern Indians who had previously reacted to Spanish and Mexican regulations. First, a historiography is constructed to determine the general Indian policies used by the Spanish, Mexican and US governments. Conclusions from the historiography are connected to primary source documents located at the National Archives at Fort Worth to determine if Americans adjusted their overall Indian policies when dealing with southwestern Indians. This research mainly analyzes Spanish, Mexican and US policies aimed at assimilating Indians into mainstream white society. Ultimately, primary sources created by American Indian Agents operating in Oklahoma during the twentieth century demonstrate that Americans used similar Indian policies as the Spanish and did not adjust their widespread Indian policies when dealing with Indians in the US southwest.

INTRODCUTION

The American public is largely unaware of how complex interactions between Indians and white settlers have been since the sixteenth century. Cultural myths like a peaceful first Thanksgiving and manifest destiny empowering white settlers to displace western Indians account for much of Americans' common knowledge on this subject. As a result, a "simplistic assumption of a uniform Indian experience pervade popular culture."¹ In reality, some Indian groups dealt with evolving regulations imposed by multiple foreign governments. This was especially true in the present day southwestern United States which was governed by the Spanish, Mexican and US governments at different times. All three of these western style governments had to develop "practical conventions for dealing with" Indians.² The US government had the opportunity to study which Spanish and Mexican Indian policies effectively controlled and assimilated southwestern Indians centuries before American settlers arrived in the region. Assimilation was the process of forcing Indians to adopt accepted aspects of mainstream, white society. Instructing Indians to replace aspects of their traditional cultures with common white behaviors was intended to make Indians compliant citizens. This research determines if the US government developed special Indian policies in the southwest based on previous Spanish and Mexican policies or simply implemented the same overarching, national Indian policies in this region. The Spanish founded a colony in America called New Spain in 1521. By the nineteenth century New Spain enveloped present day Mexico, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, Nevada and California. Spain decolonized this region in the 1820s which produced an independent Mexican state. Anglo-American settlers rapidly expanded into the same region during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This research uses primary source documents regarding Indians forced onto reservations in Oklahoma. These Indians, including the Kiowa, Comanche, Apache, Shawnee, Kickapoo, and several others, lived relatively mobile lifestyles and as a result were exposed to Spanish, Mexican and US regulations from the sixteenth to twentieth centuries. After initially using military force to control Indians, these three governments tried to assimilate them by replacing their traditional cultural tendencies with those of accepted white culture.

Historiography: Spanish Indian Policy

The Spanish Empire contacted southwestern Indians first. The Spanish founded New Spain in 1521 and expanded the colony for the next three hundred years. European traditions of defining societies as either barbarian or

¹ Ned Blackhawk, "Recasting the Narrative of America: The Rewards and Challenges of Teaching American Indian History," *The Journal of America History* Vol. 93, No. 4 (march, 2007), 1165-1170, 1166.

² Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 6.

civilized encouraged the Spanish to theorize Indians as less culturally advanced barbarians.³ The Spanish viewed their colonial activities as “a mission for civilizing” the American Indians in addition to finding resources to bolster Spain’s economy.⁴ The Spanish primarily focused on converting Indians to Catholicism. The Spanish also believed that other elements of their own culture, including a monarchical government, monogamy and certain clothing were more advanced than Indians’ “savage” cultural expressions.⁵ As a result, Indians were also instructed to adopt common Spanish behaviors.

The Spanish believed that “civilized life” featured people living in “towns with a prescribed form of government.”⁶ The Spanish lacked appropriate levels of settlers and finances to support large urban centers throughout New Spain. Instead, the Spanish constructed missions to create communities of Indians “obedient to the missionary priest and...his instruction in both secular and spiritual matters.”⁷ Spanish missionaries, including Jesuits and later Franciscan Friars, worked with colonial administrators and the Crown in order to finance and maintain the missions which featured a church and surrounding residential and agricultural buildings. Missionaries promised Indians protection, food, religious experiences and occasional religious festivals in the missions.⁸ Indians were pressured to adopt Catholicism and other elements of European society like “dress...at least to the extent of trousers and shirts for men and skirts and upper garments for women,” monogamy facilitated by formal marriage ceremonies, living in permanent houses and developing agriculture.⁹ Indian children were especially targeted for religious conversion. These missions were ultimately intended to “bring Indians into participation in Spanish culture by forming them into largely self-sufficient communities under the direction of the missionaries.”¹⁰ Missionaries pressured Indians to take up construction, farming, weaving, blacksmithing, and other occupations to maintain the missions and instill values of “regular work with some appeal to the basis of community benefit.”¹¹ While missions were intended to control Indians by assimilating them into Spanish society, sites of forced Indian labor were used to physically control Indians.

Indian forced labor fueled Spanish economic pursuits in New Spain like mining and large agricultural operations. The *encomienda* system gave Spanish conquistadors grants of land and Indian laborers. The Spanish often “worked the Indians to death in mines and fields” if they survived the initial waves of warfare and disease.¹² Later on, the *hacienda* and *repartimiento* systems similarly forced Indians to work for the Spanish. The Spanish justified these atrocities by claiming that they were ultimately saving Indian souls by introducing them to Catholicism. Contrary to missions which gave Indians some freedoms, forced labor communities were strictly governed by Spaniards appointed by their peers. Indians in missions could interact with one another in order to preserve their traditional cultures while reaping benefits like Spanish gifts and protection. Indians coerced into labor however were forced to “break with old ways under the domination of foreigners.”¹³

Indians did not collectively comply with Spanish policies aimed at controlling and assimilating them. Instead, “the ability of the Crown to assert authority...lay in part in the willingness of the indigenous population to accept that authority.”¹⁴ Collectively, Spanish missions were not as effective as they were intended to be. Mission populations “were notoriously unstable” as Indians often abandoned them in response to labor demands.¹⁵ Indians attended missions “largely at their convenience” like when opportunities to interact with other Indians, obtain food, livestock, and other gifts arose.¹⁶ More mobile Indians like the Tarahumaras, Comanches and Tepehuanes “took advantage of the frontier areas that were less occupied” by the Spanish “primarily because of their unfriendly

³ Edward H. Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico and the United States on Indians of the Southwest, 1533-1960* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press), 281.

⁴ Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest*, 5.

⁵ Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest*, 5.

⁶ Deeds, *Defiance and Deference*, 18.

⁷ Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest*, 288.

⁸ Deeds, *Defiance and Deference*, 72.

⁹ Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest*, 282.

¹⁰ Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest*, 287.

¹¹ Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest*, 283.

¹² Jon Allan Reyhner and Jeanne M. Oyawin Eder, *American Indian Education: A History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 17.

¹³ Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest*, 287.

¹⁴ Ethelia Ruiz Medrano, Susan Kellogg and Russ Davidson, *Negotiation within Domination: New Spain’s Indian Pueblos Confront the Spanish State* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2010), 21.

¹⁵ Deeds, *Defiance and Deference*, 197.

¹⁶ Deeds, *Defiance and Deference*, 197.

physical environments and extreme marginality to Spanish interests.”¹⁷ These Indians were capable of inciting large revolts and overwhelming sparsely populated frontier settlements and missions. Spanish colonial officials and missionaries debated over what caused Indian revolts but increased conversion attempts, disease, warfare and forced labor were all contributing factors. Mobile Indians could retreat to hideouts in the mountains and plan continuous guerrilla warfare which disrupted Spanish mining, commerce and agriculture.¹⁸

Sedentary (less mobile) Indians living in central and southern Mexico, including the Acaxees and Xiximes, “were the first to succumb” to Spanish colonial pressures.¹⁹ These Indians were used to intertribal warfare featuring the loser paying tribute to victorious Indian groups. This meant that they were less likely to form effective, long lasting Indian alliances and paying tribute to their new Spanish overlords was a relatively familiar and accepted concept. The Spanish also introduced diseases and warfare which decreased Indian populations and made it harder to forcibly overthrow the Spanish.²⁰

Mexican Indian Policy

The Spanish decolonized New Spain in 1821 which produced an independent Mexican nation. Mexico faced several hindrances to forging national unity. For instance, Centralists and Federalists debated over how to properly govern the new nation. Centralists favored a strong, centralized government which benefitted wealthier classes while Federalists advocated for states’ rights and giving power to the working class. Also, white Spaniards, African slaves and Indians interacted with one another in New Spain which produced a myriad of mixed ethnic identities.²¹ Missions and sites of forced labor helped facilitate this ethnic mixing.

These social and political differences encouraged the Mexican government to try and “solve the Indian problem in one stroke” by granting full citizenship rights to all Indians.²² Mexico’s first republic drafted a constitution in 1824 which intended to grant equal citizenship rights to “Indians, Spaniards, and mestizos” (mixed races).²³ Mexican leaders tried to encourage national unity by demanding that every person in Mexico embrace their definition of citizenship which included paying taxes, owning land individually and participating in local government.²⁴ Instead, many Indians refused to abandon their traditional cultures and give in to Mexican demands.

Indians used armed resistance to retaliate against the Mexican government. The Mexican government viewed rebellious Indians as barbarians who hindered national unity and modernizing strategies.²⁵ The Mexican government used three general approaches to dealing with Indians during the nineteenth century: “military domination, colonization, and deportation.”²⁶ Hostile Indians were forcibly removed from their traditional lands which were then distributed to Mexican settlers. The “Law of Colonization” was enacted during the early nineteenth century and “paid non-Indians to take up residence in Indian country and work the land.”²⁷ The Mexican government also deported Indians to reservations and foreign lands. For instance, in 1903 the Mexican government systematically deported the Yaquis Indians to Cuba.²⁸ Although Mexicans attempted to forge national unity by granting citizenship rights to all Indians, this approach enforced specific requirements for citizenship which many Indians did not accept. The Mexican government also lacked specific methods for assimilating Indians and thought that legislation proclaiming them as citizens would be effective enough. As a result, Mexican Indian policy largely featured military action and forced relocation instead of assimilation policies like the Spanish and Anglo-Americans implemented.

¹⁷ Deeds, *Defiance and Deference*, 193.

¹⁸ Deeds, *Defiance and Deference*, 32.

¹⁹ Deeds, *Defiance and Deference*, 191.

²⁰ Deeds, *Defiance and Deference*, 191-192.

²¹ Deeds, *Defiance and Deference*, 198.

²² Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest*, 335.

²³ Trudy Griffin-Pierce, *The Columbian Guide to American Indians of the Southwest* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 25.

²⁴ Griffin-Pierce, *The Columbian Guide*, 25.

²⁵ Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest* 338.

²⁶ Griffin-Pierce, *The Columbian Guide*, 26.

²⁷ Griffin-Pierce, *The Columbian Guide*, 26.

²⁸ Griffin-Pierce, *The Columbian Guide*, 31.

Initial US Indian Policy: Separating Whites and Indians

Determining British American Indian policies provides crucial historical context for understanding how Americans dealt with Indians after securing independence. The British considered Indian groups as separate nations. The British forcibly pushed Indians from their homelands in order to make room for white settlers instead of trying to assimilate Indians into colonial society.²⁹ Americans adopted the British strategy of treating Indian groups like sovereign, foreign nations. This approach encouraged Americans to compare their society with Indian communities. Americans considered themselves “superior to the Indians” in areas like “population, in technological and agricultural achievements, and ultimately, therefore, in power.”³⁰ By the early 1800s America’s largely agrarian population wished to settle on seemingly unused land west of the Appalachian Mountains. Meanwhile, Christian missionaries tried to convert Indians independently from the government.³¹

As the nineteenth century progressed, American settlers and professional soldiers fought hostile Indians and forcibly relocated them further away from white settlements.³² The US government “promoted the expansion of settlers westward,” placed “restrictions on [Indians’] freedom of action, dictated treaty terms to chiefs unable or afraid to reject them, and set about to change the fundamental cultural patterns of the Indians in a self-righteous paternal manner.”³³ However, American policy makers knew that whites and Indians could not remain separate forever. Anglo-American population, industry and general economic pursuits rapidly developed in the west during the 1870s and 1880s. Indians threatened burgeoning economic interests in the west and “merchants, railroad executives, [and] simple farmers” agreed that “tribal lands were a barrier to prosperity.”³⁴ This encouraged American policy makers to try and assimilate Indians into American culture instead of continuing to separate them from whites.

The Second Phase of US Indian Policy: Americans Replicate Spanish Assimilation Strategies

The US government attempted to “bring civilization to the Indians” beginning in the 1880s.³⁵ Americans tried to assimilate Indians into mainstream white culture by focusing on “landholding, education, and citizenship” according to established American laws.³⁶ Policy makers and social activists believed that assimilating Indians would replace their seemingly backward and underdeveloped cultural tendencies with cooperative and familiar American values. Policy makers believed that shrinking the overall size of reservations would encourage Indians to interact with white settlers and learn about American culture instead of preserving their own traditional lifestyles on reservations.³⁷ Between 1880 and 1895 the American government significantly seized Indian lands, including reservations, and opened them to white settlement.³⁸ The money white settlers used to purchase Indian lands was “applied to teaching farming to the tribes” and “what was left of the reservation would be divided into allotments or individual homesteads.”³⁹ An annual report of the Kiowa Indian Agency in Oklahoma written in 1904 demonstrated that Americans imposed these general assimilation policies on southwestern Indians instead of adjusting their regulations based on previous Spanish and Mexican policies in that region.

An annual report of the Kiowa Indian Agency in Anadarko, Oklahoma written to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1904 demonstrates that Americans did not adjust general policies for Indians who had already dealt with Spanish and Mexican regulations. This agency was in charge of supervising the “affairs of the Kiowa, Comanche...Apache...Wichita, Caddo and Affiliated” Indian groups.⁴⁰ The Comanche, Apache, Kiowa and Caddo

²⁹ Prucha, *The Great Father*, 11.

³⁰ Prucha, *The Great Father*, 31.

³¹ Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest*, 345.

³² Prucha, *The Great Father*, 104.

³³ Prucha, *The Great Father*, 33.

³⁴ Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 47.

³⁵ Prucha, *The Great Father*, 135.

³⁶ Prucha, *The Great Father*, 42.

³⁷ Hoxie, *A Final Promise*, 42.

³⁸ Hoxie, *A Final Promise*, 44.

³⁹ Hoxie, *A Final Promise*, 52.

⁴⁰ Colonel, U.S.A., “Kiowa Indian Agency. Anadarko, Oklahoma, Nov. 4, 1904,” from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Central Files, 1904-1950*.

Indians had previously interacted with the Spanish and Mexican governments. The anonymous Indian Agent who wrote this report indicated that assigning land allotments to individual Indians was “completed [on] June 15, 1901.”⁴¹ The report also indicated that new legislation opened Indian lands for “settlement to whites” at a price of “\$1.25 per acre.”⁴² This is consistent with American Indian policies across the nation as described in the previous paragraph. Henry Dawes (the senator who introduced the 1887 General Allotment Act aimed at selling Indian lands to whites and placing Indians on individual land allotments) believed that shrinking reservations would bring whites and Indians together and “allow America’s institutions, its schools, its political system and its expanding economy, to raise up the Indian.”⁴³ Just as Dawes and other policy makers predicted, whites settled near the Kiowa Agency in Oklahoma and introduced American behaviors like farming and working for individual wages. The 1904 report stated that Indians were “trying to farm their allotments” and that “white settlers” were “offering employment to the Indians as cotton pickers” for the first time.⁴⁴ However, the Dawes Act did not specifically define how to make Indians citizens and instead simply provided for whites to buy reservation lands and settle closer to Indians. The author of the 1904 Kiowa Agency report clearly expressed this sense of ambiguity regarding how to specifically assimilate Indians into American society and also demonstrated that Indian Agents replicated previous Spanish Indian policies in the southwestern US.

Franciscan missionaries surveyed each mission in Nueva Vizcaya in the mid-eighteenth century. Nueva Vizcaya was a region in New Spain located in present day northwestern Mexico and the southwestern US and contained Indian groups who later fell under US control in Oklahoma. The Spanish survey revealed serious problems with Nueva Vizcaya’s missions’ economic sustainability. These missions generally were not “closed to pernicious influences from outside” people like raiding Indians and Spanish settlers.⁴⁵ Similarly, the 1904 report asserted that “the worst of all hindrances to [Indians’] prosperity” in the Kiowa Agency was “the experience had with the money lenders, from Presidents of National Banks down to the curbstome and pawn broker.”⁴⁶ Also, “the economic disintegration of the missions stemmed not only from outside pressures on their human and other resources, but also from administrative ineptitude and mismanagement by many of the missionaries.”⁴⁷ The 1904 report demonstrated that American policy makers and Indian Agents supervising the Kiowa Agency were inept at solving Indians’ financial problems like the Spanish. The report stated that “usually the Indian who neither reads or writes knows nothing of...the mortgage papers until the day of settle or foreclosure” and that “there seems to be no way to stop this systematic robbery...it is hoped that as the Indian advances in knowledge he will not be so easily duped.”⁴⁸ This Indian Agent was clearly aware that illiteracy contributed to Indians’ financial problems and ultimately hindered their general prosperity. Instead of suggesting that strategies should be developed to help Indians gain an education to help end their financial problems, the author only offered the optimistic and ambiguous possibility that Indians could one day no longer fall for these money lending abuses. If Americans had studied previous Spanish Indian policies they might have recognized that Indians living around missions (similar to American Indians on reservations) were financially challenged due to outside pressures and a lack of specific, helpful administrative systems. Instead, this portion of the report demonstrates that Americans simply used the same general Indian policies in the southwest as elsewhere in the country. This Indian Agent supervising the Kiowa Agency clearly followed the Dawes Act by selling Indian lands and encouraging whites to settle near Indians. However, he, like American policy makers and Indian Agents operating across the nation, did not go a step further by suggesting that specific strategies needed to be developed in order to help solve Indians’ problems on southwestern reservations.

The anonymous Indian Agent who wrote this report demonstrated that Americans considered themselves superior to Indians. The report stated that “Congress, the guardian, may deal with the lands of the Indian wards of the Nation precisely as an individual legal guardian would deal with and dispose of the lands of an infant or other

⁴¹ Colonel, “Kiowa Agency,” from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Central Files, 1904-1950*.

⁴² Colonel, “Kiowa Agency,” from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Central Files, 1904-1950*.

⁴³ Hoxie, *A Final Promise*, 50.

⁴⁴ Colonel, U.S.A., “Kiowa Agency,” from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Central Files, 1904-1950*.

⁴⁵ Deeds, *Defiance and Deference*, 150.

⁴⁶ Colonel, “Kiowa Agency,” from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Central Files, 1904-1950*.

⁴⁷ Deeds, *Defiance and Deference*, 142.

⁴⁸ Colonel, “Kiowa Agency,” from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Central Files, 1904-1950*.

incompetent person.”⁴⁹ This language demonstrates that southwestern Indians were viewed the same as Indians across the nation. As noted in the historiography portion of this research, the British demonstrated to American colonists that white society could, and should, remove Indians from their lands using force. As a result, Americans believed they deserved to displace seemingly backward and underdeveloped Indians as they moved west during the nineteenth century. This sense of white cultural superiority also influenced assimilation strategies which focused on replacing Indian behaviors with more accepted white tendencies. The historiography portion of this research demonstrates, however, that Indians living in the southwestern US were not incompetent like the 1904 report described them as. In reality, Indians who interacted with the Spanish, Mexican and American governments evaluated the regulations placed upon them and responded in ways that promoted their survival. For instance, Comanches, Conchos, Apaches, Tarahumaras and Tepehuanes living on the northern border of New Spain (an later in the US southwest) employed their traditionally mobile tendencies to access Spanish missions when it benefitted their survival, fled to mountainous hideouts and launched raids against Spanish, Mexican and American towns when they felt threatened.

This report also stated that “these Indians understand the status of their relations to the general government...the chiefs and headmen, and the educated young men of these tribes, claim that they are not utterly incompetent to have a voice in” the sale and allotment of their reservation lands.⁵⁰ The Indian Agent who wrote this report knew that Indians understood the regulations enforced on the Kiowa Agency. However, he already asserted that Congress should dictate Indian policies instead of allowing seemingly incompetent (and uncivilized) Indians to voice their concerns. The Spanish previously assumed a paternalistic relationship with southwestern Indians as well. This was especially true among missionaries whose “views of Indians tended to be even more disparaging, arising out of the frustration they felt at what they perceived as native...incapacity to change.”⁵¹ This 1904 report portrays a similar situation among Indians in Oklahoma in 1904. Indians in the Kiowa Agency still faced problems due to a lack of administrative assistance in 1904. This Indian Agent viewed these problems as proof of Indian incompetence thus encouraging him to express a paternalistic relation to them instead of developing strategies to assist them. This ultimately demonstrates that Americans did not learn from previous Spanish Indian policies and instead interacted with southwestern Indians using the same general Indian policies used throughout the nation. This sense of American cultural superiority was depicted by assimilation strategies in Indian schools as well.

Americans might have been conscious of previous Mexican and Spanish Indian policies when they implemented assimilation plans based using Indian schools. As pointed out in the historiography portion of this research, the Spanish attempted to replace Indian behaviors with Spanish cultural tendencies like Catholicism, specific clothing, monogamy, town life featuring communal responsibility, etc. The Spanish congregated Indians near missions and specifically targeted Indian children in order to instill their cultural values. The Mexican government on the other hand did not provide a consistent plan for assimilating Indians which produced widespread warfare and Indian relocation. Americans may have gathered from Spanish and Mexican policies that a specific framework and location for assimilating Indians (like the Spanish missions) was more successful than having none at all (like the initial Mexican program). Forcing Indian children into schools provided a more concrete and replicable plan for assimilation than initial strategies portrayed by the 1904 Kiowa Agency report which simply moved whites closer to Indians.

Employees working in Indian schools taught Indian children that their cultural tendencies should be abandoned and replaced by superior Anglo-American behaviors. For instance, Indian boarding school employees forced students to cut their hair, wear American style school uniforms, eat American food and educated them on the rights and obligations of citizenship including the structure of federal, state and local governments.⁵² Between 1879 and 1894, increased federal funding and a distinct plan outlined by the National Indian School System produced “twenty off-reservation government boarding schools...along with dozens of new agency schools.”⁵³ Instruction in

⁴⁹ Colonel, U.S.A., “Kiowa Agency,” from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Central Files, 1904-1950*.

⁵⁰ Colonel, U.S.A., “Kiowa Agency,” from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Central Files, 1904-1950*.

⁵¹ Deeds, *Defiance and Deference*, 152.

⁵² David Wallace Adams, *Education For Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 1995), 100-116, 143.

⁵³ Hoxie, *A Final Promise*, 53.

these schools went from “a haphazard affair directed by evangelical missionaries” to “an orderly system ran by trained professionals” who eagerly tried to incorporate their students into white society.⁵⁴

Charles H. Burke served as the Commissioner of Indian Affairs during the 1920s. In 1923 he sent instructions detailing a five year program for assimilating Indians to J.L. Suffecool who was serving as Superintendent of the Shawnee Indian School in Oklahoma. Burke’s instructions demonstrate how important educating Indian children was to American assimilation strategies during the twentieth century. Burke immediately asserted the importance of getting every Indian child on or near reservations to attend school. Meanwhile, a memorandum to Shawnee Agency day school inspectors written by R.L. Spalsbury in the mid-1920s echoed Burke’s position on educating Indians. Spalsbury demanded that day school inspectors carry out “the policy of the government” by “putting as many of the Indian children in public schools as possible.”⁵⁵ Burke ordered that Indian children should “development sentiment in favor of public schools.”⁵⁶ Similarly, Spalsbury emphasized that day school inspectors should check school attendances, “get after the stragglers and put them in school as rapidly as possible,” make monthly reports on the condition of schools and Indian students and “commend” Indian parents who sent their children to school.⁵⁷ These two documents clearly demonstrate how important consistent and widespread Indian education was to American assimilation strategies during the twentieth century and that Indian Agents emphasized education in the southwest as well.

Records produced by the Kiowa Agency Riverside School and the Fort Sill Indian Boarding School in Oklahoma demonstrate how Americans tried to assimilate Indians in school settings in 1899. Indians with anglicized names such as Edgar Halfmoon worked as butchers, farmers, carpenters and blacksmiths to support the surrounding community.⁵⁸ ⁵⁹ Indians living near Spanish missions were instructed to become self-sufficient and work jobs that supported the mission community just like Indians attending the Kiowa Agency Riverside School and Fort Sill Boarding School. Although Americans developed a concrete plan of assimilation through education, they still repeated previous Spanish policies of teaching self-sufficiency and manual tasks. Americans further emphasized training Indians in self-sufficient, manual tasks throughout the twentieth century.

American policy makers emphasized vocational training in Indian schools during the twentieth century. One Superintendent of Indian Education named Estelle Reel proclaimed in 1900 that, “half of each school day should be devoted to work and half to classroom learning.”⁶⁰ Indians received vocational training to promote self-sufficiency and could choose between twenty eight subjects such as baking, blacksmithing, farming, canning, and upholstering.⁶¹ This style of education continued well into the 1930s as expressed in records produced by the Chilocco Indian Agricultural School in Oklahoma.

The Chilocco Indian Agricultural School published a pamphlet in 1935 which described the school’s courses and goals for educating Indians. The pamphlet stated that “vocational training” was important to Indian children because it would ultimately help them find “independence” and “happiness.”⁶² The same document also claimed that vocational training would “perpetuate those elements of Indian culture which [held] real values for the present and future generations.”⁶³ This final quotation implies that the only Indian values worth perpetuating were those that could be applied to manual jobs already accepted in white society. Instead of allowing Indians to apply

⁵⁴ Hoxie, *A Final Promise*, 54.

⁵⁵ R.L. Spalsbury, “Memorandum,” from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Educational Field Agent Files, 1921-1947*.

⁵⁶ Charles H. Burke, “Expanded Five Year Program,” from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Correspondence Relating to Land Use and Leasing, 1915-1944*.

⁵⁷ Spalsbury, “Memorandum.”

⁵⁸ W.J. Walker, textual records of the Riverside Indian School, 1899, from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Record of Employees, 1899-1902*.

⁵⁹ Department of the Interior, textual records of the Fort Sill Indian Boarding School, 1899, from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Record of Employees, 1899-1902*.

⁶⁰ Hoxie, *A Final Promise*, 195.

⁶¹ Hoxie, *A Final Promise*, 196.

⁶² Department of the Interior, Chilocco Indian Agricultural School Course Pamphlet 1935-1936, from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Annual Reports Relating to School Operations, 1918-1952*.

⁶³ Department of the Interior, Chilocco, from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Annual Reports Relating to School Operations, 1918-1952*.

their natural skills and interests towards expressing elements of their traditional cultures, schools like Chilocco encouraged Indians to pursue manual professions which were accepted in Anglo-American society.

The Chilocco Indian Agricultural School's 1935 course pamphlet stated that Indians were required to take general education courses featuring instructions on how to maintain the home, practice agriculture, practice childcare and study physical sciences, history, English and personal health and hygiene. Chilocco also offered trade courses to teach Indian students skills in subjects like auto mechanics, baking, cutting hair, metal welding, printing, home economics, painting, masonry, leather crafting, plumbing and power plant operation. Electives were also offered featuring subjects like agriculture, public speaking and music.⁶⁴ The courses offered at Chilocco Indian School in 1935 were consistent with vocational training promoted throughout the nation during the twentieth century. Spanish missionaries also encouraged Indians to adopt trades that were accepted in Spanish colonial society (blacksmithing, farming, weaving, etc.). As previously stated, missions were never as successful as they were intended to be and many Indians never fully assimilated into Spanish society. Despite this, American policy makers replicated the Spanish approach of congregating Indians around specific areas of instruction (Americans used schools while the Spanish used missions) to teach them accepted white values of communal living and manual professions which promoted self-sufficiency. This demonstrates that Americans did not alter educational policies for Indians who had already experienced similar regulations under Spanish rule in missions.

Charles H. Burke outlined aspects of white culture Indians living on the Shawnee Indian Agency in Oklahoma should adopt in the same document which emphasized sending Indian children to schools written in 1923. Burke stated that Indian Agents should "exert pressure to persuade...Indians to adopt proper customs of civilization and comply with State laws" which embodied general American Indian policy aimed at replacing Indian customs with white tendencies during the twentieth century.⁶⁵ To achieve this, Burke asserted that Indian Agents should promote monogamy and "break up irregular and improper cohabitation."⁶⁶ The Spanish also attempted to replace Indian customs with their own cultural tendencies like monogamous marriages. Burke also claimed that each Indian family should tend a garden, raise livestock and cultivate agriculture on their allotment of land. He urged Indian Agents supervising the Shawnee Agency to assign Indians to repair roads on the reservation. He also called for the establishment of a labor agency aimed at securing employment for Indians near the reservation.⁶⁷ Burke's demands to assimilate Indians by encouraging them to gain regular employment, repair reservation infrastructure and practice agriculture are similar to Spanish assimilation strategies near missions. Indians living near missions were encouraged to practice manual jobs like blacksmithing, farming, repairing mission structures, etc. in order to promote a sense of communal obligation and self-sufficiency. Indian Agents were also called upon to "push improvement of [Indians'] home buildings" and "restrict Indian dances and celebrations" while showing Indians that "the loss of time and property at celebrations amounts to large [financial] sums."⁶⁸ The Spanish generally promoted celebrations held near missions but worked to suppress non sanctioned Indian celebration rituals.⁶⁹ Burke's program for assimilating Indians clearly replicated Spanish strategies near missions. The fact that he served as Commissioner of Indian Affairs suggests that the plan he presented for Indians in Oklahoma probably mirrored his general goals for all Indians in the US. As previously established, Spanish missions did not completely assimilate Indians. Similarly, primary documents showcasing Oklahoma Indians living in poverty during the 1930s demonstrate that Burke's plans for assimilating southwestern Indians were not completely achieved either.

Day School Representative G. Kurtz and the Principal of Seger Indian School C.T. Hanchey conducted a survey of Kickapoo Indian homes in the Shawnee Indian Agency in 1932. This survey determined that only a

⁶⁴ Department of the Interior, Chilocco, from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Annual Reports Relating to School Operations, 1918-1952*.

⁶⁵ Burke, "Expanded Five Year Program," from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Correspondence Relating to Land Use and Leasing, 1915-1944*.

⁶⁶ Burke, "Expanded Five Year Program," from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Correspondence Relating to Land Use and Leasing, 1915-1944*.

⁶⁷ Burke, "Expanded Five Year Program," from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Correspondence Relating to Land Use and Leasing, 1915-1944*.

⁶⁸ Burke, "Expanded Five Year Program," from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Correspondence Relating to Land Use and Leasing, 1915-1944*.

⁶⁹ Deeds, *Defiance and Deference*, 168.

portion of Kickapoo Indian families had developed self-sufficient and Anglo-American behaviors like practicing agriculture, maintaining their homes, gaining literacy and securing steady incomes like Burke outlined nine years previously. Of the twenty three Kickapoo families surveyed, at least one parent was illiterate in twelve families, nine families did not practice sustainable agriculture or raise livestock, and thirteen families were regarded as living in poor to very poor conditions featuring dilapidated housing and insufficient incomes.⁷⁰ Unfortunately, the National Archives at Fort Worth did not contain any additional surveys detailing the living conditions of other Indians in the Shawnee or nearby Indian agencies. However, a document produced in 1935 supported the claim that Oklahoma Indians generally lived in poverty during this time period. This document detailed a public hearing regarding the implementation of a new Indian welfare bill. Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier stated at the beginning of the hearing that “the majority of Oklahoma Indians today [in 1935] are very poor...their poverty is increasing and...their condition would grow steadily worse unless action such as that which the pending bill proposes is undertaken.”⁷¹ This new welfare bill was called the Thomas-Rogers Bill and generally sought to exempt Indians from state taxes, give Indians greater access and freedom over land, promote sustainable agriculture and redistribute wealth in reservations to benefit poorer Indians. Thomas Alford lived in the Shawnee Indian Agency and represented his fellow Shawnee Indians at this public hearing. Alford supported Collier’s statements by stating that “members of his tribe were generally landless and penniless, and growing poorer and poorer.”⁷²

The 1932 survey of Kickapoo Indians and the 1935 public hearing clearly demonstrate that US assimilation strategies did not improve the lives of Indians living in the southwestern US. The survey of Kickapoo Indians demonstrates that Indian Agents did not completely fulfill Burke’s five year plan of assimilating Indians introduced in 1923. Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier and Shawnee Indian representative Thomas Alford reinforced the survey’s conclusions by agreeing that Indians living in Oklahoma were generally very poor in the 1930s. As previously discussed, assimilation strategies outlined by Burke in 1923 resembled Spanish assimilation goals for mission communities in New Spain. These included developing self-sufficiency and embracing white tendencies like farming, raising livestock, maintaining the home, attending schools and maintaining steady employment. If American policy makers like Charles Burke studied Spanish policies they may have recognized that forcing Indians to become self-sufficient and take on manual professions did not completely assimilate Indians in New Spain. Instead, Indians in the southwestern US (as demonstrated by primary documents regarding Indians in Oklahoma) were instructed upon widespread assimilation strategies that mirrored partially ineffective Spanish policies.

CONCLUSION

The historiography and primary documents used for this research demonstrate that Americans inserted the same broad Indian policies used throughout the US in the southwest as well. The 1904 annual report of the Shawnee Indian Agency described selling Indian lands to whites and providing individual allotments for Indians. This parallels the Dawes Act of 1887 which allowed the US government to sell Indian lands to whites and distribute individual allotments of land to Indians. This policy was intended to place whites closer to Indians so that Indians could gradually observe and adopt their behaviors. The 1904 report clearly demonstrated that Indians in Oklahoma learned white values like farming cotton for individual wages just like the Dawes Act was intended to promote.

The same report described American policy makers as paternal in relation to seemingly incompetent Indians. Although Indians on this reservation wanted to voice their opinions regarding the allotment of their lands, the Indian Agent who wrote the report did not allow them to do so. This sense of white cultural superiority over Indians was widespread across the nation and influenced general assimilation policies. Employees working at Indian schools instructed Indian children that their traditional behaviors should be replaced by aspects of a superior white culture. Records produced by the Shawnee Agency Riverside Indian School and Fort Sill Indian Boarding School in 1899 and the Chilocco Indian Agricultural in 1935 all demonstrate that Indians in the southwest received vocational

⁷⁰ G. Kurtz and C.T. Hanchey, “School Surveys of Families, 1931-1932,” from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Records Relating to Education*.

⁷¹ A.G. Harper, “General Bulletin No. 15,” from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Annual Reports Relating to Extension and Relief Programs, 1932-1941*.

⁷² Harper, “General Bulletin No. 15,” from the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Annual Reports Relating to Extension and Relief Programs, 1932-1941*.

training. Vocational training was implemented in Indian schools across the nation during this time period and was intended to make Indians masters of manual professions that were widely accepted in white society.

American policy makers likely evaluated Mexican Indian policies before implementing their own assimilation strategies. The initial Mexican program produced widespread warfare and Indian relocation because it did not provide a solid framework and location for assimilating Indians. Spanish missions, although not completely effective, provided a location and plan for assimilating Indians into colonial society. Like the Mexican approach, the first American assimilation strategy based on the Dawes Act did not provide a specific plan for completely assimilating Indians into Anglo-American culture. The 1904 Shawnee Agency report demonstrated that although Indians were gradually learning white behaviors, they still struggled to completely assimilate into mainstream society and Indian Agents did not develop specific plans to help them do so. Instead of continuing Indian policies based on ambiguous assimilation and separation strategies (like the Mexican government), the American government made Indian schools the primary method for assimilating Indians during the twentieth century.

The American and Spanish governments encouraged Indians to adopt similar cultural values. Both governments congregated Indians around specific locations (Americans used reservations and schools while the Spanish used missions) in order to teach Indians accepted white behaviors. The historiography portion of this research concluded that the Spanish encouraged Indians to practice behaviors like living communal lives in towns, developing self-sufficiency through agriculture and other common Spanish occupations like blacksmithing and weaving, practicing monogamy, wearing Spanish clothes and adopting Catholicism. The 1904 Kiowa Agency report, Indian school documents, and Charles Burke's assimilation plans showed that Americans instructed Indians to adopt similar behaviors. These included maintaining the homes and roads in their communities, securing employment in manual jobs (often through vocational training), conducting agriculture, practicing monogamy and generally adopting their white neighbors' tendencies. American assimilation strategies not only emphasized the same cultural tendencies as the Spanish but also produced similar, relatively ineffective results.

The 1932 survey of Kickapoo Indians and the 1935 public hearing clearly demonstrate that US assimilation strategies (similar to those used by the Spanish to assimilate Indians in missions) did not improve the lives of all Indians living in the southwestern US. The survey of Kickapoo Indians demonstrated that Indian Agents did not completely fulfill Burke's five year plan of assimilating Indians introduced in 1923. Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier and Shawnee Indian representative Thomas Alford reinforced the survey's conclusions by agreeing that Indians living in Oklahoma were generally very poor in the 1930s.

If American policy makers like Charles Burke studied Spanish policies they may have recognized that forcing Indians to become self-sufficient and take on manual professions did not completely assimilate Indians into Spanish society. Instead, Indians in the southwestern US were assimilated according to widespread US Indian policies that mirrored relatively ineffective Spanish policies. However, Americans may have noticed the largely ineffective and ambiguous Mexican assimilation strategies of the nineteenth century. This may have encouraged Americans to install concrete assimilation plans focused on Indian schools instead of continuing the ambiguous policies of separating Indians and whites and selling Indian lands according to the Dawes Act. American policy makers had the opportunity to learn from previous Spanish and Mexican Indian policies in the southwestern US. They could have determined which policies were most effective at controlling and assimilating Indians in the past and adjusted their policies in the southwest accordingly. Instead, this research determined that Americans and Spaniards encouraged southwestern Indians to adopt similar cultural tendencies but ultimately failed to completely assimilate a majority of them into mainstream white society. The fact that these two governments generally agreed on what qualified as civilized behavior is very interesting. Americans must have had some knowledge of the semi-effective Spanish assimilation strategies but chose to impose similar cultural behaviors onto Indians. Further research could investigate why notions of European culture were so common among white societies including in America. It could also investigate why European societies broadly imposed their aspects of civilization instead of crafting unique programs to better govern unique conquered/colonized societies.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Burke, Charles H. "Expanded Five Year Program." From the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Correspondence Relating to Land Use and Leasing, 1915-1944* (accessed May 23, 2018).
- Colonel U.S.A., Indian Agent. "Kiowa Indian Agency, Anadarko, Oklahoma, Nov. 4, 1904." From the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Central Files, 1904-1950* (accessed May 23, 2018).
- Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Chilocco Indian School 9/171947-1980. Chilocco Indian Agricultural School Course Study Pamphlet 1935-1936. From the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Annual Reports Relating to School Operations, 1918-1952* (accessed May 22, 2018).
- Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, Kiowa Comanche and Wichita Agency 9/1/1878-1947. Textual Records of the Fort Sill Indian Boarding School, 1899. From the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Record of Employees, 1899-1902* (accessed May 21, 2018).
- Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, Kiowa, Comanche and Wichita Agency 9/1/1878-1947. Textual Records of the Kiowa Agency Riverside Indian School, 1899. From the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Record of Employees, 1899-1902* (accessed May 21, 2018).
- Harper, A.G. "General Bulletin No. 15." From the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Annual Reports Relating to Extension and Relief Programs, 1932-1941* (accessed May 24, 2018).
- Kurtz, G. and C.T. Hanchey. "School Surveys of Families, 1931-1932." From the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Records Relating to Education* (accessed May 23, 2018).
- Spalsbury, R.L. "Memorandum." Textual memorandum sent to Day School Inspectors in the Shawnee Indian Agency. From the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Educational Field Agent Files, 1921-1947* (accessed May 23, 2018).
- Walker, WJ. Textual Records of the Riverside Indian School, 1899. From the National Archives at Fort Worth, *Record of Employees, 1899-1902* (accessed May 21, 2018).

Secondary Sources

- Adams, David Wallace. *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995.
- Blackhawk, Ned. "Recasting the Narrative of America: The Rewards and Challenges of Teaching American Indian History." *The Journal of American History* 93, no. 4 (March, 2007): 1165-1170.
- Deeds, Susan M. *Defiance and Deference in Mexico's Colonial North: Indians under Spanish Rule in Nueva Vizcaya*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003.
- Griffin-Pierce, Trudy. *The Columbian Guide to American Indians of the Southwest*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.
- Hoxie, Frederick E. *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001.
- Prucha, Francis Paul. *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.
- Reyhner, John Allan and Jeanne M. Oyawin Eder. *American Indian Education: A History*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006.
- Ruiz Medrano, Ethelia, Susan Kellogg and Russ Davidson. *Negotiation within Domination: New Spain's Indian Pueblos Confront the Spanish State*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2010.
- Spicer, Edward H. *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico and the United States on Indians of the Southwest, 1533-1960*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2015.