CHAPTER 5

The Common School and the Threat of Cultural Pluralism

In the 1830s, the desire to establish public schools as a means of creating a common culture was heightened by increased immigration, particularly by the immigration of Irish Catholics. Discriminated against by the English, Irish Catholics threatened Protestant domination of American culture. The growth of public schools paralleled the growth of the immigrant and enslaved populations.

The common school movement of the 1830s and 1840s was, in part, an attempt to halt the drift toward a multicultural society. Self-proclaimed protectors of Protestant Anglo-American culture worried about the Irish immigrants streaming ashore, the growing numbers of enslaved Africans, and the racial violence occurring in northern cities between freed Africans and whites. Also during the 1830s, President Andrew Jackson implemented his final solution for acquiring the lands of the southern Indians by forcing the tribes off their lands and removing them to an area west of the Mississippi. The Indian removal was called the "Trail of Tears." Upon completion of this forced removal, the government was to "civilize" the southern tribes through a system of segregated schools. In addition to the concern about the risk posed to Anglo-American culture, there was a hysterical fear among European Americans during the common school period that Africans and Indians would contaminate white blood. This fear resulted in a demand by some whites for laws forbidding interracial marriages.

Many New Englanders hoped common schools would eradicate these "savage" cultures. The sensuous and emotional rhythms of African and Indian drums and the incense and ritual of the Irish Catholic Church offered a stark contrast to the stiff, repressed, and self-righteous way of life of white New Englanders. With the possibility of a multicultural society existing in North America, many European Americans hoped the common school would assure that the United States was dominated by a unified Protestant Anglo-Saxon culture.

As Carl Kaestle argues in *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780–1860,* the common school movement was primarily designed to protect the ideology of an American Protestant culture. Most of the common school reformers, Kaestle documents, were native-born Anglo-American Protestants, and their public philosophy "called for government action to provide schooling that would be more common, more equal, more dedicated to public policy, and therefore more effective in creating cultural and political values centering on Protestantism, republicanism, and capitalism."[1]

This chapter will discuss the following issues regarding multicultural education after the founding of public schools:

- The increasing multicultural population of the United States.
- Catholic and Protestant struggles over public schooling.
- Freed slaves and public schools.
- The education of Native Americans.

THE INCREASING MULTICULTURAL POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 show the increasing diversity of the U.S. population during the development and expansion of public schools from the 1830s to the 1850s. It is possible, but not necessarily provable, that public schools expanded in order to create a common culture and language. In 1830, six years before Horace Mann became secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, immigration expanded from Ireland and Germany, as indicated in Table 5.1. The reader will recall from Chapter 3 that in 1790, 60.9 percent of free whites were of English ancestry, 80 percent had English-speaking ancestry, and about 75 percent were Protestant. The reader can see from Table 5.1 that immigration almost quadrupled between the decades 1820–1830 (151,824 immigrants) and 1831–1840 (599,125 immigrants). During the 1820–1830 period the majority of immigrants still came from England (about 59 percent). But this dramatically changed in 1831–1840 with the increase in German immigration to 25.4 percent of the total immigration, reducing the number of immigrants from England to about 39 percent. The percentage of immigrants that did not come from England, as indicated in Table 5.2, rose to 72 percent by 1850.

The domination of immigrants by Irish and Germans during the early common school period of 1830–1840 threatened the Protestant majority among free whites. Almost all Irish during this period were Catholic while Germans were a mixture of Jews, Catholics, and Protestants. Also, the increased German immigration increased the number of free whites whose first language was not English.

Table 5.1 Immigration to the United States from Countries Other Than England by National Origin, 1820–1860

Total and National Origin by Decade	*Numbers of Immigrants*	*Percentage of Total Immigration*
Total Number of Immigrants		
1820–1830	151,824	100%
1831–1840	599,125	100
1841–1850	1,713,251	100
1851–1860	2,598,214	100
Ireland		
1820–1830	54,338	35.7
1831–1840	207,381	34.6
1841–1850	780,719	45.5
1851–1860	914,119	35.1
Germany		
1820–1830	7,729	5.0
1831–1840	152,454	25.4
1841–1850	434,626	25.3
1851–1860	951,667	36.6
Scandinavia (Sweden, Norway, Denmark)		
1820–1830	283	0.18
1831–1840	2,264	0.37
1841–1850	14,442	0.25
1851–1860	24,680	0.94
Italy		
1820–1830	439	0.28
1831–1840	2,253	0.37
1841–1850	1,870	0.10
1851–1860	9,231	0.35
Greece and Turkey		
1820–1830	41	0.02
1831–1840	56	0.009
1841–1850	75	0.004
1851–1860	114	0.004

Source: Calculated and complied from tables provided in Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life,* 2nd ed. (New York: Perennial, 2002), pp. 124, 129, 146, 165, 189, 202.

Adding to the possible anxiety about multiculturalism among free whites was the growing numbers of the nonwhite population. As indicated in Tables 5.3 and 5.4, the number of enslaved African Americans increased from 2,009,050 in 1830 to 3,953,760 in 1860, while the number of free African Americans increased from 319,576 in 1830 to 488,070 in 1860. And as I discuss in more detail in Chapter 7, an Asian population

Table 5.2 Approximate Percentage of Non-English Immigrants to the United States, 1820–1860

Decade	*Approximate Percentage of Non-English Immigrants to the United States*
1820–1830	41.2%
1831–1840	60.7
1841–1850	72.05
1851–1860	72.9

Source: Calculations were based on previous Table 5.1, Immigration to the United States from Countries Other Than England by National Origin, 1820–1860.

Table 5.3 Free and Slave Population of the United States by Race, 1830 Census

Status and Race	*Population*	*Percentage of Total Population*
Total Population	12,858,670	100%
Free White	10,530,044	81.9
Free Black	319,576	2.5
Slaves	2,009,050	15.6

Source: *Abstract of the Returns of the Fifth Census, Showing the Number of Free People, The Number of Slaves* (Washington, DC: Duff Green, 1832), p. 47.

Table 5.4 Free, Slave, Native American, and Asian Population of the United States, 1860

Status and Race	*Population*	*Percentage of Total Population*
Total Population	31,443,321	100%
Free White	26,922,537	85.6
Free Black	488,070	1.6
Slaves	3,953,760	12.6
Native Americans	44,021	0.1
Asian	34,933	0.1

Source: Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States* (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2002), Table F-1.

began to develop as the result of the California gold rush. Not included in these tables or in the U.S. Census for these decades was a growing Mexican American population as a result of the Mexican American war. I discuss this Mexican American population and their educational experiences in more detail in Chapter 7.

IRISH CATHOLICS: A THREAT TO ANGLO-AMERICAN SCHOOLS AND CULTURE

"No Irish Need Apply," a famous folk song of the common school period, referred to rental and employment signs telling Irish Americans they were not welcome as residents or workers. English colonists in North America stereotyped the Irish as "savages" and "slaves of their passions." These stereotypes developed during the long course of English domination of Ireland, which by 1700 left the Irish owning only 14 percent of Ireland.[2]

By the time of the great Irish immigration to the United States, English exploitation of Irish workers had reduced the average Irish family to a life of misery and famine. Living in one-room mud huts with straw roofs with only a hole cut through the straw for a chimney, the typical Irish family ate little more than a daily ration of potatoes. By 1845, one million Irish had immigrated to the United States. When the smell of decay from the potato blight crossed the land in 1845, another million-and-a-half Irish set sail to escape starvation. For those who stayed behind, the choice was often a deadly one. By 1855, the potato famine had killed one million people.[3]

As the Irish arrived at the great port cities, such as Boston and New York, they found themselves greeted with open hostility. Competing with freed Africans for jobs, the Irish found employment building roads and railroads, working in mines, and digging canals. Irish workers were thought of by other European Americans as "dogs" and "dray horses" to be worked like other animals in the building of the new nation.[4]

Protestant Anglo-Saxons feared that the "drunken Irish," acting mainly out of "passion" rather than reason, might destroy the American dream. The Reverend Theodore Parker warned his congregation of "The Dangerous Classes," who were "inferior in nature, some perhaps only behind us in development . . . a lower form . . . [consisting of] negroes, Indians, Mexicans, Irish, and the like."[5]

The Catholicism of the Irish also bothered Protestants. By the nineteenth century, many Protestants feared that the Catholic Church was the church of Satan, and they worried that the pope had sent an army of Irish Catholics to undermine Protestant churches. Ironically, it was the English who forced the Irish to become Christian and, after the Church of England became Protestant, most Irish remained Catholic.

The majority of Irish immigrating to the United States in the nineteenth century were Catholic.[6]

The hostility between Catholics and Protestants resulted in the common school never truly being "common" to all children in the nineteenth century. The common or public schools in the United States in the nineteenth century were dominated by Protestant religious values. This resulted in disputes over the use of state educational funds for the support of public schools. In large part, this conflict resulted from strong anti-Catholic feelings in the Protestant community. In the end, Catholics felt excluded from the common schools and found it necessary to establish their own system of independent parochial schools.

In the 1830s and 1840s, New York City was the scene of religious conflicts when Catholics demanded a share of the state educational funds that were being monopolized by the Public School Society (originally the New York Free School Society). Until this time, Catholics had been operating their own schools in an attempt to provide children of Catholic parents with an alternative to the Protestant-dominated schools of the Public School Society. Catholics objected to the use of the Protestant version of the Bible and textbooks containing anti-Catholic statements.

The smoldering conflict between Catholics and Protestants in New York City erupted during the 1838 election of Governor William Seward. Governor Seward was a strong advocate of government-sponsored internal improvements and increased state support of education. Although he believed that a centrally controlled and expanded system of education was necessary for the health of society, he also believed that state money for the support of Catholic schools was necessary to achieve this goal.

One of Seward's major concerns was the education of Catholic immigrants, particularly the Irish, for citizenship. Attacking the strong anti-Irish feeling existing in the 1830s and 1840s, he denounced American hatred of "foreigners."[7] While visiting New York City in 1840, Seward concluded that large numbers of New York's Catholic children were not attending public schools because of their anti-Catholic atmosphere. His concern was that immigrant children, particularly the Irish, might grow up to be adult illiterates who would become public burdens and never enter the mainstream of American life. In 1840, he proposed to the state legislature that Catholic schools become part of the state school system while retaining their private charters and religious affiliation. As historian Vincent Lannie writes, "Seward urged the establishment of schools that would be acceptable to this minority group and staffed with teachers who spoke the same language and professed the same religious faith as their pupils. Such schools would be administered by Catholic officials but supported with public funds."[8]

Many Protestants were outraged by Seward's proposal and demanded that no money go for the support of Catholic schools. In a letter to a friend in 1840, Seward reasoned that it was necessary for the state to provide a moral and religious education to all children in order to maintain social stability and "if it cannot be otherwise conferred, may rightly be conferred by the employment for the purpose of teachers professing the same language and religious creed."[9]

Accepting Seward's proposal, New York's Catholic community petitioned the Board of Aldermen of New York City for a portion of the common school fund. The petition enumerated Catholic complaints about Protestant dominance of the public schools. First, the Catholic petitioners attacked the supposed nonsectarianism of the schools operated by the Public School Society. The petition cited a number of instances in which the reports of the Public School Society either called for religious instruction or demonstrated the existence of religious instruction in the schools. This religious instruction included the reading and study of the Bible, which the petition claimed made the school sectarian. The petitioners argued: "Even the reading of the Scriptures in those schools your petitioners cannot regard otherwise than as sectarian; because Protestants would certainly consider as such the introduction of the Catholic Scriptures, which are different from theirs, and the Catholics have the same ground of objection when the Protestant version is made use of."[10]

In addition, the petitioners complained of anti-Catholic statements in selections used for elementary reading lessons. They argued that historical and religious portions of the reading lessons were selected from Protestant writers who were prejudiced against Catholics. The petition stated: "The term 'Popery' is repeatedly found in them. This term is known and employed as one of insult and contempt towards the Catholic religion, and it passes into the minds of children with the feeling of which it is the outward expression."[11]

The Catholic petition acknowledged that the members of the Public School Society were trying to remove anti-Catholic sentiments from textbooks. According to the petitioners, this effort was failing because Protestants were unable to clearly discern anti-Catholic statements. As an example, the petition quoted the following passage from a textbook approved by the Public School Society:

> Huss, John, a zealous reformer from Popery, who lived in Bohemia, towards the close of the fourteenth, and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries. He was bold and persevering; but at length, trusting himself to the deceitful Catholics, he was by them brought to trial, condemned as a heretic, and burnt at the stake.[12]

The anti-Catholic atmosphere of common schools, according to the Catholic petitioners, forced them to open their own Catholic schools. This situation, they argued, resulted in double taxation whereby they were taxed to support the schools operated by the Public School Society and to support an alternative school system. In the words of the petition, "The expense necessary for this [establishment of Catholic schools], was a second taxation, required not by the laws of the land, but by the no less imperious demands of their conscience."[13] Catholics' claims that they had to assume the burden of double taxation for the maintenance of public and Catholic schools continued into the twentieth century.

The Catholic petitioners recognized that public monies should not be used for the support of religion. They were willing to remove all religious instruction from their schools during school hours. To ensure that money was not used for religious instruction, they recommended that the organization of their schools and the control of the disbursement of money "shall be conducted, and made, by persons unconnected with the religion of your petitioners, even the Public School Society. . . . The public may then be assured that the money will not be applied to the support of the Catholic religion."[14]

Both Governor Seward's proposal and the Catholic petition brought a storm of protest from the Protestant community. The "great debate" began within a month of the presentation of the petition before the Board of Aldermen in the city's Common Council chambers. The Protestant community responded to the Catholic petition with the argument that if Catholics were willing to postpone religious instruction until after school hours, they should be willing to instruct the children attending the Public School Society schools after school hours. The Reverend Mr. Knox of the Dutch Reformed Church claimed that the public schools were not "adverse to feelings of reverence for Catholic peculiarities." The Reverend Mr. Bangs of the Methodist Church argued that all poor and wayward children should be forced to attend public schools. Bangs argued, in the words of Vincent Lannie: "This coercive action of the state would really be an act of compassion, since these vagrants would be snatched from the streets and their concomitant vices, and taught to become Christian gentlemen and competent citizens." The strong anti-Catholic feelings of Protestants were evident in Presbyterian minister Gardner Spring's statement that he viewed the Catholic petition "with more alarm on account of the source from which it comes . . . if there was no alternative between infidelity and the dogmas of the Catholic Church, I would choose, sir . . . , to be an infidel tomorrow."[15]

By 1842, the school issue inflamed public feelings to the point of causing a riot between anti-Catholics and Irish Catholics. Beginning in front of the city prison, the riot quickly spread to attacks on unsuspecting

Catholic individuals and homes. Some Catholics took refuge in a hotel that was then stormed by anti-Catholic mobs. Rioters even attacked the residence of Bishop Hughes behind the major symbol of Irish Catholicism, St. Patrick's Cathedral.

New York City was not the only place where riots erupted between Catholics and Protestants. In 1843, the Philadelphia public school board ruled that Catholic children could read their own version of the Bible in public schools and that they could be excused from other religious instruction. Protestants claimed that this was an attempt by Catholics to exclude the Bible from the schools. The result of this conflict was the Philadelphia Bible riots, in which thirteen people died and a Catholic church was burned to the ground. Other conflicts of this type, though not of this intensity, occurred around the country.[16]

In the end, Catholics found it necessary to establish their own system of schooling, the organization of which emerged from the work of plenary councils held in Baltimore in 1852, 1866, and 1884. A major theme of these councils was that religious instruction should not be separated from other forms of instruction. At the First Plenary Council, church leaders told parents that they had a responsibility to "watch over the purity of their [children's] faith and morals with jealous vigilance." To avoid neglecting their children's upbringing, Catholic parents were urged to give their children a Christian education "based on religious principles, accompanied by religious practices and always subordinate to religious influence." The council urged that all possible sacrifices be made for the establishment of Catholic schools.[17]

In 1866, the Second Plenary Council emphasized the principle "that religious teaching and religious training should form part of every system of school education." In addition, concern was expressed about the large number of delinquent Catholic youths who were being sent to Protestant reformatories. The council admitted, "It is a melancholy fact, and a very humiliating avowal for us to make, that a very large proportion of the idle and vicious youth of our principal cities are the children of Catholic parents." It recommended the establishment of Catholic industrial schools to care for delinquent Catholic youths.[18]

The Third Plenary Council, in 1884, sent forth decrees for the establishment of a system of Catholic schools. The council warned that the continued trend toward secular education was resulting in the undermining of Christianity and argued that all religious groups were calling for a Christian education in the schools, reflecting a common concern with the preservation of religious faith. The council claimed it was not condemning the state "for not imparting religious instruction in the public schools as they are now organized; because they well know it does not lie within the province of the State to teach religion." In fact,

it considered the creation of Catholic schools as beneficial to the state because such schools would create better citizens by educating better Christians. It declared: "Two objects therefore, dear brethren, we have in view, to multiply our schools, and to perfect them."[19]

To achieve the objective of ensuring a Catholic education, the council decreed that every church establish a parish school and that all Catholic parents send their children to Catholic schools. The following decrees of the Third Plenary Council established the ideals of Catholic education in the United States:

I. That near every church a parish school, where one does not yet exist, is to be built and maintained in perpetuum within two years of the promulgation of this council, unless the bishop should decide that because of serious difficulties a delay may be granted. . . .

IV. That all Catholic parents are bound to send their children to the parish school, unless it is evident that a sufficient training in religion is given either in their own homes, or in other Catholic schools; or when because of sufficient reason, approved by the Bishop, with all due precautions and safeguards, it is licit to send them to other schools. What constitutes a Catholic school is left to the decision of the Bishop.[20]

The origins of the Catholic school system can be found in the centuries-old struggle between Irish and Anglo-Saxon cultures. Transported to the United States, the cultural conflict threatened Protestant Anglo-American cultural domination. The Catholic rebellion against public school reformers gave proof to the argument that the common school reflected a primarily Protestant ideology. Beginning in the nineteenth century and continuing into the twentieth, many Catholics would refer to public schools as Protestant schools.

SLAVERY AND FREEDOM IN THE NORTH: AFRICAN AMERICANS AND SCHOOLS IN THE NEW REPUBLIC

By the middle of the eighteenth century, there was a dramatic change in the origins of the slave population. The burgeoning northern economy and the development of the southern plantation system increased the demand for enslaved Africans. Increasingly, slave traders arrived with human cargo who had been enslaved in the interior areas of Africa. Unlike the Atlantic Creoles, these enslaved Africans had been farmers and herdsmen living in small villages. Unlike Atlantic Creoles, they had little or no contact with Europeans before being enslaved and marched to the west coast of Africa, where they were shackled in the disease-infested holds of slave ships. They spoke many different languages and

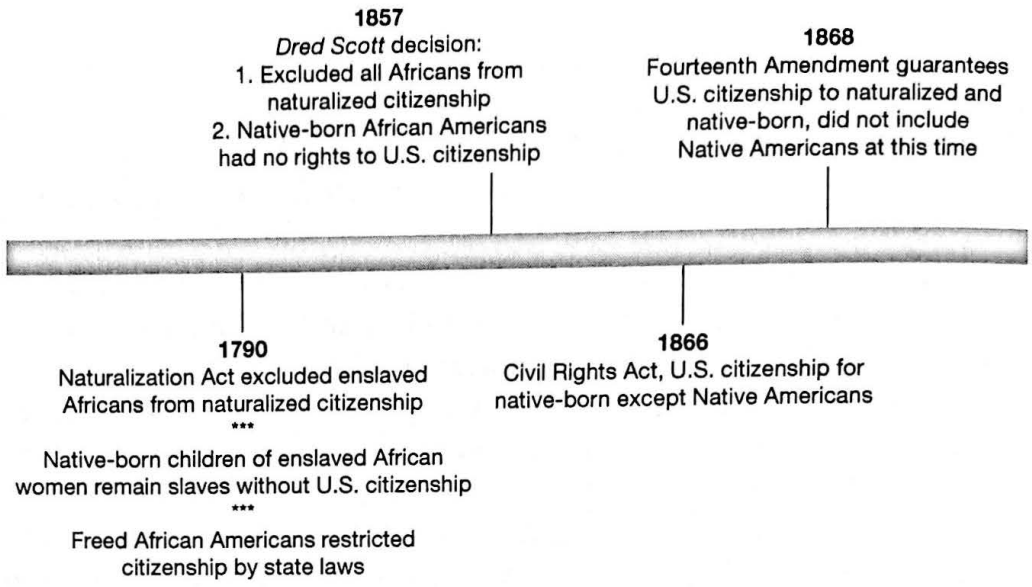
had differing religious traditions. By the time they reached the Americas, if they survived the ocean trip, they were often psychologically devastated by the experience of being wrenched out of their villages, separated from their families, marched to the African coast in shackles, forced into the dark holds of sailing ships, and then sold to some unknown Anglo-American in a country that had little resemblance to their homelands.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, northern slaves were increasingly owned by artisans and tradesmen to help in the rapidly expanding workshops and warehouses of the northern colonies. In New Jersey, the Hudson Valley, and Long Island, enslaved Africans played an important role in expanding the agricultural base of the colonies. Ira Berlin reports that by the middle of the eighteenth century, slave men outnumbered free white laborers in many New Jersey counties, such as 262 to 194 in Monmouth County, 281 to 81 in Middlesex County, and 206 to 8 in Bergen County.[21]

As the northern slave population increased, it became more difficult for slaves to gain their freedom. In addition, free blacks found their rights severely restricted by newly enacted laws. Berlin states, "in various northern colonies, free blacks were barred from voting, attending the militia, sitting on juries," and in many places they were required to carry "special passes to travel, trade, and keep a gun or a dog."[22]

Unlike the Atlantic Creoles, the newly arrived enslaved Africans resisted the adoption of European culture. Many refused to Europeanize their names. Like Native Americans, they resisted the imposition of Christian religion. In Newport, Rhode Island, local clergy could only find approximately thirty Christians among a black population of a thousand. It was estimated that only one-tenth of New York City's black population was Christian. In the middle of the eighteenth century, Americans of African ancestry established festivals that celebrated African traditions. An observer at a festival in Rhode Island wrote, "All the various languages of Africa, mixed with broken and ludicrous English, filled the air, accompanied with the music of the fiddle, tambourine, banjo, [and] drum."[23]

Inevitably, free and enslaved Africans learned to speak English. In most cases, language instruction did not take place in any systematic way. It was documented that in fugitive slave notices appearing in New York City's presses between 1771 and 1805, a quarter or more either did not speak English or spoke it poorly.[24] However, some enslaved Africans learned to read and write English well enough to petition the Massachusetts General Court for their freedom by proclaiming, "We have no Property! We have no Wives! No children! We have no City! No country! In common with all other men we have a natural right to our freedoms."[25]

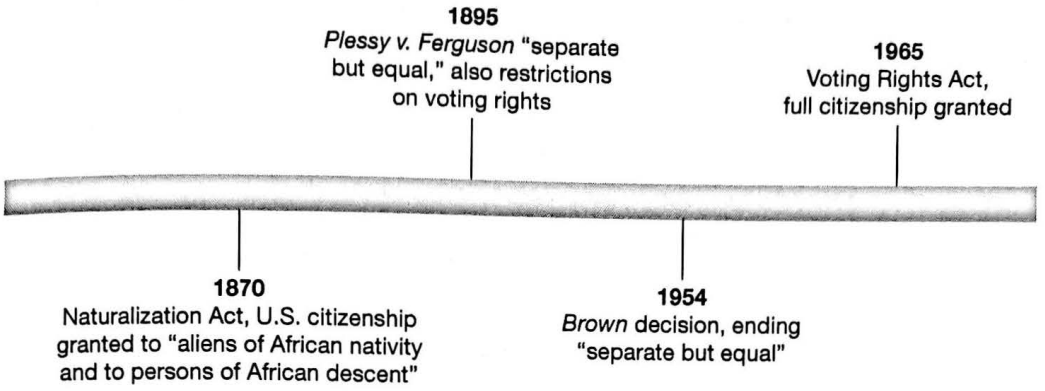


Time Line 5.1 African American Citizenship

For many northern state legislators, though not for southern, there was an obvious contradiction between the principles of the American Revolution and support of slavery. However, for freed slaves in the North freedom did not mean equality before the law or equality of treatment. The freeing of enslaved Africans highlighted the difference between freedom and equality in the minds of Anglo-Americans of the Revolutionary generation. Also, the treatment of freed slaves underlined the idea that equality meant equality for only a select few.

Petitions for freeing enslaved Africans began appearing during the Revolution. In 1778, the Executive Council of Pennsylvania asked the Assembly to prohibit the further importation of slaves with the goal of eventually abolishing slavery. The Council pointed out that Europeans were "astonished to see a people eager for Liberty holding Negroes in Bondage."[26] During the same year, the governor of New Jersey called on the state legislature to begin the process of gradual abolition of slavery because it was " 'odious and disgraceful' for a people professing to idolize liberty."[27] In 1785, the New York legislature passed a bill for the gradual abolition of slavery. In Massachusetts, slavery ended through court action. By 1830, there were still 3,586 enslaved Africans in northern states, two-thirds of them in New Jersey.[28]

Also, abolitionist societies sprang up during the Revolutionary years. These societies would play a key role in the education of freed Africans in the North and South after the Civil War. In addition, these abolitionist societies were central to the antislavery movement of the nineteenth century and supported efforts by African Americans to escape bondage in the South. In general, the abolitionist groups had a strong religious orientation that shaped the type of education they provided to freed



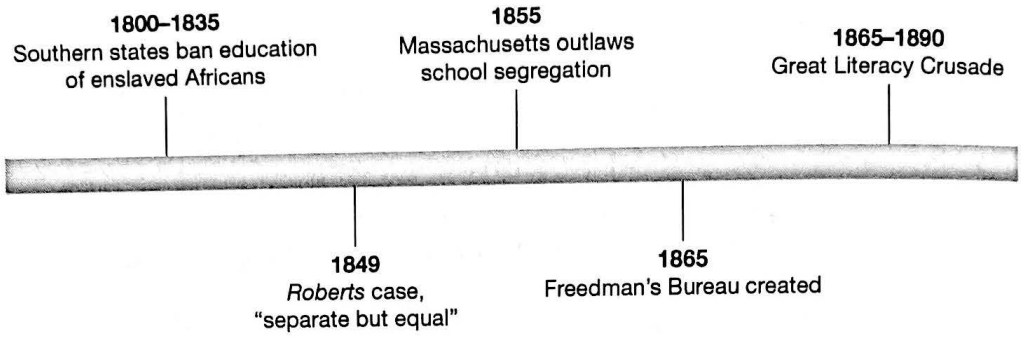
African Americans. The Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery was organized in 1775 and joined with Quakers to ensure the speedy end to slavery in that state. Similar organizations played an active role in other northern states.

Racial Segregation

It was immediately apparent that most Anglo-Americans were not going to accept integrated educational institutions. Racially segregated schools were widely established from the late eighteenth century until the U.S. Supreme Court ruled them unconstitutional in 1954. Segregation meant more than building a racial divide. It also resulted in unequal funding of schools. Educational segregation resulted in unequal educational opportunities.

In 1787, African American leaders in Boston petitioned the legislature for schools because they "now receive no benefit from the free schools."[29] In Pennsylvania and Ohio, school districts were required to build separate educational facilities for African Americans. In Indiana, despite the fact that school laws made no racial distinctions, the white population refused to send their children to schools with African American children. The result was segregated schools. Some Anglo-Americans after the Revolution even protested the provision of any education for African Americans, claiming that it would offend southerners and encourage immigration from Africa.

Resistance to educational integration also extended to higher education. When African American leader Charles Ray tried to enter Wesleyan College in 1832, student protests forced him to leave. In Canaan, New Hampshire, the Noyes Academy in 1835 admitted twenty-eight whites



Time Line 5.2 African American Pre-Civil Rights Education

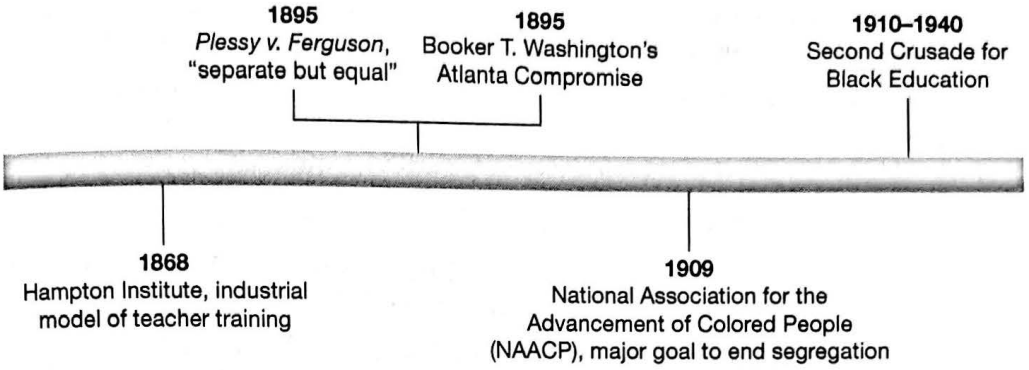
and fourteen African Americans. The school received support from African American communities and abolitionist societies in Massachusetts and New York. However, when the school year began, four-fifths of the residents of Canaan registered a protest against the integrated school. A mob attacked the school but was eventually restrained by local officials.

The residents of Canaan mixed patriotism with racism in protesting the Noyes Academy. For some Americans, racism would always be cloaked in the mantle of patriotism. The protesters in Canaan condemned abolitionism and praised the Constitution and Revolutionary patriots as they removed the school building from its foundations and dragged it by oxen to a new site. Stories of this sort were typical of efforts of African Americans and abolitionist societies to establish integrated schools.

Discrimination and segregation affected other parts of the lives of African Americans in northern states. Attempts to prohibit interracial marriages occurred in New York, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Illinois. In Philadelphia, African Americans were allowed to ride only on the front platforms of horse-drawn streetcars, and in New York City blacks could ride only on "colored-only" vehicles. Race riots broke out in Philadelphia and Cincinnati. In 1834 rioting whites in Philadelphia forced blacks to flee, and in 1841 whites in Cincinnati used a cannon against blacks defending their homes.[30]

Boston and the Struggle for Equal Educational Opportunity

An important example of the early struggle for equality of educational opportunity occurred in Boston. Boston organized the first comprehensive system of urban schools after the passage of the Massachusetts Education Act of 1789. This legislation required towns to provide elementary schools for six months of the year and grammar schools in communities with more than 200 families. In 1790, the black population in Boston was 766 out of a total population of 18,038. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, no law or tradition excluded black children from the public schools. Some were enrolled in public schools, while others attended private ones.[31]



However, few black children actually attended school. The low attendance rate was a result of the poor economic conditions of the black population and the hostile reception given black children in the public schools. To protect their children from the prejudice of white children, a committee of African Americans in 1798 asked for a separate system of schools for their children. The Boston School Committee rejected this request, reasoning that if it provided separate schools for blacks it would also need to provide separate schools for other groups. Receiving aid from white philanthropists, the parents opened a school that survived for only a few months. In 1800, a group of thirty-six African Americans again asked the Boston School Committee to establish a separate school for their children. Again the answer was no. Two years later the black community opened another separate private school.[32]

In 1806, the school committee reversed its position and opened a segregated school with a combination of public funds and contributions from white philanthropists. In 1812, the school committee voted for permanent funds for the school and established direct control over it.[33]

The Boston School Committee's decision created a complex situation. First, the committee supported and controlled a segregated school, although no law existed requiring segregation. In theory at least, black children were free to attend public schools other than the one established for them. Second, the African American community supported the segregated school as an alternative to the prejudice existing in the other white-dominated schools. And last, the school was supported by a combination of private and public monies. Private contributions to the school became a major factor when Abiel Smith died in 1815 and left the entire income from his shares in New England turnpikes and bridges and from the U.S. bonds he had owned to the support of black schools. The school committee assumed trusteeship of the estate, which meant that it controlled both the school and the majority of private funds supporting the school.[34]

By the 1820s, the African American community realized that a segregated education was resulting in an inferior education for their children. The school committee was appointing inferior teachers to the all-black school and was not maintaining the school building. In 1833, a subcommittee issued a report on the conditions of the schools. The major conclusion of this report was that black schools were inferior to other schools in the quality of education and physical conditions. The report argued that "a classroom better than a basement room in the African Church could be found. After all, Black parents paid taxes which helped to support white schools. They deserved a more equal return on their share of the city's income."[35]

The most important conclusion of the report was that segregated education was not benefiting either race. The Boston School Committee responded to the report by focusing efforts on building a new segregated school. The school committee accepted the idea of segregated education and argued that the real problem was assuring that separate schools for black children were equal to those of whites.

Local black abolitionist David Walker answered this question with a resounding "No!" Walker was representative of an increasingly militant and literate African American community in the northern states. Walker was born in North Carolina in 1779 of a free mother and a slave. According to North Carolina law, Walker was thus born free. He moved to Boston in the early 1820s and became a contributor to, and local agent for, the nation's first black newspaper, *Freedom's Journal,* published in New York.

In the newspaper and in his other writings, Walker argued that four principal factors were responsible for the poor situation of blacks in the nation: slavery; the use of religion to justify slavery and prejudice; the African colonization movement, designed to send free blacks back to Africa; and the lack of educational opportunity. White Americans, he argued, were keeping black Americans from receiving any significant amount of education. As proof, he cited laws in the South that made it illegal to educate slaves. In the North, according to Walker, the inferior education blacks received in schools was designed to keep them at a low level of education.[36]

After studying the conditions in Boston schools, Walker reached the conclusion that segregated education in the city was a conspiracy by whites to keep blacks in a state of ignorance. Walker's arguments added fuel to the fire. Demands by the black community for integrated education intensified, and for almost two decades the black community struggled with the school committee to end segregated education. Part of the issue was the loss of control of black schools by the black community.

Originally, the black community exercised control over its early private educational endeavors. Over the years, however, the school committee had gained complete control, so that any complaints the black community had about its schools had to be resolved by the committee.

In 1849, the protests over segregated schools finally reached the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court when Benjamin Roberts sued the city for excluding his five-year-old daughter from the schools. In this particular case, his daughter passed five white primary schools before reaching the black school. Consequently, Roberts decided to enroll her in one of the closer white schools. He lost the case on a decision by the court that the school system had provided equal schools for black children. This was one of the first separate-but-equal rulings in American judicial history.

The issue of segregation in Massachusetts schools was finally resolved in 1855, when the governor signed into law a requirement that no child be denied admission to a public school on the basis of race or religious opinions. In September of that year the Boston public schools were integrated without any violent hostilities.

This early history of segregated education illustrates the ambivalent attitudes of whites about the education of African Americans. On the one hand, whites might feel that containing the threat of African culture to the dominant Protestant culture of the United States required "civilizing" African Americans in the same manner as Native Americans. This meant providing schools. On the other hand, whites who considered Africans a threat to their racial purity and culture, and who believed Africans were "inferior," wanted the "civilizing" or education of African Americans to occur in segregated schools. As a result of the latter beliefs, public education for African Americans in the United States remained primarily segregated in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Learning in the Plantation System

Literacy was a punishable crime for enslaved Africans in the South. However, by the outbreak of the Civil War in 1860, it is estimated that 5 percent of slaves had learned how to read, sometimes at the risk of life or limb. Individual slaves would sneak books and teach themselves while hiding from their masters. Sometimes self-taught slaves would pass on their skills and knowledge to other slaves. James Anderson quotes a former slave, Ferebe Rogers, about her husband's educational work prior to the Civil War: "On his dyin' bed he said he been de death o' many a nigger 'cause he taught so many to read and write."[37]

It was easier for slaves to learn to read if they worked in cities such as Charleston and Savannah. For enslaved Africans in these communities, as opposed to plantation slaves, there was a chance to earn money

to purchase freedom. Also, there was greater assimilation into Anglo-American life. Nevertheless, plantation life sometimes provided the opportunity for clandestine learning.

In *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery,* Leon Litwack relates a number of examples of how literacy spread the word of southern defeats during the Civil War. In one case, discussions of the Civil War by the plantation owners were usually punctuated with the spelling of words so that house slaves could not understand. However, one maid memorized the letters and spelled them out later to an uncle who could read. In Forsyth, Georgia, Edward Glenn, after going to town to get the newspaper, would give it to the local black minister to read before taking it to the plantation house. Litwack writes, "On the day Glenn would never forget, the preacher threw the newspaper on the ground after reading it, hollered, 'I'm free as a frog!' and ran away. The slave dutifully took the paper to his mistress who read it and began to cry. 'I didn't say no more,' Glenn recalled."[38] In another situation, a Florida slave kept his literacy secret from his owner. One day the owner unexpectedly walked in while he was reading the newspaper and demanded to know what he was doing. "Equal to the moment," Litwack states, "[he] immediately turned the newspaper upside down and declared, 'Confederates done won the war.' The master laughed and left the room, and once again a slave had used the 'darky act' to extricate himself from a precarious situation."[39]

NATIVE AMERICANS

U.S. political leaders considered education a method for gaining Native American land. A major problem facing the U.S. government after the Revolution was acquiring the lands of Native Americans to the south and west of the lands already controlled by white settlers. Of particular concern were the tribes occupying southern lands in what is now North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. President George Washington and Secretary of War Henry Knox warned the Senate in 1789, "To conciliate the powerful tribes of Indians in the southern District [which included the so-called Five Civilized Tribes—Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole] amounting probably to fourteen thousand fighting Men, and to attach them firmly to the United States, may be regarded as highly worthy of the serious attention of government."[40]

Having fought a long and costly war with the British, the U.S. government did not have the resources to immediately embark upon a military campaign against the southern tribes. The easiest route to acquiring their lands was to purchase them through treaties. It is important to understand

that the U.S. government treated the purchase of Native American lands as the same thing as bringing the land under the control of the laws of the American government. For instance, the traditional practice in Europe was that if an English citizen bought land in France, French laws would continue to govern the land. In North America, Europeans assumed that the purchase of Native American lands resulted in governance by European American laws. For example, if traditional European practices were followed, then Cherokee land purchased by the U.S. government would have remained under the governance of the Cherokee tribe rather than being placed under the control of U.S. laws.

Therefore, purchase of Indian lands was the same as conquest and it was cheaper than a military campaign. Washington proposed this approach in a 1783 letter to James Duane, who served as head of a select committee on Indian affairs in the Continental Congress. Washington urged the purchase of Indian lands instead of expropriation. "In a word," Washington wrote, "there is nothing to be obtained by an Indian War but the Soil they live on and this can be had by purchase at less expense, and without bloodshed."[41] The famous Northwest Ordinance of 1787 held out the same promise of peace and negotiation for Indian lands. The ordinance states: "The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians, their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and in their property, rights and liberty, they never shall be invaded or disturbed."[42]

U.S. government leaders decided that the best methods of convincing the southern tribes to sell their lands were civilization programs. And, in what would later be used by Thomas Jefferson as a means of civilizing Native Americans, Washington proposed the establishment of official U.S. government trading houses on tribal lands as a means of "render[ing] tranquility with the savages permanent by creating ties of interest."[43]

When Thomas Jefferson became president in 1801, he also hoped trading houses would be the means for civilizing Native Americans and gaining their lands. The major flaw in these policies was the assumption that Indians would be willing to sell their lands. As Jefferson noted in a message to Congress in 1803, "the policy has long been gaining strength with them [Native Americans] of refusing absolutely all further sale on any conditions."[44] In the face of this resistance, Jefferson's problem was developing a plan that would cause tribes to sell their lands.

Jefferson was convinced that the cultural transformation of Native Americans was the key to acquiring tribal lands. For Jefferson, the solution to breaking down resistance to selling land involved transforming Native Americans into yeoman farmers who, living on farms and no longer dependent on hunting, would not need vast tracts of wilderness. In his

first annual message to Congress in 1801, he informed the members that "efforts to introduce among them [Indians] the implements and practice of husbandry, and of the household arts" was successful. "They are becoming more and more sensible," he stated, "of the superiority of this dependence for clothing and subsistence over the precarious resources of hunting and fishing." He was pleased to report that as a result of learning European American methods of husbandry and agriculture, tribes "begin to experience an increase of population."[45]

As did many other European Americans, Jefferson believed it was important to teach Indians a desire for the accumulation of property and to extinguish the cultural practice of sharing. Like other advocates of "civilizing" the Native Americans, Jefferson linked the creation of the nuclear family with a desire to acquire property and the establishment of a formal government. Writing to the chiefs of the Cherokee Nation in 1806, he congratulated the tribe for beginning a transition from hunting to husbandry and farming. The nuclear family structure resulting from farming, he argued, would create a desire to accumulate and pass on property. "When a man has enclosed and improved his farm," Jefferson wrote, "builds a good house on it and raised plentiful stocks of animals, he will wish when he dies that *these things shall go to his wife and children, who he loves more than he does his other relations, and for whom he will work with pleasure during his life* [emphasis added]."[46]

The accumulation of property, Jefferson warned the Cherokees, requires the establishment of laws and courts. "When a man has property," Jefferson wrote, "earned by his own labor, he will not like to see another come and take it from him because he happens to be stronger, or else to defend it by spilling blood. You will find it necessary then to appoint good men, as judges, to decide rules you shall establish."[47]

By creating in Native Americans a desire for the accumulation of wealth and the purchase of manufactured goods on display at government trading houses, Jefferson believed, European Americans would be able to persuade Indians to sell their lands to gain cash. In this manner, Native Americans would become part of a cash economy and would become dependent on manufactured goods.

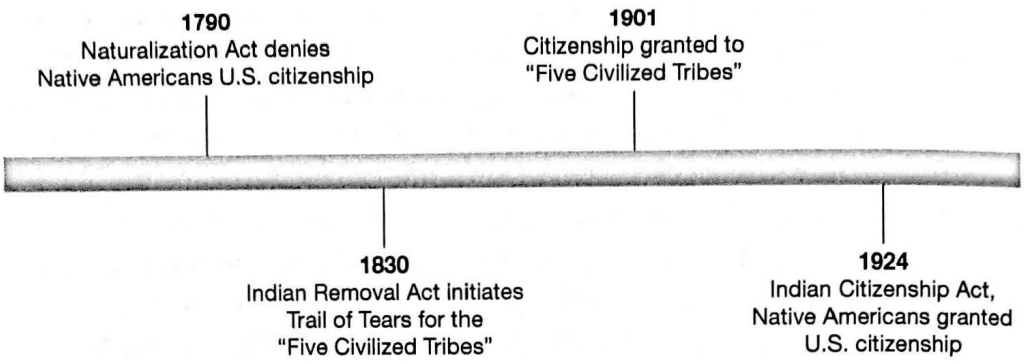
In a special message to Congress urging the continuation of trading houses, Jefferson wrote that to counteract tribal resistance to selling land "and to provide an extension of territory which *the rapid increase of our numbers will call for* [emphasis added], two measures are deemed expedient." The first, he argued, was to encourage Indians to abandon hunting for agriculture and husbandry. "The extensive forests necessary in the hunting life," he told Congress, "will then become useless, and they will see advantage in exchanging them for the means of improving their farms and of increasing their domestic comfort." Second, he argued,

the trading houses will make them aware of what they can purchase with the money earned from the sale of lands. Consequently, Jefferson asked Congress, "to multiply trading houses among them, and place within their reach those things *which will contribute more to their domestic comfort than the possession of extensive but uncultivated wilds* [emphasis added]."[48]

Jefferson wanted to change Native American values regarding the economy, government, family relations, and property, and to manipulate desires regarding consumption of goods. Civilizing Native Americans, in this case, meant completely wedding them to an economy of increasing production and demand for new goods. "In leading them thus to agriculture, to manufacture, and civilization," Jefferson told Congress, "in bringing together their and our sentiments, and in preparing them ultimately to participate in the benefits of our Government, I trust and believe we are acting for their greatest good."[49]

U.S. government agents were the principal means for instituting Jefferson's civilization policies. Among the Cherokees, government agents were instructed to establish schools to teach women how to spin and sew and to teach men the use of farm implements and methods of husbandry. Agents acted as teachers and advertisers of manufactured goods. They were to begin the cultural transformation of Native Americans that would change Native American ideas about farming, families, government, and economic relations. At the end of his term, according to Francis Prucha, Jefferson felt vindicated by his policies of civilization. "The southern tribes, especially," Prucha writes, "were far ahead of the others in agriculture and the household arts and in proportion to this advancement identified their views with those of the United States."[50]

Native Americans had ambivalent attitudes about the educational efforts of the government and missionaries. Some Native Americans concluded that education was necessary for protecting their interests against the continual attempts by the U.S. government to expand its territorial control. Consequently, Native American educational goals were quite different from the efforts by the U.S. government to "civilize" Native Americans by sending missionary educators into their lands. This ambivalence was exemplified by the Cherokee Ghost Dance movement of 1811–1812. Similar to other Ghost Dances that spread through tribes in the nineteenth century, the Cherokee Ghost Dance represented a desire to restore tribal lands to their conditions prior to the invasion of Europeans. The Great Spirit's message for the Cherokees included an educational plan to help the tribe adapt to the reality of European conquest.[51]



Time Line 5.3 Native American Citizenship

The Ghost Dance: The Educational Dilemma for Native Americans

In January 1811 a vision of night riders in the sky appeared to a Cherokee woman and two men who stopped at a deserted cabin on a lonely mountain in northwest Georgia. Pounding on their drums, the ghostly band descended from the sky and encircled the three Cherokees. They announced that the Great Spirit was angry because the Cherokee Nation was allowing bad white people to enter tribal lands and the Cherokees were adopting white people's methods of using large millstones to grind corn. This anger was causing the Mother of the Cherokee Nation to allow game to disappear from the Nation's lands. Reflecting the racial attitudes of many Native Americans, the messengers of the Great Spirit announced that white people and Indians were different types of humans. White people were made from white sand and Indians from red clay. The message was clear. The game would be restored to the Cherokee forests if the tribe returned to traditional ways and drove bad white people off tribal lands.[52] Suddenly, the ghost riders turned and pointed to a bright light descending from the dark sky. Inside the beam of light were four white houses. The white houses were to be built, the three Cherokees were told, for good white people "who could be useful to them with writing."[53]

By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many Cherokees, like other Native American tribes that still survived in the northern and southeastern parts of the United States, had concluded that learning to read and write was essential for trade and the negotiation of treaties with the U.S. government. To avoid losing all lands to white people, these Native Americans believed, required literacy. The problem for the Cherokees and other tribes was how to find "good" white people who would limit their teaching to reading and writing—in other words, white teachers who would not attempt to change traditional tribal values and customs.

Native Americans knew that European Americans harbored a belief in their own cultural superiority. They did not want this sense of cultural superiority to be introjected into their instruction of tribal members. Cherokee chief Arcowee expressed this sentiment in 1798 to Moravian missionaries who were requesting to enter Cherokee lands as teachers. Arcowee told a creation legend that developed after the European invasion. At creation, the Great Spirit offered a Bible to the Indians but they could not read from it. When white people saw the book, they immediately began reading. Consequently, white people, Arcowee told the missionaries, were given the ability to read books.[54] Arcowee then related a vision in which his father told him that it was time for Indians to learn to read. The problem, Arcowee said, was that white people refused to share the knowledge of reading given to them by the Great Spirit. Indeed, whites failed to recognize that the Great Spirit expected them to treat Indians as equals. The Christian missionaries, he stated, should understand that whites had previously failed to share knowledge given to them as a gift by the Great Spirit. Missionaries did not understand the invitation and quickly angered the Cherokees by focusing their efforts on changing social habits before teaching reading and writing.[55]

The Civilization Act

After the Ghost Dance movement, U.S. political leaders made another attempt to acquire Indian lands with the passage of the Civilization Act of 1819. The passage of this legislation was guided by Superintendent of Indian Trade Thomas L. McKenney. He was born into a Quaker family on March 21, 1785. McKenney's religious values were reflected in policies stressing peace and Christianity during the fourteen years of his service as superintendent of Indian trade and, after the office was abolished in 1823, as head of the newly created Office of Indian Affairs from 1824 to 1830.[56]

Thomas McKenney's belief in the power of schooling to culturally transform Native Americans reflected the growing conviction among many European Americans that education was the key to social control and improvement of society. A decade before the common school movement, McKenney's ideas on the power of schooling were enacted by Congress in the Civilization Act of 1819. In the 1820s, McKenney advanced the argument that the creation of tribal school systems operated by white missionary teachers would culturally transform Native Americans in one generation. This extreme belief in the power of the school to change and control societies was later reflected in the thinking of common school reformers in the 1830s and the rise of public schools.

Conceptualizing Indians as children, McKenney believed the key to civilizing them was schooling. Consequently, shortly after he was

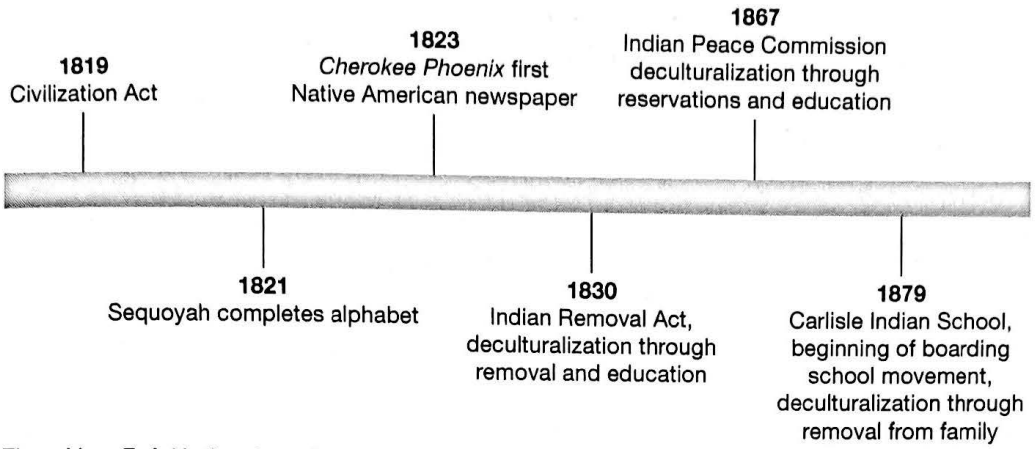
appointed superintendent of Indian trade in 1816, his interests shifted from trade as a means of cultural transformation to the use of schools. By 1819, McKenney was able to convince Congress to pass the Civilization Fund Act to provide money for the support of schools among Indian tribes. Reflecting on his effort to gain approval of the legislation, McKenney wrote, "I did not doubt then, nor do I now, the capacity of the Indian for the highest attainments in civilization, in the arts and religion, but I was satisfied that no adequate plan had ever been adopted for this great reformation."[57]

Just prior to the adoption of the Civilization Fund Act, McKenney recounts, it appeared "to me to be propitious for the making of the experiment."[58] It is important to emphasize that McKenney considered the introduction of schools into Indian tribes as an "experiment" in what I call ideological management. Could schools "civilize" Native Americans? Could schools bring about a cultural transformation? At the time, McKenney didn't consider the possibility that some tribal members might resent and resist this attempt at cultural transformation. He believed that the time was right for the experiment because of relative peace with the tribes and, besides, "there were now several missionary stations already in operation, though on a small scale, all of them furnishing proof that a plan commensurate to the object, would reform and save, and bless this long neglected, and downtrodden people."[59]

The Civilization Fund Act of 1819 authorized the president to "employ capable persons of good moral character, to instruct them [Indians] in the mode of agriculture suited to their situation; and for teaching their children in reading, writing, and arithmetic." The legislation provided an annual sum of ten thousand dollars to be used by the president to fund the establishment of schools. The legislation specifically indicated that the funds were to be used with tribes "adjoining the frontier settlements of the United States." In practice, a large percentage of the money funded missionaries to set up schools among the Choctaws and Cherokees.[60]

Native Americans, Education, and Social Class

Surprisingly, the Civilization Fund Act of 1819 contributed to the development of social classes among Native American tribes and to a lasting division between "progressives" and "traditionalists." From the nineteenth century to the present, tribal progressives have argued for acculturation of Native Americans to the dominant social and economic system of the United States. In contrast, traditionalists have tried to maintain Native American customs and ways of living, and they have often rejected European forms of schooling. Progressives adopted European American values regarding the accumulation of wealth and



Time Line 5.4 Native American Pre-Civil Rights Education

therefore tended to become the wealthiest members of a tribe. Scorning acquisitive values, traditionalists remained the poorest members of the tribe. It is important to note that the idea of social classes and the existence of extreme differences in wealth had their origins in European and not Native American societies.

The funds authorized under the Civilization Fund Act were primarily used to send missionary educators into the southern tribes. One reason for the focus on southern tribes was the desirability of their lands for cotton growing. For instance, cotton grown on lands vacated by the Choctaws in the 1830s made Mississippi the leading producer of cotton.[61]

In the southern tribes, missionary educators were primarily welcomed by progressive and wealthy "mixed-blood" members of the tribe. The term *mixed blood* referred to those Indians of Native American and European ancestry. Their fathers were, in most cases, whites who decided to join Native American tribes. Prior to the Civilization Fund Act, some Cherokees were influenced by Jefferson's civilization policies and did begin growing cotton and raising livestock. By 1809, certain Cherokee families were already accumulating large numbers of slaves and livestock. In 1809 it was reported that Joseph Vann, a mixed blood and at the time the wealthiest Cherokee, owned 115 slaves, 1,000 head of cattle, and 250 horses.[62]

The major political and economic leaders of the Cherokees in the early nineteenth century were members of the McDonald, Ross, Ridge, and Vann families. William McLoughlin estimates that by the 1820s wealth was concentrated in mixed families who made up 25 percent of the population of the tribe. Only 6 percent of the tribe owned one or more slaves, and less than 1 percent owned more than ten slaves. Since land was held in common by the tribe, wealth was measured according to the number of slaves, wagons, plows, looms, and land under cultivation. The vast majority of Cherokees owned no slaves or wagons and

cultivated less than forty acres. In the 1820s, McLoughlin concludes, "Over three-quarters of the Cherokees were full bloods who spoke no English. They preferred the steady routine of life and the extended kinship system of their clans."[63]

The mixed-blood Vann, McDonald, Ridge, and Ross families helped missionary educators build their schools. For instance, in 1816, Presbyterian missionary Cyrus Kingsbury bought twenty-five acres of McDonald's land to build the Brainerd mission. The U.S. government provided five hundred dollars for the land and furnished the school with farm equipment.[64] On this site, Kingsbury built four log cabins for boarding students and a schoolhouse designed to teach one hundred students.[65]

In the Choctaw tribe, the Folsoms, the Pitchlynns, and the Leflores were the leading families in wealth, political power, and education. Nathaniel Folsom, John Pitchlynn, and Louis Leflore were the founders of these Choctaw families. Nathaniel Folsom's son, David Folsom, and John Pitchlynn—the two Choctaws who played a leading role in establishing the first school in the Choctaw Nation—were a mixed blood and a white, respectively. The descendants of these three families were active in the government and educational system in Mississippi Territory and, after removal, in Indian Territory.

An 1819 letter written by Choctaw David Folsom underscores the role of progressives and wealthy mixed bloods in the introduction of schooling. The letter was written shortly after the opening of the first school in the Choctaw Nation financed by the Civilization Fund Act. The letter opened with Folsom apologizing for his poor English and his limited school attendance of six months. Then he declared that education was now vital to the tribe because of the decline in hunting. He wrote: "I have been talking to my people, and have advised them for the best, turn their attention to industry and farming, and lay our hunting aside. And here is one point of great work, is just come [*sic*] to hand, before us which is the establishment of a school; and the Choctaws appear to be well pleased."[66]

These wealthy mixed bloods primarily wanted schools to provide their children with an education that would aid in the further accumulation of wealth and protection of property. The educated children of the mixed-blood families assumed major political positions with the tribe by creating constitutional governments and written laws that made literacy essential for political power. Serving mainly the mixed-blood families, the Civilization Act helped to cement the political power of the wealthy mixed-blood progressives and reduce the political power of traditionalists.[67]

It was the leading mixed bloods in the Cherokee and Choctaw tribes who signed treaties giving up all traditional lands to the U.S. government.

From the perspective of traditionalists, mixed-blood progressives and European American schools destroyed the Indian nations.[68]

The Missionary Educators

There was no objection to the U.S. government subsidizing Protestant missionary educators under the provisions of the Civilization Fund Act. From the perspective of the early twenty-first century, government support of missionaries might be considered a violation of the First Amendment prohibition against government support of religion. But, for most European Americans in the early nineteenth century, public education and Protestantism went hand in hand. Throughout the nineteenth century, most educators did not think it was strange to begin the public school day with a prayer and a reading from a Protestant Bible. In fact, in the minds of most white Protestants in the early nineteenth century, it probably appeared logical and correct to use missionary educators to "civilize" Native Americans, because "civilizing" included conversion to Christianity.

In the United States, Protestant churches organized to civilize Native Americans and to convert the entire non-Christian world. In the early nineteenth century, missionary educators took the message of Protestantism to Asia, Africa, and the South Pacific. In 1810, the Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches founded the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). The ABCFM had a global mission and began sending missionaries abroad and to Native American tribes in 1812. In the minds of missionaries, Native Americans were foreign "heathens."[69]

Presbyterian missionaries sponsored by the ABCFM and later the Board of Foreign Missionaries believed that missionary work involved the manifest destiny of Anglo-Saxon culture to be spread around the world. And, of course, the concept of manifest destiny included a belief that it was God's will that the U.S. government extend its power across the continent and over all Native American tribes. The Board of Foreign Missions believed it was proper for the U.S. commissioner of Indian affairs to aid missionary efforts, because they believed the spread of republican government to Indian nations required the spread of Protestantism and Anglo-Saxon culture.[70]

An example of the combining of the civilization of Native Americans with the spread of Anglo-Saxon culture was the Reverend James Ramsey's speech at a Choctaw school in 1846. Ramsey described his initial lecture to students and trustees in the following words: "I showed them [on a map] that the people who speak the English language, and who occupied so small a part of the world, and possessed the greatest part of its wisdom and knowledge; that knowledge they could thus see for themselves was

power; and that power was to be obtained by Christianity alone."[71] Then he told them that the key to their success would be to continue the practice of establishing religious schools. In this way, they could share in the glory of Anglo-Saxon culture and Christianity.

The Presbyterian missionaries sent by the ABCFM had more influence on the leadership of Native American tribes than other missionary educators. Presbyterians believed that conversion of the tribal leadership would result in Christianity and civilization trickling down to other tribal members. In contrast, Baptists and Methodists believed that their work should begin with conversion of the common full-blood Indian.[72]

All three religious dominations emphasized the importance of changing traditional customs of Native Americans while teaching reading and writing. For instance, the Presbyterian missionary Cyrus Kingsbury, known as the "Apostle to the Choctaws," wrote,

> It is our intention to embrace in their [Native American] education, that practical industry, and that literary, moral and religious instruction, which may qualify them for useful members of society; and for the exercise of those moral principles, and that genuine piety, which form the basis of true happiness.[73]

In the words of historian Michael Coleman, "These Presbyterians could accept nothing less than the total rejection of the tribal past, and the total transformation of each individual Indian, a cultural destruction and regeneration to be brought about by the Gospel of Jesus Christ."[74]

Similar to the Presbyterians, the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Kentucky Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen, and other Protestant missionary organizations defined as their goal the replacement of Native American culture with the culture of white Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. Many Native Americans had simply asked for literacy, but they received an education designed to bring about their cultural and religious conversion.

Language and Native American Cultures

The relationship between language and culture is clearly evident in the differences between missionary efforts to develop written Native American languages and the creation of a written Cherokee language by Sequoyah. Missionaries wanted to develop written Native American languages so that they could translate religious tracts. Missionaries did not want to use a written Native American language as a means of preserving Native American history and religions. For missionaries, a written Native American language was another means of teaching Protestant Anglo-American culture. The teaching of English was also

considered another means of cultural transformation. Moravian educator John Gambold wrote, "It is indispensably necessary for their [Cherokee] preservation that they should learn our *Language* and adopt our Laws and Holy Religion."[75]

In contrast, Sequoyah developed a written Cherokee language for the purpose of preserving Cherokee culture. Missionaries reacted negatively to Sequoyah's invention because it threatened their efforts. The Reverend John Gambold wrote, regarding Sequoyah's invention, "The study of their language would in a great measure prove but time and labor lost. . . . It seems desirable that their Language, Customs, Manner of Thinking should be forgotten."[76]

In 1821 Sequoyah, a mixed-blood Cherokee whose English name was George Guess, returned to the Cherokee Nation from Arkansas with a Cherokee alphabet using eighty-six characters of his invention. Sequoyah was born in a small Cherokee village in Tennessee, served in the War of 1812, and joined a group of Cherokees in 1819 who immigrated to Arkansas. He worked twelve years on the development of his alphabet. An important thing to note about Sequoyah's work is that he was illiterate and did not speak English. Consequently, his approach to developing a written language was different from that of a literate missionary using English or another European language to render the Cherokee language into a written form. Although he probably got the idea of having a written language from Europeans, Sequoyah's invention was based on his creation of characters to represent different sounds in the Cherokee language.[77]

The genius of Sequoyah's alphabet was that since each of the eighty-six characters matched a particular sound in the Cherokee language, it was possible for a Cherokee to quickly become literate in Cherokee. With diligence, a person speaking Cherokee could learn the alphabet in one day and learn to read Cherokee in one week. A Moravian missionary described the following changes resulting from Sequoyah's invention:

> The alphabet was soon recognized as an invaluable invention . . . in little over a year, thousands of hitherto illiterate Cherokees were able to read and write their own language, teaching each other in cabins or by the roadside. The whole nation became an academy for the study of the system. Letters were written back and forth between the Cherokees in the east and those who had emigrated to the lands in Arkansas.[78]

The future editor of the first Native American newspaper, *Elias Boudinot*, recognized the importance of Sequoyah's invention and decided to publish a newspaper in English and Cherokee. While requesting funds

in 1826 for his newspaper, Boudinot told the congregation at the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia that one of the most important things to happen to the tribe was the "invention of letters." He pleaded for funds for a printing press "with the types . . . to be composed of English letters and Cherokee characters. Those characters," he informed the congregation, "have now become extensively used in the nation; their religious songs are written in them; there is an astonishing eagerness in people of all classes and ages to acquire a knowledge of them."[79]

After his address in Philadelphia, Boudinot headed to Boston to collect the newly cast type in Sequoyah's symbols. He returned to the Cherokee Nation and on February 21, 1828, he published the first Native American newspaper, the *Cherokee Phoenix,* with columns written in English and Cherokee. Of primary importance for full bloods, the newspaper published Cherokee laws in both English and Cherokee.

Despite the fact that missionaries had struggled for years to create a written Cherokee language, they were not very receptive to Sequoyah's invention. One important reason for their reluctance to embrace the new alphabet was that it required a knowledge of spoken Cherokee. None of the missionary educators had been able to learn Cherokee, so Sequoyah's symbols were of little use to them. In addition, many missionaries feared that if Cherokees learned to read and write in their own language, then they would never learn English. For most missionaries, learning English was essential for the purpose of destroying traditional Cherokee culture. Therefore, while Sequoyah's invention proved a uniting force among full-blood Cherokees, it did not become a language of the missionary schools established on Cherokee lands in the East.

Education and the Trail of Tears

The supposed failure of the Civilization Act to clear Indians off southern lands resulted in a painful episode in American history referred to as the Trail of Tears. During the 1820s, Thomas McKenney reiterated his position that the solution for gaining the lands of the southern Indians was "to give them a country, and to secure it to them by the most ample and solemn sanctions . . . in exchange for theirs."[80] Once they were moved to new lands, according to McKenney, schools and churches could be established to enlighten the next generation.

By the time of his election to the presidency and his First Annual Message to Congress in December of 1829, Andrew Jackson had concluded that civilization policies originating with Presidents Washington and Jefferson, and extended by the Civilization Act of 1819, had failed to educate southern tribes to the point where they would want to sell their lands. In his First Annual Message to Congress, Jackson devoted considerable space to outlining his arguments for Indian removal to lands

west of the Mississippi.[81] One of the crucial parts of Jackson's argument was the right of white settlers to Indian lands. President Washington had argued that Indian lands should be acquired by treaties and purchases. Now, President Jackson proposed a combination of treaties and exchange of lands for land west of the Mississippi. In addition, Jackson maintained that white settlers had rights to Indian lands that were not cultivated. In other words, he recognized as legitimate land claims by Indians only those claims for land on which they had made improvements. Claims could not be made for land, in Jackson's words, "on which they have neither dwelt nor made improvements, merely because they have seen them from the mountain or passed them in the chase."[82]

In proposing to set aside land west of the Mississippi for the relocation of Indians, Jackson promised to give each tribe control over the land and the right to establish any form of government. The only role of the U.S. government, Jackson argued, would be to preserve peace among the tribes and on the frontier. In this territory, Jackson declared, the "benevolent may endeavor to teach them the arts of civilization, and, by promoting union and harmony among them, to raise up an interesting commonwealth, destined to perpetuate the race and to attest the humanity and justice of this Government."[83] The key to fulfilling the humanitarian goals of removal would be education. In its final version, the Indian Removal Act of May 28, 1830, authorized the president to set aside lands west of the Mississippi for the exchange of Indian lands east of the Mississippi. In addition, the president was authorized to provide assistance to the tribes for their removal and resettlement on new lands.

In one of the most infamous acts in human history, entire nations of people were forced from their lands. On what is called the "Trail of Tears," Indians died of cholera, exposure, contaminated food, and exhaustion. Witnessing the removal of the Choctaws from Mississippi, the missionary William Goode wrote, "Melancholy and dejected with their compulsory removal, years elapsed without much effort for improvement." He told the story of the drunken Choctaw who threw himself into the last boat leaving for Indian Territory shouting, "Farewell white man! Steal my Land!"[84] Near his home in 1832, Horatio Cushman recalled the sounds from the encampment of Choctaws waiting for removal: "there came, borne upon the morn and evening breeze from every point of the vast encampment, faintly, yet distinctly, the plaintive sound of weeping."[85] After visiting the encampment, Cushman recorded this bleak portrait:

> The venerable old men . . . expressed the majesty of silent grief; yet there came now and then a sound that here and there swelled

> from a feeble moan to a deep, sustained groan—rising and falling till it died away just as it began . . . while the women and children, seated upon the ground, heads covered with shawls and blankets and bodies swinging forward and backward . . . [sent] sad tones of woe echoing far back from the surrounding but otherwise silent forests; while the young and middle-aged warriors, now subdued and standing around in silence profound, gazed into space . . . here and there was heard an inarticulate moan seeking expression in some snatch of song, which announced its leaving a broken heart.[86]

The Cherokees faced the horror of actual physical roundup by the U.S. Army. By 1838, only 2,000 of 17,000 Cherokees had made the trip west. The remaining 15,000 did not seem to believe that they would be driven out of their country.[87]

In 1838, General Winfield Scott with a combined military force of 7,000 was placed in charge of the removal process. General Scott issued a proclamation that within a month every Cherokee man, woman, and child should be headed west. Scott's troops moved through the countryside, surrounding houses, removing the occupants, looting and burning the houses, and forcing the families into stockades. Men and women were run down in the fields and forests as the troops viciously pursued their prey. Sometimes the troops found children at play by the side of the road and simply herded them into stockades without the knowledge of their parents. Besides stealing directly from the Cherokees, the troops and white outlaws drove off cattle and other livestock. The Cherokees placed in stockades were left destitute. A volunteer from Georgia, who later served as a colonel in the Confederate Army, wrote, "I fought through the Civil War and have seen men shot to pieces and slaughtered by thousands, but the Cherokee removal was the cruelest work I ever knew."[88]

The removal of tribes to Indian Territory raised the issue of the legal status of tribal governments and, as part of the operation of government, tribal school systems. This issue was clarified in a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 1831 involving the extension of the laws of the state of Georgia over the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokees argued that this extension was illegal because they were a foreign nation. The question, as posed in the decision of the Court, was: "Is the Cherokee nation a foreign state in the sense in which that term is used in the Constitution?"[89] The Court argued that the section of the Constitution dealing with the regulation of commerce made a distinction between foreign nations, states, and Indian tribes. Consequently, Indian tribes were not foreign countries but political entities distinct from states. In the words of the Court, Indian tribes are "domestic dependent nations . . . they are in a state of pupilage.

Their relation to the United States resembles that of a ward to his guardian."[90]

Once settled in Indian Territory, the tribes quickly engaged in the business of organizing governments and establishing school systems. Because of their segregation in Indian Territory, the tribal school systems were only for tribal children. One example of a successful Native American school system was the system created by the Choctaws, who sent their best graduates to the East to attend college. In 1842, the ruling council of the Choctaw Nation provided for the establishment of a comprehensive system of schools. A compulsory attendance law was enacted by the Choctaw Nation in 1889. The Choctaw schools were developed in cooperation with the missionaries. In this regard, Superintendent of Indian Affairs Thomas McKenney's dream of establishing schools in Indian Territory became a reality. The Spencer Academy (the author's uncle, Pat Spring, died in the fire that burned down the academy in 1896) was opened in 1844 and the Armstrong Academy in 1846. By 1848, the Choctaws had nine boarding schools paid for by tribal funds. In addition, a system of day or neighborhood schools was organized, and by 1860 these schools enrolled five hundred students. After the Civil War, the Choctaws established a system of segregated schools for the children of freed slaves.[91]

In addition, missionaries developed an adult literacy program through a system of Saturday and Sunday schools. Whole families would camp near a school or church to receive instruction in arithmetic, reading, and writing. Instruction was bilingual in both Choctaw and English. Although there were not many texts in Choctaw, missionaries did translate into Choctaw many portions of the Bible, hymn books, moral lectures, and other religious tracts.[92]

Many teachers were Choctaws educated in tribal schools. The teachers were examined in the common school subjects and the Choctaw constitution. Teachers followed a course of study modeled on that of neighboring states and taught in English, using the *Choctaw Definer* to help children translate from Choctaw into English.

The Spencer Academy for boys and the New Hope Academy for girls were the leading schools. The children who attended these schools were selected by district trustees until 1890 and after that by county judges. Selection was based on "promptness in attendance and their capacity to learn fast."[93] Only one student could be selected from any particular family.

In 1885, the tribal council removed the two academies from missionary management and placed them under the control of a board of trustees. In 1890, a school law was enacted that required male teachers at the Spencer Academy to be college graduates and to have the ability to teach

Greek, Latin, French, and German, and female teachers at the New Hope Academy to have graduated from a college or normal school and to be able to teach two modern languages besides English. The faculty of both schools included both white and Choctaw instructors.

The success of the Choctaw educational system was paralleled by that of the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokees were given land north of the Choctaw Nation. In 1841, after removal, the Cherokee National Council organized a national system of schools with eleven schools in eight districts, and in 1851 it opened academies for males and females. By the 1850s, the majority of teachers in these schools were Cherokee. Reyhner and Eder write, "By 1852 the Cherokee Nation had a better common school system than the neighboring states of Arkansas and Missouri."[94]

The success of the Choctaw and Cherokee school systems was highlighted in a congressional report released in 1969. The report noted that "In the 1800s, for example, the Choctaw Indians of Mississippi and Oklahoma [Indian Territory] operated about 200 schools and academies and sent numerous graduates to eastern colleges."[95] The report went on to praise the Cherokee schools: "Using bilingual teachers and Cherokee texts, the Cherokees, during the same period, controlled a school system which produced a tribe almost *100% literate* [emphasis added]."[96] The report concluded, "Anthropologists have determined that as a result of this school system, the literacy level in English of western Oklahoma Cherokees was higher than the white populations of either Texas or Arkansas."[97]

CONCLUSION

There were many reasons for the establishment of a common or public school system in the United States, including educating students for good citizenship, ending poverty and crime, and stimulating national economic growth. Ironically, the perception by many whites that Irish Americans, African Americans, and Native Americans were a threat to the dominance of white Protestant Anglo-American culture in the United States resulted in the segregation of Native Americans and most African Americans, and the establishment of a competing parochial school system. As a result, the common school was never common to all children, and the struggle over cultural dominance continued through the end of the twentieth century.

NOTES

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9. Quoted in ibid., p. 24.
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15. Quoted in Lannie, *Public Money*, pp. 85–87.
16. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic*, pp. 167–172.
17. "First Plenary Council (1852)," in McCluskey, *Catholic Education in America*, pp. 78–81.
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26. Quoted by Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790–1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 7.
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37. James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 17.
38. Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), p. 22.
39. Ibid., p. 23.
40. Quoted in Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), p. 53.
41. "George Washington to James Duane, September 7, 1783," in *Documents of United States Indian Policy*, 2nd ed., ed. Francis Paul Prucha (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), pp. 1–2.
42. "Northwest Ordinance, July 13, 1787," ibid., pp. 9–10.
43. "President Washington on Government Trading Houses, December 3, 1793," ibid., p. 16.
44. "President Jefferson on Indian Trading Houses," ibid., p. 21.
45. "First Annual Message, December 8, 1801," in *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Adrienne Koch and William Peden (New York: Modern Library, 1944), p. 324.
46. "To the Chiefs of the Cherokee Nation, Washington, January 10, 1806," ibid., p. 578.
47. Ibid., p. 579.
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62. "Table 5: Schools and Pupils in the Cherokee Nation, 1809" and "Table 6: Prosperous Cherokees in 1809," in McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence,* p. 174.
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70. Ibid., pp. 38–42.
71. Ibid., p. 42.
72. McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries,* pp. 135–151.
73. Quoted in Horatio Bardwell Cushman, *History of the Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Natchez Indians,* ed. Angie Debo (New York: Russell & Russell, 1972), p. 99. Cushman's book, originally published in 1899, is an important primary source on the history and cultural traditions of the Choctaws in the nineteenth century. Cushman was born at the Mayhew missionary station in the Choctaw Nation, where his parents had been sent in 1820 by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Cushman's book is full of fond memories of growing up at Mayhew and participating in Choctaw life. He personally knew the Folsom, Pitchlynn, and Leflore families. See Angie Debo's foreword to the book.
74. Coleman, *Presbyterian Missionary Attitudes,* pp. 5–6.
75. McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence,* p. 354.
76. Ibid.
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78. Ibid., p. 11.
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