



PROJECT MUSE®

---

Indian Play: Students, Wordplay, and Ideologies of  
Indianness at a School for Native Americans

Lisa K. Neuman

The American Indian Quarterly, Volume 32, Number 2, Spring 2008, pp. 178-203  
(Article)

Published by University of Nebraska Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/aiq.2008.0021>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/233254>

# Indian Play

*Students, Wordplay, and Ideologies of Indianness  
at a School for Native Americans*

LISA K. NEUMAN

---

Missionaries come to Oklahoma,  
Find Indians need much knowledge,  
Build big school on hill-top,  
Call 'em Bacone College.

Indians hear 'bout big school  
On hill-top far away,  
Send boys and girls—learn something—  
Humph! Maybe so, some day.

Indians come from all directions;  
From Montana, land of Crow,  
Through Nevada, Oklahoma, Texas,  
New Mexico—where wild Zuni grow.

At first Indian get much homesick;  
Too much books and rules;  
Want go back to tepees—  
No like 'em White Man's School.

President tell 'em—No get discouraged.  
Some day he give 'em sheepskin.

“Humph! Got sheep ranch in Montana,  
Want go back home again.”

Sometimes “Mating Moon” shine on hill-top;  
Braves steal maidens’ hearts away,  
Some go home—get married—  
Rest—want knowledge—stay.

Twelve Great Suns pass since we come here,  
Few drop out, few new come in;  
We fight brave fight, all way through  
Now we want ’em Sheep Skin.

—Ruth Hopkins (Choctaw),

Bacone high school valedictorian, 1928

---

In the spring of 1928 Ruth Hopkins, a student at Bacone College, an American Baptist high school and junior college for American Indians in Muskogee, Oklahoma, wrote a poem that cleverly revealed the complex feelings that many Indian students had about their experiences at school.<sup>1</sup> Hopkins’s poem is one of many examples of student writings, speeches, artistic creations, and musical performances produced by Baconians from 1927 to 1955 that directly comment on the meanings of being Indian and being educated.

The case of Bacone College provides an insightful opportunity to examine how students articulated their ideas about Indianness while attending a school for American Indians. As neocolonial institutions designed to assimilate American Indians to European American cultural and religious values, social institutions, and economic practices, most schools run by the federal government and missionaries during the first part of the twentieth century sought to suppress all or most aspects of their young students’ Indian identities.<sup>2</sup>

Bacone College, however, proved to be different. Established in 1880 by Baptist minister Almon C. Bacon with the goal of training American Indian students to be teachers and preachers, by the 1920s Bacone was pursuing a unique fund-raising strategy that emphasized the Indian identities of its students and provided innovative curricular and extra-curricular programs in Indian arts, histories, and cultures. Within this unique historical context, students at Bacone had an unusual amount of freedom to publicly engage ideas about what it meant to be Indian and educated.<sup>3</sup> Through their frequent use of humor and inventive wordplay

to reference Indianness, students articulated the (often contradictory) meanings of being educated Indians in mid-twentieth-century America. In an inversion of what scholar Philip Deloria calls “playing Indian” (i.e., the widespread appropriation of romanticized notions of Indianness by non-Indians to define their own identities), I borrow Deloria’s term *Indian play* to describe Native students’ creativity in publicly engaging, articulating, and negotiating ideas about their own and others’ Indian identities.<sup>4</sup> As Deloria helps us see, historically, the Indian play of both non-Indians and Indians has been firmly intertwined. I argue that Indian play was a powerful aspect of peer culture at Bacone that merits careful analysis. While playful and spirited, the Indian play of students at Bacone was dedicated to a serious purpose: challenging white stereotypes of Indians, exposing the differences among diverse American Indian communities, recognizing the effects of colonialism on American Indians, and questioning how schools run by European Americans could truly benefit Native students. In this context Indian play among peers at Bacone fostered the development of important new Indian identities.

In analyzing the richness and complexity of Indian play among students at Bacone I take a theoretical approach to the study of the anthropology of education known as *cultural production*. Studies of cultural production employ dynamic notions of the relationship between education and culture; they view schools as potential sites where new cultural meanings may be created. Scholars of cultural production view students as active producers of cultural forms rather than passive recipients of school knowledge and ideology. Yet scholars of cultural production do not impart unfounded notions of agency or resistance to students. They examine how students create cultural meanings in relation to the cultural meanings produced by their teachers, other adults, and other students before them. By investigating culture in process, the cultural production approach eschews essentialism and treats cultures and identities as fluid, contextual, and complex.<sup>5</sup>

In examining instances of Indian play at Bacone as forms of cultural production, I will attempt to make sense of the cultural meanings within students’ Indian play. While offering some analysis of the meanings of Indian play in terms of current theories of hegemonic versus counterhegemonic cultural forms, I assert that what is most important to understand is that these cultural forms provided a space for students to comment on, talk about, and (sometimes) reinvent their own ideas

about what it meant to be Indian. Not surprisingly, in neocolonial contexts people may produce cultural forms that appear both to reinforce dominant hegemonic ideologies and to challenge them. I suggest that cultural forms that appear at first to be hegemonic may be transformed into something altogether different when we consider their meanings to the people who created them.

This article is organized into several sections. In the section that follows I give a brief history of Bacone College and its unique programs that emphasized American Indian cultures, and I assert that these programs provided a space in which students could actively engage ideas about Indianness. In the second section I discuss peer relationships and student life during the period from 1927 to 1955. In the third section I examine how students used Indian play to articulate the meanings of being educated and being Indian. Finally, I examine how Indian play was connected to the creation of new Indian identities among students at Bacone, and I discuss the importance of the case of Bacone in terms of current theories of schooling, hegemony, counterhegemony, and resistance.

#### A SHORT HISTORY OF BACONE COLLEGE

Originally called Indian University, or IU, Bacone College was founded in 1880 in Tahlequah, Indian Territory (what is now Oklahoma), by an American Baptist missionary, the Reverend Almon C. Bacone. In the late nineteenth century Indian Territory was home to a large number of diverse tribes that had been relocated forcibly from other parts of the country to make room for white settlement. Perhaps the most well known of the groups who made the forced journey to Indian Territory were the groups from the American Southeast—the Choctaws, Cherokees, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. Their adoption of Christianity and many aspects of European American social and economic practices had made them known collectively as the Five “Civilized” Tribes. Bacone’s personal goal was to provide higher education to members of the Five Tribes, and, in particular, he wanted to train Native teachers and preachers who would return to work among their people. From the beginning, Indian University was coeducational. As the only institution of higher education at the time in Indian Territory, IU accepted a small number of white students who demonstrated an interest in studying for the minis-

try or the teaching professions. The training provided by the university proved to be in demand in Indian Territory; by the end of the first full academic year, enrollment had climbed from a mere three to fifty-six students. Finding that his tiny accommodations in Tahlequah were too cramped for his growing student body, in 1881 Bacone obtained permission from the Creek Nation to move Indian University to a spacious 160-acre campus in Muskogee, twenty-five miles to the southwest.<sup>6</sup>

In its early years IU prided itself on having a classical curriculum that was modeled on elite white schools and seminaries in the eastern United States. Students studied classical subjects like Latin, Greek, astronomy, zoology, philosophy, and English literature, and they participated in literary societies and attended daily chapel services. In many respects student life in those early years was similar to the educational experiences of students at small sectarian colleges for whites. During this time the Indian identities of the school's students were not overtly emphasized in fund-raising campaigns, the curriculum, or campus life. On occasions when the Indian identities of students were referenced by the school's administration, it was in a manner that often juxtaposed the "modern" educated students of Indian University with older "traditional" Indians, making Indian identities appear to be outmoded curiosities of the past.

In 1917 the Reverend Benjamin D. Weeks arrived on campus to serve as vice president, and in 1918 he began his twenty-three-year presidency of the institution. Weeks initiated major changes to the school's student body, fund-raising strategies, and curriculum that would have a profound effect on how the school approached the Indian identities of its students. By the time Weeks arrived on campus, Indian Territory had become the state of Oklahoma, and the name Indian University had been changed to Bacone College in honor of its founder. However, this was a misnomer, since—like many of the large off-reservation boarding schools run by the federal government for Indians—by this time Bacone had no courses above the high school level and was even offering some industrial education and domestic science courses geared toward basic vocational education. At this time Bacone was educating members of the Five Tribes and a growing number of Indian students from the Plains tribes of western Oklahoma. Indian students from a total of fifteen tribes were represented on campus.<sup>7</sup> However, there was only a handful of buildings on campus. In the face of growing student enrollment the lack of space on campus was becoming restrictive. In 1918 Weeks made a crucial decision to limit enrollment at Bacone to Indian students.<sup>8</sup>

In the 1920s President Weeks began an expansive building campaign on Bacone's campus that was funded largely by donations from wealthier members of the Five Tribes. By this time a number of members of the Five Tribes had substantial revenues from oil and mineral leases on their individual land allotments.<sup>9</sup> Through the gifts of Indian donors, during the early 1920s a number of new buildings were added to Bacone's campus, and the school's endowment increased dramatically. Although members of the Five Tribes financially supported the work of Bacone, there was still very little official emphasis on Indian cultures at the school.

However, this would soon change. By the mid-1920s a number of court cases challenged the legality of large donations to Bacone from members of the Five Tribes, whose finances were under the joint control of local white guardians and the secretary of the interior in Washington, DC.<sup>10</sup> Ultimately, a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court against Bacone forced the school to shift its fund-raising strategies from Indian to non-Indian donors. No longer able to count on large donations from members of the Five Tribes to support the work of the school, Weeks had to make Bacone appealing to white donors. However, he had to compete with other sectarian institutions for their support. Needing a way to make Bacone stand out, Weeks decided to focus on the unique Indian identities of his students. Ironically, the shift to non-Indian patrons led Bacone's administrators to actively promote the Indian identities of students in fund-raising campaigns, to pursue the hiring of Native American faculty, and to develop curricular programs that emphasized Indian cultures. The school's new fund-raising strategies were successful, resulting in increasing numbers of Indian students from diverse tribes on campus. Most important, these changes provided a space for students to actively engage and explore their Indian identities.

In 1927, in an attempt to create a public image of Bacone as an *Indian* school, President Weeks hired Mary "Ataloo" Stone McLendon, a Chickasaw instructor with a degree from the Teachers College of Columbia University, to teach English and assist Bacone in its public fund-raising efforts. Ataloo, as she preferred to be called, established a biweekly school newspaper, the *Bacone Indian*, that featured student writers and would become an important forum for students' Indian play. Unlike some newspapers generated by other Indian schools, which, according to Amelia Katanski, effectively functioned as "rhetorical panopticons, encourag-

ing student self-colonization through writing,” the *Bacone Indian* was largely produced *by students for students*.<sup>11</sup> Through their writings in the *Bacone Indian*, Native students became, to borrow another expression from Deloria, unexpectedly modern “shaper(s) of images.”<sup>12</sup>

Recognizing that the school’s Indian students were the best source of publicity for the school, Ataloa also began to help build new vocal music programs for female and male students to garner public support for Bacone. Popular with students, the Girls Glee Club (later called the Melody Maids) and a male chorus called the Singing Redmen dressed in Native costumes of the highly recognizable tribes of the Plains and Southwest and performed romantic Indian-themed songs—mostly written by white composers—before white audiences. Beginning in the early 1930s, the Singing Redmen traveled across the country in their signature Navajo costumes on yearly summer concert tours to raise money for Bacone, promoting the image of Bacone as an “Indian” school to white audiences.

Using students to help promote Bacone to the non-Indian public proved to be a success. Moreover, the romanticized images of Indianness that were projected to the public generated income for the school and helped Bacone—to borrow an expression from Deloria—“play Indian to Indian advantage.”<sup>13</sup> Money was channeled into new curricular programs, including new courses in American Indian arts, cultures, and histories. The school’s competitive athletic programs, its artistic programs, and its music programs all began to reflect an emphasis on Native cultures. Even its religious education programs and campus clubs began to focus on the Indian identities of the school’s students. A new Art Lodge that showcased the artistic traditions of various tribes was completed in 1932 and served as a popular campus social center, reception hall, art classroom, and museum. A new Indian Art Department, created by Ataloa, was ultimately helmed by a series of Bacone alumni who were successful Indian artists, including Acee Blue Eagle (Creek/Pawnee), Woody Crumbo (Potawatomi), and Walter Richard “Dick” West (Cheyenne).

Moreover, a new junior college program saw its first graduates in 1929. The return of postsecondary students to campus was a boon for Bacone. Junior college students lived on campus and were an important part of peer culture and fund-raising at the school. Many of them took advantage of Bacone’s new curricular and extracurricular programs. They also helped to recruit new students to the school. Ultimately, demand to



attend Bacone was so high that hundreds of students had to be turned away each year. For example, during the 1939–40 school year Bacone, which had a capacity of 300 students, turned away 467 applications for enrollment.<sup>14</sup>

After President Weeks left Bacone in 1941 Bacone appointed its first alumnus and American Indian as president, Earl Riley (Creek). Riley (1943–47) and his successor, the Reverend Francis W. Thompson (1948–55), kept the programs implemented by Weeks and Ataloo going with the help of students and alumni who returned to the school to teach. From 1927 to 1955 Bacone's fund-raising strategies and its innovative curricular and extracurricular programs emphasizing American Indian cultures and identities provided a rich space for students to pursue Indian play.

Since peer relationships were fundamental to many aspects of Indian play at Bacone, I now turn to a brief discussion of those relationships, highlighting important aspects of daily life at Bacone that shaped the context in which students articulated ideas about what it meant to be Indian at school.

#### PEER RELATIONSHIPS AND STUDENT LIFE AT BACONE

Between 1927 and 1955 students came to Bacone for very different reasons. A few were orphans, and others were the children of single parents who could no longer care for them. Some students came to Bacone from other Indian schools after being directed to Bacone by school administrators or hearing about Bacone from other Indian students. Others were recruited from their hometowns or reservations by one of Bacone's presidents, by Bacone alumni, or by missionaries and pastors. A number of students had been drawn to Bacone after hearing the performances of the Singing Redmen on tour; others were drawn to the Christian atmosphere of the school. Many students had parents who wanted them to go to Bacone; as one former student put it, "Our father wanted us to attend an Indian school." Some had relatives or friends who attended Bacone. For some, attending Bacone simply meant an opportunity to earn an athletic scholarship or a chance to go to school at a time when finding employment was difficult. For others, Bacone was a gateway to further college studies and economic opportunities; according to one alumnus: "I wanted to go to college and this was the first opportunity I had."<sup>15</sup>

In many respects students at Bacone modeled their peer relationships after those of white students at elite preparatory schools and coeducational colleges in the eastern United States. High school and junior college students often divided themselves according to gender and year in school. In 1928 college sophomore and editor of the *Bacone Indian* Harry Frost wrote a poem about the young men in the incoming college class:

They strive in vain,  
They're dumb, they're lame,  
In that portion above the neck.  
They're green, they're fresh,  
Their gears don't mesh,  
They're truly an awful wreck.<sup>16</sup>

In turn, the women of the college sophomore class composed their own poem for their younger female counterparts:

I'm a little freshman flower,  
Growing greener every hour.  
If sophomores do not cultivate me,  
I'll stay as green as I now be.<sup>17</sup>

Hazing rituals became an annual part of what Baconians dubbed "hell week," a period of peer initiation for new college students.<sup>18</sup> During hell week first-year students were expected to don bizarre clothing and defer to sophomores.<sup>19</sup> For example, in 1928 the first junior college sophomore class set rules for first-year students to follow, such as tipping their hats to the sophomores, yielding the sidewalk, and rising from their seats when upper-class students entered the room.<sup>20</sup> College sophomores devised punishments for new students who got out of line; these punishments included making first-year male college students sport fake beards, forcing both male and female students to carry umbrellas and other objects around campus for several days, whacking male students with paddles and belts, or bestowing "baby bottles and caps" on first-year college females during weekly chapel services.<sup>21</sup> Teasing was common among all students in all grade levels at Bacone.<sup>22</sup>

However, class rivalries and teasing were balanced by a shared sense among most students that fellow Baconians were like family. When

students were away from campus due to illness or visits home or when female students assumed “domestic responsibilities,” fellow students noted their absence in the *Bacone Indian*.<sup>23</sup> Students threw birthday parties for each other, they cheered together for their athletic teams, and they bonded over issues involving daily life on their small residential campus—among them, students’ shared displeasure with the abundance of “spuds” and “beans” served in the dining hall.<sup>24</sup> The arrival of new students at school was announced in the *Bacone Indian*; within weeks, if a student stayed at school, he or she inevitably was known not by a first or last name but by a new nickname. Nicknames like Dummy, Oogy, Fuzz, Chunk, Sitting Bull, Sixshooter, Ramrod, Nehi, and Bull filled the pages of the newspaper.<sup>25</sup> When alumni returned to campus to visit, current students greeted them with enthusiasm, and their visits and post-Bacone lives were described in detail.

Student friendships lightened the drudgery of institutional life and the routines and regulations to which students were often subjected. Students’ daily lives were highly structured by a regular schedule of academic courses, extracurricular activities, mandatory chapel services, and—for most students—campus jobs. Bells signaled the appropriate times for students to wake, eat, attend chapel, and move about campus; and administrators, dorm matrons, and resident faculty kept close watch over students’ comings and goings. According to one former Baconian, “students were constantly being urged not to walk on the campus lawn, not to smoke in public, and not to be late for chapel or Sunday School.”<sup>26</sup> Students who violated campus rules or curfews were subjected to a punishment that often involved paying fines, scrubbing pots in the dining hall kitchen, or being required to memorize selected passages from the Bible and recite them in chapel. Students who arrived late to dinner often found themselves locked out of the dining hall by teachers and staff, who “beamed” the doors shut. However, unlike students at some other Indian schools, students at Bacone were not beaten for violating school rules.<sup>27</sup>

While most students lived on campus, they were not isolated from adult Indians. Parents and their children exchanged letters, and parents, siblings, and other relatives occasionally visited campus. Bacone’s administration often included local Indian communities in campus events. For example, in spring 1931, when Bacone faculty and students presented a pageant to commemorate the Trail of Tears, members of local Indian communities were invited to pitch their tents in an encamp-

ment on school grounds.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the nearby Creek Nation, which had donated the land for Bacone's Muskogee campus, took an avid interest in the school's students. For example, the Baptist Creek Women's Association of Muskogee sponsored an annual Washington's Birthday dinner each February for the children of the Murrow Home, a residential unit for young Indian orphans that was located on the Bacone campus. Local Creek leaders came to campus for the elaborate banquets, and they spoke to the youngest Baconians in both Creek and English. The highlight of the evening was the traditional Creek meal prepared and served by Creek women; it included sour bread, blue dumplings, and a Creek specialty called coal flour. Sofky, a Creek corn soup, was an annual favorite at the banquet.<sup>29</sup>

At Bacone English was the lingua franca among students who came from diverse tribes. Occasionally, younger students arrived on campus speaking little English, but they quickly learned.<sup>30</sup> Evidence suggests that some parents did not speak English as fluently as did their children, and students sometimes wrote letters home to their parents in their Native language.<sup>31</sup> However, older students who had come directly from other Indian boarding schools often had a good command of English, and many of them had one or more Indian parents who had also attended an Indian boarding school and spoke English in the home. It was not uncommon for students of different ages and tribes to be paired together as roommates during a given semester, and this facilitated the use of English among students. Students at Bacone were not punished for speaking Native languages, although teachers demanded that students develop a strong command of both spoken and written English.<sup>32</sup>

Students at Bacone used language as a source of empowerment, using it to define and redefine their own identities as educated Indians. In the section that follows I turn to an examination of student writings found in the *Bacone Indian*, paying particular attention to students' creative use of Indian play and its relationship to their emerging identities.

#### INDIAN PLAY

Indian play was a creative process through which educated and highly articulate students negotiated the meanings of Indianness and produced new Indian identities. Through their creative use of humor and word-play American Indian students at Bacone used Indian play to explore,

comment on, and negotiate their identities as young Indians. Students often used Indian play in their peer interactions, and it often formed the basis for teasing. However, the Indian play of students often had a more serious purpose. It was through Indian play that students most often commented on white stereotypes of Indians, exposed the differences among Indian communities, acknowledged the effects of colonialism on American Indian lives, and questioned how schools run by European Americans could truly benefit Indian people. At Bacone students' Indian play could be divided into two general types: that which used formal English interlaced with words that referenced Indianness to convey humor or sarcasm and that which humorously employed a type of pidgin English or what some alumni called "Indian talk."<sup>33</sup> Carefully crafted by students, both types of Indian play involved the use of metaphor. At times students drew cartoons with captions to highlight their written Indian play.

To twenty-first-century readers the wordplay that made up the Indian play of Bacone's students may appear to be their internalization of negative European American stereotypes of Indians. However, an examination of the meanings of Indian play at Bacone during the period from 1927 to 1955 reveals that such a "modern" analysis misses the deeper connections between students' creative Indian play and the construction of new Indian identities on campus. In fact, students' inventiveness in using Indian play often directly addressed and challenged European American stereotypes of Indians.

Students used Indian play to reinforce their own identities as Indians, and their Indian play also offered a powerful commentary on European American images of Indians. For example, in 1929, when Cherokee student Sarah McElhaney returned to classes after an apparent illness, students wrote: "We are glad to see her out again even if we do have to look twice to see her. She is just another 'vanishing American.'"<sup>34</sup> In 1930 student Charles Frye wrote an article on campus life in which he described how "living up to one of their characteristics, laziness," male students in Barnett Hall were slow to rise to the morning bell.<sup>35</sup> In February 1933, when the campus experienced an unusual cold spell that affected students' regular morning journey from their dormitories to the dining hall, students wrote that the inclement weather had made the "trek" a virtual "Trail of Tears" and had brought about "a sad end for a noble race"—with the exception of some students "of the plains tribes" who

“just whooped and lowered their heads, then rushed through the storm like the bison herds of yesteryear” because they “had not yet reached the stages of civilization where [they] could miss a meal.”<sup>36</sup> When an “anonymous admirer” of the football team donated buffalo meat for a special campus dinner, student reporters announced in a 1936 headline that “Indians Go Savage: Eat Buffalo Meat.”<sup>37</sup> In 1948, after a football victory against a white school, a headline in the *Bacone Indian* boldly declared that “Bacone Warriors Secure Paleface Scalp.”<sup>38</sup> In an article written in 1946 entitled “Know the Pep Yells” student writers asked fellow Bacone “squaws and braves” to support the school’s sports teams.<sup>39</sup> In these examples students cleverly used Indian play to articulate dominant cultural ideologies of the time that imagined Indians as members of a vanishing, “uncivilized” race.

Students often used Indian play to challenge European American perceptions of Indians as inarticulate, naive, and unworldly. In a particularly telling example of Indian play written up by students in the campus newspaper, the members of the 1949 Girls Glee Club played an elaborate trick on the pastor of a church they visited while on a summer tour stop in South Bend, Indiana. According to the *Bacone Indian*, students “agreed to play as dumb Indians and talk broken English or not talk at all” when they arrived at the church.<sup>40</sup> Students described how their practical joke unfolded:

[President] Thompson alighted from the bus and cautioned Rev. Dick that the girls were quite bashful and wouldn’t respond very quickly to strangers. So with the purpose of persuading us to church, Rev. Dick came in the bus and quite heartily said, “Hello, it’s good to see you. Won’t you get off the bus and come in and meet these nice people who are here to take you to their homes?” We sat there and looked at him curiously. Finally [a student] Doris informed him that we couldn’t speak English and that whatever he had to say to us, she would be glad to interpret to us. Stunned, Rev. Dick asked if she were teasing. Assured that she wasn’t, he proceeded to use sign language and talk to us. He told Doris to tell us that there were nice homes that we could go to and spend the night if we would get out. One of the girls spoke up and said, “No, sleep in bus!” No amount of persuading could move them and he was at the end of the rope. But when one of the girls spoke up and said “hangubers and rat sody pop,” he was lost. After we had gone further than we

intended, Mrs. Thompson told us that it had gone far enough, he still thought she meant that we had been stubborn long enough. So we all got out of the bus laughing and teasing him. Dr. Thompson told him that the girls had merely played a trick on him and that it was all a joke. But even when we left him the next day, Rev. Dick still looked puzzled.<sup>41</sup>

In this example, as in many others, students had a laugh at the expense of a white authority figure—in this case, a minister. Normally proper, well mannered, and respectful of adults, the students were not afraid to play with the meanings of being Indian in certain contexts. Moreover, the inability of many non-Indians to figure out that the Indian play of students was precisely that—a form of joking behavior rather than a serious reflection of students’ abilities—likely further solidified the students’ perceptions that their Indian play was merited.

Students at Bacone used Indian play to define themselves in opposition to Indians who were seen as “lacking” a formal education. One particular column called *Ole Time Injun* began to appear in the *Bacone Indian* during the mid-1930s.<sup>42</sup> Students took turns writing *Ole Time Injun*; in fact, some alumni continued to submit material for the column after leaving Bacone and moving on to four-year colleges out of state.<sup>43</sup> Portrayed as a traditional Indian who lived on a reservation and had never attended school, the *Ole Time Injun* appeared to represent the antithesis of modern educated Indian youth.

The type of pidgin English used in the *Ole Time Injun* column mirrored other writings featuring Indian characters that had appeared in print media in Indian Territory and Oklahoma during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Perhaps the most famous of these was the persona of *Fus Fixico*, popularized by Creek author Alexander Posey, himself a former Bacone student.<sup>44</sup> Evidence suggests that later students at Bacone were familiar with Posey’s style, and it is highly likely that they modeled parts of the characters *Ole Time Injun* and *Bub*, who appeared in the column *Bub’s Letter*, on familiar literary tropes from Posey and other authors.

The topic of many *Ole Time Injun* columns was the suspicion with which some reservation communities and traditional Indians viewed the schooling of Indian youth by European Americans. In a 1947 column *Ole Time Injun* recounted his conversations with a white woman who

had come to the reservation to convince him to send his children away to Bacone:

Other day a womans come to seen why ole injun don't send it to school all them bois whats I got at home. I tell it to her I don't seen it good reason for go to school for anybody. I tole it that womans, "Looka here, me, I don't went to school all time since was little boy. Me, I raise it jus good corn as anybodies and white fellas. Ole woman, he don't had a schoolhousin too. . . ."45

White woman was made lots of talk bout eva body need it that book educated. Ole Injun jus sed it he don want it his bois to went to school—might turn out to make lawyer. Better keep stay at home and been hones Injuns when grown up.

White womans more talk long time, loud too, waved hans too like shoo off a flies. She's said somethings bout sen it him off schools somewheres called Bakon Colledge. "Nope," I sez, "thas too far off frum home for my boy to went."46 Afterwhile I tole white woman, "Mebbeso I send it my boy to school nex day."

Nex day that I sen him to school, he don stay long, but little while. When he come home I sed it to him, "Boy, you supposed to been at school to get it that educated."

My boys he jus look at groun and scratch head then said it, "Shucks, don do no good for me to went to school, I can't read or write."47

Ole Time Injun projected the very images of Indianness from which Baconians longed to disassociate themselves. He was inarticulate, naive, and unworldly. Most important, Ole Time Injun did not understand the value of a Bacone education. However, while students laughed at Ole Time Injun and may have sometimes pitied him, they also embraced him. He represented imagined and real generations of Indians who did not have the same opportunities as Baconians to go to school. A regular feature in the campus newspaper, the Ole Time Injun column reinforced the importance of staying in school for Baconians and demonstrated what life might be like without education.

If Ole Time Injun represented the antithesis of the lives that young Baconians sought, another literary character—Bub—more closely represented the lives of Bacone's Indian students. Bub's Letter (also sometimes called Bub Writes Home) made its debut in 1928 in the very first issue of the *Bacone Indian*, accompanied by cartoons drawn by Acee Blue



Eagle, and it regularly appeared in the student newspaper as well as occasional alumni newsletters throughout the 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s.<sup>48</sup> A Creek alumnus described how students wrote Bub's Letter:

They had a column in the paper, they called it Bub's Letter—"B-U-B's" Letter. It was in the paper every week and different ones on the staff would write that. And it was humorous and it was broken English. . . . Sometimes they'd tell about what happened on the campus the other day. . . . [The *Bacone Indian*] was printed downtown somewhere, but the students wrote everything that was in there. . . . A student was the editor. . . . We met about once a week at night to line up stuff for next week's *Bacone Indian*. The editor would say, "Now who wants to write Bub's Letter?" and different ones did. If somebody had a good subject they wanted to write about, they didn't have to be on the staff, I don't think.<sup>49</sup>

In letters that often began "dir Mom" and were signed "Yure prekary-ous son" or "Ur luvin son," Bub wrote home to his mother from "bacon colij" or "Bacon Colitch," telling her about life at school.<sup>50</sup> Bub's column occasionally contained a few words of Cherokee, Creek, or some other language that students knew. In a letter dated "wensday, February 6, 1935," Bub wrote:

i ges i betur rite 2 u agin, becaus its a lon ways bak sence i rote 2 u. we r havin a purty gud tim hear nowadays. we hev begun in thet nu semistur. Mom thars the pretiest lil nu gurl in colij. she's sorta lil lik.  
mom u shudda ben in Okmulge 2 here thim redmen sing. they shur sell it on wun song. Erl Rily has went to the hospitle to hev an operation. i wish i cud go to the hospitle somtim.  
them glee club gurls shure luk like mary pickfor in ther nu dresses. mom, ther dresses r long, luk like they mite step on 'em. But them gurls cud shure sing perty. U shud here 'em, mom. . . .  
mom, i'm shure hungry fer som gravy whut's not white.  
sen me some ob-us-ki [Creek food], mom.<sup>51</sup>

In fact, Bub was not simply a student with a poor command of formal English; he was naive and struggled to understand how school worked, often getting poor grades. In one letter Bub made excuses to his mother for performing poorly on his midterm exams: "Since last week letter me head, she goes roun and roun. Mi head is empty 'cause six week test took

wot i know. Teacher kina knowsey, they ask wot we know in test. In some question i know tellum.”<sup>52</sup> In a 1948 letter Bub, who had taken on the persona of a returned Indian World War II veteran, wrote his mother that he did not try very hard to get good grades in school, saying, “Gues dont luk lyke i am trying dont it. I gib it a little bitty one ever nou and then.”<sup>53</sup>

While Bub’s Letter provided students and alumni with news of campus life, it also called attention to white images of Indianness. Bub’s portrayal was absurd; he was, after all, a junior college student, but his seemingly poor language skills led readers to question his level of “education.” With its exaggerated forms of pidgin English and intentional misspellings of common words, Bub’s Letter was a linguistic trope on European American stereotypes of Indians as uneducated and illiterate.

These linguistic tropes made the similarities between educated Bub and Ole Time Injun more obvious than their differences. By focusing on Bub’s apparent lack of understanding of how school worked, students were also pointing out that adjustment to boarding school life was not immediate, that the rules and regulations of school often did not make sense, and that going away to school often involved a major transition for Indian youth. Moreover, Bub always appeared just one step away from academic failure, and Bub’s uncertainties about where education would take him reflected Baconians’ own uncertainties about the futures they would face after Bacone. Would they face racial prejudice? Would they actually find good jobs? Would they be able to succeed in the “white man’s world,” or would some of them return to the reservations or local Indian communities where they were raised? Students created Bub to express these tensions; while they sometimes laughed *at* him, they often laughed *with* him and identified with his struggles to understand what education could really do for him and them as well.

The ultimate fear of some students was that, if they were educated, they might no longer be considered “Indians” by their communities or even by members of their own families. Interviews with Bacone alumni suggested that when students went home for visits their families would sometimes tease them about how they had changed. For example, one alumnus recalled a particularly uncomfortable experience when he was having dinner with his family. When he asked his Choctaw-speaking grandmother in English to pass him the bread, his grandmother sternly replied: “Oh, we have a white man among us!”<sup>54</sup> In the context of this type of experience related by alumni, Bub’s exaggerated forms of “Indian

talk” and his general level of discomfort with the routines and requirements of school made a powerful statement. Like many younger Indians who attended institutions run by European Americans, Baconians often feared being rejected by their communities for acting too “white.” However, through venues like Bub’s Letter Bacone’s Indian students tried to demonstrate that they were, after all, still *Indians* like everybody else.

Through the use of Indian play, students articulated and negotiated the uncertainties and contradictions of being educated Indians in mid-twentieth-century America. While being educated meant the chance for success in the white world and a chance to give something back to Indian communities, it also could mean alienation from older, more traditional Indians who were suspicious of schools run by European Americans. While Baconians often portrayed uneducated Indians as “other,” in one important respect students struggled to reinforce their bonds with less educated and more traditional Indians. Baconians often struggled to demonstrate that, although they were educated in schools run by European Americans, they still identified as Indians.

#### NEW INDIAN IDENTITIES: SCHOOLING, HEGEMONY, AND COUNTERHEGEMONY AT BACONE

Given that their Indian play relied on many of the same stereotypical images and perceptions of Indians that non-Indians often attributed to Native Americans, how can we assess the meanings of students’ Indian play and its counterhegemonic potential?

As institutions of colonialism and assimilation, the Indian schools—particularly those serving teenagers and young adults like Bacone—were primary sites where dominant cultural ideologies about Indianness took center stage in students’ lives. Perhaps it should be no surprise that schools designed to educate Indians fostered the development of ideas about the meanings of being Indian and being educated. After all, as Alexandra Harmon points out, in addition to their own motivations for being in school, Native students from diverse tribes were in schools precisely because European Americans monolithically viewed them as *Indians*.<sup>55</sup>

However, while their Indian play clearly relied on the articulation of dominant cultural ideologies and images of Indianness, Indian students at Bacone did not simply parrot hegemonic ideologies. When they

wrote humorous headlines in the *Bacone Indian* declaring that they had gone “savage” or implying that they were “uncivilized,” students seized the opportunity to bring such hegemonic cultural meanings out in the open, to confront them in the public forum of their campus peer culture. Moreover, this public peer culture was possible because of the specific historical, financial, legal, and social forces at Bacone College that created an environment in which ideas about Indianness could be openly expressed. Unlike students at other Indian schools, whose peer cultures often were well hidden from teachers and administrators, American Indian students at Bacone could openly engage in Indian play.

The Indian play of students often challenged dominant cultural ideologies about Indianness and represented a form of counterhegemonic discourse. In modified form Gramscian-inspired theories of the relationship between ideology, hegemony, and counterhegemony are helpful tools in analyzing the potential meanings of Indian play at Bacone. To understand the meanings of Indian play at Bacone, we might borrow part of John and Jean Comaroff’s notion that hegemonic cultural meanings derive their power from being largely unconscious and that, once people become aware of them, they are transformed either into the iteration of overt dominant ideologies or rebellious counterhegemonic cultural forms.<sup>56</sup> Here I prefer to avoid an historical assessment of students’ level of political “consciousness” and instead borrow—in modified form—Pierre Bourdieu’s idea that hegemonic ideas derive their power largely from being *unsaid*.<sup>57</sup> Once fully articulated, these hegemonic meanings have the potential to become something altogether different. At Bacone, students took hegemonic cultural ideas about Indianness that were known but were often left unsaid and articulated them through Indian play, thereby making them open to negotiation and contestation.

However, the very fact that Indian play was so public at Bacone makes assessing its counterhegemonic potential all the more difficult. For example, we might ask whether Bub’s Letter, Ole Time Injun, and other public forms of Indian play that appeared in the *Bacone Indian* represented discourse that challenged dominant ideologies of Indianness *and* simultaneously reinforced them. For example, although students wrote most of the columns, we cannot forget that the *Bacone Indian* was used by the school’s administration for fund-raising purposes. Students at Bacone clearly used Ole Time Injun to set themselves apart from older, more traditional Indians who had not attended schools run by European

Americans. The images of Indianness that Ole Time Injun projected to the public served to remind potential donors of the differences between Bacone's "progressive" young students and an older generation of unfortunate "backward" Indians who lacked a "formal" education. However, I would argue that Ole Time Injun did not fall within what K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa L. McCarty call a "safety zone" of acceptable images of Indianness that were permitted by school staff because they effectively domesticated or neutralized American Indian identities.<sup>58</sup> To the contrary, the public nature of students' Ole Time Injun column provided a powerful counterhegemonic discourse about the hidden presumptions of European American cultural superiority that were behind the school's mission to assimilate American Indians by educating them. The character of Ole Time Injun revealed that although whites tried to recruit students for their schools by making promises about what education could do for Indians, many Indians were very suspicious of these promises and doubted that attending schools run by European Americans had real benefits. Indeed, this echoed the suspicion with which Indian communities had come to view the intentions of whites. Whites often broke their promises, while Indians strove to be—in the words of Ole Time Injun—"hones Injuns."

That we can locate this type of dual discourse should not surprise us or detract from our discussion of the significance of Indian play at Bacone. In her work on Cherokee identity politics, Circe Sturm reminds us that in neocolonial contexts there is a "constant slippage between ideology, hegemony, and counterhegemony."<sup>59</sup> The neocolonial context of the Indian schools produced tensions, uncertainties, and contradictions that students had to negotiate. In articulating hegemonic meanings about being Indian and being educated and bringing them to public discourse through Indian play, students at Bacone reinforced some aspects of dominant cultural ideologies about Indians while at the same time creating a space for counterhegemonic discourse.

In describing students' Indian play I have been careful not to impart unfounded notions of agency or resistance to students. Students did not produce a purely original discourse; their Indian play clearly bounced off meanings that others—non-Indians, Indians, school administrators, teachers, and students—had created before them. When a new student writer assumed the persona of Bub or Ole Time Injun in the *Bacone Indian*, he or she often drew on what other students had written in previ-

ous columns. Indian play at Bacone was structured by dominant ideologies of Indianness, but it was also imbedded within an incredibly creative and versatile student peer culture. This peer culture provided a forum for students to negotiate dominant ideologies of Indianness. Moreover, if their Indian play sometimes represented resistance to dominant ideologies of Indianness, it was not because students were simply holding fast to traditional cultural forms. As Michael F. Brown reminds us, “resistance” is often represented in academic writing as cultural “persistence.”<sup>60</sup> This has been a characteristic of many accounts of Indian schooling. I have tried here to avoid the simple equation of student resistance with cultural stasis or preservation, instead focusing on resistance as one possible outcome of creative processes whereby students at Bacone actively negotiated dominant ideologies about the meanings of being Indian and being educated.

More important than its counterhegemonic potential, Indian play was a powerful discourse that created a space for students to be Indian, and it promoted the development of *new* Indian identities among students. Many of the students who attended Bacone were from the Five Tribes, and some of them were from families that were already highly assimilated into European American society. Interviews with Bacone alumni suggested that Indian play was an important part of a peer culture that strengthened students’ identities as Indians. Interviews with alumni revealed that, with so many tribes represented on a small campus that encouraged the expression of Indianness, students were able to readily exchange cultural information with other young Indians. One former student summed up the views of many alumni when she stated: “I didn’t know a lot about Cherokee culture until really I went out to Bacone.”<sup>61</sup> Alumni credited their interactions with Indian peers from diverse tribes with strengthening their own perceptions of their separate tribal identities as well as with fostering a sense of a larger Pan-Indian identity.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps what is most important to remember is that it was the creativity of students’ Indian play—more than any single structural feature of campus life at Bacone—that provided the centerpiece for the production of new cultural meanings about Indianness on campus. Furthermore, this process of creating meaning has continued into the present; it is manifest in the symbols of culture and identity that alumni evoke today in the process of retelling their educational histories and in gleefully recalling episodes of their Indian play.

## NOTES

The poem cited in the epigraph is given in its entirety. According to Coeryne Bode's master's thesis on Bacone (see note 6), this poem first appeared in 1928 on page 36 of the student yearbook, the *Bacone Chief*. The *Bacone Indian* reprinted it in its entirety in the February 28, 1929, issue on page 2 as part of a feature article on Hopkins. Bode also reproduces the poem in her thesis.

The Spencer Foundation, the Philips Funds of the American Philosophical Society, the Jacobs Research Funds of the Whatcom Museum (Bellingham, Washington), and a summer faculty research grant from the University of Maine all provided financial support for portions of this research. Historical and ethnographic research was conducted during 1990 and 1992 and from January 1994 to December 1995. Along with archival research and an alumni questionnaire, I conducted interviews with more than forty-five people, mostly alumni, including several former teachers and staff members from Bacone College. I thank the two anonymous reviewers from the *AIQ* for their particularly insightful comments. Thanks to all of the participants, especially the alumni who attended Bacone from 1927 to 1955 and who shared their memories of campus life and peer cultures with me.

1. "American" Baptists are sometimes called "Northern" Baptists and distinguish themselves from Southern Baptists. The terms *Native American*, *Native American Indian*, and *Indian* are used interchangeably throughout this article. While many non-Indians have been taught to use only the academically popular term *Native American*, in fact, all four terms are used today in the United States by descendants of the original inhabitants of North America to refer to themselves collectively. However, some members of indigenous communities prefer to use the name of their clan or Native nation instead.

2. For example, see Margaret C. Szasz, *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination since 1928*, 2nd ed. (1974; Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1977) and *Indian Education in the American Colonies, 1607–1783* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988); David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875–1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995); Robert A. Trennert, Jr., *The Phoenix Indian School: Forced Assimilation in Arizona, 1891–1935* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988).

3. K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa L. McCarty make a case that the distinctions typically made between "formal" and "informal" education and the hierarchical association of "formal" education with Western systems of institutionalized schooling and "informal" education with traditional systems of education used by indigenous groups do not acknowledge that traditional systems of Native education were often formalized. In this article, when I use the

term *formal education* I reference the term that Bacone students often used to describe their institutionalized schooling by European Americans. Native students at Bacone—many from the more assimilated families of the Five “Civilized” Tribes—sometimes expressed the hierarchical view that the “formal” education they were receiving was superior to traditional systems of Native education. For further discussion of the “formal”/“informal” distinction in studies of education see K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa L. McCarty, *To Remain an Indian: Lessons in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education*, ed. James A. Banks, Multicultural Education Series (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006).

4. Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998). While Deloria employs the term *Indian play* in a broader historical and social context, I find this term particularly useful in describing the spirited wordplay of Native American students at Bacone.

5. For example, see Paul E. Willis, *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* (Farnborough, Eng.: Saxon House, 1977); Henry A. Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition*, Critical Perspectives in Social Theory (South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey, 1983); Douglas Foley, *Learning Capitalist Culture: Deep in the Heart of Tejas* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990); K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of the Chilocco Indian School* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); and the edited volume by Bradley A. Levinson, Douglas E. Foley, and Dorothy C. Holland, *The Cultural Production of the Educated Person: Critical Ethnographies of Schooling and Local Practice*, Power, Social Identity, and Education Series (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

6. Coeryne Bode, “The Origin and Development of Bacone College” (M.A. thesis, University of Tulsa, 1957), 19, 18, 23; John Williams and Howard Meredith, *Bacone Indian University: A History*, ed. Kenny A. Franks, Oklahoma Horizons Series (Oklahoma City: Western Heritage Books, 1980), 11.

7. Bode, “Origin and Development,” 61.

8. The children of white teachers, missionaries, and administrators were still permitted to attend the school.

9. Federal policies of allotment, which began in the nineteenth century and were implemented widely beginning in 1887 with the passage of the Dawes (or General Allotment) Act, divided communally held reservation lands and distributed small parcels (often 160, 80, or 40 acres) to individual tribal members to farm. In Oklahoma the allotment of the lands of the Five Tribes was delayed and was not completed until the early twentieth century.

10. See Tanis C. Thorne, *The World's Richest Indian: The Scandal over Jackson Barnett's Oil Fortune* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) for a detailed discussion of the legal entanglements affecting Bacone during this time.



11. Amelia Katanski, *Learning to Write "Indian": The Boarding-School Experience and American Indian Literature* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 51.
12. Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 240.
13. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 122.
14. Benjamin D. Weeks, lecture delivered to the members of the North Shore Baptist Church, Chicago, April 9, 1940, 5, Oklahoma Indian Baptist Association folder, Bacone College Indian Collection, Bacone College Library.
15. Both quotes taken from alumni responses to a questionnaire administered by the author.
16. *Bacone Indian*, September 25, 1928, 2.
17. *Bacone Indian*, September 25, 1928, 3.
18. *Bacone Indian*, October 5, 1938, 3.
19. *Bacone Indian*, November 7, 1928, 3, December 5, 1928, 3, November 15, 1929, 3.
20. *Bacone Indian*, September 25, 1928, 2.
21. *Bacone Indian*, November 15, 1929, 2, October 14, 1930, October 5, 1938, 3.
22. *Bacone Indian*, March 14, 1934, 2.
23. *Bacone Indian*, October 14, 1930, 1, October 28, 1931, 2.
24. *Bacone Indian*, October 25, 1928, 2, March 20, 1944, 1, October 11, 1946, 3, October 25, 1946, 2, February 11, 1949, 2.
25. *Bacone Indian*, October 28, 1930, 1, November 25, 1930, 1.
26. Charles Ballard, letter to the author, 1995.
27. From alumni responses to a questionnaire administered by the author. Other data compiled from the *Bacone Indian*. Also see Ruthe Blalock Jones, "Bacone College and the Philbrook Indian Annuals," in *Visions and Voices: Native American Painting from the Philbrook Museum of Art*, ed. Lydia L. Wyck-off (Tulsa, OK: Philbrook Museum of Art, 1996), 50–58.
28. *Bacone Indian*, May 29, 1931, 1.
29. Coal flour is a liquid or broth made from corn. See *Bacone Indian*, February 26, 1936, 1.
30. Verlon Cimino Long, telephone conversation with the author, July 21, 1995; Elizabeth Joshua Miller and Ray Miller, interview with the author, Holdenville, Oklahoma, 1995.
31. Letter in Cherokee, 1931, Bacone College Indian Collection, Bacone College Library.
32. Taken from alumni responses to a questionnaire administered by the author along with data compiled from the author's interviews with Bacone alumni who attended the school sometime between 1927 and 1955.
33. In this particular case this expression should not be confused with another

meaning of the phrase “Talking Indian,” which sometimes is used as a synonym for “speaking a Native language.” Data were compiled from the author’s interviews with Bacone alumni.

34. *Bacone Indian*, February 14, 1929, 4.

35. *Bacone Indian*, January 10, 1930, 3.

36. *Bacone Indian*, February 15, 1933, 2.

37. *Bacone Indian*, January 15, 1936, 1.

38. *Bacone Indian*, September 24, 1948, 4.

39. *Bacone Indian*, October 25, 1946, 2.

40. *Bacone Indian*, June 3, 1949, 4.

41. “Girls Play Trick on Host,” *Bacone Indian*, June 3, 1949, 4.

42. The column was sometimes spelled Ol’ Time Injun. For example, see *Bacone Indian*, October 7, 1936, 2.

43. *Bacone Indian*, October 7, 1936, 2.

44. Posey attended Bacone in the late nineteenth century and began to write political and satirical columns featuring Indian characters while at the school. He left the institution in 1894. See Alexander Posey, *The Fus Fixico Letters*, ed. Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., and Carol A. Petty Hunter (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993); Alexander Posey, *Chinnubbie and the Owl: Muscogee (Creek) Stories, Orations, and Oral Traditions*, ed. Matthew Wynn Sivils (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).

45. One aspect of students’ construction of “Indian talk” was the use of the male pronoun “he” in place of the female pronoun “she.”

46. In this instance I have corrected the punctuation for clarity. The original reads: “Nope I sez . . .”

47. This column is a revised version of an Ole Time Injun column that appeared in the *Bacone Indian* on March 6, 1941. Spelling and punctuation, except as noted in note 46, are in the original. *Bacone Indian*, March 7, 1947, 4.

48. *Bacone Indian*, January 9, 1929, 4, January 25, 1929, 3.

49. Wilson Fixico (pseud.), interview with the author, Okemah, Oklahoma, 1995.

50. *Bacone Indian*, February 6, 1935, October 5, 1938, 4, April 25, 1941, 4.

51. *Bacone Indian*, February 6, 1935.

52. *Bacone War Whoops* [1949], Bacone College Indian Collection, Bacone College Library.

53. *Bacone Indian*, October 22, 1948, 2.

54. Alvie Carney, interview with the author, McAlester, Oklahoma, June 4, 1995.

55. See Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities around Puget Sound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 156.

56. Although the Comaroffs provide a thorough treatment of the interplay between hegemony, ideology, and counterhegemony, I find their focus on

unconscious cultural meanings problematic from a methodological standpoint. See John and Jean Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, vol. 1 of *Of Revelation and Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

57. Here I modify Bourdieu's strong definition of *doxa*—that which may be unsayable or unknowable—by substituting the idea that hegemonic cultural meanings are often known but are often left unsaid. That they are not always openly articulated, however, does not mean that they are necessarily unconscious or unable to be articulated. For a discussion of the concept of *doxa* see Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice, Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology, no. 16 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

58. Lomawaima and McCarty, *To Remain an Indian*, 2–3.

59. Circe Sturm, *Blood Politics: Race, Culture, and Identity in the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 25.

60. See Michael F. Brown, "Beyond Resistance: A Comparative Study of Utopian Renewal in Amazonia," *Ethnohistory* 38, no. 4 (1991): 388–413.

61. Mary Kathryn Harris Smith, interview with the author, May 17, 1995.

62. This echoes the conclusions of other research on the creation of Pan-Indian identities in the Indian schools. See Stephen E. Cornell, *The Return of the Native: American Indian Political Resurgence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Hazel W. Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1971); James H. Howard, "Pan-Indian Culture of Oklahoma," *Scientific Monthly* 81, no. 5 (1955): 215–20; Sally J. McBeth, *Ethnic Identity and the Boarding School Experience of West-Central Oklahoma American Indians* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1983); and Robert K. Thomas, "Pan-Indianism," in *The American Indian Today*, ed. Stuart Levine and Nancy O. Lurie (Deland, FL: Everett Edwards, 1968), 77–85.