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Reviews

Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences. Edited and with an introduction by Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006. 256 pages. \$45.00 cloth; \$20.00 paper.

Just when one might have thought there was little more new information to be conveyed about the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century boarding school experiences of Native youths, comes this extraordinary edited volume. A collection of twelve penetrating essays and an insightful introduction by the editors, *Boarding School Blues* adds significantly to the field, not only in terms of geographic scope but also in methodological approach. Clearly written and cleanly presented, it should find a ready home in undergraduate and graduate courses and will be of interest to a general audience. As the inaugural volume in the University of Nebraska Press's new Indigenous Education series, it may very well signal a fundamental reinterpretation of this critically important subfield that has the potential of carrying far-reaching import.

For many students and scholars, the era of assimilation—and especially the advent of the off-reservation boarding school system—represents one of the most intriguing dimensions of the Native past. As with so many other areas of American Indian history, initial excursions into this realm often begin on the policy side. How did non-Natives come to believe that it would be a good idea to craft a system that would result in cultural genocide? A related question deals with the internal workings of this system. What were the means by which Native people would be made in the image of the dominant society? Although innumerable books and essays have been written on these subjects, Robert Berkhofer's *The White Man's Indian* (1978), Brian Dippie's *The Vanishing American* (1982), and David Wallace Adams's *Education for Extinction* (1995) remain the best.

Over the past two decades, attention has turned more directly toward the lives of the students. Adams's *Education for Extinction* evidenced the shift, and scholars such as Michael Coleman, Tsianina Lomawaima, Clyde Ellis, Scott Riney, and Brenda Child took the research to new depths. What emerged from their work was a subtler view of a period often portrayed in the

one-dimensional terms of victimization and defeat. Without discounting the reality of cultural, social, political, and economic oppression, these authors recovered stories of resilience, creative adaptation, and overt and covert resistance—stories of survival.

Boarding School Blues builds upon and in some important ways extends beyond this literature. In the opening chapter, for instance, David Wallace Adams carries readers back to the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, the first and surely most written about of the off-reservation boarding schools. In “Beyond Bleakness,” he asks how students came to look upon their years as students in a positive light and proceeds to share stories of courting, mischief making, coming of age, and learning about the world beyond the reservation, of playing sports and garnering important skills that would make a more economically secure existence possible. Barbara Landis provides still another new perspective on Carlisle by recovering the story of Take the Tail, a young Lakota girl also known as Lucy Pretty Eagle, who died only three months after arriving in Pennsylvania. Jacqueline Fear-Segal branches out in an entirely new direction by revealing the identity of and probing the deep motivations behind the “Man on the Bandstand,” a fictitious persona created for the school newspaper whose observations were meant to remind students that their actions were always being watched and, by implication, their lives controlled.

Several of the contributions to *Boarding School Blues* serve as a reminder that the educational system constructed during the 1870s and 1880s included more than just off-reservation boarding schools located in distant places. Clyde Ellis returns to the Rainy Mountain Boarding School, an institution located within the homelands of the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache peoples of present-day Oklahoma and that he originally explored in his book *To Change Them Forever* (1996). Scott Riney builds upon a past monograph as well in an insightful essay devoted to a boarding school based in Rapid City, an urban setting situated near the home communities of many of the students. St. Boniface, a Catholic boarding school, serves as the focus of Tanya Rathbun’s “Hail Mary.”

Like Fear-Segal, Katrina Paxton offers a particularly incisive essay by delving into the gendered dimension of the boarding schools. Focusing on the Sherman Institute in Riverside, California, she reveals that the Victorian era’s “Cult of True Womanhood” and “separate spheres” informed the curriculum designed for Native girls, resulting in a double-form of subjugation—one that affirmed the supposed superiority of white over Native cultures *and* men over women.

Each of the essays discussed in the preceding text builds upon the existing literature by shedding additional light on themes of agency, accommodation, and dominance. Two additional essays by Margaret Connell Szasz and Margaret Jacobs aggressively go beyond it. Connell Szasz and Jacobs begin the difficult process of situating the boarding school experience in larger comparative and international contexts, the former drawing parallels between tribally controlled boarding schools and those found in England and Scotland and the latter connecting the forced removal experiences of indigenous children

in North America and Australia. Jacobs, in sharp contrast to most of the other contributors, argues that no matter how much agency Native youths exercised—no matter how unintended many of the consequences of schooling proved to be—one must not forget that boarding schools represent legacies of an exploitative colonial project in Native North America and elsewhere.

Benefiting from an introductory essay that provides exceptional historical and historiographical overviews of the field and ten diverse but well-integrated essays, *Boarding School Blues* accomplishes three important feats. First, it brings readers up to date on the scholarship while giving an accurate sense of the methodologies and interpretive angles that are currently being employed to understand the multiple stories residing within the campaign to assimilate Native people through the imposition of the Euro-American educational system. Second, given the inclusion of a variety of schools situated across Native America, readers gain a clear sense of how vast, multifaceted, and complex the educational experiences of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were. And finally, by adding a comparative component to the overall analysis, this volume points students and scholars toward the future.

Following the model offered by Margaret Connell Szasz and Margaret Jacobs, new works will undoubtedly help us to understand better how this moment in the history of Native North Americans articulates with similar events in the history of indigenous peoples the world over. My sense is that this kind of scholarship carries additional contemporary significance. Take, for example, the “Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.” Despite recent setbacks at the United Nations, the document lives on and may still come to fruition. Among its provisions, one can find an uncompromising demand that the world recognize the right of indigenous peoples to determine their own education. *Boarding School Blues* speaks to the urgency of this demand. Taken as a whole, this volume shows how the concept of “education” became colonized and offers examples of Native people responding to and making the most of the oppressive system that resulted. But in the final analysis it reaffirms why it matters so much that all indigenous peoples control the intellectual development of their young people.

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Captive Histories: English, French, and Native Narratives of the 1704 Deerfield Raid. By Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006. 298 pages. \$80.00 cloth; \$22.95 paper.

In the telling and retelling of the history of interaction between colonial New Englanders and the area's Native populations, the 1704 raid on Deerfield, Massachusetts holds a privileged place. Between 250 and 300 Hurons, Abenakis, Pennacooks, Mohawks, Montagne Iroquois, and Frenchmen attacked Massachusetts Bay's most remote town, killing 50 and capturing 112. Famously, these raiders captured the Reverend John Williams, whose