1958

A Sociological Study of the Choctaw Indians in Mississippi.

Charles Madden Tolbert
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/475

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.
A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE CHOCTAW INDIANS IN MISSISSIPPI

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Sociology

by

Charles Madden Tolbert
B. A., Mississippi College, 1948
M. A., University of North Carolina, 1954
June, 1958
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer is indebted to many for assistance and encouragement, not only in connection with this study, but throughout his graduate training. The writer is particularly grateful to his adviser, Professor Vernon J. Parenton, whose counsel and constructive criticism have been most beneficial. The writer is also deeply appreciative of the guidance and intellectual stimulation he received from his other teachers in the Sociology Department: Professors Alvin L. Bertrand, Rudolf Heberle, Homer L. Hitt, Roland J. Pellegrin, and Paul H. Price. Professor William G. Haag gave the writer an orientation in anthropology.

Sincere appreciation is due the people about whom this study is concerned. In particular the writer wishes to thank Mr. Paul Vance, Superintendent of the Choctaw Indian Agency, and Mr. Joe Chitto, President of the Tribal Council of the Mississippi Band of Choctaws.

For permission to quote extended passages from their publications, the writer wishes to thank the following: The Editor, The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science; The Editor, The American Journal of Sociology; Harper and Brothers; Alfred A. Knopf; The Viking Press, and Rinehart and Company, Inc.

Those who have been most understanding during the strains accompanying four years of graduate study are the writer's wife, Jean, and son, Charles II. To them he owes much gratitude for their patience and encouragement.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST OF TABLES</th>
<th>ix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER

### I. INTRODUCTION

- Significance of the Study | 1
- A Note on Sociology and Anthropology | 3
- Review of the Literature | 9
- Frame of Reference | 12
- Techniques Used in Collecting Data | 20
  - Participant Observation | 20
  - Unstructured Interviews | 24
  - Historical Documents | 25
- Plan of the Study | 26

### II. HISTORICAL SKETCH

- Relations with Europeans | 28
- Early Relations with the United States | 31
  - Treaty of 1786 | 32
  - Treaty of 1801 | 37
  - Treaty of 1802 | 38
  - Treaty of 1805 | 42
  - Treaty of 1816 | 45
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treaty of 1820.</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. HISTORICAL SKETCH (CONTINUED)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those Who Remained</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in the Civil War</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotment of Indian Lands</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Agency Established</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth and Distribution</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vital Processes</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertility</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crude Birth Rate</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Birth Rate</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertility Ratio</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortality</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crude Death Rate</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age-specific Death Rate</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Removals</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Migration</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Future</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Stratification</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Society</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Before Removal</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Stratification</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Indian in the Larger Society</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians and whites</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians and Negroes</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Mobility</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Society</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Larger Society</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Leaders</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Indian Agency</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Beginnings</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. THE FAMILY</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinship</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descent Pattern</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moieties and Clans</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Ceremony</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Practices</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Family Relationships</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of Labor</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care of the Young</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. EDUCATION</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Columbian Education</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Schools</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliot</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayhew</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tucker</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Public Schools</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Schools</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence and Achievement of Students</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-curricular Activities</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Developments</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The High School Problem</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginnings in Higher Education</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First College Graduates</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Standing Pine Community</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. RELIGION</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive Beliefs and Practices</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Supreme Deity</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origins</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Choctaw Program</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of the Program</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE                        PAGE

I. Population of Whites, Negroes and Indians by Residence, Mississippi, 1950 84
II. Population of Mississippi, by Race, 1830-1950. 88
III. Population of Selected Counties in Mississippi, by Race, 1950 90
IV. Fertility Measurements of Mississippi Indians and Selected Populations 98
V. Age Specific Death Rates for Mississippi Indians and Selected Populations, 1951 103
VI. The Number of Indians Removed from Mississippi to Indian Territory, 1831-1903 106
VII. Ratio of the Percentage Distribution of Arrests to Percentage Distribution of Population by Race, Neshoba County, Mississippi, 1956 123
VIII. Type of Marriage Recorded for 318 Indian Families, Choctaw Agency Area, Mississippi, 1957 150
IX. Percentage Distribution of Males and Females 14 Years Old and Over by Marital Status, Mississippi Indians and Selected Populations, 1950 153
X. Indian Schools in Mississippi, 1957 171
XI. Total Enrollment and Average Daily Attendance of the Seven Indian Schools in Mississippi, 1920-21
TABLE | PAGE
---|---
Through 1955-56 | 178
XII. Choctaw Churches in Mississippi, 1957 | 221
XIII. Percentage Occupational Classification of Employed
  Mississippi Indian Males, United States Indian Males,
  and All United States Males, 14 Years Old and Over,
  1950 | 234
XIV. Percentage Distribution of Mississippi Indian, United
  States Indian, and Total United States Population
  with Income, 14 Years Old and Over, 1949 | 239
XV. Mississippi Choctaw Relocations, By Community
  of Origin and City of Destination, Fiscal Year,
  1957 | 246
XVI. Population and Voting Registration by Race, Two
  Indian Agency Area Counties, Mississippi, July 1,
  1957 | 262
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mississippi Choctaw Indian Reservation, 1957</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Boundary of the Choctaw Nation as it was Defined in the Treaty of 1786, with Indications of Land Ceded in Later Treaties</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Distribution of the Indian Population by Counties, Mississippi, 1950</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Racial Composition, Population of Mississippi, 1950</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rate of Growth of Population, by Race, Mississippi, 1830-1950</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Comparisons of Age-Sex Distributions of Mississippi Indians with Those of the Total United States Indians and the White Population of Mississippi, 1950</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Comparisons of Age-Sex Distributions of Mississippi Indians with Those of the Nonwhite and Total Populations of Mississippi, 1950</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this study is to analyze social relationships in a tri-racial setting with particular emphasis on the Choctaw Indians living in Mississippi. A secondary objective is concerned with tracing the social history of the Mississippi Choctaws since 1830.

The theoretical framework of the study involves the use of the situational approach. Emphasis is placed on stereotypes and their place in defining situations. Stereotypes which have prevailed at various periods in history of Indian-white relations are recorded. On the basis of these stereotypes situations are defined. The resulting patterns of behavior are evidence of the theory of the self-fulfilling prophecy. The study is threaded together with a description of the changes which have taken place among the Choctaws in historical times.

The Choctaw Indians living in four counties (designated the agency area) in Mississippi are the object of study. Data presented are from three sources: participant observation, unstructured interviews, and historical documents. With background information provided by a historical sketch and an analysis of demographic data, the investigation of social organization is undertaken. Special attention is given to major institutional areas—the family, education, religion, and economic life.
The findings of this study indicate that the social organization of the Choctaws has been practically destroyed by three separate removals of Indians from Mississippi. Population of the Indians remaining in Mississippi has fluctuated highly since the first removal in 1830. The present population is growing rapidly but it is offset by the migration from the area.

The family has been the mainstay of the Choctaws through the years. The contemporary family is patriarchal; kinship is reckoned as it is among whites in the larger society. The status of women is low; however, it is rising at the present.

Among the Indians there are distinguishable three classes: the native, transitional, and marginal. In the class structure of the larger society the Indians are on the bottom. There is a semi-caste wall separating the three races in the agency area. Because of migration of young people, the Indians are deprived of leadership.

In the area of education, the Choctaws have one of the lowest attainments among all Indians. In 1953 the first Mississippi Choctaw Indian graduated from college. Presently the Indians are trying to secure a four-year high-school.

About half of the Indians are members of Christian churches. Over three-fourths of the church members are Baptists. The church house has been an important place for social contacts for Indians widely scattered on farms.
The economic condition of the Choctaws is among the lowest in the country. Over three-fourths of them are farmers—share-croppers or tenants. Because of prevailing stereotypes, Indians are unable to get work in cities in the reservation area.

In one community of the agency area different patterns of relationships between Indians and whites were observed. Upon investigation it was learned that the particular Indians who inhabit the community are defined somewhat differently from other Indians. A school has been maintained in this community longer than in the others.

On the basis of the findings of the study, it is concluded that the Indian's problem is not one primarily of acculturation but one of assimilation. There are varying degrees of acculturation, but those who are most acculturated, the marginals, are not accepted in the larger society. Because of the way the Indians are defined and treated by whites in the agency area, the process of acculturation is hindered. Mutual trust and understanding are the basis for the good relationships prevailing in the exceptional community.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Minority and ethnic groups in American society have long been an object of study, because of the desire to ameliorate problems and of the motivation to develop and apply theory to race relations. This study is undertaken in the latter sense. Although much work has already been done in this field, some of the most fruitful results in research often come from the application, in a new area, of theory developed in a different context.¹ That is the primary aim of this endeavor: to apply sociological theory which has been developed in other areas to what would ordinarily be just another ethnic group study.

I. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The Choctaw Indians in Mississippi, with whom this undertaking is concerned, are a significant object of study for at least three reasons: First of all, these Indians are not merely interacting with whites as is the case with most Indians in the United States, but with a third racial group, Negroes.² In general,


²The concept of race used in this study does not refer to clear-cut biological stocks but rather to the distinctions of white
studies of Indians by sociologists in the South have been concerned with racial hybrids who are only part Indian. In contrast, the group under consideration here are of relatively pure stock.

Second, in view of the extended contact of the Choctaws with another culture for over three centuries, a fertile ground is provided for the study of social and cultural change. Studies of the Oklahoma Choctaws have been concerned with this problem; consequently,

and nonwhite employed in social relations. This differentiation is employed by the Census Bureau and is "derived from that which is commonly accepted by the general public as reflected in the action of legislative and judicial bodies of the country." American Indians are included in the nonwhite category. (U. S. Census Bureau, U. S. Census of Population: 1950, Vol. II, Characteristics of the Population, Part 24, Mississippi /Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1952/, p. xvi.)


Culture consists of patterns of learned behavior and the products of learned behavior which are shared by and transmitted among members of a society. Linton has defined it as "the way of life of any society," consisting of details of behavior that are expected of its members. The resulting "consensus of behavior and opinion constitutes a culture pattern; the culture as a whole is a more or less organized aggregate of such patterns." (Ralph Linton, The Cultural Background of Personality /New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1945/, p. 19.)

Social change refers to alterations in social organization--in the structure and function of society. It is a part of a broader concept, cultural change, which embodies change in any aspect of culture. This follows Kingsley Davis (Human Society /New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950/, p. 622.).

some comparisons between those findings and the results of this study should be helpful toward a better understanding of the phenomena of change.

Finally, this group of Indians, unlike its better known relatives in Oklahoma, has not been subjected to intensive study, from a historical point of view or otherwise. While this study is primarily an effort toward sociological analysis, at the same time a descriptive account of the main body of the Choctaws before removal to the West and of those who remained is presented.

II. A NOTE ON SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

The people under consideration are the descendants of aboriginals who are now living in a contemporary setting; consequently,

7Sociology is defined as the science of social interaction and the resulting social relationships. Green defines it as "... the synthesizing and generalizing science of man in all his social relationships." (Arnold W. Green, Sociology: An Analysis of Life in Modern Society /second edition; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1956/, p. 2.)

Anthropology is defined as "the science of man and his works." There are two main divisions in the field, physical and cultural anthropology. In referring to the latter, Boas states that it "... deals with man as a social being. ... Its subject matter includes all the phenomena of the social life of man without limitation of time and space." (Franz Boas, "Anthropology," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences /New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937/, i, 73.) More recently, Herskovits states that cultural anthropologists "... study the ways man has devised to cope with his natural setting and his social milieu; and how bodies of custom are learned, retained, and handed down from one generation to the next." (Melville J. Herskovits, Cultural Anthropology: An Abridged Revision of Man and His Works /New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955/, p. 3.)
much of the literature reviewed in undertaking the research, outside of historical works, was by anthropologists. The question may then arise as to why a sociologist is studying Indians, the consideration of whom usually lies within the realm of the cultural or social anthropologist. To begin with, the writer is aware of the fact that the anthropologist has always been concerned with the study of the Indian and other preliterates; but, from the beginning, he contends that both disciplines are, in the final analysis, studying the same thing, social man. The approaches have been different—the anthropologist until quite recently concentrated on preliterate societies whereas the sociologist has studied in the main contemporary Western society. There are, however, increasing areas of rapprochement today between the two disciplines.

As early as 1927, Sapir, in taking note of the growing relationship between sociology and anthropology, indicated that he expected sociology to be enriched by anthropology.\(^8\) Since unilinear evolution was no longer in vogue in the two disciplines, he envisioned a more empirical and functional approach in their studies.\(^9\)

But with this growing rapprochement between the disciplines and an increasing reciprocity in the use of data, methods, and theory, and an increasing reciprocity in the use of data, methods, and theory,

---


\(^9\) There was no suggestion from him or the other writers in the volume to which he contributed as to what anthropology might learn from sociology.
Tomars, among others, warns of the dangers involved in the use of anthropological data by the sociologist. After discussing a number of these perils, he gives the opinion that "the great usefulness of anthropology for the sociologist lies in the way it has vastly expanded the range of available comparative data." He concludes by saying that:

If the social anthropologist comes to focus his interest on the social, in social relationships, then his task will be indistinguishable from that of the social theorist. Then social anthropology will not only be useful to sociology, but social theory will be indispensable to the social anthropologist who must surely make use of the analysis of the social structure as already developed by the sociologist.

With the anthropologist turning to the study of present-day society, it appears that both disciplines are fast approaching a common ground. As Firth has recently pointed out, there are many areas in which the two fields can profit from the other's research. In fact, he termed the role of social anthropology as "almost a regional complement to sociology." In another instance, he was even more explicit about the close relation between the two disciplines:

11 Ibid., p. 630.
12 Ibid., p. 634.
The more general theory of the [social] anthropologists . . . is hardly distinguishable in its scope from that of the professed theoretical sociologist, though its different ethnographic base gives it a different illustrative content and a different—sometimes sharper—focus.14

Herskovits states a similar view when he says, "Among the social sciences, cultural anthropology is most often identified with sociology." He adds that "when questions of the development and functions of institutions, general principles of human group behavior, and problems of social theory are involved, sociology and cultural anthropology work together with a give and take that is solidly rooted and has proved mutually helpful."15 But in spite of such statements referring to the close relationships between the two disciplines, there are yet wide differences between the two.

These differences were the subject of discussion by an interdisciplinary symposium in 1953, the results of which are published under the title, For a Science of Social Man.16 In the symposium, seven individuals, representing anthropology, psychology, and sociology, discussed relations between the three disciplines. Sociologists are advised by Becker that they "can learn a good deal

---


15 Herskovits, op. cit., p. 8.

from the anthropologists by dealing with culture a little more systematically and comprehensively, rather than as the occasional vehicle of ritual invocations in the opening chapters of elementary textbooks.\(^{17}\) He urges more interdisciplinary research, particularly in "area studies." Murdock makes a similar recommendation, after he points out that while anthropology "holds most of the resources" about human social life, sociology "holds most of the tools with which to exploit them," namely, methodology.\(^{18}\)

The conclusions of this symposium, particularly those of Becker and Murdock, are referred to by Bennett and Wolff in their appraisal of current communication between sociology and anthropology. They indicate that "neither author has found it possible, in the light of contemporary relations between the two fields, to describe any very definite points of rapprochement. Their recommendations for collaborative efforts stress the adoption, by both sides, or a more or less 'interdisciplinary' outlook."\(^{19}\)

After surveying the results of the symposium and other literature on cooperation between the two fields, Bennett and

\(^{17}\) Howard Becker, "Anthropology and Sociology," ibid., p. 158.

\(^{18}\) George Peter Murdock, "Sociology and Anthropology," ibid., p. 29.

Wolff came to the conclusion that the channels of communication between them are rather poor at this time. They see both disciplines as being divided into two camps, the "traditionalists," and the "avant-garde." As one might expect, the "traditionalists" compose the old guard which sees little or no point in communicating with the other discipline. The "avant-garde," on the other hand, are cultivating new fields, with emphasis on problem rather than on discipline.

It is the researchers in this latter group who, while studying similar problems, find it profitable to acknowledge the work of others, regardless of disciplinary affiliation. Bennett and Wolff observe in this connection that "one of the most promising areas of rapprochement between the two fields is the growing interest of anthropologists in what sociologists call the 'structural-functional' approach." 21

Among the leading structural-functional theoreticians in sociology are Parsons, Merton, and Davis. 22 In anthropology, structural-functional studies had their beginning in Malinowski,

20 Ibid., p. 333.

21 Ibid., p. 338. "Structural-functional studies tend to be portrayals of structural systems in which behavior is explored in respect to its meaning or "function." (Ibid., p. 339.)

and in recent years they have been carried on by Radcliffe-Brown, Kluckhohn, and Firth, to name only a few. In the work of these men, with their orientation toward structure-function, Bennett and Wolff see the chief area of communication between the disciplines. With the increasingly common use of such key concepts as "status," "roles," "goal," "value," etc., it now becomes possible to comprehend method and results of studies in both fields.

Thus, in view of the increasing rapprochement between sociology and anthropology, it seems altogether in order for the sociologist to study the Indian, comparing and augmenting his own findings with those of anthropologists whose works are pertinent to his own. Although the theoretical framework of this study is based on theory developed in the main by sociologists, the techniques for collecting data are in common use by both disciplines.

III. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As was mentioned earlier, very little has been written concerning the Indians presently living in Mississippi. In fact, one informant said, "I hope you're going to tell the whole story of these people." Much, however, has been written about their an-

cestors and about their relatives who are living in Oklahoma today.

Foremost among the students of the Indians in the Southeast is the ethnologist, John R. Swanton. The most pertinent of his works to this undertaking is his collection of data on the Choctaw Indians. Although he conducted field work in Oklahoma and Mississippi while gathering material for this volume, it is in the main about life prior to 1830, before most of the Indians were removed from Mississippi to Indian Territory.

This writer has been unable to find any extended published studies of the Choctaws who remained in Mississippi. All data from the time of removal, beginning in 1830 until the establishment of an Indian agency in 1918, were gathered from articles and books, many of which only occasionally mentioned the Indians. Important exceptions are the articles about the Choctaws by Henry S. Halbert, who undoubtedly had deep insight into their way of life. He was


25 There exists in the Indian Agency office at Philadelphia, Mississippi, a typewritten booklet entitled "History of the Mississippi Indians" on the cover and "Indian Office Hand Book of Information, Mississippi Choctaws" on the title page, written in 1935 by John Pearmain. It is not very helpful; in fact, the period from 1830 to 1918 is dismissed in one paragraph of two sentences.

26 His diversity of knowledge is indicated by the following titles: "Courtship and Marriage Among the Choctaws of Mississippi," American Naturalist, XVI (1882), 222-244; "Funeral Customs of the Mississippi Choctaws," Publications of the Mississippi Historical
closely associated with them for many years as a teacher and bene-
factor. Since he wrote around the turn of this century, he has
provided much useful data about the period from 1830 to 1900.

Newspapers afforded little help in the search for data covering
the same period. Several articles concerning the early removals were
found in newspapers in the Mississippi State Department of Archives
and History at Jackson. The entire files of the Neshoba Democrat,
published at Philadelphia, Mississippi since 1882 were scanned; how­
ever, prior to the establishment of the agency, there was nothing
found about the Indians, except one announcement of a ball game.
Concerning the absence of news, a white friend of the Indians re­
marked, "It was as if they didn't exist."

The only helpful recent study the writer has been able to
find is "A Study of the Educational Development of the Choctaw
Indians of Mississippi," an unpublished Master's thesis (Mississippi
Southern College, 1953) by Etna Myerl Langford, a white teacher at
Conehatta Indian School. Her chief concern, though, is with the
educational work since 1918, the essence of which will be presented
later.

The Choctaws who settled in Oklahoma have been studied in­
tensively by historians and ethnologists. The works of the histori­

Society, III (1900), 553-566; "District Divisions of the Choctaw
Nation," Publications of the Alabama Historical Society, I (1901),
275-305.
ans, Grant Foreman and Angie Debo, are sources of incidental data concerning those who remained in Mississippi. Besides Swanton, Eggan and Spoehr have studied social organization and social change among the Oklahoma Indians.

Sociological literature reviewed preceding the study revealed nothing on these particular Indians; on the other hand, the wealth of material on minority and ethnic groups were sources for theoretical considerations in developing the framework of the study.

**IV. FRAME OF REFERENCE**

This undertaking employs the situational approach to the study of social phenomena. This method, according to Thomas and Znaniecki, necessitates a consideration of the social situation (or total situation as it is sometimes called), which involves three interrelated elements: objective conditions, including the totality of values.

---


29 Eggan, *op. cit.*

30 Spoehr, *op. cit.*

31 Value, according to Williams, is "... any aspect of a situation, event, or object that is invested with a preferential interest as being 'good,' 'bad,' 'desirable,' and the like." (Robin M. Williams, Jr., *American Society: A Sociological Interpretation* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1952], p. 374.)
and socially enforced rules of behavior; pre-existing attitudes of the individual and the group; and the definition of the situation by the actor himself. Placing emphasis on the third of these elements, in a subsequent study, Thomas developed the theorem which states, in substance, that "if men define their situations as real, they are real in their consequences." In another instance, Thomas stated that "... actually, not only concrete acts are dependent on the definition of the situation but gradually a whole life-policy and the personality of the individual himself follow from a series of such definitions." This theorem has become a very useful tool in the study of individual and group behavior and has been applied in various areas of research.

Related principles have been used in connection with studies concerning the Negro. As early as 1931, Embree, writing in a rather

---

32 An attitude is a predisposition to act or think in some way toward a person, situation, or object. MacIver and Page define the term as "... states of consciousness within the individual human being, with relation to objects," while interests (or values) are the objects toward which people are oriented. (Robert M. MacIver and Charles H. Page, Society: An Introductory Analysis (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1949), p. 24.)


unsophisticated way about the American Negro, suggested what has come to be called the theory of the "vicious circle":

There is a vicious circle in caste. At the outset, the despised group is usually inferior in certain of the accepted standards of the controlling class. Being inferior, members of the degraded caste are pushed still further down and then are regarded with that much less respect, and therefore are more rigorously denied advantages, and so around and around the vicious circle. Even when the movement starts to reverse itself . . . there is a desperately long unwinding as a slight increase in good will gives a little greater chance and this leads to a little higher accomplishment and that to increased respect and so slowly upward toward equality of opportunity, of regard, and of status.36

Myrdal develops the theory of the vicious circle into a major theoretical tool for explaining the plight of the American Negro; however, he prefers to call it the "principle of cumulation."37 It is his hypothesis that "a rise in any single one of the Negro variables [health, education, etc.] will tend to raise all the other Negro variables and thus, indirectly as well as directly, result in a cumulatively enforced effect upon white prejudice."38 The "variables" are categorized into three "bundles of interdependent causative factors"—(1) economic level, (2) standards of intelligence,


37 "We call the principle the 'principle of cumulation' rather than the vicious circle because it can work in an 'upward' desirable direction as well as in a 'downward' undesirable direction." (Gunnar Myrdal, with the assistance of Richard Sterner and Arnold Rose, An American Dilemma [New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944], p. 75.)

38 Ibid., pp. 1066-1067.
ambition, health, education, decency, manners, and morals; and (3) discrimination by the superordinate group. "A primary change, induced or unplanned," affecting any one of these three "will bring changes in the other two and, through mutual interaction, move the whole system along in one direction or another."39

In summarizing his theoretical considerations of the principle, he observes:

If, in actual social life, the dynamics of the causal relations between the various factors in the Negro problem should correspond to our hypotheses, then--assuming again, for the sake of simplicity, an initially static state of balanced forces--any change in any one of these factors, independent of the way in which it is brought about, will, by the aggregate weight of the cumulative effects running back and forth between them all, start the whole system moving in one direction, or the other as the case may be, with a speed depending upon the original push and the functions of causal interrelation within the system.40

MacIver refines the theory of the vicious circle as set forth by Myrdal and uses it in theoretical considerations of prejudice and discrimination in general. He contends that the idea that an upward change in any one of the factors will tend to raise all of the other factors is misleading. Instead, he adds that "a favorable change in any one of the distinctive conditions will, if it can be held constant long enough, tend to raise the other conditions and to bring about a readjustment of the whole system in conformity with the

39Ibid., p. 208.
40Ibid., p. 1067.
There seems little doubt that the vicious circle as employed by Myrdal and MacIver goes far toward explaining the dynamics of ethnic and racial conflict. But Merton indicates that the principle "may have even more general bearing upon the relations of ethnic groups than Myrdal has indicated." Referring to the principle as the "self-fulfilling prophecy," he states that in the beginning there is a "false definition of the situation evoking a new behavior which makes the originally false conception come true." The misleading falsity creates the very conditions of its own fulfillment. "The specious validity of the self-fulfilling prophecy perpetuates a reign of error."

The assumption is being made in this study that this principle operates regardless of race or color. The Choctaw Indians, in this case, were defined as inferior, as savages, in terms of the invading whites' standards. Consequently, the resulting behavior of the

---

42 Merton, op. cit., p. 423.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
45 If sociological principles are to have any validity beyond the immediate area in which they are developed, they must be applied in different contexts, and, subsequently, be either reaffirmed or negated.
46 The development of the idea of the savage Indian in relation
whites was such as to strengthen these definitions. Furthermore, the three centuries of recorded contacts of whites and Indians reveal a continuation and at times intensification of these definitions. On the other hand, the gradual granting of privileges and opportunities to the Indians on the part of the whites should lead to increasing respect and status for the inferior group.

In view of the assumptions made above, this study will seek to demonstrate that common stereotypes of these Indians, which serve as bases for defining situations are largely without fact, and that the prevailing patterns of behavior are founded on these definitions. In other words, the hypothesis with which this work is undertaken is that the whites believe the Indians are inferior; consequently, their resulting behavior in relation to them is as if the belief were true. Conversely, the study should reveal a corresponding set of patterns on the part of the Indians in response to what is expected of them on the part of the whites.

In the consideration of socio-cultural change, the study will seek to demonstrate further that the process of acculturation\textsuperscript{47} is

to nineteenth century ideas of civilization and progress has been traced by Roy Harvey Pearce in *Savages of America, A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1953).

\textsuperscript{47} Acculturation refers to a group's taking on elements from the culture of another group. But, as Linton has pointed out, acculturation is not a one way process, for "... close and complete contacts always result in an exchange of culture elements." (Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man* [student's edition, New York: D. Appleton-
moving very slowly in view of the behavior patterns which have resulted from the stereotyped definitions, and that complete acculturation can only come when the situation is such to permit it. The investigation will try to shed light on reasons for the persistence of some Indian cultural patterns when much pressure has been exerted for acculturation. The Choctaws have never been isolated on remote reservations; on the contrary, they have been surrounded by Western culture for over three hundred years. Those who remained in Mississippi were deprived of any organized communal structure, so traditional cultural forms should have given way readily to the conquering culture. Yet, certain patterns still persist.

The effort will be made to relate the persistence of these patterns to the general framework outlined above. That this is feasible is suggested by Vogt, who states that the various hypotheses dealing with acculturation of American Indians have neglected "what is perhaps the most important factor of all: our persisting Anglo-American 'racial' attitudes, derived historically from Puritan Colonialism, which strongly devaluate other physical types bearing different cultural traditions."48 Noting the ease with which the

---

In the United States . . . the path to full acculturation is confusing and frustrating, and an ultimate ceiling is still firmly clamped down by our persisting Anglo-American "racial" attitudes. Instead of proceeding generation by generation along a continuum to full acculturation, it is as if an American-Indian group must at some point leap across a spark gap to achieve a fully integrated position in white American society.49

As a result of this, there is emerging what Vogt calls "Pan-Indianism," a movement in which Indian cultural elements are being drawn from various sources (particularly Plains culture) and synthesized into a new Indian culture.

These elements have become symbols of Indianism to the Indians themselves to a degree that bears little relationship to the aboriginal facts. And it is probable that their importance as symbols derives in part from the fact that these elements are central features of the prevailing white-American stereotype of the American Indian. They are the features of American Indian culture which white tourists expect to find when they attend intertribal ceremonials, and Indians are rewarded for behaving in conformity to the stereotype.50

But the stereotypes and expectations which Vogt notes in connection with Pan-Indianism have much wider implications for the whole of Indian-white relationships. Expectations on the part of whites are largely built on stereotyped definitions, founded on beliefs that in the main are false. Therefore, this study will seek to show that the degree of acculturation—or lack of it—is functionally related to the situation as it is defined by the persons in it.

---

49 Ibid., p. 145.
50 Ibid., p. 146.
V. SELECTION AND LOCATION OF THE STUDY AREA

The Choctaw Indians living in Mississippi were selected for study because of the writer's personal interest in them. He was reared in Philadelphia, Mississippi, where the Indian agency which serves them is located, and was able to bring to the study a general knowledge gained by earlier experience.

Approximately half of the Indians live on reservation lands in four counties located in the east central section of the state: Leake, Neshoba, Newton, and Jones (See Figure 1.), while most of the remainder are tenant farmers, living in those same or adjoining counties. The writer made numerous trips to the Pearl River community, which is the largest of the reservation areas and only a short distance from Philadelphia. In collecting data two or more visits were also made to three other communities: Standing Pine, Bogue Chitto, and Tucker. In the process of carrying on the field work, a number of techniques for gathering information were used.

VI. TECHNIQUES USED IN COLLECTING DATA

Participant Observation

Believing it to be essential for this type of study, the writer relied heavily upon participant observation, as it opened

51 The Bureau of Indian Affairs refers to the four counties as the "Choctaw Agency Area," while all other counties in which Indians live comprise the "nonagency area."
Figure 1. Mississippi Choctaw Indian Reservation, 1957. (Source: Mississippi State Highway Department maps, 1957.)
avenues of understanding the Indians which could not have been gained otherwise. On the other hand, the writer was cognizant of the difficulties in analyzing observations. He constantly asked himself, "Would the Indians agree with this interpretation?" Unfortunately, the question was lacking of an answer, for "sociological research at nearly every point is pressed and twisted by the logic of the moral order from which the investigator has emerged." Knowing then, that interpretations—and even what is observed—are unavoidably influenced to some extent by the writer's culture, he simply approached the problem as objectively as possible.

The writer was introduced into the Indian community by an elderly white man who seemingly was highly respected by the Indians, particularly by the older ones. He explained the investigator's

52 "Through intensive participation in community life, the observer exposes himself to experiences which give him a firsthand knowledge of the more subtle pressures and counterpressures to which the members of the community are exposed. His introspection about his own experiences as a participant represents one of the most fruitful means of understanding the community's characteristics." (Jahoda, Deutsch and Cook, op. cit., p. 142).

53 "Are we not likely to be in constant danger of reading specialized characteristics and meanings from our culture into phenomena, which, in the other culture, possess no such clearly specialized significance?" (Tomars, op. cit., p. 628).


55 The man is a retired Government employee who worked for thirty years as a farmer in the Bureau of Indian Affairs. From 1920 until he was transferred in 1935, he worked with the agency which served the Mississippi Indians. In protest over his transfer, Indian children were kept from attending school for several days by their parents in two of the communities.
presence as a means of getting information to tell their story.
There is little doubt that after short contact the writer was identified with "their side" by most of them with whom he had extended dealings. This was advantageous, especially in view of the techniques used in obtaining information. On the other hand, the writer carefully tried to avoid appearing to over identify with a particular side or establish "over-rapport," as Miller refers to it. Instead, he endeavored to develop "... a sympathetic understanding, so that ... [he could], without strain, talk the informant's language."58

After initial contacts were made, interaction was observed intermittently in homes, at schools, on the streets of Philadelphia, and at various organized and random activities involving Indians over a period from August, 1956 to May, 1957. The month of August, 1956 and approximately six additional weeks spread out over the following months were spent in the field.

56. This precaution has been suggested concerning the assuming of neutrality: "The investigator who makes an effort to remain neutral is in danger of being caught in the crossfire. He may have to align himself with one side to participate at all." Benjamin D. Paul, "Techniques and Field Relationships," in A. L. Kroeber and others (eds.), Anthropology Today (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 431.


58. Lewis Anthony Dexter, "Role Relationships and Conceptions of Neutrality in Interviewing," American Journal of Sociology, LXII (1956), 157. He adds, "It is probably better ... to make the effort to do so, even if it is not well done." (Ibid.)
Unstructured Interviews

During the same period of time, extended unstructured interviews were held with "key informants," with Indian agency personnel, members of the tribal council, and other whites and Indians believed to have good knowledge of the problem. Early in the research it was decided that rapport could best be obtained without taking notes in the interviews; however, as soon as possible, the information was recorded in detail. Information from these provided highly significant data in support of the basic hypothesis. The writer was aware of the disadvantages of this type of interview; however, he

59 These were chosen on the basis of the writer's personal knowledge of the situation, with the help of the retired Government employee mentioned above, and with suggestions made by the leader of the Choctaws.

60 The writer originally planned to include an intensive study of attitudes which would have necessitated administering standardized schedules to Indians, whites, and Negroes. However, in view of the nature of the people upon whom the study is focused and, equally as important, the tense racial situation prevailing in the area at the time of the study, this was deemed unwise. This advice seemed applicable to this undertaking: "Where languages are too diverse, where common values are too few, where the fear of talking to strangers is too great, there the interview based on a standardized questionnaire calling for a few standardized answers may not be applicable." (Mark Benney and Everett C. Hughes, "Of Sociology and the Interview: Editorial Preface," American Journal of Sociology, LXII [1956], 137.)

61 On the use of this procedure, Whyte comments, "Outside the laboratory, it seems to me impossible for the observer to take notes on the spot without destroying the spontaneity of the relationship. Certainly you cannot be a participant observer in a small group situation and take notes at the same time." (William Foote Whyte, "Observational Field-work Methods," in Jahoda, Deutsch and Cook, op. cit., II, 504.)
decided it was best in view of the nature of this particular problem.

Historical Documents

Historical documents provided an additional source of data. The importance of historical data in contributing to the understanding of human behavior has been stressed by a number of sociologists. MacIver and Page, for example, attach considerable significance to the historical perspective:

The social structure is subject to incessant change, growing, decaying, finding renewal, accommodating itself to extremely variant conditions and suffering vast modifications in the course of time. Its contemporaneous aspect holds and hides the secret of its past. We know its nature, as we know the nature of the living person, only in the comprehension of it through a time-span. Its meaning is never revealed in any moment of its existence, but, finally and fully, only in the whole process through which it passes. To understand the social structure we must therefore view it in the historical process, seeking continuity, observing also how differences emerge. 62

Since the beliefs, attitudes, and values which an individual brings into a situation are products of the past, a knowledge of the past can possibly make the understanding of present-day complexities much easier.

That such an understanding may be helpful, especially in the study of the American Indian, is suggested by McNickle:

A review of the historical relations between the first inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere and the later coming Europeans may have an uncommon importance in our day, if in reconstructing this past we can identify and describe not

62 MacIver and Page, op. cit., p. 508.
the events alone but the attitudes and passions and judgments which lay behind the events.\textsuperscript{63}

The knowledge gained in reviewing these relations, he contends, would be an aid in learning more about the field of human relations. Thus, a look back through time, tracing the continuity of relations between the Mississippi Indians and their neighbors as they have occurred through the years, may help in the effort to grasp the full import of present patterns of interaction.

VII. PLAN OF THE STUDY

The chapter on history will present a general resume of Indian-white relationships from the earliest contacts up to the present. Somewhat lengthy quotations are presented at times to give some indication of the beliefs and attitudes of the people at various periods. From a strictly historical point of view, the history of these people consists of little more than a series of treaties, but always there was, and still is, social interaction--society in process; and through all of it there was the ever present factor of socio-cultural change. These, in addition to the treaties which consume much of the space in the chapter on history, will be discussed throughout the study.

The historical sketch is followed by the demographic analysis

\textsuperscript{63}\textsuperscript{63} D'Arcy McNickle, "Indian and European: Indian-White Relations From Discovery to 1887," \textit{The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science}, CCCXI (1957), 1.
in which Indian data are compared with five selected populations: United States Indian; Mississippi white, nonwhite, and total; and United States total. This chapter of necessity presents a static picture, but the analysis of the vital processes of the Indians indicates a dynamic population.

The knowledge of the history and demography of these people provides the groundwork for the consideration of their social organization. Their main institutional arrangements—the family, religion, education, and economics—will be given detailed treatment, not only for the understanding of present relationships, but also for the tracing of socio-cultural change. Evidence of change, in turn, will be related to the theoretical framework outlined above.

A final chapter in the nature of a summary will tie together the various conclusions.
CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Choctaws were originally one of the principal tribes of the Muskogean linguistic stock, which included the Chickasaws, Creeks, Houmas, and a number of smaller tribes. Their origin is uncertain; however, they probably migrated to the Southeast from west of the Mississippi River at a time considerably earlier than their first encounter with the white man. At the height of their strength as a nation, the Choctaws occupied about three-fourths of what is now the present state of Mississippi and a sizeable portion of western Alabama.

I. RELATIONS WITH EUROPEANS

The earliest mention of the Choctaws is in the year 1540 in the narratives of De Soto's travels. The natives who fought the

1 There are a number of legends which deal with this question. Some refer to a migration from the West; others point to the sacred mound of Nanih Waiya as the "mother" from which their ancestors emerged; and one story has them rising out of the sea. Gideon Lincaecum records in much detail one of these legends about an eastward migration of the Choctaws and Chickasaws in "Choctaw Traditions About Their Settlement in Mississippi and the Origin of Their Mounds," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, VIII (1904), 521-542.

Spaniards at Mauvillla, near the present site of Mobile, were probably a branch of the Choctaws. After leaving Mauvillla, De Soto and his men reached a province called Pafallaya, according to one source, but to a river called Apafalaya, according to another. Halbert believes that these words definitely establish the Indians as Choctaws, for they are apparently variations of the old name the Choctaws had among their neighbors, Pansfalaya or "Long Hairs." The wearing of long hair by both men and women was a unique custom which set them off from the other Indians of the Southeast.

The next mention of the Choctaws occurs in narratives of explorers and traders who provided information of French activities in the early part of the eighteenth century. The French were the first to have any extended contact with the Choctaws. Beginning with the settlement of Biloxi in 1699, they early came into friendly relations with them. As evidence of this, a treaty of peace was signed at Mobile in 1702 with the Choctaws and other tribes in the Mississippi Valley. From Mobile and New Orleans, as well as Biloxi, traders

---

3Robertson, op. cit., p. 140.

4Smith and Bourne, op. cit., p. 130.


6The name "Choctaw" is possibly a corruption of the Spanish word, chato, meaning "flat" or "flattened." Other customs of the Choctaws not generally practiced in the Southeast were the scraping of flesh from the bones of the dead and the flattening of the heads of male infants.
dealt extensively with the Indians throughout the South.

By no means were all of the French relations with the Indians peaceful. On a number of occasions, the French fought wars, and, in several instances, the Choctaws were their allies against other Indian tribes. In the French war on the Natchez in 1730, a large number of Choctaw warriors served under French officers. Again in 1736 and 1740 the Choctaws joined the French in fighting unsuccessful wars against the Chickasaws, who had allied themselves with the English.

This friendly relation continued until English traders succeeded in drawing over to the English interest some of the Choctaw towns. In 1746 there occurred what the French called the "Choctaw rebellion." A war chief, named Shulush Homa, led a group of his people into an alliance with the English because the French were not proving satisfactory in their trade relations. The French governor of Louisiana then demanded the head of the rebel leader, who was eventually assassinated. This act further complicated the situation and the result was general civil war among the Choctaws. Although the faction favoring the English was finally defeated in 1750, sporadic internal conflicts, encouraged by the English and Chickasaws, continued to disturb the French. In 1752 the loyal Choctaws joined with

---

the French in a final vain effort to subdue the Chickasaws. Peace within the Choctaw tribe was completely restored with the assumption of control of the area by the British in the treaty of 1763.

The British were the first to request land cessions from the Choctaws, and this was accomplished by the treaty of March 26, 1765 in which the Chickasaws also participated. The land ceded included the sea coast around Mobile, the lower valley of the Tombigbee River, and west of that river along the thirty-first degree of latitude to the Mississippi River. In addition to defining the land being ceded, the treaty also stated that "none of his Majesty's white subjects should be permitted to settle on the Tombechbee River to the northward of the rivulet called Centebonk."8

II. EARLY RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES

After the Revolutionary War, the westward migration of whites, particularly Georgians, increased greatly. The Choctaws were invited to make trade agreements with them. In June, 1783, upon the instructions of the Choctaw Council, Franchimastabe, the head chief, sent a delegation to Savannah to try to make arrangements for peace and trade. On July 17 the leader of the delegation, Mingohoopa, second

---

8 Quoted in Dunbar Rowland, History of Mississippi (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1925), I, 262.

9 The Choctaw Council was a loose confederation of the three divisions of the Choctaw Nation—the western, northeastern, and southern.
chief of the Choctaws, and the Governor of Georgia agreed to terms of friendship and trade, provided the Choctaws would persuade the Creeks to permit the Georgia traders to pass through their territory in order to get to the Choctaw country.  

**Treaty of 1786**

The signing of treaties of friendship between the Indians and the Americans did little to assuage the growing animosity between them. Continued movement of whites from North Carolina and Georgia to the Southwest increased conflict. In an effort to bring some order out of the chaos brought about by the individual states, the Continental Congress appointed commissioners on March 5, 1785 to discuss boundaries and trade agreements with the Southern Indians.

It was probably not too difficult for the commissioners to induce the Choctaws to send a delegation because trading conditions were not what they had anticipated from the signing of the treaty two years earlier with the Spaniards. The latter had given a monopoly of trade to one company which at that time was unable to provide an adequate supply of goods. Nor had the company been partic-

---

10 While this delegation was away, a large group of Choctaws went to Mobile to confer with the Spaniards who signed a treaty with them also involving trade agreements.

11 A record of the difficulties encountered by the new government in trying to deal with the Choctaws and other Indians in the Southeast can be found in Walter H. Mohr, *Federal Indian Relations, 1774-1788* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1933), Chapter IV, pp. 139-173.
ularly interested in buying Indian products which were plentiful at the time. Not understanding the laws of supply and demand, the Choctaws came to distrust the Spanish and proceeded to turn their attentions to the Americans.

The commissioners entreated with the Creeks at Galphinton, Georgia on October 24 and later with other tribes, including the Choctaws at Hopewell, South Carolina. A treaty was signed on November 28, 1785 with the Cherokees and other tribes, but without the Choctaws, who had not arrived at that time.

The Choctaw delegation, selected by Franchimastabe on the basis of their former loyalty to the British, reached Hopewell on December 26, nearly a month after the Cherokees had signed the treaty. Their neighbors, the Creeks, had taken all of their horses as they passed through Creek territory, making it necessary for them to finish the journey on foot.

Before negotiations could begin, the Choctaws had to be clothed and fed and given several days to recuperate from the ordeals of their journey. A treaty was signed on January 3, 1786 and contained a number of significant items: an acknowledgement by the Choctaws of American sovereignty, a recognition of American control of their trade, and a guarantee of Choctaw Indian territory as it had been the last day of British rule. (Figure 2 shows the boundary of the nation as it was drawn at that time.) The Choctaws ceded to the United States two six-square mile tracts of land for trading
Article four of the treaty was designed to protect them from the encroachments of whites:

If any citizen of the United States, or other person not being an Indian, shall attempt to settle on any of the lands hereby allotted to the Indians to live and hunt on, such person shall forfeit the protection of the United States of America, and the Indians may punish him or not as they please.\textsuperscript{13}

The treaties were ratified by Congress over vigorous protests from Georgia and North Carolina. But the order which the Congress had hoped to bring about failed to materialize as the states continued to harass the Indians.

In 1790 the Creeks and Chickasaws became involved in war, which was not desired by the new government nor by the Spanish who were trying to spread their influence among the Indians. The other Indian tribes did not want it either, especially those in the North-west, who were seeking allies against the Americans.\textsuperscript{14} Some of the southern chiefs, possibly realizing the folly of continuing inter-tribal wars, tried to make peace and organize the Creeks, Chickasaws, Cherokees, and Choctaws into a confederation; but continued fighting, and the dislike of the Choctaws for the Creeks, prevented the leaders


\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 9.

\textsuperscript{14}The latter sent a delegation headed by the Shawnee chief, Tecumseh, to visit the southern Indians in the fall of 1811 to secure pledges of aid for their efforts. Nineteen Choctaws joined his party as he turned to the Creeks.
Figure 2. Boundary of the Choctaw Nation as it was defined in the Treaty of 1786, with indications of land ceded in later treaties. (Source: Eighteenth Annual Report of the American Bureau of Ethnology /Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1899/, II, Plates CVIII, CXIII.)
from meeting until the fall of 1793.

Prior to that, however, a preliminary step toward the contemplated confederation was taken on May 10, 1793 when the southern division of the Choctaws ceded to Spain the land on the Tombigbee where the French formerly had erected Fort Tombecbe, in order that a storehouse and a fort could be built for the common security of Spain and the Indians.

At the meeting of the four tribes on October 28, 1793 at Fort Nogales (Walnut Hills), one mile north of the present city of Vicksburg, the Choctaws were the best represented. While few top leaders of the other three tribes attended the meeting, Franchimastabe led the Choctaw delegation, which included the head chiefs of the three divisions. By the terms of the agreement, the four Indian nations formed a military alliance and all were to be under the protection of Spain. The latter was given the authority to mediate with the United States on the question of Indian boundaries. The most significant aspect of this treaty, according to R. S. Cotterill, was the power of mediation given to Spain. The latter had long supported hostilities against the United States as a means of creating Indian dependence, but with the signing of the treaty the dependence was confirmed.

---

In July, 1798 a council from the Creeks and Cherokees met at Tuckabatchee, a town on the Tallapoosa River in the Creek nation, and made permanent the peace which had been established between them. At the same time they recommended that henceforth no land should be ceded to the whites without the prior consent of the head chiefs of all four nations. The action of the Cherokees in the following September indicated the impotence of tribal agreements; only the Creeks actively resisted further cessions. The Choctaws, who had become poverty-stricken, failed to show any opposition to the United States commissioners who shortly came to mark off the boundary between the United States and Spanish West Florida.

**Treaty of 1801**

Another group of commissioners, headed by General James Wilkinson, was appointed by President Jefferson on June 4, 1801 to secure land cessions and permission for roads from Georgia to Natchez. The commissioners met strong opposition from the Cherokees and Creeks, but the Choctaws attended the conference which began at Fort Adams, about fifty miles south of Natchez on the Mississippi, on December 12, 1801, in large numbers. It appears that they were eager to bargain in order to get some respite from a famine which had been plaguing them. This was brought about in part by the gradual exhaustion of their hunting grounds; hence, they were unable to get pelts to exchange for needed goods. They were existing
day-to-day on goods extended on credit by the trading firm, Panton, Leslie and Company of Mobile, which appeared reluctant to extend further credit to the indebted Choctaws.

By this time such central government as the tribe had been able to maintain, had disappeared, and each of the three divisions was going its own way. Because of their economic plight, hungry and submissive, it was not difficult getting the Choctaws to submit to a request for a Natchez to Nashville road through their territory and cession of land on the Mississippi surrounding Natchez. (See Figure 2, p. 35) They signed a treaty on December 17, 1801 conveying the land and received in return merchandise valued at two thousand dollars and a supply of tobacco. To the commissioners' surprise they refused a gift of whiskey.  

Treaty of 1802

Indians to the east and north of the Choctaws continued to be troubled with white encroachments; and in 1802 the Choctaws and Chickasaws became subject to renewed pressures upon the retrocession of Louisiana. Jefferson believed that the land east of the Mississippi would have to be cleared of Indians so that it could be defended against possible action by the French in the West. Further threats


came from Panton, Leslie and Company, demanding tribal land cessions for trading debts which they were unable to collect. With increasing pressures from the government and the trading company, it was inevitable that the Choctaws would yield. But it appears that Jefferson expected the Indians to refuse to cede their land, for he devised a plan whereby land cessions could be required as a matter of payment of debts accumulated in government stores.  

On April 30, 1802 Congress, in effect, approved this idea by voting to continue the existing government stores among the Indians and to provide funds for the establishment of two new ones among the Choctaws and Chickasaws. The store for the Chickasaws was located at Chickasaw Bluff, a central site; but the Choctaw post was placed on the southeastern boundary of the southern division at St. Stephens, apparently to prevent trade between the Indians and the Spanish at Mobile. Ten thousand dollars worth of goods were sent to the Choctaw factory even before its site was determined. The merchandise was stored at Fort Adams until the factory opened early in 1803.

But the opportunity came for Jefferson to get the cessions much sooner than he had anticipated through debts or otherwise. Panton,

18 The plan was "to establish among the Chickasaws [and Choctaws] a factory for furnishing them all the necessaries and comforts they may wish (spirituous liquors excepted) encouraging them and especially their leading men to run in debt for these beyond their individual means of paying; and whenever in that situation they will always cede land to rid themselves of debt." (Albert Ellery Bergh, The Writings of Thomas Jefferson [Washington, D. C.: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907], XVII, 374.)
Leslie and Company already had the debts, and he thought that the
Indians could simply cede their land to the United States and pay
their debts with the money received. This plan was advocated in
order to offset a similar one proposed by the trading company it­
self. In May, 1802 it was learned from the agent for the Choctaws
that the company was seeking from the Choctaws a land cession to
which the United States had given approval through him (the agent)
in 1797. Jefferson pointed out that, although the government
could not approve of an Indian cession to the firm, the debt could
be paid with funds secured by a cession to the United States. To
accommodate the Choctaws, he was willing to accept a cession between
the Tombigbee and the Alabama; but when he heard of the retrocession
of Louisiana, he desired, instead, the land along the Mississippi
River. General Wilkinson, who was then among the Choctaws running
the boundary line between them and the United States, was instructed
to work with the Choctaw agent in obtaining Indian approval. The
Chickasaws, along with the Choctaws, were then pressured by John
Forbes, the successor of Panton as head of the trading company, who
saw in the new suggestion the only possibility of the debts.

In September, Forbes came to the Choctaw country to partici­
pate in the discussions between the commissioners and the Indians.

19Dunbar Rowland (ed.), The Mississippi Territorial Archives
(Nashville, Tennessee: Brandon Printing Company, 1905), I, 484-
485.
Reaching a decision was hindered by the dissension among the three divisions; each was reluctant to dispose of its land to the advantage of the others. The southeastern district had been willing to cede the portion of its land between the Tombigbee and Alabama, perhaps because of the knowledge that this land was also claimed by the Creeks. But it was pointed out above that the United States refused to buy this, preferring, instead, land on the Mississippi. As a preliminary to securing this, Wilkinson, in the fall of 1802 sent Homastubbee, head chief of the northeastern district, to Washington with a delegation of his chiefs to see the President.²⁰

The trip did not produce the intended results; nevertheless, a treaty was signed on October 17, 1802 at Fort Confederation on the Tombigbee River. By this agreement the United States received most of the land north of the southern boundary of the United States between the Chickasawhay River on the west and the Tombigbee and Mobile Rivers on the east (identified by the date of 1802 in Figure 2, p. 35) for the sum of only one dollar.²¹ Another treaty was signed on August 31, 1803 at Fort Confederation after marking the boundary established by the treaty of the previous year. The agreement reaffirmed the boundary and ended with a list of presents for the Indians "... as a consideration in full for the confirmation


²¹Kappler, op. cit., II, 47.
of the above concession, the following articles, viz.: fifteen pieces of strouds, three rifles, one hundred and fifty blankets, two hundred and fifty pounds of powder, two hundred and fifty pounds of lead, one bridle, one man's saddle, and one black silk handkerchief."

Treaty of 1805

With the accomplishment of the Louisiana purchase in 1803, Federal pressure for additional cessions was temporarily lightened. But Forbes continued his own efforts to such a vigorous extent that in August of 1804 he succeeded in obtaining a petition from the northeastern division of the tribe asking that the United States purchase some of its land so that the division could pay Forbes. Immediately commissioners were appointed to treat with both Choctaws and Chickasaws. The government was intent upon securing all of the land along the Mississippi, part of which belonged to the Chickasaws. They were notified in advance that they would be allowed a price of two cents an acre for their lands, which was twice as much as that usually paid for Indian land.

22Ibid., p. 51.

For the Choctaw conference to be held at St. Stephens in June, 1805 the Indian agent went to New Orleans and brought back a stock of provisions—wines, spices and other delicacies—apparently for the purpose of entertaining themselves as well as dining the Indians. In spite of the extravagant outlay, the conference was in vain. The leaders of the northeastern district refused to sell, indicating that they had changed their minds or else Forbes had secured the petition fraudulently. Cotterill comments, "It is not to be supposed that the commissioners relied exclusively upon entertainment to alter the determination of the strangely resolute chiefs, but made liberal use of those allied arts of bribery and intimidation, which had become basic ingredients of American Indian diplomacy." The adamant chiefs forced the commissioners to adjourn the conference.

When the commissioners returned in November to the Choctaws assembled at Mt. Dexter, they had instructions to negotiate with the southeastern division for the land offered earlier to the United States between the Tombigbee and the Alabama adjoining the Florida border. They were unsuccessful in securing this land; however, through the persistent efforts of Forbes, both parties were persuaded to agree to a treaty on November 16, 1805 which embodied a cession of land along the Florida border between the Mississippi

---

24 Cotterill, op. cit., p. 148.
and the Tombigbee. (See Figure 2, p. 35.) The Government paid $50,500 for the land, $48,000 of it going directly to Forbes to pay for the Choctaw debt. The tribe was to receive an annuity of $3,000; the three chiefs were to receive $500 each, plus an annuity of $150.25 As usual, there was some discontent among the Choctaws with the treaty, which, in this instance, found expression in a refusal of some of the chiefs to accept presents from the commissioners.26

Formal efforts to secure additional Choctaw land were interrupted by the Creek War of 1813-1814. The conflict, which began as a civil war among Creek factions, soon developed into full scale war, when neighboring states, desirous of obtaining all of the Creek territory, succeeded in drawing the United States in to suppress it. A small number of men from each of the three divisions of the Choctaw Nation joined with General Andrew Jackson against the Creeks, with whom they had been having frequent border conflicts. These were commanded by Pushmataha, chief of the southern division, who was given the rank of lieutenant colonel. At the conclusion of the Creek War, Jackson asked for further aid in his campaign against the British and 750 Choctaws enlisted, most of them coming from Pushmataha's district.27

25Kappler, op. cit., II, 63-65; American State Papers, Indian Affairs, I, 750-751; Richardson, op. cit., I, 434-435.
26Carter, op. cit., p. 434.
27J. S. Bassett (ed.), The Correspondence of Andrew Jackson
Treaty of 1816

Following the establishment of peace, President Madison appointed commissioners to make treaties with the southern Indians in order to clarify their boundaries. As a preface to an agreement, the Choctaw boundary was defined the same as it had been in 1805. The treaty signed on October 24, 1816 embodied not only this understanding but also a cession to the United States of all remaining Choctaw land east of the Tombigbee River. (See Figure 2, p. 35.) For the latter, the tribe received $10,000 and an annuity of $16,000 for twenty years. 28

Treaty of 1820

After the establishment of boundaries, it became increasingly apparent that the only way the United States could get more land was by removal of the Indians. General Jackson negotiated removal treaties with the Cherokee in July, 1817 and with the Chickasaw in October, 1818. While he was holding discussions with the latter, another group of commissioners entreated unsuccessfully with the Choctaws. The following March, Jackson was instructed to assist the Choctaw commissioners, probably because of his successful negotiations with the Cherokees and Chickasaws. In June, 1819 Mushula-

28 Kappler, op. cit., II, 94-95; American State Papers, Indian Affairs, II, 118.
tubbee, chief of the northeastern division, and Pushmataha agreed to a conference; but, at a Choctaw Council in August, both of these leaders expressed their opposition to an exchange of land in a letter to President Monroe, stating that Mississippi was their old home and that the land offered in the West was inferior. Later in the fall of that same year the tribe sent a delegation to Washington to press its opposition to emigration. Its determination is attested by the fact that it paid its own expenses when the commissioners refused to furnish money.

About a year later the chiefs were finally persuaded to meet with Jackson at Doak's Stand even though sentiment was still very strong against a cession. Chief Puckshenubbe was the leading opponent, for a cession would all but destroy his district. He expressed his opposition by refusing to eat during the negotiations. Although his efforts were in vain, he had strong support from the mixed-bloods who had accumulated considerable property and had no desire to remove.

Jackson asked for land on the Mississippi, which included most of the western district, in exchange for land between the Arkansas, Canadian and Red Rivers. Such a proposal meant that the Indians would have to migrate, and they were opposed to removal; however,

29American State Papers, Indian Affairs, II, 230-231.

30Doak's Stand was located on the Natchez to Nashville road and was about half way between the present Mississippi cities of Canton and Carthage.
a small band of Choctaws which had already migrated to Arkansas favored the plan which would give them land. When, after prolonged conferences, no progress was made, Jackson threatened to deal with the Arkansas group alone, for similar tactics had worked effectively with the Cherokees. Facing the possibility of losing their land and getting nothing in return, the Choctaw chiefs and other delegates from the three divisions decided to negotiate. In the end, Jackson got the exchange he originally sought when the treaty was signed on October 18, 1820.31

According to the treaty, the Indians were exchanging "for a small part of their land here as indicated in Figure 2, p. 35", a country beyond the Mississippi River, where all, who live by hunting and will not work, may be collected and settled together."32 The boundaries on this side of the Mississippi established by the treaty were guaranteed to remain without alteration "until the period at which said nation shall become so civilized and enlightened as to be made citizens of the United States, and Congress shall lay off a limited parcel of land for the benefit of each family or individual in the nation."33

Shortly after the treaty was signed, it was discovered that

32Kappler, op. cit., II, 133.
33Ibid., p. 134.
white settlers were already occupying part of the land in the West assigned to the Indians. As a result, the President called delegates of the Choctaw Nation to Washington to reconsider the matter. On January 20, 1825 a new treaty was signed and the cession was carried into effect, but that portion of the land inhabited by whites was ceded back to the United States in return for which they received compensations and annuities. The chiefs of the three divisions, Puckshenubbe, Pushmataha, and Mushulatubbee, were delegates to that conference but Puckshenubbe and Pushmataha died before the treaty was signed.34

Like his predecessor Monroe, President John Quincy Adams disapproved of the tactics employed by the states, but he approved of removal in principle. Since only a small number had emigrated under the terms of the treaty of 1820, he saw the necessity of conducting further negotiations toward that end. Consequently, in October, 1826 he sent a three-man commission to the South to discuss removal treaties with the Choctaws and Chickasaws. By this time the Choctaws had begun to distrust all Federal commissions, and, as a result, they took the unusual step of preparing for them by replacing their old chiefs with younger and more resolute men. On the eve of the conference, the Choctaws deposed Mushulatubbee and Robert Cole, and elected in their places David Folsom and Greenwood LeFlore. These

34 Pushmataha was buried in the Congressional Cemetery with full military honors.
men were half-bloods, well acquainted with white ways and wiles.

Instead of bringing to the conference the rank and file, who were all too susceptible to bribery and corruption, the new chiefs entrusted the conduct of the negotiations to a committee of thirteen whom they thought invulnerable to American pressure. To the commissioners' offer of $1,000,000 for their Mississippi territory, transportation to the West, and reservations in Mississippi for all preferring to remain under state jurisdiction, the committee gave an almost unanimous rejection, commenting that if they could not trust to an American guarantee of their present territory, they could not have faith in a guarantee of new lands. They also refused a cession of a small tract on the Tombigbee that the commissioners had been instructed to get in case their larger demands were refused. The commissioners, after deploring the absence of the Choctaw rank and file, departed for the Chickasaws.

Although only about one-third of the Choctaw purchase of 1820 had been sold to either settlers or speculators, agitation was growing in Mississippi for the removal of all the Indians from the state. In actual area, the latter still possessed about half of the land, much of it the best. The general attitude of the whites was reflected in the governor's message to the legislature in January, 1829. He expressed concern over the prosperity of the state while so much fertile land remained in the possession of

... savage tribes of Indians, who, as they progress in civilization, become attached to the soil and cannot be
induced to remove by the policy heretofore used of treating them as a sovereign people, and will, eventually, set up for themselves a government, professing to be an independent sovereignty within our limits, in defiance of the authority of the State. These things cannot be tolerated, consistent with our best interests, honor and safety.35

Without waiting for treaty stipulations to be conducted through the Federal government, the legislature proceeded to extend its jurisdiction over the Indians and to abolish their sovereignty. On February 4, 1829 an act was passed by which legal process was extended over that part of the state occupied by the Indians. The Indian country was divided into districts over which the jurisdiction of the judges and justices of the peace of adjoining counties was extended. The following year the legislature went further, extending the laws of the state over "the persons and property of the resident Indians." The act, passed January 19, 1830, bestowed on them the citizenship "enjoyed by free white persons" and was designed to abolish the tribal governments:

Any person, or persons, who shall assume on him the office of chief, mingo, head man, or other post of power established by the tribal statutes, ordinances or customs of the said Indians, and particularly recognized by the laws of the State, shall, on conviction upon indictment or presentment before a court of competent jurisdiction, be fined in any sum not exceeding five hundred dollars or twelve months, at the discretion of the court before whom conviction may be had.36

35Cited in Rowland, History of Mississippi, I, p. 554.

Although neither was ever enforced, these acts contributed to fear on the part of the Indians concerning their future in Mississippi. Shortly after these laws were passed, David Folsom and John Garland, chiefs of the northeastern and southern divisions, abandoned their positions, apparently in fear of arrest. There remained Greenwood LeFlore, chief of the western division, who assumed leadership of all the Choctaws later in the year.
When Andrew Jackson became president, he pressed more vigorously for the emigration of the Indians and subsequently approved on May 28, 1830 an act providing for their removal. In the fall of 1830 he sent commissioners to enter into discussions with the Choctaws looking toward that end. After nearly ten days of negotiating, a treaty was signed at Dancing Rabbit Creek on September 27, 1830. In exchange for their remaining land in Mississippi (See Figure 2, p. 35), the Choctaws were to receive land in the Indian territory, the same as that in the treaty of January 20, 1825. The treaty also specified the time for their removal. Agreement probably could never have been reached had it not been for provisions which were made for those who wished to remain. Several times the talks almost broke up; but when the commissioners finally consented to

1"The Choctaw Nation of Indians consent and hereby cede to the United States the entire country they own and possess east of the Mississippi River; and they agree to remove beyond the Mississippi River as early as practicable, and will so arrange their removal that as many as possible of their people, not exceeding one-half of the whole number, shall depart during the fall of 1831 and 1832; the residue shall follow during the succeeding fall of 1833." (Charles J. Kappler (ed.), Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties, Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1892/, II, 221.)
the insertion of the fourteenth article of the treaty, the leaders of the Choctaws agreed to sign. In effect, this did not make it mandatory for them to move; those who wished to remain were to be allotted land, provided they fulfilled certain requirements. As was the custom in previous treaties, the United States gave assurances of territorial integrity to the land being offered them in the West. Halbert sums up a detailed discussion of the negotia-

---

2 Article fourteen stated that "each Choctaw head of a family being desirous to remain and become a citizen of the States, shall be permitted to do so, by signifying his intention to the Agent within six months from the ratification of this Treaty, and he or she shall thereupon be entitled to a reservation of one section of six hundred and forty acres of land, to be bounded by sectional lines of survey; in like manner shall be entitled to one half that quantity for each unmarried child which is living with him over ten years of age; and a quarter section to such child as may be under ten years of age, to adjoin the location of the parent. If they reside upon said lands intending to become citizens of the States for five years after the ratification of this Treaty, in that case a grant in fee simple shall issue; said reservation shall include the present improvement of the head of the family, or a portion of it. Persons who claim under this article shall not lose the privilege of a Choctaw citizen, but if they ever remove are not entitled to any portion of the Choctaw annuity." (Ibid., p. 223.)

3 "The Government and people of the United States are hereby obliged to secure to the said Choctaw Nation of Red People the jurisdiction and government of all the persons and property that may be within their limits west, so that no territory or state shall ever have a right to pass laws for the Government of the Choctaw Nation of Red People and their descendents; and that no part of the land granted them shall ever be embraced in any Territory or State; but the U.S. shall forever secure said Choctaw Nation from and against all laws except such as from time to time may be enacted in their own National Councils, not inconsistent with the Constitution, treaties, and laws of the United States." (Ibid., p. 222.) Debo calls this the "... Magna Carta of their national existence." (Angie Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic [Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934], p. 55.)
tions for the treaty by saying that "it can be safely placed on record that the seductive influence of the fourteenth article, fear, intimidation and coercion, all more or less combined, were the causes that prompted the Choctaw councilmen to sign the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek."^4

First Period of Removal

Immediately following the signing of the removal treaty, groups of Indians began to emigrate.5 LeFlore did not wait for the ratification of the treaty before starting the removal of his people. Within a month after the signing of the treaty he had a party on its way even before any plans had been made for their transportation and subsistence. Several groups were sent out by him in this manner. Opposition to his leadership became so intense that he was deposed as chief of his district and George W. Harkins, his nephew, was elected in his place. The United States did not recognize Harkins, however, and continued to deal with LeFlore.6


^5 A narrative of the removal of the Choctaws is recorded in Grant Foreman, Indian Removal (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), Chapters I-VII, pp. 19-106.

^6 LeFlore has been both praised and denounced for his actions in relation to his people. For a sympathetic treatment of his life, see Vera Alice Toler, "Greenwood Leflore, Choctaw Chieftain and Mississippi Planter" (unpublished Master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 1936). Foreman says, "Though a man of little education, LeFlore was intelligent and had progressive views that might have been
The Choctaws were in a deplorable state in 1831. The treaty was not ratified until February 24, 1831, nearly five months after it had been concluded; consequently, the uncertainty of the situation produced much confusion and near anarchy among them. Between those favoring and those opposing removal there was continued conflict. Many failed to plant crops, thinking they would be leaving immediately. Drinking became increasingly widespread; and, by the time the removals got under way in November, large numbers had become totally demoralized and impoverished.

Although some preparations were made in advance for the removals, those which took place in the fall of 1831 and the early part of 1832 were characterized by extreme suffering. The winter was severely cold and the Choctaws were not dressed sufficiently for travelling in the weather. Transportation was inadequate and journeying through the forests and swamps on the west side of the Mississippi almost impossible. Disease was rampant; food supplies were pitifully insufficient. Under these conditions more than six thousand were removed to their new home across the river. 7 That so

---

7 George S. Gaines, who was in charge of removal on the east side of the Mississippi during the first winter, stated that he landed 6,000 on the west bank of the Mississippi. (George S. Gaines, "Removal of the Choctaws," Dancing Rabbit Creek Treaty, Alabama State Department of Archives and History, Historical and Patriotic Series, X [1928], 17.)

8 The eminent writer De Tocqueville was in Memphis in the
many were induced to go may be explained by the fact that Mitakechi and Mushulatubbe, earlier vehemently opposed, decided to cooperate.

While these removals were taking place, Indian and white relations worsened as the latter rushed in to take possession of the land without waiting for the government to dispose of it in an orderly manner. The condition of the Indians remained in a deplorable state:

Everything is in suspense, and the Indians \(\text{are}\) constantly holding councils and ball plays, where whiskey is openly sold, and drunkenness prevails to an extent beyond anything ever before experienced. Numerous parties of Indians pass the agency every week, with whiskey packed on horses and on

winter of 1831 and witnessed a boat load crossing the river: "At the end of the year 1831, while I was on the left bank of the Mississippi at a place named by Europeans Memphis, there arrived a numerous band of Choctaws (or Chactas, as they are called by the French in Louisiana). These savages had left their country, and were endeavouring to gain the right bank of the Mississippi, where they hoped to find an asylum which had been promised them by the American Government. It was then the middle of winter, and the cold was unusually severe; the snow had frozen hard upon the ground, and the river was drifting huge masses of ice. The Indians had their families with them; and they brought in their train the wounded and the sick, with children newly born, and old men upon the verge of death. They possessed neither tents nor wagons, but only their arms and some provisions. I saw them embark to pass the mighty river, and never will that solemn spectacle fade from my remembrance. No cry, no sob was heard among the assembled crowd; all were silent. Their calamities were of ancient date, and they knew them to be irremediable. The Indians had all stepped into the bark which was to carry them across, but their dogs remained upon the bank. As soon as these animals perceived that their masters were finally leaving the shore, they set up a dismal howl, and plunging all together into the icy waters of the Mississippi, they swam after the boat." (Phillips Bradley \hspace{1em} \textit{ed.}, Alexis De Tocqueville: Democracy in America \hspace{1em} \textit{The Henry Reeve text as revised by Francis Bowen; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945}, I, 340.)
sleds from Columbus; and since the troops have retired, the little intimidation they caused has ceased, and the most unrestrained violation of the laws has resulted, with a perfect defiance of the authority of the agent. The district judge, Nichols, held court in Columbus in May, and expressly declared all laws of the United States in the Choctaw nation null and void. The sale of their reserves and stock keeps them amply supplied with whiskey, which is kept for sale in every part of the nation. . . . They are in a state of suspense. . . .

It was in such an atmosphere that removal was renewed in the autumn of 1832. Although there were still many hardships involved in moving, those in charge had profited from the previous year's experiences. Some of the Indians continued to try to make the journey without government agents, hoping to be able to collect for themselves the ten dollar fee the agents received for each person transported. Numbering more than 1,500, those who went without leaders suffered considerably more than the others. It was reported on February 23, 1833 that about six thousand Choctaws had been moved by the government.

These, together with those who migrated on their own, made an approximate total of 7,500 who crossed the Mississippi during the second year of removal.

There remained in Mississippi only those who were determined not to remove to the West. Describing them as being in a destitute condition, the removal agents estimated their total number as of

---


10 Ibid., p. 498.
August, 1833 to be about 6,200—4,000 in LeFlore's district, 1,500 in Mitakechi's, and 700 in Mushulatubbe's. In the summer and fall of 1833 the agents went through the three districts in a final effort to induce them to go. They were able to persuade 900 to go under government sponsorship, of whom, 831 reached their destination. Equally as many must have emigrated on their own resources, for it was reported that since November, 1832 a total of 3,215 had gone without agents.

Choctaw Land Claims

Letters and other documents relate in fragments the story of the claims made by the Indians who wished to remain in Mississippi. As was mentioned above, the removal treaty was ratified on February 24, 1831; however, Colonel William Ward, who had been appointed agent for the United States in registering those who desired to stay, did not receive his instructions until May 21, 1831. Consequently, there was a period of only three months in which the Indians from all parts of their land could get to him and state their intentions to remain. To further complicate the situation, Ward himself was intemperate and, at times, totally indifferent toward his assignment. When his term of office ended, he transmitted to the War Department the names of only sixty-nine heads of families out of the several hundred who had registered with him.

14 American State Papers, Public Lands (Washington, D. C.:
It was not until June 26, 1833 that George W. Martin was ap­
pointed by President Jackson to locate all reservations under the
various articles of the treaty, and he did not receive his instruc­
tions until the fifth of August. He proceeded to lay off the reser­
vations of the sixty-nine families reported by Ward. But complaints
from Indians who had been denied land became so numerous that the
President ordered Martin to get their names, provided they gave him
sufficient evidence to indicate they had registered with Ward. At
the same time Martin was attending to these matters, surveyors were
going through the country; land offices were opened; and whites were
pouring in to claim the land, making his work more difficult. In
cases where Indian land had been sold, the plan was to give them
land of equal value.

In 1834 Congress failed to do anything for the additional
claimants turned in by Martin. In March, 1935 he was instructed
to make a new list, and to indicate the locations of the land he
would give to them. He made provisional locations for 520 heads of
families, covering about 615,686 acres.

The continued delay in the settlement of the claims caused
many Indians to seek legal help; on the other hand, speculators
were eager to assist the Indians who were ignorant of their designs.
The longer the delay, the more opportunity the speculators had for

Gales and Seaton, 1860), VIII, 432, 686. Fifteen of the sixty­
nine were listed as white men with Indian wives and twenty-four
as "half-breeds."
bettering their own ends. The situation concerning these claims was well stated in a letter written to the General Land Office in Washington on May 7, 1835:

They are held by speculators and not by Indians—have been purchased at reduced prices, and the assignees were, at the last session, lobby members in Washington; ... these lands are worth fifty times as much as the land the Indians pretendedly lived on. There is no justice in their floating from the poor lands, east of the Yala Busha to the richest river lands on the Mississippi. I have seen enough to know that anything can be proved where the rich river lands are in view.15

In January, 1836 the Mississippi Legislature appointed a committee to hold hearings on the frauds that were being committed under the fourteenth article of the treaty. As a result of the testimony given, a resolution was passed urging Congress "to use the most speedy and efficient means, to prevent the consummation of such titles to said lands, as have originated in fraud, to the end that the aforesaid land may be disposed of, in the regular way, and in accordance with the law in such case made and approved."16

In 1834 a United States Senate committee began investigating the validity of the claims. In 1836 Senator John Black from Mississippi, reporting for the committee, stated the opinion that lands could not legally be granted to the Indians in the place of those sold. The committee recommended instead that the Indians with

15Ibid., pp. 394-395.
On February 1, 1836 Colonel J. F. H. Claiborne of Mississippi submitted to the committee in the House of Representatives studying the same matter "a memorial from certain mingoos of the Choctaw nation, remaining in the limits of the State of Mississippi, praying a grant of unappropriated lands in lieu of those to which they were entitled under the fourteenth article of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek . . ." and a memorial from a large number of his constituents against the validity of these claims. In making the presentation, Claiborne stated:

Whether just or unjust, if they be confirmed, the fairest portion of Mississippi will be desolated; the stability of property will be shaken; the tide of prosperity will be rolled back, and hundreds of my best constituents, the men who support their Government, and fight its battles in war, will be driven from their homes to other and distant lands.18

On May 11, 1836 a Senate committee submitted a report which stated in part:

Most of the Indians are grossly ignorant; and having once despaired of their claims, it is very probable that but few of them possess the intelligence and energy to have asserted them if they had not been prompted and assisted by the interested activity of white men, or sought the interference of these white men, or their lucrative expectations to prejudice any claim which is otherwise well supported. It is the duty of the government, while it does justice to the Indians, in allowing them reservations in all cases when they can bring

17 American State Papers, Public Lands, op. cit., VIII, 564-566.
18 Register of Debates in Congress (Baltimore: Gales and Seaton, 1835), XII, Part II, 2466-2467.
themselves clearly within the provisions of the fourteenth article to provide also that they shall not become the victims of their own improvidence, as far as the Government has the power to shield them.\textsuperscript{19}

When the bill based on this report was introduced, Senator Robert J. Walker of Mississippi moved to amend it by striking out the whole of it and inserting a provision appropriating $30,000 in addition to funds already appropriated, for the removal of all the Choctaws in Mississippi to the West.\textsuperscript{20} The bill was tabled and consideration of it was postponed until the following session.

Senator Walker's suggestion was not carried out at the next session, but Congress did approve on March 3, 1837 a bill creating a commission to investigate the claims and report their findings. Before the commission had hardly begun, its time expired. However, a new commission was created in 1842. In addition to the authority to investigate, it was given judiciary powers.\textsuperscript{21}

The plan of the new commission was to examine thoroughly the claim of each Indian, and, on establishing its validity, recommend settlement. If there was enough vacant land surrounding the place where the Indian lived to make up the amount due him, the land was granted to him. But if the land had been sold, in lieu of it the

\textsuperscript{19}American State Papers, Public Lands, op. cit., VIII, 675-676.

\textsuperscript{20}Register of Debates in Congress, op. cit., p. 1936.

Indian was granted scrip at the rate of $1.25 an acre. The scrip was to be paid only on condition that he migrate, one half payable on departure and the other half payable on arrival at his destination. The United States also was to defray the cost of removal and provide subsistence for a year after removal. 22

The commission took applications from over a thousand Indians and heard testimony from several hundred at sessions held at various places in east central Mississippi. A great deal of opposition arose from the legal counsel employed by speculators and from prominent citizens in the state. Among those criticizing the claims was General Reuben H. Grant who believed that attempts were being made to defraud the government on the part of the speculators. Until they had become interested in the land, he insisted, the Indians had no interest in the claims. 23 In view of the rising protests from the

22 Ibid., pp. 118-119.
23 The following is part of an open letter Grant wrote in order "to give the facts to the public":

I have known Col. Ward, the agent, to refuse a good many Choctaws to register their names; all that I saw refused by him, have removed West, and are now among the present claimants. I traveled much of my time after the 24th Aug., 1831, until the last party emigrated in 1833; I heard but few complaints amongst the Choctaws, that injustice had been done them by the Government of the United States. I have frequently conversed with a number of those now claiming land since the 24th Aug., 1831, when they did not pretend to claim lands, their object then appeared to be to reject the treaty and to that end not to comply with any of its provisions. Some denied that the country was sold and would not acknowledge the treaty, nor do anything that would commit them on the
whites in the state, Claiborne wrote the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in November, 1843 that nothing further could be done until all claims could be scrutinized more thoroughly. He made a further suggestion designed to get the Indians out of the state, namely, to withhold payment of any money until they migrated to the West. The subject of the treaty. A number of their intelligent half-breeds have complained of the stubbornness and ignorance of the Choctaws; they would neither register nor remove, and would lose all the benefit of the treaty. Some time in the year 1835 those Choctaws became more enlightened about the time they had employed agents or sold their rights; and now those very Indians who had frequently informed me that they did not signify their intention to the agent, now come before the board and prove everything necessary in their cases. (Natchez Mississippi Free Trader, June 29, 1843, p. 4.)

I urge it upon the Department to recommend a revision of the law as to land and scrip. The contracts made with the Indians are all fraudulent. No court of equity will enforce them. Land is of little use to the Indian. It is not convertible into cash, and it fixes him to the soil, when the policy is to emigrate him. He cannot cultivate it. The moment he receives his patent some cormorant speculator claims one-half of it under these fraudulent contracts, and the residue is soon lost by improvidence, or sold for taxes. If you issue scrip, payable to him and assignable by him, you still leave him in power of the speculator. He will endorse it over the instant it is paid into his hands, and thus be robbed of one-half or the whole of his indemnity. Why not have the laws so ordered as to fund the amounts due to those Indians whose claims shall be allowed by the board, and sanctioned by the Department, paying them only the interest after they shall have been emigrated; nothing while they remain? This would induce them all to emigrate; indeed many are anxious now to go. They have been frightened into it with threats of prosecution for bigamy, Sabbath breaking, exercising tribal jurisdiction, &c, contrary to our statute of 1829. . . . These Indians are all improvident, habitually
protests of opponents to such a plan were able to prevent any change in the procedure, so the Indians continued to receive scrip in Mississippi. Finally, on March 3, 1845 Congress approved an act whereby scrip was issued for one-half of the claims remaining and the other half was to be paid on the arrival of the Indians at their destination.

Second Period of Removal

With the settlement of claims, groups of Indians began migrating once more in 1845. That year a total of 1,182 removed from Mississippi. The following year 1,768 departed, a thousand of whom the agent described as well educated, Christian, and pros-

intemperate and incapable of managing their affairs. The mode I suggest you know how to consider or appreciate; but I assure under the present plan these unfortunate beings will be stripped without remorse and without a shadow of justice.

A most stupendous fraud is on foot. .... (Claiborne to Crawford, November 7, 1843; Claiborne Collection, Mississippi State Archives, Jackson.)

25 According to War Department figures of April 25, 1846, the amount of land which was actually assigned to the Indians who remained in Mississippi was 163 sections, or 104,320 acres. The amount of scrip issued up to that time to Indians who were deprived of land was $711,500, half of the amount they were entitled to for 569,200 acres of land. The other half was retained by the government at an annual interest of five per cent until they should remove from Mississippi. (U. S. Senate Documents, Twenty-ninth Congress, First Session [Washington, D. C.: Ritchie and Heiss], Vol. VI, No. 189, pp. 1-2.)

perous members of a community on the Leaf River.\textsuperscript{27} In 1847 eight
groups totaling 1,623 left Mississippi.\textsuperscript{28}

From the few records that are preserved concerning this period,
it appears that after 1847 the removal agents experienced increasing
difficulty in moving the Indians. Five hundred and forty-seven were
persuaded to emigrate in 1849, but several scheduled removals failed
to materialize. At the same time whites became increasingly insis­
tent in their demands for complete removal of the Indians.

During this period of removal, Jefferson Davis, then a United
States Senator, was one of the most vocal among those determined to
expel from Mississippi the remnants of the aboriginal owners of the
soil. On March 27, 1850 he addressed a letter to the Commissioner
of Indian Affairs in which he stated, "It is an object of great im­
portance to us that the Choctaws should be removed and prevented
from returning. . . ."\textsuperscript{29}

About this same time, George S. Gaines, who had proved him­
self a trusted friend of the Choctaws, was in Washington seeking
compensation for his services to the Indians in behalf of the govern­

\textsuperscript{27} U. S. Senate Documents, Twenty-ninth Congress, Second Ses­
tion (Washington, D. C.: Ritchie and Heiss, 1847), Vol. I, No. 1,
p. 214.

\textsuperscript{28} U. S. Senate Documents, Thirtieth Congress, First Session
(Washington, D. C.: Wendell and Van Benthuysen, 1847), Vol. I,
No. 503, p. 734.

\textsuperscript{29} Davis to Brown, March 27, 1850, Office of Indian Affairs,
"Choctaw Emigration"; cited in Grant Foreman, The Five Civilized
ment some twenty years earlier. Approximately a hundred of his Choctaw friends, mainly from Newton and Jasper counties, appealed to him to intercede in their behalf:

Our tribe has been woefully imposed upon of late. We have had our habitations torn down and burned; our fences destroyed, cattle turned into our fields and we ourselves have been scourged, manacled, fettered and otherwise personally abused, until by such treatment some of our best men have died. These are the acts of those persons who profess to be the agents of the Government to procure our removal to Arkansas and who cheat us out of all they can, by the use of fraud, duplicity, and even violence.

Gaines was requested to use his influence in getting removal agents that they could trust; however, he was able to do little or nothing for them, let alone accomplish his own mission. With and without the aid of government agents, small groups continued to migrate after 1850, but many returned because of food shortages and disease epidemics.

The end of this period of Choctaw history has been movingly recorded by the editor of a Vicksburg paper as he observed some of the last remnants of the tribe crossing the Mississippi on their way west:

"To one who, like the writer, has been familiar to their bronze inexpressive faces from infancy it brings associations of peculiar sadness to see them bidding a last farewell perhaps to the old hills which gave birth and are


31 "One Hundred Red Men," December 6, 1849, Office of Indian Affairs, Choctaw File G, 156; cited in Foreman, The Five Civilized Tribes, p. 75.
doubtless equally dear to him and them alike. The first playmates of our infancy were the young Choctaw boys of the then woods of Warren County. Their language was once scarcely less familiar to us than our mother English. We think we know the character of the Choctaw well. We knew many of their present stalwart braves in those days of early life when Indian and white alike forgot to disguise, but in the unchecked exhuberance of youthful feeling, show the real character that policy and habit may afterwards so much conceal; and we know that under the stolid, Stoic look he assumes, there is burning in the Indian's nature a heart of fire and feeling—and an all observing keenness of apprehension that marks and remembers everything that occurs and every insult he receives—Cunni-at-a-hah!—They are going away!—With a visible reluctance which nothing has overcome but the stern necessity they feel impelling them, they have looked their last on the graves of their sires—the scenes of their youth—and have taken up their slow toilsome march with their household gods among them to their new home in a strange land. They leave names to many of our rivers, towns, and counties; and so long as our State remains, the Choctaws who once owned most of her soil will be remembered.  

The Indians who did not leave became either tenant farmers for whites or settled on abandoned land.

IV. THOSE WHO REMAINED

Involvement in the Civil War

The Indians who stayed in Mississippi were soon caught up in the throes of the Civil War. Living where they did, it was inevitable that they would become involved.  


33 Abel has made a study of the activities of Indians in the Civil War; however, she alludes only once to those under consideration here: "Choctaws from Mississippi ... fought with the South
Early in the war, white leaders gathered Indian men from several counties—mainly from Neshoba, Jasper, Scott, and Newton—and formed them into the Mississippi Choctaw Battalion, a unit of one hundred and eighty men, commanded by white officers. For a while, it was stationed at the town of Newton, but later was transferred to Camp Moore near Tangipahoa, Louisiana. While in training there, they were taken by surprise by the Union army and all were captured. One lieutenant evaded capture by the federal forces as he was leading a search party for a number of the Indians who had left the battalion supposedly with the intention of permanently leaving it. There were not enough Indians remaining in the state to be of any service, so further efforts to train them were abandoned. Although the officers who were captured returned to Newton after the war, Brown states that "nothing is known of what became of the Indians." 34

The Civil War left the South destitute. The Indians suffered as much as, if not more than, the others inhabiting the territory. They had long been deprived of property; consequently, they lived in poverty, often as squatters or trespassers on abandoned land. They lived in small colonies of a few hundred each occupying tents and hutments. They cultivated small patches of ground, fished, and

34 A. J. Brown, History of Newton County, Mississippi, From 1834 to 1894 (Jackson, Mississippi: Clarion-Ledger Company, 1894), p. 97.
dug roots for food. Cane baskets were woven and bartered for food and clothing.

**Allotment of Indian Lands**

This was the condition in which they were found when the Dawes Commission came to Mississippi in 1902 to offer them once more the opportunity to go to the Indian Territory. Since its creation on March 3, 1893, the commission had been negotiating with leaders of the Five Civilized Tribes and enrolling the Indians, in preparation for the allotment of the tribal lands provided for by the Curtis Act of June 28, 1898.35 A supplementary agreement was proclaimed on March 21, 1902 whereby details were provided for the Mississippi Choctaws’ participation in the allotment.36 There was no difficulty in getting applications from Mississippi; over six thousand people claiming to be part Indian tried to enroll. The great majority were rejected, while the ones really entitled to share in the allotment, the fullbloods, did not appear at the commission headquarters in Meridian. Many of them thought that this was another scheme to force them to move to the West. Consequently, the workers had to spend months in the field, camp near communities of fullblood settlements in Leake, Jasper, Neshoba, and Scott counties, and send interpreters to the homes. Gradually

35*Kappler, op. cit., II, p. 92.*

36*Ibid., pp. 780-783.*
they were able to obtain the necessary information for enrollment.

At first the Indians were required to indicate that their ancestors had made efforts to comply with the fourteenth article of the treaty of 1830; however, the supplemental treaty of 1902 in effect established the claims of all fullbloods upon their proving that they were such. While this assured fullbloods of allotments, it virtually eliminated all others from any further consideration.

While lawyers were helping the Indians in presenting their claims before the "Citizenship Court" set up through the 1902 treaty, the real agents were equally active in the field. The two groups—lawyers and speculators—formed partnerships in their efforts to assist the Choctaws. Rather than wait for the Indians to get to Oklahoma, they chose to handle their transactions in Mississippi.

It required only a short time for the combine to make a fortune on paper. An agent would ride over Mississippi making contracts with the Indians, signing up as many as a hundred, assuring himself that he would be part owner of thousands of acres in Indian Territory. But the Indians would sign with more than one agent, thus causing a reign of confusion. The agents tried to convince the Choctaws that they could help them get their land, and the lawyers had provided the contracts. John W. Wade, an observer of the time, said, "But how could the ignorant Choctaw be convinced when he did not understand, and of what benefit is an ironclad contract when it
cannot bind one of the parties to it?"  

After September, 1902, when the supplemental treaty went into effect, the fortune hunters turned all of their efforts toward the fullbloods. However, with this group, they encountered difficulty:

Fullbloods could not be aroused to any great extent by the arguments of the real estate agents, and frequently they were utterly indifferent to all inducements held out to them. The country was too far away, and the claims were too vague . . . for their minds to comprehend, and when once their ardor was kindled it was soon cooled off.  

A greater difficulty encountered by those seeking to assist the Indians was the extreme poverty of the fullbloods. The latter were not able to advance any funds for the prosecution of their claims or to pay any of their expenses in moving. Consequently, this resulted in the elimination of many smaller companies, and the appearance of a few large corporations. Here again the lawyers and real estate men collaborated in what they expected to be a successful venture. Wade wrote the following description of their operations:

The money advanced soon collected the Mississippi Choctaws with their families at their nearest railway stations. Special arrangements were made with railroad officials for

---

38 Ibid., p. 412.
39 On March 2, 1903, Congress appropriated $20,000 for "aiding indigent and identified full-blood Mississippi Choctaws to remove to the Indian Territory." (Kappler, op. cit., III, 17.)
through coaches and cheap transportation. A coach was loaded with Mississippi Choctaws and headed for the Indian Territory. That carload was landed as is a drove of Kentucky mules, the goods were delivered and the agent was off at once for another carload.40

This removal was carried on for six months into 1903, the time allowed by the treaty. Unlike their relatives who were removed earlier, these Indians received considerably better treatment, because the businesses engaged in assisting had everything to gain by the successful establishment of their clients on allotments in Indian Territory. However, Wade concludes that, "On the whole, all private enterprises engaged in the business of assisting Mississippi Choctaws in the allotment of land have come out losers."41

Indian Agency Established

Even this last effort failed to remove all of the Indians from Mississippi. Only about half of them departed, and the plight of those who did not go remained much the same as it had been before. The Congress, at the request of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, appropriated funds in 1916 in order that he might investigate the conditions of the Indians.42 The report of the special representative indicated that they were living in extreme poverty and that they were virtual peons of white farmers.43 His report concluded

40 Ibid., p. 413.  
41 Ibid., p. 421.  
42 Ibid., IV, 63.  
with recommendations for the establishment of an agency to assist them.

The report was acted on favorably by Congress on May 25, 1918. \(^{44}\) Funds were provided for salaries of three administrative personnel, for the establishment of a school, and for a land-purchasing program.

The sum of $25,000 was included "for the purpose of encouraging industry and self-support among said Indians and to aid them in building homes." \(^{45}\) The fund was also used for seed, tools, and animals.

The land was to be purchased "for the use and occupancy of fullblood Choctaws in Mississippi." The further stipulation was made that no family was to use more than eighty acres. After the original grant of $25,000 for such purposes, Congress annually appropriated from two to seven thousand dollars for this purpose through 1931. A total of 16,212 acres of land in seven localities of the state has been purchased, on which about half the Indians live on a rental basis.

In 1927 Congress appropriated funds for the erection of a hospital which was opened in the fall of 1928. Until the establishment of the hospital, the agency superintendents were physicians.

\(^{44}\) Kappler, op. cit., IV, p. 158.

\(^{45}\) Ibid.
Medical services are now available in towns near the communities on a contract basis.

Although the Indian Reorganization Act was passed by Congress on June 18, 1934, it was not until April 15, 1945 that the Choctaws adopted a constitution. They organized themselves under the name of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Provision was made for a tribal council to be composed of elected representatives from the seven principal communities in the state. Even though the council has limited governing authority, always subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, it is serving as a symbol for a revitalized and growing group of people.


CHAPTER IV

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Far from exemplifying the often repeated characteristic of being a "vanishing race," the Mississippi Choctaws now number more than at any time in the past one hundred years. In fact, for the past three decades they have experienced decennial increases of considerable magnitude, particularly when compared with the growth rates for white and Negro elements in the total population of Mississippi. ¹

I. GROWTH AND DISTRIBUTION

Had it not been for the removal periods, the trend of the Choctaw population in Mississippi would have probably followed through the years about the same course as the total Indian popula-

¹ The Indians have received only cursory treatment in analyses of Mississippi population. Foreman mentions them four times in his study made in 1939; yet, strangely enough, he made this comment about the Chinese in the delta who numbered only a third as many as the Indians at that time: "They are most significant sociologically since they lend a triadic pattern to caste relationships." (Paul B. Foreman, Mississippi Population Trends /Nashville, Tennessee: The Joint University Libraries, 1939/, p. 19.) That is exactly the reasoning behind the present study.

In another study of Mississippi made by Machlachlan two years before Foreman's, the Indians are not mentioned at all. While there are several chapters devoted to demography, the one of a general nature entitled "A Panorama of Our People" treats the population only as "white" and "Negro," a practice, incidentally, followed throughout the study. (John Miller Machlachlan, "Mississippi: A Regional Social-Economic Analysis" /unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1937/, Chapter XIV, pp. 242-256.)
Beginning with the advent of contact with Europeans, the total Indian population experienced a sharp decline, which continued until about the middle of the nineteenth century when it became somewhat stabilized. About the turn of the twentieth century, a slow upward trend began which has continued until the present. Mooney estimates that the aboriginal population in 1600 within the confines of the United States was 846,000. By 1800, the total was down to 600,000 and by 1850 it dropped to a low of about 250,000. From 1850 to 1900 the Indian population remained close to the 250,000 figure; however, since 1900, it has increased to more than 400,000. Hadley's recent estimate places the 1950 figure at 445,000.

The Indian population in Mississippi, on the other hand, has experienced decided fluctuations since 1830. The total Choctaw

---


5 This reflects to some extent variations in the census definition of Indians and inaccuracies in the process of enumeration. Prior
figures, including those for Oklahoma, however, indicate a fairly stable population, according to Swanton, who asserts that "the Choctaw population seems always to have fluctuated between 15,000 and 20,000." Mooney and Swanton estimate the population to have been about 15,000 in 1650.

The first real attempt at a census of the Choctaws occurred in 1831 in connection with the implementation of the treaty of 1830. At that time they numbered 19,554--7,505 in the western district, 6,106 in the northeastern, and 5,943 in the southern. With the advent of the removals in the fall of 1831, there began a sharp decline in the Mississippi population. By 1833, the total remaining in the state was estimated to be 6,200--4,000 in the western district, 1,500 in the northeastern, and 700 in the southern. And in 1838, the Com-

to 1890 the census did not include reservation Indians; and before 1870, only Indians who were taxed were counted. With such being the case, only two Indians were reported in Mississippi in 1860. (Department of the Interior, Census Office, Eighth Census of the United States, Vol. I, Population (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1862), p. 596.) As a result of these difficulties, the estimates of the Bureau of Indian Affairs have to be accepted for population data prior to 1870.


9 Ibid., p. 412.
missioner of Indian Affairs estimated the number to be 3,323.  

With the temporary cessation of removal in 1838, the population was estimated to have increased to 7,000 by 1844, having more than doubled in six years. With the resumption of emigration in 1845, the population was reduced to 1,762 in 1849 and was down to 1,000 in 1853. Small groups continued to migrate in the succeeding decade, resulting in a continued decline in the total number east of the Mississippi.

Without a doubt, the Civil War contributed to a further decline in the Indian population as males were impressed into service for the Confederacy and as all of them suffered from its devastating effects. The plausibility of this supposition is borne out by census reports for 1870 in which the Indians in Mississippi were included for the first time.

---


11 U. S. Senate Documents, Twenty-eighth Congress, Second Session (Washington, D. C.: Gales and Seaton, 1845), Vol. I, No. 1, p. 321. This figure is abnormally high if the preceding figure of 3,323 is correct. However, there must have been about 7,000 in 1845, because 5,238 emigrated from 1845 to 1850. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that many who left in the first period of removal returned. This was probably the case with the other removals as well. The report of the Choctaw agent for 1855 stated that the "larger portion" of those who had emigrated from Mississippi during the previous year had returned. He urged the passage of "stringent laws" by the Mississippi legislature in order to compel the Indians to remove permanently. (Messages and Documents, Thirty-fourth Congress, First Session (Washington, D. C.: Beverly Tucker, 1855), Vol. 1, p. 472.

12 Ibid., p. 575.
first time. That year there were enumerated 809 Indians. This appears to be the lowest figure at any time estimated or enumerated for the Indian population in Mississippi.

Census counts in the next three decades indicated the Indians were increasing; however, additional emigration from 1900 to 1910 reduced the population by 34 per cent during that decade. A continued decline was registered in the census of 1920 with 1,105 Indians reported. Coincident with the establishment of an Indian agency in Mississippi, the Indian population began increasing and over a period of three decades has more than doubled. In 1950 there were 2,502 Indians enumerated in Mississippi.

The present Indian population is centered largely in six counties in the east central section of the state. (See Figure 3.) By far the


15 This area of Mississippi has been classified by Machlachlan as the "uplands" (more commonly called hill country), in contrast to the "dark soil," or delta region of the western part of the state, each presenting a more or less definite socio-economic character. The Choctaws are concentrated in the "short leaf pine" division of the
largest concentration, 1,057 or 42 per cent of the total, is located in Neshoba County. The four counties adjoining Neshoba also have sizeable contingents: Newton, 390; Leake, 340; Kemper, 146; and Winston, 107. When the census was taken in 1950, nine other counties had ten or more Indians. Six of these counties—Hinds, Jones, Jasper, Leflore, Noxubee, and Scott—were within a hundred mile radius of Neshoba.

II. RESIDENCE

The fact that the great majority of Mississippi Indians are rural dwellers may help explain their present circumstance, for "residence determines in a general way what people do and the conditions of life to which they are subjected or exposed." Of the 2,502 in the state in 1950, 2,391 or 95.6 per cent fall in one of the two rural classifications. From Table I it can be observed that while 42.2 per cent of the white population is in the rural-farm category, 60.1 per cent of the Negroes and 80.6 of the Indians are so classified. These rural residents are located in the main in a section of the state which has large rural and correspondingly small upland region which is characterized by small farms, low land values, low crop yields, rural farm residence, and small Negro populations. (Machlachlan, op. cit., p. 31.)


Figure 3. Distribution of the Indian population by counties, Mississippi, 1950. (Source: U. S. Census of Population: 1950, Vol. II, Part 24, Table 41, pp. 60-73; Table 47, p. 99.)
urban populations, with the exception of Jones County.

The remaining Indians, 210 in number, are scattered in other counties throughout the state. Those in Leflore, Quitman, and Washington counties are more than likely farm workers. However, there is an Air Force installation in Washington County and also one in Harrison with which some Indians may be connected. The ten Indians who were numbered in Hinds County, site of the state capital, were probably classified as urban. Recent interviews disclosed that a number of those who live on farm land in Neshoba and Leake Counties do not derive the major portion of their income from farming; nevertheless, the Mississippi Indians are largely rural-farm dwellers.

III. COMPOSITION

Race

Indians are classified in the census as a part of the nonwhite category. This fact is significant because classification by race ranks along with residence in importance in demographic analysis. Not only does it have a bearing on vital phenomena as is shown in this chapter, but it is also the source of much social friction and is a factor in social stratification.

The identification of Indians as nonwhite is a matter of relative importance from one state or area to another; however, in view of the magnitude of the total nonwhite population in Mississippi, this assumes added significance in the consideration of the Choctaws. A
TABLE I

POPULATION OF WHITES, NEGROES, AND INDIANS
BY RESIDENCE, MISSISSIPPI, 1950

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>White</th>
<th></th>
<th>Negro</th>
<th></th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cent</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cent</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,186,632</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>986,494</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,502</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>374,320</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>232,237</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural-nonfarm</td>
<td>312,108</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>161,496</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural-farm</td>
<td>502,204</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>592,761</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>2,016</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

large proportion of the total population in Mississippi is nonwhite, 45.4 per cent, according to the last census.\(^{18}\) That this is an important factor in the study of any group in Mississippi is readily apparent by an examination of Figure 4, which shows the relative population of the various counties and the proportion of whites to nonwhites in each. The nonwhites range from 81.8 per cent in Tunica County to 5.2 per cent in Tishomingo; in 31 of the 82 counties they number 50 per cent or more.\(^{19}\)

Among the nonwhites the Indians make up a very small proportion; in fact, they make up only 0.1 per cent of the total population of the state. It can be observed in Table II that this proportion has remained about the same since the removals in 1830 and 1840. The white population has continued to increase, although at slower rates; and, in the last decade, Negroes have begun to decline in absolute numbers.\(^{20}\) While the Indians have proportionately remained the same, their rate of increase has been much higher than that of both whites and Negroes for the past three decades. (See Figure 5.)

\(^{18}\)Ibid., p. 21.

\(^{19}\)Ibid. See Table A in the Appendix for the percentage distribution of the white and nonwhite population in all of the Mississippi counties.

\(^{20}\)A recent study concludes that Mississippi's total population "is apt to remain stationary or decline" in the foreseeable future. (Morton B. King, Jr., Harold A. Pederson, and John N. Burrus, Mississippi's People, 1950, Sociological Study Series, No. 5 [University of Mississippi Bureau of Public Administration, 1955], p. 84.)
Figure 4. Racial composition, population of Mississippi, 1950.
(Source: Appendix, Table A.)
Since most of the Indians live in one section of the state, a further comparison of the three racial groups in counties containing ten or more is suggested by Table III. In the counties where there are 10 or more Indians, comparisons are made with other racial groups. Neshoba has the highest proportion with 4.1 per cent, while the counties most distant from Neshoba have 0.1 per cent or less. The Negro population in each of the five counties with the largest number of Indians is less than ten thousand; however, their proportion in the county totals ranges from 21.8 per cent in Neshoba to 58.5 in Kemper. White population in these same counties ranges from 40.6 per cent in Kemper to 74.1 in Neshoba. Thus, there seems to be no relationship between the presence of Indians and the corresponding presence or absence of white or Negro populations.

Age

The Indians in Mississippi, as well as those elsewhere in the United States, are a young population. In 1950 a total of 50.7 per cent of the United States Indian population was under 20 years of age, in contrast to about one-third for the total population. Indeed, an even larger number, 55.9 per cent, of Mississippi Indians

---

21 Ibid., pp. 60-73, 99.


### TABLE II

**POPULATION OF MISSISSIPPI, BY RACE, 1830-1950**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Negro*</th>
<th>Indian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>827,922</td>
<td>786,111</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>2,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>379,274</td>
<td>353,899</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>607,526</td>
<td>295,718</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>792,303</td>
<td>353,899</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>827,922</td>
<td>382,896</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1,131,597</td>
<td>479,398</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>1,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>1,289,600</td>
<td>544,851</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>2,036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1,551,270</td>
<td>641,200</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>2,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1,797,114</td>
<td>786,111</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>1,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>1,790,618</td>
<td>853,962</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>1,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>2,009,821</td>
<td>998,077</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>1,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>2,183,796</td>
<td>1,106,327</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>2,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>2,178,914</td>
<td>1,188,632</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>2,502</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes nonwhites (other than Indians) who make up less than 0.05 per cent of the total population.

**The total is adjusted to include Indians who were not in the census count.

Estimates made by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the years indicated.

Figure 5. Rate of growth of population, by race, Mississippi, 1830-1950. (Source: Table II.)
### TABLE III

**POPULATION OF SELECTED COUNTIES IN MISSISSIPPI, BY RACE, 1950**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>White Number</th>
<th>White Per Cent</th>
<th>Negro Number</th>
<th>Negro Per Cent</th>
<th>Indian Number</th>
<th>Indian Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neshoba</td>
<td>25,730</td>
<td>19,064</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>5,609</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>1,057</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton</td>
<td>22,681</td>
<td>14,829</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>7,462</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leake</td>
<td>21,610</td>
<td>12,446</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>8,824</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kemper</td>
<td>15,893</td>
<td>6,460</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>9,287</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winston</td>
<td>22,231</td>
<td>12,938</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>9,186</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>57,235</td>
<td>42,207</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>14,933</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jasper</td>
<td>18,912</td>
<td>9,193</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>9,673</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noxubee</td>
<td>20,022</td>
<td>5,117</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>14,865</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>21,681</td>
<td>12,310</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>9,332</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>70,504</td>
<td>23,436</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>47,036</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>-- **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison</td>
<td>84,073</td>
<td>70,652</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>13,396</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-- **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leflore</td>
<td>51,813</td>
<td>16,482</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>35,316</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-- **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quitman</td>
<td>25,885</td>
<td>10,183</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>15,687</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinds</td>
<td>142,164</td>
<td>78,247</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>63,907</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-- **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes nonwhites (other than Indians) who make up less than 0.05 per cent of the total population.

**Less than 0.05 per cent.

were under 20 years of age in 1950. This is considerably higher than the figure of 42.9 per cent for the total population of Mississippi. The white and Negro populations in Mississippi are both older than the Indian, for the percentage of their totals under 20 years of age are 38.6 and 48.0 per cent, respectively.

The large proportion under twenty, of course, means a correspondingly smaller proportion in the population 20 years of age and over. Figures 6 and 7 depict graphically the percentage distributions by age and sex for the Mississippi Indian population and for selected populations—total United States Indian, Mississippi white and nonwhite, and total Mississippi. In all cases there is a larger proportion of Mississippi Indians under twenty-five years of age than in the same category for the other populations. Conversely, beginning with the 25-29 year age group, there is an abrupt decrease in the Indian population which becomes even more pronounced in the 35-39 year age group. Although the proportion in the age groups above 65 years increases, it remains well below that of any of the selected populations.

This unusual age distribution of the Mississippi Indians is significant for a number of reasons. Not only are the vital processes affected but there are equally important consequences of a social nature, for, "age composition determines in large measure

---

24 Percentage distributions by age and sex for the Mississippi Indians and the selected populations are presented in Table B in the Appendix.
Figure 6. Comparisons of age-sex distributions of Mississippi Indians with those of the total United States Indians and the white population of Mississippi, 1950. (Source: Appendix, Table B.)
Figure 7. Comparisons of age-sex distributions of Mississippi Indians with those of the nonwhite and total populations of Mississippi, 1950. (Source: Appendix, Table B.)
the social roles of the population, the degree, range, and direction of their movement, both vertical and geographical, their adaptability to new situations, the extent and nature of their social participation, and the goals for which they strive.\textsuperscript{25}

Sex

Like age, the balance between the sexes affects the vital processes and social relations. In contrast to the sex distributions for the United States Indian, total and Mississippi white populations, the Mississippi Indian population under 20 years of age has more females than males (28.3 to 27.6 per cent). Only in the first age category (under 5) do males outnumber females more than 0.1 per cent. Since this is not consistent with what is normally expected among younger children, it is quite possible that there has been a discrepancy in enumeration as sometimes occurs among Negroes.\textsuperscript{26}

A preponderance of females is also a characteristic of the total Mississippi Indian population which has a sex ratio\textsuperscript{27} of 97.8. The situation is quite different on the national level, however.


\textsuperscript{26}Smith and Hitt, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

\textsuperscript{27}The sex ratio is determined by dividing the number of males in an area in a given year by the number of females in that area and year and multiplying the quotient by 100. (Landis, op. cit., Appendix, p. XXIV.)
There a marked deficiency of females exists. In 1950 the total Indian sex ratio was 108.6, while that of all races in the United States was 98.6.\textsuperscript{28}

On the state level, the Choctaw ratio of 97.8 is only slightly above that of 97.7 for all races in Mississippi. But it is of interest to note that the Indians who are living outside the agency area have a sex ratio of 100.6, which indicates that more males than females are migrating to other places in Mississippi. The balance between the sexes among the white and nonwhite populations in Mississippi differs to some extent from that of the Indians—the white ratio is higher (100.5), while that of the nonwhites is lower (94.5).

IV. VITAL PROCESSES

There are only three ways a population can change—through births, deaths, and migration; hence, the importance of a knowledge of these processes in the study of a group of people is immediately apparent. A consideration of the vital processes of births and deaths among the Choctaw Indians in Mississippi is essential; nevertheless, data in this respect are considerably less reliable than those for other racial groups. Within recent years, Indian registration has made improvement; but, in some areas, it is still markedly

deficient. 29

Fertility

Crude Birth Rate. 30 Although the crude birth rate is widely used in the study of fertility, it is actually misleading, particularly in the case of the Choctaws. Since this index is based on the entire population under consideration, the fertility of the Indians appears to be low in comparison with other populations because of the large proportion of persons below twenty years of age. (See Table IV.) The crude birth rate for Mississippi Indians, based on a five-year average from 1949 through 1953, was 29.5 births per 1,000 population, while the rate for the total Indians in the United States for the same period was 32.1. 31 The rate for the entire United States population for the year 1951 was 24.5. 32


30 The crude birth rate is derived by dividing the number of recorded live births in an area in a given year by the number of people living in an area, preferably at the mid-point of that year, and multiplying the quotient by 1,000. (Landis, op. cit., p. vi.)

31 Data for the five-year average were compiled by the National Office of Vital Statistics and published in U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Health Services for American Indians, op. cit., Table 17, pp. 209-210.

32 Birth data for United States total and Mississippi white and nonwhite populations were obtained from U. S. Department of
### TABLE IV
FERTILITY MEASUREMENTS OF MISSISSIPPI INDIANS
AND SELECTED POPULATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Crude Birth Rate, 1951</th>
<th>Specific Birth Rate, 1951</th>
<th>Fertility Ratio 1950</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi Indian, Total*</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>143.5</td>
<td>809.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choctaw Agency b</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>200.0</td>
<td>-- c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonagency Area b</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>-- c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Indian, Total*</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>157.2</td>
<td>758.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi, Total**</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>138.2</td>
<td>590.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>104.1</td>
<td>503.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonwhite</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>176.4</td>
<td>700.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States, Total**</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>107.7</td>
<td>472.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Births per 1,000 females, 15-44.

b Choctaw agency area includes Jones, Leake, Neshoba, and Newton counties—in which most of the Indians served by the agency reside. Nonagency area refers to all other counties in the state where Indians live.

c Data not available.


**Source: U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare,
TABLE IV (Continued)

When compared with other Mississippi figures for the year 1951, the Mississippi Indian crude birth rate exceeds only the white which was 23.4. The total for all races in Mississippi (30.0) is slightly higher than the Indian rate, but the nonwhite figure (37.9) is nearly eight per cent higher.

A better indication of childbearing among the Mississippi Indians is obtained by computing separately the birth rates for the Indians living in the agency area and those in the nonagency area. With this refinement, the crude birth rate for the Choctaws in the agency area is found to be 41.0 persons per 1,000 population.

Specific Birth Rate. A more precise measurement than the preceding is the specific birth rate which takes into account sex and age of females in the total population. The use of females aged 15 to 44 years partially eliminates the problem of the disproportionate number of Indians in the lower age categories. The specific birth rate for 1951, based on the five year average 1949-1953, for the Mississippi Indians then becomes 143.5 births per 1,000 women, 15-44 years of age. The rate for the total Indians in the United


The specific birth rate is derived as is the crude birth rate except the female population aged 15-44 years is used as the base instead of the total population. (Landis, op. cit., p. X.)

States is 157.2 as compared to 107.7 for all races.

A comparison of the Mississippi Indian birth rate with other populations in the state can be made by again observing Table V. While it is higher than the rate for the white (104.1) and total state (138.2) populations, it is considerably lower than the nonwhite rate of 176.4. When the Mississippi Indians are adjusted for agency and nonagency populations, the agency specific birth rate becomes 200, which is well above the rates of any of the selected populations in the table.

Fertility Ratio. A common index used in determining the rapidity with which populations reproduce is the fertility ratio. It has an advantage over the crude and specific birth rates in that it is derived from census data instead of birth registration, which is particularly deficient among Indians. The fertility ratio for the Mississippi Indians was computed to be 809.4 per 1,000 females aged 15 to 44 years.

Among the fertility ratios listed in Table V, the Mississippi Indians have the highest, with the total United States Indians second with a ratio of 758.8 and Mississippi nonwhites third with 700.3. The ratio for all races in Mississippi is 590.6, while that for the total

---

35 The fertility ratio is the number of children under five years of age per 1,000 females aged 15 to 44 years. (Landis, op. cit., p. 158.)

United States population is 472.5. Data were not available for the computation of the ratio for the agency area; however, it probably is near 1,000.0.

Mortality

Crude Death Rate. The crude death rate for Indians also is misleading, because of the youth of the Indian population. Again based on a five year average of deaths, the crude death rate for Mississippi Indians for 1951 was 8.2 deaths per 1,000 population. In comparing this rate with the other selected populations, it should be noted that the death rates for the total Indian population and total United States population are both somewhat higher, 10.3 and 9.7 respectively.

The Mississippi Indian rate compares favorably with the rate of 9.6 for the total for all races in the State. The white rate (8.1) is slightly lower; the nonwhite rate (11.5) considerably higher. It should be noted that the agency area rate of 11.0 is almost as high as the nonwhite.

---

37 The crude death rate is determined by dividing the number of recorded deaths in an area in a given year by the number of people living in the area at the mid-point of that year and multiplying the quotient by 1,000. (Landis, op. cit., p. XII.)


Age-specific Death Rate. A much better picture of the death rate among the Indians is afforded by the age-specific death rate in Table V. There exists a very high death rate among Indian infants under one year of age. The rate for the Mississippi Indians is 69.9, while the total for the United States Indians is still higher, 80.3. These figures are far above the rate of 28.4 for the United States total for all races in the comparable age group. The figures are also much higher than rates for white and nonwhite population in Mississippi, which have rates of 30.3 and 46.8 respectively.

While the rates of both the Mississippi and total Indian populations drop sharply, in the 1-4 year age group they still remain over twice as large (6.9 and 6.8, respectively) as the highest rate

40 The age-specific death rate is computed by dividing the number of recorded deaths occurring to persons of a given age in an area in a given year by the mid-year population of that age group in that year and multiplying the quotient by 1,000. (Landis, op. cit., p. XIV.)

41 Figures for Indians under one year of age are infant mortality rates based on the five year average (1949-1953). These and other Indian measurements are published in U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Health Services for American Indians, op. cit., Table 19, pp. 216-217.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Populations</th>
<th>Deaths per 1,000 Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Under 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi Indian*</td>
<td>69.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choctaw</td>
<td>63.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonagency b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Indian*</td>
<td>80.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi Total**</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonwhite</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Total**</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aSince the number of Indians under one year of age is not available in published census data, these figures are infant mortality rates based on data for a five-year average (1949-1953) for Indians and for the year 1951 for the other selected populations.

*bData not available.


(Mississippi nonwhite, 3.0) among the other selected populations. In the ages 5-44, the Mississippi Indians and total Indian death rates remain higher than the others. However, in the age categories of 45-64 and 65 and over, the Mississippi Indians have a lower rate than any of the other populations, except Mississippi white, 45-64.

V. MIGRATION

The Removals

Equally as important as births and deaths in the growth of the Mississippi Indian population has been migration. Soon after 1800 small groups of Choctaws began emigrating west of the Mississippi. Some went into what later became Indian Territory; others settled in Louisiana and Texas. The large migrations did not begin until 1831. As is indicated in Table VI, there were three principal periods of emigration, which, incidentally, might better be termed removals rather than emigration. It is true that a change of residence was involved, but the voluntary aspect of contemporary migration was absent. To a large degree the change was forced upon the Indians. Sixteen thousand were removed in the

---

43 Two remnants of the Choctaws have been identified in Louisiana by Fred B. Kniffen in The Indians of Louisiana (Baton Rouge: Bureau of Educational Materials, Statistics and Research, College of Education, Louisiana State University, 1945), p. 84; and Alvin L. Bertrand in The Many Louisianas: A Study of Rural Social Areas and Cultural Islands (Baton Rouge: Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin No. 496, 1955), p. 30.
three-year period from 1831 to 1833.\textsuperscript{44} With the exception of a small number leaving in 1838, migration then ceased until 1845. From that year to 1849, 5,238 were removed to the West; and, in 1852 and 1854, groups totalling approximately 300 each migrated.\textsuperscript{45}

Not until fifty years later, in 1903, when the tribal land was allocated in the Indian Territory, did the Indians in any great numbers again migrate to the West. Although 1,639 Indians were placed on the Choctaw tribal roll\textsuperscript{46} and made eligible for participation in the division of the land, it is probable that not more than half that number remained in Oklahoma. The census of the Indians in Mississippi in 1910 indicated a decrease of only 950 during the intercensal period.

As there was no longer land for them to settle on in the West, all migration of the Indians outside Mississippi virtually ceased after this last removal. After the establishment of the agency in 1918, migration began again, slowly, however, as children sent to Oklahoma to school sometimes remained after completion of their education.

\textsuperscript{44}U. S. Senate Documents, Twenty-third Congress, First Session (Washington, D. C.: Duff Green, 1834), Vol. I, No. 1, p. 192.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number Removed</th>
<th>Cumulative Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>16,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>1,182</td>
<td>17,359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>1,768</td>
<td>19,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>1,623</td>
<td>20,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>20,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>21,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>21,715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>22,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>1,639</td>
<td>23,654</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1831-1903. Reports from 1831 to 1848 are included in Annual Reports of the War Department; those from 1849 to 1903 are in the Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior.
Current Migration

Today emigration is taking place in two respects to other counties in Mississippi besides the Choctaw agency area, and to other states. The former takes place largely on the resources of the Indian himself, while the latter is accomplished through the assistance of the Government in a relocation program.

Current migration is selective of the Indians 25 years old and over, both male and female. At the present there are only ten high school graduates living in the agency area; yet there are at least ten Mississippi Indians graduating from Indian high schools in other states each year. During the school year, 1956-1957, there were 49 students in the eleventh and twelfth grades of Oklahoma and Kansas high schools.

In all probability a similar pattern of migration will be followed in the immediate future; perhaps even to a greater extent. The government-sponsored relocation program will likely become more effective. The number of high school and college graduates from the agency area is increasing. Opportunities for employment in the agency area are not increasing. To migrate is the only alternative.

VI. THE FUTURE

If there were no migration, the population would be growing at a much more rapid rate than has been indicated by the census figures for the past three decades. The average number of births
per year from 1949 through 1953 was 94 in contrast to an average of 26 deaths per year for the same period. The result is an average annual increase of 68 without consideration of migration.

By using census data, on the other hand, a simple arithmetical average yearly increase of the Indian population can be determined from the 1930 and 1950 figures. For the twenty year period, the average yearly increase is 52.2, which is considerably lower than the figure 68 (which did not include migration). By extrapolation the population for July 1, 1960 is estimated to be 3,090.

A more realistic figure than the preceding estimate can be obtained by using the tribal role figure, 2,622, for April 11, 1950. This number can be used with the census enumeration for 1930, because the figures for that year, as well as for 1910, represent the most thorough Indian counts made by the census. By using the tribal role figure, the average yearly increase then becomes 58.2; and by extrapolation, the population estimate for July 1, 1960 is 3,219.

But with increasing racial tensions brought about as a result of the Supreme Court decision of May 17, 1954 on segregation, Indians have been affected as well as Negroes. Furthermore, the soil bank

---


48 Special schedules were used in 1910 and 1930 for Indians. In 1950 the special schedule was used only in certain major reservation areas.
program has deprived many Indians of their main source of livelihood—farm tenancy. Consequently, migration will probably be the principal factor in the change of the Indian population in the years immediately ahead.
CHAPTER V

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The historical sketch and the demographic data provide a background for undertaking the consideration of social organization, that is, the arranging of social actions into interdependent parts for the achievement of common ends.¹ While the emphasis in this chapter is on general structural characteristics of the Choctaws,

¹There is much disagreement concerning the meaning of the concepts, social organization, social structure, and cultural structure. Some writers equate the terms; other subsume one under the other; and still others replace one or more of them with new concepts.

Firth sees social organization as "... a social process, the arrangement of action in sequences in conformity with selected social ends." (Raymond Firth, Elements of Social Organization /London: Watts and Company, 1951/, p. 36.) Similarly, Znaniecki states that the concept "... is commonly used to denote the organization of actions of several agents who cooperate for the achievement of a common purpose." (Florian Znaniecki, "Social Organization and Institutions" in Georges Gurvitch and Wilbert E. Moore (eds.), Twentieth Century Sociology /New York: The Philosophical Library, 1943/, p. 200.) He adds, "Social organization can only be realized in a lasting 'social group' or 'association'." (Ibid.)

Social structure, on the other hand, is the organized set of relationships through which the members of the group or society carry on their activities. It is made up of statuses, positions in a group to which are attached rights and duties. Role, the dynamic aspect of status, is the manner in which the individual enjoys the privileges and fulfills the obligations of the status. This follows the definition and elaboration of these concepts in Ralph Linton, The Study of Man (student's edition; New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1936), Chapter VIII, "Status and Role," pp. 113-131. Concerning social structure, Firth states that "the essence of this concept is those social relations which seem to be of critical importance for the behavior of members of the society, so that if such relations were not in operation, the
the chapters which follow are devoted to special institutional areas: the family, education, religion, and economic activities.

The social organization of the Indian society as it has been manifested in the activities of various groups and associations has been subjected to disorganizing forces of an extreme nature. For example, the society was almost destroyed in the second quarter of the nineteenth century when most of the population was moved from Mississippi and again in 1903 when large scale migration once more took place. However, elements of its socio-cultural structure have endured, serving both as bond and guide in their day-to-day existence, which until recent years was based on a minimum of organization.

For the purposes of structural analysis, it is helpful to consider social organization as an on-going process which can be studied in cross-section at any one time, thus revealing the social and cultural structures. A knowledge of these structures is essen-

society could not be said to exist in that form." (Ibid., p. 31.) Merton defines the cultural structure "... as that set of normative values governing behavior which is common to members of a designated society or group." (Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure [revised and enlarged edition; Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1957], p. 162.) One element of it consists of "... culturally defined goals, purposes and interests, held out as legitimate objectives for all or for diversely located members of society." (Ibid., p. 132.) "A second element ... defines, regulates and controls acceptable modes of reaching out for these goals." (Ibid., p. 133.)

2It is not meant to suggest that structures are static. They are relatively stable. That they do change can be observed readily in the historical treatment offered in this chapter and in those that follow.
tial in understanding behavior in particular situations. A person enters a social situation with pre-determined definitions concerning the behavior of the other person or persons. These expectations are norms which are the standards for conduct in a particular situation. A person's behavior carries with it an expectation of appropriate response from the other person; in fact, expectations operate on both sides of the relation. To the degree that a person's behavior, or role, deviates from the expected, the situation will have to be re-defined.

Having been determined through observation and intensive interviews, some aspects of the socio-cultural structure of the Choctaws are presented below. Preceding the discussion of contemporary structure, however, structural characteristics which have prevailed at different times in recorded history will be traced in order to indicate the change which has taken and is still taking place. In the general consideration of socio-cultural structure which follows, attention will be given to social stratification, social mobility, and leadership on the contemporary scene.

I. SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

The Choctaws, like every other social group, are characterized

---

3 They define and regulate the acceptable means of reaching the ends and goals of a group or society.

by some degree of social stratification, that is, "... the differential ranking of the human individuals ... and their treatment as superior and inferior in certain socially important respects." The status accorded an Indian in his own society, however, is quite different from that accorded him by members of the larger society of which the Indians are a part. Consequently, the consideration of social stratification among the Choctaws will have to be undertaken from two points of view: in the smaller society composed of the Indians and in the larger society which includes whites and Negroes. A knowledge of an Indian's positions in both is essential for the purposes of this study. Furthermore, additional insight into contemporary relationships can be obtained through tracing changes in their social structure in historical times.

Indian Society

Class Before Removal. A survey of available historical documents indicates that in the eighteenth century the Indian society was considerably more stratified than today. There were groups or strata of statuses which suggested well-defined classes. But in

---


6 A society consists of individuals who interact regularly on the basis of mutual expectations. The Indians form a sub-society within the society about them. The sub-society is a "partial social system" in the Parsonsian sense. (Talcott Parsons, The Social System [Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1951], p. 19.)

7 Social class refers to a number of people in a society whose
the decade of 1830 the society was abruptly changed by the removal of the majority of its members from Mississippi. As those who remained became a part of the larger society, dominated by whites, the bases for according status underwent tremendous change and the result was the dual system of statuses in operation today.

The earliest information on the social life of the Choctaws (c. 1700-1750) reveals that four classes of men were recognized: (1) the head chiefs, village chiefs, and war chiefs; (2) holy or beloved men; (3) warriors; and (4) those who had not struck blows or who had killed only a woman or a child. 8

In the first century of their contact with whites, the Choctaws had a "head chief" who ruled over the entire nation composed of three semi-independent divisions. He presided over a council composed of representatives from the three divisions—the northeastern, southern, and western. 9 He was assisted by a "second chief" or "vice chief" status is similar. They look upon each other as social equals and upon all others in the society as socially superior or inferior. Individuals in a class share the same "life chances" and (in contemporary Western society) generally have the same economic position. (H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills /trans. and eds./, From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology /New York: Oxford University Press, 1946/, pp. 181-183, 405.)

8 John R. Swanton, "An Early Account of the Choctaw Indians," Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association, V (1918), 54-55. (This is a translation of the portion of Relation de La Louisianne pertaining to the Choctaws. It was written prior to 1750 and the author is unknown.)

9 Swanton has found evidence in early writing that there was once a fourth division referred to as the "central division." It probably encompassed the portions of the present counties of Neshoba
as some writers referred to him. These two leaders, mentioned frequently prior to 1800, do not appear to have been confined to any particular town or division. However, early writers mention the "Choctaw capital" as being Koweh Chito which was located in what is now Kemper County. From the references to these men and to the council, it seems that, at the most, the organization was a loose confederation, as the head chief had authority only in matters of an intertribal nature.

Shortly after the beginning of the nineteenth century, the head chieftainship apparently was abolished; and, unfortunately, there are no existing documents relating how or why. The regional chiefs then ruled their divisions with absolute authority independently of the others but with some effort toward unity in intertribal matters. These leaders, later referred to as head chiefs, were elected to their positions after 1800; however, it appears that a division had rather limited choice in whom it could choose. The successors to the rulers were their nephews, sons of their sisters, a practice which was doubtless a carry-over from the matrilineal family system which prevailed in pre-Columbian times.

In each of the divisions there were village chiefs or captains who were elected by the people to be rulers of their respective towns

In addition to these chiefs there were other leaders of high status: a war chief, who was assisted by two lieutenants, and an assistant chief who arranged all ceremonies, feasts, and dances. The latter usually succeeded the village chief upon his death.

Records do not reveal on what basis the men of the second class, the holy or beloved men, were ranked. However, in view of the strong familial ties which were prevalent prior to 1830, it is possible that these were old men who were no longer able to fight, whose counsel, nevertheless, was important to the people. It may have included also the prophets and medicine men.

A fifth class of people (if there were sufficient numbers to merit the designation of class) were the "bone pickers," men and women whose function was to prepare the bones of the dead for burial. The literature indicates that this class had a very low status. After 1800 when the practice of scraping the flesh of the dead was discontinued, the bone pickers took up other activities in connection with burials.

Contemporary Stratification. In his study of research findings concerning stratification and class in American society,

---

10 From a number of sources, Swanton has identified 115 towns which were scattered throughout the three divisions. (Swanton, op. cit., pp. 58-76.) However, he indicates that at any one time there were probably only 40 or 50 towns, as the Choctaws occasionally moved whole towns and sometimes renamed them. Furthermore, it is possible that some of the names were those of villages connected with larger towns.
Kahl employed six variables: personal prestige, occupation, possessions, interaction, class consciousness, and value orientations. Briefly, the contemporary Choctaw society can be examined in respect to these criteria.

Family and kinship have always been important in determining status and prestige in the Choctaw society. This fact assumed even greater significance after 1830 when other aspects of their social organization were destroyed. On the contemporary scene some families, especially those largely oriented toward white values, feel that they are better than others. This is not openly stated but can be inferred from remarks occasionally made about particular families. Several families (as well as some individuals) are referred to as "no-count." Others (mainly older couples and those with no education) are the object of criticism because they are uncooperative in community activities. They cling to the "old ways" which are embarrassing to the younger adults.

From his family the individual receives an ascribed status which affects his chances in both the Indian society and the larger society. As families are ranked, so are their individual members. Those who come from families of low prestige are also generally looked down upon; and, vice versa, those from a few families enjoy high prestige among the Indians. Those who are ranked high are in

---

the main Christians and look with scorn on those who overindulge in drinking alcoholic beverages. Concerning those who drink, one interviewee said, "They don't care. They just won't do right. And all of us get blamed for what a few do."

Occupation, the second variable, is a factor which has received much attention in studies of class. Among the Indians the principal occupation is farming, more particularly tenant farming. In general, tenants who live on the reservation are better off economically than sharecroppers. As reservation farming appears to be more desirable, there is a continual waiting list of those who wish to occupy agency land.\footnote{This is not to suggest that all who live on the reservation are prosperous farmers. One basic reason for the desire to live there is that the individual is working for himself and not for a landlord. The writer visited in two reservation houses that were not more than twelve feet square. Both were made of scraps of lumber and abandoned tin. The ground served as a floor in both. Farming equipment was at a bare minimum in these two instances.} Approximately forty individuals supplement their incomes by working for the Agency—driving school busses, maintaining reservation roads, and working at schools. The bus drivers have higher prestige than the others, with the exception of recently added white-collar employees. There is only one business—a small general store—in the agency area owned by an Indian. He is a deacon in his church and his wife is a member of the Tribal Council. The Indian ministers also enjoy high prestige in spite of meager income. The sharecroppers are on the bottom. Their lot is unfortunate, for they can hardly get out of debt before time to borrow
for another crop. Theirs is, indeed, a hand-to-mouth existence.

Occupations provide the income on which is based consumption behavior or "style of life." Because the income from farm tenancy is so low, most of the Choctaws have had to content themselves, until quite recently, with the bare necessities of existence. Only four own their homes. As one might expect, the families of these four and the store owner mentioned above have high prestige among the Indians. Although the remainder are renters of one kind or another, their places and types of residence are a reflection of their style of life.

About half of the Indians live on reservation land in houses most of which are similar in construction. Those who live there feel that they are better off than sharecroppers, because, among other reasons, in a sense they are working for themselves. The desirability of living on reservation land is evidenced by the fact that there is a continual waiting list for the limited number of houses. Most of these are similar in construction—small, four-room frame buildings. But there are a few log cabins and shacks scattered through the seven communities. Those who are tenant

---

13 The Agency reported in 1950 that there were 20 families living in log cabins, 529 in frame houses, and one in a brick house. (Investigation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, House Report No. 2503, Eighty-second Congress, Second Session /Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1952/, p. 1248.) The brick house has never ceased to be a topic of conversation among Philadelphians. About fifteen years ago it was built by a wealthy Oklahoma Choctaw for his mother. The writer particularly remembers hearing visitors to the house make this remark: "It's just like a pig pen."
farmers for whites generally have worse housing and are less stable in residence than those who rent from the Agency.

A better indication of style of life among the Choctaws can be obtained from a consideration of material objects (variously considered as necessities or luxuries, depending upon one's value orientation) possessed by them. Information in this respect is provided in the 1956 and 1957 annual reports of the Choctaw Agency. The Conehatta principal maintains a record of "community improvements" of approximately 100 families served by that school. The items listed offer some illumination as to the material objects which add prestige to the family and/or the individual:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1957</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cars</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity in homes</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric refrigerators</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice boxes</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butane gas</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television sets</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radios</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tractors</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although washing machines were not included, a number of washing machines in each community were found. Throughout the reservation area, as at Conehatta, not more than half the Indians have sufficient income to purchase anything other than essentials.

---

Consideration of the remaining variables—interaction, class consciousness and value orientation—can be better discussed by analyzing them in the context of acculturation. Because all of the Indians are oriented to some degree toward the values of the larger society about them, their interaction with each other is influenced by the degree of orientation. There results a consciousness of differences in the extent to which culture of the larger society has been adopted. Hence, it is necessary to approach the problem of class distinctions from the standpoint of acculturation.

The fact that some Indians constantly referred to the "old folks" while others referred to "young folks" suggested a basic cleavage in the group, related to the degree of acculturation. This situation, of course, has been encountered in other Indian studies.\(^15\)

An investigation of this cleavage has led to a three-fold classification of the Choctaws on the basis of acculturation: native, transitional, and marginal.\(^16\) The native and the marginal are the largest groups. Those classified as native, of course, are mostly "old folks." Many can neither read nor write English. They refuse to cooperate in community improvement programs; lawns, flowers,

\(^15\) For example see Ralph Linton (ed.), Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes (New York: Appleton-Century Company, 1940).

window screens, and soil improvement are not a part of their value system. They steadfastly adhere to the frontier style of dress. Because of their value orientation, most of them have always been sharecroppers. They either do not encourage their children to attend school or forbid them to go. A group of some fifty "natives" lives more or less isolated from the rest of the Tribe in Noxubee County.

In the native class are found most of the chronic drinkers. It is true that youth in the transitional class occasionally indulge, but drinking appears to be an institutionalized pattern of behavior for many of the sharecroppers. Names of some Indians are recorded on the jailer's roster in Neshoba County Saturday after Saturday. A tabulation of the arrests in the County for 1956 reveals that a much larger proportion of the Indian population is arrested than Negro or white. This fact is clearly shown in Table VII in which the ratio of percentage of arrests to percentage of population for the races is computed. The ratios for Negroes and whites are 1.45 and .65 respectively, while the Indian ratio is 4.43. Most of these arrests, according to the jailer, were for drinking or possession of alcoholic beverages.

---

17 Men wear black pants and coats, shirts that are usually brightly colored, and black hats with wide brims. Women wear ankle-length dresses trimmed with braid.

18 Jailer's Records, Neshoba County, Mississippi, 1956.

19 In June, 1956 two boys were arrested for raping an old Indian
TABLE VII
RATIO OF THE PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ARRESTS TO PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY RACE
NESHOB A COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI, 1956

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Arrests</th>
<th>Population*</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>1,170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negro</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>5,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>18,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>25,175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Population estimates for July 1, 1956 were determined by extrapolation. The arithmetic average yearly increase of population was derived from 1930 and 1950 census data.

A large number of the Choctaws—perhaps half of them or more—are in the transitional category. In varying degrees they are oriented toward values of the larger society. White dress has been adopted by those in this category, at least to some extent. Men dress in the fashion prevailing among rural whites about them, but some women in this class still wear traditional dress. They have attended school, usually six or eight years, and some have completed ten. They are active participants in church life, community clubs, and the Tribal Council. Most of those in the transitional category live on reservation land and are making the most of their farming; some supplement their income with part-time work off their farms. The more successful have cars, tractors, radios, refrigerators, electric stoves, and television sets.

Those in the marginal category are few (not more than twenty-five), but they represent advanced stages of acculturation. They have had high-school training and some kind of advanced work. They wear current white styles of clothing, to the extent that their income will permit. Because they are marginal, they are more con-

woman. They were convicted and sent to the State penitentiary. At the time of the interview with the jailer, there was a fourteen year-old boy who had been arrested for stealing. He was later sent to a training school. These were the only offenses besides drinking that the jailer could recall.

20 The marginal man, according to Park, is a man of two cultures, who never quite breaks with the past and is not quite accepted in the culture toward which he is oriented because of racial prejudice. (Robert E. Park, Race and Culture (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1950), p. 354.)
scious of discrimination against their people. And it is because of this that the number in this category remains low—the marginal Indian migrates rather than suffer discrimination.

In summary, some general remarks can be made concerning status differentials within the three acculturation groups. Roughly these groups approximate three classes. A comparison of the two extremes reveals some of the distinctions. The marginal individuals have the highest income; the natives, the lowest. With increasing income are to be found increasing material objects—possessions. The pattern of education varies in precisely the same way, the marginals having at least high-school training while many of the natives have none at all.

The Indian in the Larger Society

The marginal Indians find their status a peculiar one since they are oriented toward the larger society and yet are not allowed to participate fully in it. In the society about them, the Indians find themselves treated much the same as Negroes. In the agency area caste-like relationships exist between Indians, Negroes, and whites. There is very little contact between the three races except in economic transactions.

Indians and whites. In the city of Philadelphia the Indians are not allowed to use any public facilities which are reserved for whites. 21 They cannot attend the schools or churches, eat in restau-

21 One interesting exception to this is a Cherokee woman who
rants, nor can they sit in the main part of the motion picture theater. If they wish, they can use Negro rest rooms, eat at Negro cafes (there is only one Negro cafe in the main part of town), and sit in the balcony reserved for Negroes at the theater. But the great majority refuse to use any facilities designated for Negroes. An Indian center with lounges and eating facilities built by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board (white), is proving beneficial at the moment; by no means, however, does it solve the problem of discrimination.

Few Indians are able to get work in town. In 1953 two Indian women were employed in a small factory; objections were raised by white women employees; the Indians were dismissed, even though their work had been satisfactory. A number of Indians are continuously employed at the Agency (located within the city limits) as chauffeurs and janitors. Several are employed at the hospital as cooks, orderlies, and nurses' aides. The Agency has recently engaged two Indian secretaries. But outside of the Agency, only two other Indians are known to be in regular employment in the city—a janitor and a mill laborer.

* teaches in one of the Indian schools. She has lived in Philadelphia for about 15 years, is an active member of the First Baptist Church, and uses any facilities whites do. She is not as dark as the average Choctaw.

About three years ago an Indian girl graduated from a school of nursing and was offered a position at the hospital; but the white nurses objected, so she went elsewhere.
This caste-like barrier which excludes them from white society is the principal factor in causing the young people to migrate. One adult Indian remarked, "I don't blame them for not coming back after high-school training; if I could, I'd leave, too." The two college graduates who are now teaching at the Indian schools do not attempt to cross the color line in Philadelphia or Carthage (which is also near their homes) because of possible embarrassment. On the other hand, they experience little or no discrimination away from the agency area. Another man exclaimed, "Why, I can go forty miles from here to Meridian and be treated like anybody else." Similar sentiments were expressed by a number of those who have traveled away from the agency area.

An older informant expressing his views on discrimination against his people believed that the answer to their problems lies in the approach used by Negroes: "It looks like we're going to have to get Congress to pass us some civil rights laws, too." Later in

23 The situation in the agency area is quite similar to the caste-like relationships between Negroes and whites in the South. The use of "caste" in this connection has been questioned, but there is no doubt that many elements of the ideal-type caste are characteristic of relationships between the races in the South today. Park's observations of twenty years ago are still descriptive of many areas at the present. (See in particular Robert E. Park, "The Etiquette of Race Relations in the South," originally written in 1937, Race and Culture, op. cit., pp. 177-188. A recent discussion of caste in the South can be found in Kingsley Davis, Human Society (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957), pp. 385-388.)

24 One veteran expressed amazement at being treated as everyone else in the service. He said that it took him a while to get adjusted to the idea. He is now very unhappy and is contemplating relocation.
his conversation he pointed toward Philadelphia and said, "Those people call themselves Christians," but he went on to say that they do not know what the word means. As an afterthought, he added, "One thing I'm sure of: There won't be any color in heaven." Resentment against being treated the way they are by whites is prevalent among young and old, but it is strongest in the marginal group, those who have had most contact with whites.

**Indians and Negroes.** While it is the desire of the marginal group, for the most part, to share in the activities of the white society, there seem to be intense feelings among all Choctaws against any association with Negroes. Every adult whom the writer interrogated was acquainted with the stock joke about the class structure of the larger society: "White man first, Indian second, Indian dog third, and Negro last." The attitudes implied in this statement were not only hinted in conversations but by some were openly expressed. While the writer was talking with an older Indian at the Pearl River school where a building was under construction, he turned and pointed to some Negro laborers and said, "They [the Agency] let them work before they let us."

In the Bogue Chitto community a few years ago an Indian girl married a Negro. As a result, her parents disowned her, and she has not been permitted to return to the community. The comments

---

25 No one could recall having ever heard of an Indian man marrying a Negro.
of one Indian can be contrasted with those generally expressed about Negroes:

The niggers used to be so dirty. They just didn't care what they looked like when they went to town--I've seen 'em. But lately, they've changed--I don't know what it is. They dress up now on Saturday.26

It appears that his attitude toward Negroes is in the process of change. But this was an exception; the average Indian repeated the stereotypes held by whites toward Negroes in general.

II. SOCIAL MOBILITY

The Indian Society

Because of close family ties among the Choctaws, class lines are not rigidly drawn. In some instances the factor of age, somewhat on a generation basis, enters into the class distinctions—for example, three marginal Indians come from the same transitional class home, while their grandfather (according to the grandchildren) is one of the "old folks."

The majority of the native class are sharecroppers, those whose economic condition is lowest. As the children in this class are useful to parents in their daily work, there is sometimes no opportunity at all for education. Thus, these children find it difficult to rise beyond the class of their family because educa-

26 This might well have been said by a white, believing a prevailing stereotype about Indians.
tion is essential in the larger society. Their life chances, in effect, are severely limited because of their low position in the social structure.

Largely through their own efforts, many native-class Indians rise to the transitional class. Somewhere in their experience—perhaps in school or in military service—they become oriented toward values of the larger society. Although transitional-class parents themselves have little education, they recognize its importance and encourage their children to go to school. The children of this class are permitted to wear dress characteristic of the larger society. Females cut their hair, a practice not allowed in the traditional class. These are the families with radios, through which additional culture is available for their offspring. Hence, children from the transitional homes usually rise above the level of their parents, provided they have the opportunity to finish high school and take specialized training.

The third class consists of young men and women whose parents belong to the transitional class. Because of migration away from the reservation area the number in this class remains small. With few or no job opportunities, they leave rather than become, like their parents, small-scale farmers. There is very strong feeling among the marginal class against the "old folks" (with the possible exception of the individual's relatives), because the marginals see the stereotypes held by the whites frequently exemplified in tradi-
tional behavior. They believe that the native class is hindering acceptance of Indians in white society.

The Larger Society

Acceptance in the larger society is always a source of concern for the marginal Indian. There is the desire for full participation, yet in the agency area there is an effective caste-like relationship operating which keeps the Indian in the lower class of the larger society. The marginal Indian dresses well, speaks English fluently, and is reasonably well-trained for work, but in his skin color there is always a barrier to his acceptance.

The few white-collar employees that have been added to the agency staff may, in the long run, contribute to a redefinition of the Indians by whites. Such a redefinition would open the way for the employment of other Indians in cities of the agency area. But until that takes place, it will continue to be virtually impossible for Indians to rise beyond the lower class. The only way that the Indians can achieve higher status to any appreciable degree is by complete assimilation into the white society.

Among whites there are widely varying opinions as to when assimilation will take place. Some say, "Never." One of the primary sources for this view is Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess's *Introduction to the Science of Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), p. 735.

---

27 Assimilation "... is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life." (Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Society* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924], p. 735.)
principal informants for the study believes that it will take a hundred years. Vogt, in his discussion of this problem among American Indians in general, states that it can come about only when there is free intermarriage. But this could prove detrimental, especially to the welfare of the first participants in the mixed marriages, as has happened in the case of Negroes and whites; many times the individuals find themselves isolated from both races.

A certain amount of "race mixing," however, has already taken place, something to be expected when races are living side-by-side. Although the Indians are carried on the Choctaw rolls as "full blood," casual observation of school children reveals that there has been some mixing. An agency employee stated that he knew of four Indian women who had married white men since he had assumed his position in 1952. The son of an Indian leader is married to a white woman and is living in Mississippi outside the agency area. Among the transitional and marginal Indians, there seems to be no resentment whatsoever to Indian-white marriages; however, opposition to the idea was encountered in all conversations with whites, with the exception of two or three who have been closely associated with the Indians. One white expressed himself negatively on the subject but added, "If they have just one drop of white blood in

---

them, it makes all the difference in the world."

III. LEADERSHIP

In any group effective leadership is essential if the ends of the group are to be achieved. For more than a century after 1830 the Choctaws were deprived of any group leadership. Only in recent years has the socio-economic situation been such as to permit the emergence of native leaders. When the Agency was established in 1918, leadership was provided from that source, but as early as 1900 a few interested whites had been helping the Indians improve their conditions.

White Leaders

Among the whites there are three men who have probably been most instrumental in aiding and leading the Indians: a lawyer, an Indian agency farmer (mentioned in Chapter I), and a missionary. Although these three have been variously praised and condemned by whites and Indians, the writer's conclusion is that the net results of their efforts have been of immeasurable benefit to the Indians.\(^29\)

The lawyer, who was once an Indian school teacher, has devoted his life to carrying the claims of the Indians before the Government. At present he is seeking a claim of nine million dol-

\(^{29}\) These men feel that they are victims of gossip and at times are ostracized by fellow-whites for their activities in behalf of the Indians. One said: "I'm always waited on last in a store or cafe here in town."
lars for the Mississippi Band. His critics accuse him of wasting fantastic sums of money paid to him, not by members of the Band but by whites who can claim Indian ancestry and who therefore hope to share in any settlement. Nevertheless, the lawyer is a keen student of Choctaw history and gave every evidence to this interviewer of his sincerity of effort.

The second white man, the Indian agency farmer, was associated with the Choctaws for more than a decade before being transferred because of his independent efforts to help them. By opening up his correspondence files, the farmer convinced this writer of his desire to help the Indians. These files contain hundreds of letters, many of them pertaining to the farmer's efforts to help a particular family or individual. Three years ago the Indian hospital was about to be closed; this same farmer deserves much credit for diligently working to secure its continued operation. Even though he is now retired, he is still assisting the Indians as they seek to obtain a high school.

The third person, the missionary, has been a great influence in encouraging Indian youth to finish high school and go to college, even having a personal hand in helping the first two who went to college finish. Through his efforts the Mississippi Baptist Convention (white) formally recognized the Indian Baptist churches in 1952 and brought them into the state organizational structure. He was also instrumental in getting the Indian center at Philadelphia;
however, when construction was complete, he had been replaced.

These men definitely have aided in developing Indian leadership. The lawyer has worked with Indians serving on the Tribal Council; the farmer has persuaded them to assert themselves (for example, writing to their Congressmen); and the missionary has promoted the growth of leadership in the Baptist churches. All three of these men will soon be physically unable to pursue their goal further, at which time the burden of leadership may fall almost entirely upon the Indians, themselves.

The Indian Agency

From its inception the Agency at Philadelphia has maintained a comprehensive program for the welfare of the Indians. Under its sponsorship a Choctaw business association was organized in 1935 and the Tribal Council in 1945. In recent years community development clubs have also been sponsored by a branch of the Agency. Although the Council and the clubs are supervised by agency personnel, they provide opportunities for some degree of Indian leadership.

In spite of the program promoted by the Agency, there seems to be almost wholesale discontent with its leadership. The three men discussed above were strong in their criticism of former agency policies: "They don't give a damn about the Indians; they want to keep 'em poor and ignorant." "It's nothing but a bureaucracy that's trying to perpetuate itself." "They don't want them to have a high school."
The Indians were equally vocal in their comments about the Agency: "We just don't have confidence in them." "They don't trust us." "We have to talk English in the Council meetings." They feel that the Agency is "against" them. Regardless of what the facts are, it is what they believe that is important in their relationships with the Agency or in any social situation.

The Indians believe the Agency responsible for their having no four-year high school. They recognize the present policy of sending students to high schools out of the State is depriving them of potential leadership. And they seem to think that their problems would be solved if they could only get the high school. In that event, general conditions would eventually improve but probably very slowly. Without immediate job opportunities for high-school graduates, of course, the present pattern of migration would inevitably continue.

A factor that many critics fail to take into account is that the Agency is an administrative body and does not make the over-all policies which it administers. The various activities which it sponsors are doing much to benefit the Indians, but frequently one hears such comments: "It's not enough," or "It's too little, too late." Regardless of what is being done, the Indians seem to feel that the Agency is not genuinely interested in them. Never-

30 It is too soon to assess the effect of the employment of Indians for white-collar jobs in the Agency. More favorable attitudes may be created if the practice is continued.
theless, it deserves a fair share of credit for any improvement of their welfare.

Native Beginnings

Among the Choctaws themselves, effective leadership has failed to develop largely because of the socio-economic circumstances in which they have lived since 1830, but also on account of the migration of potential leaders. The Indians have had little opportunity to express themselves; only in their churches have they found this freedom to any extent. But in recent years with increasing education and improving economic conditions, there is emerging a more articulate Indian.

The part played by religion cannot be overemphasized. Adjoining the churches were the burying grounds which have always been hallowed in Choctaw tradition. For this reason (and others to be discussed in Chapter VIII) the Choctaws have long had a close association with their churches. In the Protestant churches the Indians have enjoyed some degree of freedom in directing their own activities and in expressing themselves. The actual operation of several churches has been in their hands; consequently, for a long time they have gained leadership experience in that responsibility. As a result of the prominence of the church in their communities, the

---

31 As late as 1945 strong feelings for the dead were still in evidence when a church moved to a larger community, leaving behind one family which insisted on staying to look after the cemetery.
leaders of the churches, particularly the ministers, are accorded high prestige among the Indians. Although the present ministers are not high school graduates,\(^{32}\) they are the most active leaders among their people.

The Tribal Council also offers opportunities for leadership; but, as was pointed out earlier, it is under the control of the Agency, thus limiting the authority of the officers. As one member put it, "We're just a rubber stamp." None of those on the council have graduated from high school, a fact which hinders intelligent action on their part, even if it is guided by the Agency. But educational handicaps are being overcome, and members of the Tribal Council, as well as church leaders, are becoming more articulate. If the potential is not lost through migration, these changes should ultimately result in more effective leadership.

While the structure of the Choctaws and its relation to the larger society have been examined in this chapter, understanding of the Indian social organization can be further facilitated by tracing the changes in their principal institutions—family, religion, educ-

\(^{32}\)One minister finished college in 1957 but has recently accepted the pastorate of a church in Oklahoma.

\(^{33}\)Institutions, according to MacIver and Page, are "... the established forms or conditions of procedure characteristic of group activity." (Robert M. MacIver and Charles H. Page, Society: An Introductory Analysis /New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1949/, p. 15.) An association, on the other hand, is "... a group organized for the pursuit of an interest or group of interests in common." (Ibid., p. 12.) (The italics are in the original.)
cation, and economy. Attention will be focused first on the family, which has been the mainstay of the Mississippi Choctaws in their many years of adversity.
CHAPTER VI

THE FAMILY

In spite of the circumstances under which the Choctaws lived in Mississippi after 1830, the family was the one institution which was able to withstand to some extent the disorganizing experiences which confronted the individual Indian from day to day. The disrupting effects of the removals, the Civil War, and the daily frustrations occasioned in adapting themselves to the invading whites and their culture destroyed most of their social organization or caused such changes that only a few vestiges of the past have survived.

When Europeans began to visit among the Choctaws during the seventeenth century, the consanguine family was observed to be the center of social organization. Other institutions of their society were on a rudimentary level of development and there appeared to be a fusion of these with the family. Knowledge of early family life, like that of general history, comes from the travelers who first encountered the Indians and, later, from Americans who were closely associated with them.

I. KINSHIP

Descent Pattern

At the time of the arrival of Europeans the Choctaw family

\[1\text{The consanguine family consists of a "... nucleus of blood}[/itex]
had many characteristics of the Crow-type kinship system.\(^2\) Descent was effected through the mother's family. Families were not necessarily matrilocal, but the newly created primary unit usually made its home in the same village in which the wife's relatives lived. The mother's brother was vested with authority and with disciplinary functions for the children. A strict taboo held between a man and his wife's mother and grandmother; they could neither speak nor look at each other. Further, the father's brother was classed with the father and the mother's sister with the mother.

The essential characteristic, however, of the Crow system is the classification of the father's sister's female descendants through females with the father's sister, and their sons with the father, thus giving a definite descent pattern.\(^3\) Eggan has found convincing evidence in support of this characteristic among the Choctaws prior to 1830 in a speech made by a missionary in which this feature was described as "aunts in a row."\(^4\)


\(^4\) Ibid., p. 37.
Although the system was probably in the process of change in 1842, the nearest relative on the female's side in Mississippi was still consulted concerning her family matters. J. F. H. Claiborne, who was on the United States commission investigating Indian land claims during that year, notes that "instances frequently came before the Commissioners where a wife, though living happily with her husband, was induced by the maternal uncle to take her children and go west, after 'leaving him,' as one of them expressed it, 'without work, child, or comrade.'" In this connection the further observation is made that it was the right of the wife, when separation took place, to take the children to aid her in making a living; and even after her death, her relatives' claim over the children was paramount to that of the father.

But by 1860 there had been a complete modification in Choctaw kinship terminology according to the investigations of Morgan. His findings indicate that the patterns had been reversed: The father's sister's son had become father; his son, father; and so on indefinitely through the male line. Hence, Eggan concluded that the evidence sug-

---


6 Ibid.

gests "... a definite change in the Choctaw kinship system from the time of removal in the 1830's to the time when Morgan collected ... [his] schedules in 1860."\(^8\)

Even though the shift in terminology appeared complete from the matrilineal to the patrilineal system, practices related to the former continued to persist. Morgan states that when a boy was placed in school, not his father but the boy's maternal uncle took charge.\(^9\) And as late as 1909, Bushnell, in studying the Choctaws of Bayou LaCom, notes that upon the death of a man his property was taken by his brothers, as the responsibility of the children supposedly lay in the wife's family.\(^10\)

But among the Mississippi Choctaws all ideas about the matrilineal system had disappeared by 1913. Swanton states that even those who remembered the clans thought that they had always been patrilineal.\(^11\) Eggan also was unable to find surviving evidence of the matrilineal system in Mississippi.\(^12\) The writer's recent investi-

\(^8\) Eggan, op. cit., p. 37.

\(^9\) Morgan, op. cit., p. 158.


\(^12\) Eggan, op. cit., p. 38.
gations along these lines further indicate that contemporary Missis-
sippi Indians reckon kinship precisely as the whites. Relatives of
both parents are accorded equal recognition. The young Indians are
using Choctaw equivalents for the kinship terminology employed by
whites, and when conversing in English, they use the English word
as it applies to the relationship.

Moieties and Clans

The Choctaws were divided into moieties and each of these
contained a number of non-totemic clans. The moieties were exo-
gamous; that is, individuals were required to marry outside their
own moiety. Those belonging to a moiety "lived promiscuously through-
out the nation, but as everyone knew to which iksa /moiety in this
instance/ he belonged," Halbert comments, "no matrimonial mistake
could occur." If one married into his own moiety, he was guilty
of incest and was subject to severe punishment.

With the removals in 1830 the moieties collapsed, but nuclei
of at least four clans remained in the State. The principle of
exogamy was then applied to clan marriages. One informant stated

\[13\] Swanton, Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life
of the Choctaw Indians, pp. 79-80.

\[14\] The word iksa was used to refer to moieties, clans, and in
later times, to Christian groups. (Swanton, Source Material for the
Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians, p. 78.)

\[15\] Henry S. Halbert, "Courtship and Marriage Among the Choctaws
of Mississippi," The American Naturalist, XVI (1882), 223.
that in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Indians belonging to the Red Water iksa were expected to marry outside their community. But, with the removal in 1903, even this arrangement broke down.

Presently the effort is being made informally to prevent marriages of closer kin than fifth cousins. An older informant admitted that emphasis on exogamy has diminished in recent years. He thought, however, that marriage of first cousins would be more than the community would tolerate.

II. MARRIAGE

Traditional Ceremony

Weddings among the Choctaws not only served the purpose of uniting a couple in marriage; they were also important occasions for the people of the various communities to gather and visit. The earliest recorded description of a marriage ceremony, tentatively dated about 1755, is very brief. In the light of the remarks made earlier about the organization of the aboriginal family, it may not be accurate:

16 This presents a disturbing problem for recent Indian college graduates, most of whom have come from the same community. Since most individuals in the locale are related, the young people cannot find mates with comparable education.

17 A brother and sister are said to have begun living together in the Bogue Chitto community shortly after 1900. When the girl became pregnant, both were driven from the community.
When a youth wishes to marry, he goes to find the father and the mother of the girl whom he desires. After having made his request he throws before the mother some strings of glass beads and a breechclout before the father. If they take the presents it is a sign of their consent, and then the youth leads the girl away to his home without further ceremony.18

Later descriptions are more extensive. Three writers—Claiborne (1880), Halbert (1882), and H. B. Cushman (1899)—have provided accounts, informative but by no means consistent.19 There were, no doubt, variations in these customs at all times; consequently, writers referring to the same period sometimes recorded different behavior patterns.20

Claiborne's description was probably characteristic before 1850, as he obtained much of his data in connection with his investigations of Indian land claims in 1843. Concerning the request of a young woman's hand in marriage, he says, "A young warrior who is in love applies to the maternal uncle—never to father or mother—and they agree on the price, which is paid to the uncle."21 This

---


20 In the published accounts of these ceremonies, it is usually impossible to determine whether the description was current at the time of writing or was characteristic of an earlier period. Unless otherwise indicated, it will be assumed that the account prevailed at the time of writing.

21 Claiborne, op. cit., p. 516.
was likely the custom prior to the first removal, in view of the type of family organization which had been in existence. The early observer quoted above may have been in error in his description.

In post-Columbian times it appears that courtship was on a voluntary basis among the young Indians. Halbert and Cushman describe a teasing game between a prospective marriage pair. If the girl responded favorably to her suitor, it meant that she was willing to marry him. In later times Swanton learned that most of the courting took place at dances; and, with the breakdown of moieties and clans, parents supervised the activities carefully to prevent courtships of close kin. Once a marriage was agreed upon, parents of the two young people set the day for the wedding.

On this day relatives and friends of both families gathered at the appointed place. Halbert indicates that it was halfway between the couple's respective houses or villages. Both families stationed themselves about one hundred feet apart. The brothers of the bride marched across to the groom and brought him forward to a central place and placed him on a blanket. The groom’s sisters did likewise with the bride. At this stage there ensued a chase of the bride by her female relatives or by the groom.22

Upon being caught she was returned to her blanket. Little

22 There are other variations from this description: The wedding was held in the yard of the bride's home. Both bride and groom were shut up in separate rooms of the house prior to the chase.
presents, mostly inexpensive trinkets, were then tossed at her head by female friends. Either these presents were divided among her female friends or there ensued a wild scramble for them by the girl's female relatives. When the presents had been disposed of, the ceremony was at an end.

After the wedding there usually followed a feast, during which the head men of the clan or community made speeches extolling the virtues of the married pair. Later in the evening the families engaged in a dance which frequently lasted all night.

Current Practices

Since 1900 the old marriage ceremony has gradually been replaced by the legal form practiced by whites. This is borne out in statistics recently compiled by the Branch of Welfare of the Agency. (See Table VIII.) The Director obtained data on types of marriage from 318 families that had been assisted at some time.

No one interviewed for this study had participated in an Indian ceremony in recent years. The younger Choctaws interviewed—those below 35 years of age—had all been married by ministers or justices of the peace. The adoption of the practice of "legal" marriages was probably accelerated during the past twenty years because of the necessity of such records in dealings with the government; for example, in securing allotments.

Cameron Wesley's followers who marry go through the legal ceremony but still hold the traditional celebration, either before or after the former.


The time covered is not indicated, but it is implied that all of the families under consideration were living in the agency area at the time of the report.
## TABLE VIII

**TYPE OF MARRIAGE RECORDED FOR 318 INDIAN FAMILIES**  
**CHOCTAW AGENCY AREA, MISSISSIPPI, 1957**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Marriage</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choctaw</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal*</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common law</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not recorded</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>318</td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Marriages conducted by ministers or justices of the peace.

by the office. Legal marriages\textsuperscript{26} were reported by 55.3 per cent, while 12 per cent had participated only in the Choctaw ceremony.\textsuperscript{27} Two and one-half per cent registered common law unions, and 30.2 per cent of those receiving assistance did not record the type of marriage. There is some question about these families being representative of the 671 on the tribal roll; nevertheless, it is safe to assume that at least this same distribution prevails among all of the families, but there is probably a higher proportion of legal marriages.

The various practices related to the Choctaw ceremony have also given way to those followed by the larger society. In fact, in this regard the behavior of the Indians today is similar to that of the poor whites about them. Inexpensive trinkets are still brought to the bride; but like her white counterpart she now keeps them rather than watch her female relatives grab for them. Because families cannot afford the expense, there have been no formal church weddings. Couples usually go to the homes of the missionaries or Indian ministers for the ceremony, occasionally without any relatives or friends.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{26}"Legal" marriages were those conducted by ministers or justices of the peace.

\textsuperscript{27}Unfortunately, the report does not indicate whether or not any of those legally married also observed the Choctaw ceremony.

\textsuperscript{28}Interest in marriage ceremonies has decreased with the breakdown of the consanguine family. The conjugal or primary family, consisting of spouses and their offspring, is the center of activities. "Fringe" relatives have lost much of their significance to the primary unit. (Linton, loc. cit.)
One informant acknowledged that he and his wife eloped without asking anyone's permission; but this is probably not general practice. Another said he asked the girl's mother beforehand. In most instances where the couple is remaining in the reservation area, the bride goes with the groom to his home for an indefinite period, until he can acquire a house or find work elsewhere.

Marital Status

In 1950, 60 per cent of the Mississippi Indians, 14 years old and over, were married as compared with approximately 67 per cent of the total United States population. In fact, the proportion of the Choctaw population married (59.7 per cent male and 60.6 per cent female) is considerably lower than that of the white, non-white, and total Mississippi populations and the United States total—all of the selected populations presented in Table IX except the United States Indians. On the other hand, a comparison of single Choctaw males and females (33.4 per cent and 27.5 per cent respectively) with the other populations reveals that only the United States Indian males had a larger percentage single.

---

The proportion of Mississippi Indians who were widowed or divorced (9.5 per cent) was also larger than all of the selected populations except the United States Indians. However, this was true of only Choctaw males (6.9 per cent), while widowed or divorced females (11.9 per cent) were exceeded by females similarly classified in all of the selected populations. In considering the totals (male and female) in the three marital categories, the Mississippi Indians have a smaller proportion married and correspondingly larger proportions of single and widowed or divorced than any of the selected populations except the United States Indians.

III. PRIMARY FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Like the pattern of descent, the responsibilities of individuals in the family have changed sharply since the coming of the white man. Contemporary family relationships are much like those prevailing among rural Negroes and whites of a similar class level. But in comparison with the pre-Columbian family, the status of men has been altered more than that of women.

Division of Labor

In the early Indian family organized on a matrilineal basis, the place of men was a minor one. Without the responsibilities of farm work and child training, they were free, according to an observer, to "... occupy themselves with hunting."30 It was also

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Single Male</th>
<th>Single Female</th>
<th>Married Male</th>
<th>Married Female</th>
<th>Widowed or Divorced Male</th>
<th>Widowed or Divorced Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi Indians</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi, Total</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonwhite</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States, Total</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

noted that they "... never go for water or fire after they are made warriors, considering that would dishonor them."\textsuperscript{31} The activities which claimed most of the men's time were, at most, only indirectly related to the family:

\ldots [They] struggled for what was immediate, the war path, the chase and council life; but when not engaged therein, the life of the national games, under the head of social amusements, filled up the measure of \ldots [their] days--the ball play, horse-race, foot-race, jumping and wrestling--to them as honorable as the gymnastic exercises of the eastern nations of antiquity; enduring heat and cold, suffering the pangs of hunger and thirst, fatigue and sleeplessness.\textsuperscript{32}

After 1830 those Indians who remained in Mississippi had to forego the "social amusements" and spend most of their time eking out a living for their families.

Early observers of the Choctaws noticed that women not only cared for the children and the house but also worked the fields, and retrieved the game killed by men on their hunts in the forest. One traveler remarked, "Their women are ugly, they are like slaves to their husbands. They do everything in the house, work the ground, sow, and harvest the crop."\textsuperscript{33} And farming was no little matter for the Choctaws; it was an important source of food and consequently required much labor. It is likely that men came to share the farm work with women shortly after the appearance of white settlers. With

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{\textsuperscript{31}Ibid.}
\footnotetext{\textsuperscript{32}Cushman, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 252.}
\footnotetext{\textsuperscript{33}Swanton, "An Early Account of the Choctaw Indians," p. 116. Even though the duties of women were many, they were expected to absent themselves from their families during their menstrual periods. Giving birth to children, however, required only a few hours away from their routine.}
\end{footnotes}
their coming, the size of the nation diminished, leaving less land to farm and less game to hunt, necessitating more intense cultivation of the soil.

The Indians who remained in Mississippi after 1850 became sharecroppers for whites. The fact that the latter dealt with men in making contractual arrangements hastened changes in the Choctaw family. The responsibility for the farm work became centered on the father rather than on the mother, as it had been prior to 1800. But women have never ceased working in the fields; whenever there is work that they can do, both women and children are expected to assist.\(^3\)
The tasks of some women are especially difficult today as their husbands hire themselves out to pick cotton in the agency area or elsewhere in Mississippi, leaving the farm work in the wives' hands.

The work of Choctaw women has always been arduous. This is a reflection of their status which has always been low in the Indian society, even when the matrilineal kinship system prevailed. In 1843 their status had changed little, for Claiborne concluded, after interviewing hundreds of couples, that generally the wife was "very submissive":

We met but one case of a henpecked husband. In that case, it was shown that the wife packed up all the movables, took all the horses, and moved away some sixty miles. He followed after a while. "She was," said the same witness, "master of

\(^3\) Of course, women and children in lower-class white and Negro sharecropping families also work in the fields.
the camp, and he was the squaw."35

Until recent years it was the woman's responsibility to carry all of the family burdens. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, observers saw women carrying grain in specially constructed cane hampers on their backs, while men carried only a gun or fishing pole. The baby has always been the responsibility of the mother. The use of the cradle board which could be attached to the mother's back prevailed until late in the nineteenth century. Today on the streets of Philadelphia, men are never seen carrying infants; women follow behind their spouses with the children.

The status of women in the Indian society still remains inferior to that of men. A white female employee at the Indian Agency remarked, "I wouldn't be an Indian's wife for any amount of money. They treat them like dogs." But the position of women is now changing. There are now two women on the Tribal Council. Women are taking active part in church life and in the community clubs. At least seven young women have had additional training beyond high school in the past three years.

Care of the Young

Changes in the responsibilities of the Choctaw men extended to the care of the young. Here, again, the changes seem to have been greater for men than for women. While a father today is master of

35 Claiborne, op. cit., p. 517.
his household, such was not the case prior to 1800. Neither the father nor mother had the responsibility of training and disciplining their sons. An eighteenth century observer noted that "... the women are not permitted to correct the boys; they have authority only over the girls." Cushman noted that the mother's oldest brother looked after the general welfare of the children, "... the parents being required merely to assist in the exercise of this duty by their advice and example."

Among the early Choctaws, child-rearing was permissive. Children were not weaned until they tired of their mothers; youths were not physically punished. Noting a seeming lack of discipline, Cushman wrote, "But little restraint, parental or otherwise, was placed on their children, hence they indulged in any and all amusements their fancy might suggest." Because patterns of child-rearing were so different from those of his own culture, Cushman (and others too) believed that the Indian children received little or no instruction; yet they matured into acceptable adults.

No records have been preserved relating to puberty rites or


38. Ibid., p. 215.

39. This lack of insight into the Choctaw culture is discussed in Chapter VII, Part I.
ceremonies whereby the youth became a full-fledged member of the
adult society. However, one observer remarked that old men rewarded
boys who were especially skillful with the bow and arrow by making
them "apprentice" warriors. Various ceremonies doubtless existed
in the early days of white contact, but even such a careful observer
as Cushman failed to note them.

Family life among the Choctaws today is patriarchal, following
somewhat the patterns of white rural life of a century ago. But in
comparison with practices prevailing generally in the larger society,
child-rearing is still permissive. There is no rush to wean the
children or to make them walk; with large families (sometimes 10 or
12 offspring) parents are unable to give much attention to the in-
dividual child.

In the family situations observed in connection with this
study, fathers, in every instance, appeared to have complete control
of spouses as well as children. One agency employee who frequently
visits in homes remarked, "There's no doubt that the man is the boss
of the house." On two occasions the writer saw mothers instructing
children with little or no response, but the same children obeying
the slightest request of their fathers.

Thus the position of father in the family has changed from
one of minor importance to one of complete authority. It is further

for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians, loc. cit.
evidence of the many changes which have taken place in the Choctaw family since the coming of the white man. Another innovation, introduced directly by the invaders, was formal education, the development of which is traced in the next chapter.
CHAPTER VII

EDUCATION

Although the process of transmitting culture in any society continually takes place among all ages, the consideration of education here is concerned with the training of the young to fit into the prevailing cultural scheme. Among the American Indians there were as many different kinds of education as there were tribes; however, there was one thing all of them had in common: all provided education informally through parents, relatives, priests, old men, and actual participation in war, hunting, and other activities.

I. PRE-COLUMBIAN EDUCATION

Since education was informal prior to the coming of Europeans, there was no specialized agency among the Choctaws charged with carrying out the educational function as is characteristic of more complex societies. If any one individual had more to do with the training of the Indian children than others, it was the mother's brother. It was noted in an earlier discussion of the family that he was charged with the discipline of the boys; however, his interest in the children concerned their total welfare, including seeing that they were prepared to become acceptable adult members of the society.¹

¹Mothers were responsible for the discipline and training of females. Their education doubtless included duties pertaining to the maintenance of the house and farming; however, early observers recorded very little about Choctaw women.
But the immediate family and peer group were probably the sources of most of the child's early learning.

Much of this learning took place through imitation and the process of trial and error. From their infancy, the boys learned to use the bow and arrow; and in their peer groups they roamed the forests freely, improving their skill at hunting and fighting. They engaged in various activities which strengthened their endurance and helped prepare them for the life of a warrior. They would deliberately permit themselves to be stung by insects to demonstrate their bravery to others. They competed frequently with one another in killing animals and birds with blow guns and bows and arrows.

Other activities which claimed their time were wrestling, running, and ball games. The latter were engaged in by young and old alike and called for a great amount of skill. In fact the ball game, "chunky," was their national sport.²

Early observers were concerned about the lack of morality among the Choctaws; but this attitude probably stemmed from inadequate knowledge of the culture of the Indians. Although the writer Cushman had lived most of his life among the Choctaws, his information about them prior to removal lead him to conclude that the

²After the removals, those who remained continued to play chunky. With most of their aboriginal culture destroyed, occasional ball games provided opportunities for social gatherings for Indians far and near. Although it now takes second place to basketball, chunky is still played. A description of the game as it is played today can be found in The New Orleans Times-Picayune, November 3, 1940, p. 36, under the title, "Football's for Sissies."
children "... were but little acquainted with the principles of right or wrong"; however this was undoubtedly a comparison with the cultural system of which he was a part. He goes on to say that the only models for the boys were "... the daring deeds of their fathers in war and in the chase," and that "... they only yearned for the time when they might emulate them in heroic achievements." Further comments about the training of the youth give additional evidence that he did not understand the nature of the Choctaw culture:

... one would very naturally infer that these boys, ignorant of all restraint from youth to manhood, would have been, when arrived at manhood, a set of desperadoes, indulging in every vice and committing every crime. But not so. No race of young people ever grew up to manhood in any nation who were of a more quiet nature and peaceful disposition than the youths of the old Mississippi Choctaws.

II. MISSION SCHOOLS

The first educational effort on the part of whites was undertaken in 1727 by Father Matturin le Petit, a French Jesuit priest, who established a mission in east central Mississippi on the Chickasawhay River, in either Clark or Lauderdale County. A short while later Father le Petit was replaced by a Father Baudouin who worked

---


4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.
for eighteen years among the Choctaws with little success. In fact, the efforts of Catholics for a whole century to reach the Indians met with failure.\textsuperscript{6}

Even though there was little or no formal education among the Indians prior to 1800, various writers noted that those who lived in the Southeast were rapidly adopting patterns of behavior characteristic among the white settlers. The observations made by a field worker for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1816 may have contributed to the Board's decision to work with southern Indians rather than with Indians in the North:

"Of the tribes in the United States proper, the Cherokees, Chickasaws and Choctaws appear the most favorable for the establishment of a mission with the prospect of success. . . . They have already made great progress in agriculture and civilization, and are by degrees casting off the Indian habits and adopting the modes of the whites. They are gradually moving out of their villages, giving up the hunting life, clearing small plantations and raising domestic animals. They have already experienced many of the blessings which flow from their change of habits, and are anxious to make further improvement, and many of them feel that this is the only way left to save themselves from extermination and ruin."\textsuperscript{7}

The following year, 1817, a mission school, called Brainerd, was established among the Cherokees under the leadership of the Reverend

\textsuperscript{6}Just how much educational work was carried on among the Indians by early Catholic missionaries is a matter of conjecture. See B. J. Bekkers, "The Catholic Church in Mississippi During Colonial Times," \textit{Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society}, VI (1902), 351-357; and Richard Oliver Gerow, \textit{Catholicity in Mississippi} (Marrero, Louisiana: The Hope Haven Press, 1939).

Cyrus S. Kingsbury, a Presbyterian minister.

**Eliot**

Work with the Choctaws was perhaps hastened by an invitation of the chiefs of the three divisions that a school be established in their nation. Kingsbury was then asked by the Board to leave Brainerd to begin the mission among the Choctaws. In 1818 Kingsbury established a mission school, which he named Eliot, three miles south of the Yalobusha River and thirty miles above its junction with the Yazoo. At the end of the first year of operation, there were sixty students attending the school; and the following year the total increased to eighty. In 1819 the Sixtown (southern) Choctaws began regular appropriations of two thousand dollars annually for the school.

**Mayhew**

In 1820 a second mission station, called Mayhew, was established in the northeastern part of the present Oktibbeha County. At the request of the chiefs, six additional schools were established in the nation. Perhaps because of its location near the eastern Choctaw agency, the Mayhew mission became the most flourishing of the schools shortly after its establishment.

Around each of the schools farms were operated by the Indian boys under the supervision of a missionary farmer. It appears from

---

8A detailed account of Mayhew can be found in Ibid., pp. 363-402.
the writing of the missionaries that there was no opposition to the teaching of these new roles to the children. This may suggest that the roles of the male had already changed considerably by 1820. The missionary narratives also indicate that the Indians made good students and cooperated willingly.

Additional evidence that the leaders of the Choctaws were interested in furthering the education of their youth is found in the Treaty of 1825 in which the United States agreed to pay the nation six thousand dollars annually for schools. Although much of this money went to the support of the mission schools, it was also used to educate boys at an academy in Kentucky. Beginning in the fall of 1825, the Choctaws sent twenty-five or more to the academy annually, a practice which was continued for several years by those who emigrated to the West in 1830. Although there were students from other Indian nations and whites attending the school, the Choctaws were always in a majority.

When the removal treaty was signed in 1830, the missionaries closed their mission schools (perhaps assuming that all Indians would leave) and moved west with the larger body of Choctaws. In fact, the missionaries were employed by the government to assist

---


10 A sketch of the Choctaw Academy operated by Colonel Richard M. Johnson can be found in Leland Winfield Mayer, Colonel Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), pp. 343-378.
with the removals and resettlements. In the fifty-year period following 1830 there is no evidence that any kind of formal education existed.

Tucker

About 1880 the bishop of the Natchez diocese of the Catholic Church visited in Neshoba County and saw the "miserable condition" of the Choctaw Indians. Among his many observations about their situation, he noted that they had no schools. A short while later on a visit to his home in Holland he invited his friend, the Reverend J. B. Bekkers, to come to Neshoba County, Mississippi to work with the Indians. Upon his arrival in November, 1883, Bekkers purchased six hundred acres of land in the Tucker community on which log cabins were erected to house Indian families. A school was opened in 1884 with Henry S. Halbert as teacher. Twenty-six children attended the first year. The following year three Sisters of Mercy took over the teaching duties and remained until 1903. Available data indicate that at this time all of the Indians from Tucker migrated to the West to participate in the allotment of Indian lands. In the fall of 1904 another school was opened for Indian children which was operated until the building was destroyed by fire in 1918.

\footnote{Gerow, op. cit., pp. 260-265.}
In addition to the establishment of the Catholic mission in 1883 another effort was made to provide schools for the Indians. In that year the Legislature of Mississippi passed a law requiring counties to provide schools for Indians where there were sufficient numbers to justify them. In the latter part of the decade, Halbert had assumed charge of Indian education and supervised the operation of one or more schools yearly.\textsuperscript{12}

For ten years prior to the 1903 removal, annual summaries of his works were included in the biennial reports of the State Department of Education. And, as was indicated earlier in connection with the mission schools, there appeared to be a desire to learn on the part of the Choctaws, for in one report Halbert remarks, "Upon the whole there has been a great improvement among our Choctaws in the last ten years. The great majority are anxious to secure the benefits of some education for their children."\textsuperscript{13} The latter statement was concurred in by six former teachers of the Indians--four Indian and two white--who taught prior to 1920. Their recollections of the schools were similar to those presented in Halbert's reports.

\textsuperscript{12}His principal assistant was the Reverend W. W. Cammack, a Methodist missionary.

Sessions were held in Leake, Neshoba, Newton, Kemper, and Jasper Counties annually when teachers were available for periods of two to four months. The 1892-93 sessions averaged 75 days. In the same year the average for all schools in Mississippi was 102 days, but county (rural) schools averaged 80 days. As there were no school facilities, the teachers made use of Indian or white churches. No school reported over forty pupils at any one time, and the total yearly enrollment of all the schools usually ranged from 75 to 125 pupils. Attendance was irregular, a fact which Halbert attributed to the living conditions of the Indians:

The poverty of the Indians is the great cause of much of the irregular attendance of their children; their parents frequently need their services at home in labor upon the farm and otherwise. During the winter months, inclement weather, the want of sufficient clothing, especially with those children who live at a distance, not infrequently causes an irregularity of attendance. But as their condition in life improves, and it is slowly improving, these hindrances will gradually disappear.

The teachers say that they recalled no serious discipline problems, and this is further documented in Halbert's annual reports to the superintendent of education for the State of Mississippi. The curriculum in these schools consisted of the rudiments of reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography. The teachers' salaries, ranging

---

14 Ibid., p. 244.
15 Ibid., pp. 574-575.
16 For example, see Ibid., pp. 574-576.
17 Halbert explains in detail the subjects taught and the method he used in Ibid., pp. 575-576. He employed both the Choctaw and English language in teaching.
from fifteen to thirty dollars a month, were paid by the counties. The schools probably would have improved had they not been disrupted by the emigration of about half the remaining Indian population to the West in 1903. After that, interest in Indian education on the part of Indians and whites languished for over a decade.

The ineffectiveness of the schools which continued to operate after the removal and the general state of education among the Mississippi Choctaws were included in the report of the special representative of the Indian Bureau who visited in the state in 1917:

As to education, most Mississippi Choctaws do not appear to have even the rudiments of an English education, and yet, remarkable as it may seem, a great many can read and write the Choctaw language. All, without exception, speak the Choctaw language, and, while a number of the older people speak English after a fashion and understand it for ordinary purposes, the majority, particularly the women, seem loath to make use of it—the result, no doubt, of bashfulness and a certain indolence, it being easier to use the language that comes to them naturally than to exert themselves to master the white man's speech.

As for schools, while it is true that they have not many opportunities in this regard, it is just as true that they fail to make use of the opportunities they have. The Mississippi Choctaws would not wish to send their children away from home to boarding schools and they do not send them regularly to the day schools. . . .

Along with his recommendations concerning the establishment of an agency for the welfare of the Indians, he suggested that the government assist the day schools that were then in operation and provide

---

additional ones where there might be need.

IV. FEDERAL SCHOOLS

The following year the Indian Bureau appointed an agent with headquarters in Philadelphia, Mississippi whose responsibilities included the purchase of reservation lands looking to the eventual establishment of an educational program in the various Indian communities. At that time it was general knowledge that the Indians had grouped themselves in several communities and the original plans provided for the establishment of schools in those areas. With the purchase of farm land and the construction of dwellings, the number of Indians in the various areas grew, contributing to the feasibility of schools. The first two were built in 1920 in the Pearl River and Standing Pine communities. By 1930 elementary schools had been erected in the seven largest communities. (See Table X.) The estimated number of families in these communities today ranges from 27 in the Bogue Homa to 181 in the Pearl River.

School Plants

The school plants in each community consist of one main building

19 John Pearmain, "Indian Office Handbook of Information," compiled September, 1935, p. 24. (Typewritten.) Bogue Chitto was the last community in which a school was built. The members of the community had long opposed any formal education (as well as Christianity), for they believed that it would be only a preliminary to forced migration to the West. Harbert commented on this group's attitude in his 1892-93 report in Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Education, op. cit., p. 576.
### TABLE X

**INDIAN SCHOOLS IN MISSISSIPPI, 1957**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Location (County)</th>
<th>Distance From Agency (in miles)</th>
<th>No. of Grades Taught</th>
<th>Date Established</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bogue Chitto</td>
<td>Neshoba</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogue Homo</td>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conehatta</td>
<td>Newton</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl River</td>
<td>Neshoba</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Water</td>
<td>Leake</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing Pine</td>
<td>Leake</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tucker</td>
<td>Neshoba</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1921</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and from one to four auxiliary buildings. The Pearl River School has the only gymnasium and has recently occupied a new fire-proof building.\(^{20}\) The grounds of the schools range in size from 10 to 60 acres and make a total of 120 acres. A system of hot and cold water is in operation at each school.\(^{21}\) Teaching equipment—furniture, visual aids, and the like—improves yearly as funds permit. In August, 1956, a "bookmobile" was purchased which provides better library service for the schools than they had had previously. All of the schools have dining rooms and well-equipped kitchens through which hot lunches are provided without any cost to the student.\(^{22}\) Five school buses and four station wagons (not including contract vehicles) transport students to and from school.\(^{23}\)

**Curriculum**

Because of the Indian child's environmental background, the curriculum of these schools is such that the learning experiences of the student can be as realistic as possible. Etha Myerl Langford, an agency teacher and student of Indian education, states that "the

\(^{20}\) Previously, all school buildings except the Bogue Chitto School were of wood construction.

\(^{21}\) Children are required to bathe at the schools.

\(^{22}\) Kitchens are supervised by "housekeepers" who also teach "homemaking" courses. They are assisted by "housekeeping aides" who are Indian civil service employees. In the junior high schools the housekeepers have the help of the Agency home economists one day a week.

\(^{23}\) Buses are operated by Indian drivers, civil service employees.
elementary curriculum is designed to provide the Indian child with materials that will motivate his interests and will enable him to adjust to his mental, physical, social, and emotional growth demands. A basic part of the curriculum is training in homemaking and agriculture. The emphasis on these subjects increases in the advanced grades with more time being devoted to them. Textbooks, furnished by the State Department of Education, are the same as those used in corresponding grades in all Mississippi schools. Indian culture is not taught—effort is made to inculcate upon the student the latest information concerning sewing, cooking, and farming.

_Intelligence and Achievement of Students_

The type of curriculum used by the Agency schools calls for special planning, not because the student is incapable of learning as the prevailing stereotype suggests, but to make up for the lack of cultural experiences facing an Indian student. Concerning ability to learn, Langford comments:

The existence of unequal civic, social and economic treatment of the Indian has been somewhat similar to that of the Negro. All too often, popular opinion has ascribed to the Indian an inferior mental capacity, hence an inferior position in society. But persons overlook the fact that the transition from the Choctaw language to English was often a hectic, confusing, and even frustrating period of life for the Indian child. This without

---

a doubt made him resentful of school life, thus giving the public a negative impression in regards [sic] to his intelligence.\textsuperscript{25}

No intelligence tests have been administered to the Mississippi Choctaws, but some general statements can be drawn from studies of other groups of American Indians.

Prior to 1935, Havighurst observes that intelligence studies of Indians "... tended to show that Indians were less intelligent than white children"; however, those since that time "... tended to show that there was no difference in average intelligence between Indian and white children, except for such differences as were explainable on the basis of cultural differences."\textsuperscript{26} The recent intelligence studies of six Indian tribes by Havighurst and his associates revealed that

... Indian children do about as well as white children on a performance test of intelligence, and that differences exist between tribes and among communities within a tribe—differences of the degree that are also found among white children in various types of communities.\textsuperscript{27}

It should be expected among the Choctaws, then, that the children who have been exposed more than others to the culture of the larger society should perform better on intelligence and achievement tests.

In January and August of 1952, the California Achievement

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., p. 2.


\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., p. 112.
Tests were administered to the Choctaw students by Madison L. Coombs and Kenneth Anderson.²⁸ Scores on these tests were compared with Indian students in the Phoenix, Arizona area, and with the national average for the same tests. An analysis of the tests by Langford²⁹ reveals that the samples of the Choctaw students were exceedingly small and may have biased the conclusions. In fact, there were only four students in the eleventh grade taking the tests.³⁰ The largest class participating was the fourth grade which had fifty-two. The average scores of children in the first three grades indicated that they were performing satisfactorily for their respective grade levels.³¹ Langford concludes that "... the average performance of the Choctaw did not differ appreciably from that of the Phoenix area Indian, especially on the fourth grade level, where the sampling was largest."³² However, scores for grades four through eleven were lower than the national average in all grades except the eighth.

²⁸ "California Achievement Test Results, Mississippi Choctaw Reservation," August, 1952 (unpublished; on file, Choctaw Area Field Office, Philadelphia, Mississippi).

²⁹ Langford, op. cit., pp. 53-58.

³⁰ The eleventh grade was taught for two years, 1951-1952 and 1952-1953.

³¹ This was also found to be the case in Havighurst's studies: "This is probably due to the fact that the material taught in elementary grades is close to the life experience of the Indian children--more practical--than is the more abstract teaching of the high school." (Havighurst, op. cit., p. 114.)

³² Langford, op. cit., p. 58.
Among the Indians he studied, Havighurst found that those "... with the greatest degree of contact with modern culture did best" on achievement tests as well as on intelligence tests.33

Extra-curricular Activities

Students are encouraged to participate in one or more student organizations. The three junior-high schools maintain a variety of clubs which provide the students with additional cultural experiences. Each has a student activity organization in which parliamentary procedure and speaking are stressed. There is competition between the three schools in sports, particularly softball and basketball. Pearl River School has clubs for students interested in agriculture, home economics, forestry, and science. There are rhythm bands and recreation programs in the lower grades of all the schools. Three schools sponsor Boy Scout programs, and there are other organizations in the different schools which seemingly fit the particular needs of the students.

A student newspaper, "The Chieftain," consisting of ten to twenty mimeographed pages of news, is published monthly at Pearl River School. It not only contains news of student activities in the Agency Area schools, but also has information about students attending Chilocco and Haskell. The paper is becoming increasingly popular throughout the area and now contains general news from each

33Havighurst, op. cit., p. 114.
of the seven communities.

Competition between the schools is keen. The elementary schools have interschool competition, as do the three junior-high schools, in various sports, games, speaking, and other activities. In April, 1956 a "science fair" was held at the Pearl River School for the first time, and it proved so successful that it was repeated in 1957. Exhibits prepared by students from various grades in the seven schools are judged. The best exhibits are taken into Philadelphia and displayed in store windows around the courthouse square. Another important day for all of the schools is the "achievement day" held in May at the end of the school year. Here again the students compete in speaking, music, and in other areas of accomplishment during the school year.

Enrollment

The enrollment in the Indian schools for 1955-56 was 816, the first time that it had gone above eight hundred.\(^3\) Table XI gives some indication of the growth of the enrollment which began with 70 during the first year the federal government operated schools for the Indians. Average daily attendance has fluctuated from a low of 44.5 per cent in the year 1944-45 to a high of 85.0 per cent in 1953-54. For the past three years the average has

\(^3\) Choctaw Area Field Office Records, Philadelphia, Mississippi; "Annual Report of the Choctaw Area Field Office to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," June 30, 1956, p. 13. (Mimeographed.)
TABLE XI
TOTAL ENROLLMENT AND AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE
OF THE SEVEN INDIAN SCHOOLS IN MISSISSIPPI,
1920-21 THROUGH 1955-56

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Total Enrollment</th>
<th>Average Daily Attendance</th>
<th>Per cent of Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954-55</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>74.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-54</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>73.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-53</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>70.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-52</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>68.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949-50</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>67.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-49</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947-48</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>65.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-47</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945-46</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>45.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944-45</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943-44</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942-43</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941-42</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>79.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940-41</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-40</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>75.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938-39</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>71.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937-38</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936-37</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>66.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935-36</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>72.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934-35</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933-34</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>85.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932-33</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931-32</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>80.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930-31</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-30</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928-29</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>70.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927-28</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926-27</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925-26</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924-25</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923-24</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>69.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922-23</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-22</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-21</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>74.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

been above 70.0.

In 1952 an eleventh grade was added at Pearl River, but the enrollment was so small that it was discontinued after a second year of operation. Presently, the ninth and tenth grades are maintained only at that school. Students from distant areas must board in Indian homes if they wish to attend as there are no dormitories. In 1956-57 there were 99 students who were boarded in homes in Mississippi. Thirty-five additional students who were attending high school outside the State lived in boarding houses. Agency personnel and interested Indians feel that this is a hindrance in encouraging students to go beyond the eighth grade.

The dropouts after the sixth, eighth, and tenth grades, in particular, keep the median number of school years completed very low. In 1950 the median number of school years completed by Mississippi Indians 25 years old and over was 0.5 years, while the comparable figure for the total population in Mississippi was 8.1 years. The number of Indian males and females, 25 years old and

35 "Annual Report of the Choctaw Indian Agency to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," June 30, 1957, p. 53. (Mimeographed.)

36 U. S. Bureau of the Census, U. S. Census of Population: 1950, Vol. IV, Special Reports, Part 3, Chapter B, Nonwhite Population by Race (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1953), Table 21, p. 73. It was assumed that students were equally distributed in grades one through four, as only one figure is given for the four grades.

over, who had completed no years of school was 335 or 42.7 per cent of the total in that age category. A total of 240 or 32.8 per cent had completed four years.

The Branch of Welfare of the Agency accumulated education data on 476 parents who were in some way involved with the office during the year 1956-57. Of a total of 476 men and women, 209 or 43.9 per cent had completed no years of school. The median years completed was 0.7 years. The report states that the office believes that "... this same report would be found true among all the Choctaw Indians of Mississippi." This conclusion may be justified in view of the migration which is known to be taking place among the younger Indians yearly. On the other hand, the Indians most in need of welfare may be those with the least education. Regardless of how representative these may be, the data indicate that Indian education is still far below that of the larger society.

V. CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS

The High School Problem

In 1955 a group of Indian women organized themselves into the Women's Council Club with the principal objective of securing

---

38 Annual Report of the Choctaw Indian Agency to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," June 30, 1957, pp. 51-52. (Mimeoographed.)

39 Ibid., p. 52.

40 This possibility is suggested in the report. (Ibid.)
a four-year high school at Pearl River. In addition to the high school, they requested that two dormitories be constructed to house students who live too far to travel by bus. A letter making the requests was sent to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington, with copies going to the Mississippi senators in Congress. Subsequent correspondence revealed the Commissioner's reasons for not establishing the high school.

Principal arguments against the twelve-year school were (1) that there were not enough students to justify the expense, and (2) that the water supply at Pearl River would not support a boarding department and the needs of an expanded school. The average Indians doubtless do not know the extent of the water resources, but it became obvious in conversations with them that they do not think water is a sufficient reason for not enlarging the present school. Two Indian men living in different communities firmly believe that the Agency wants to keep them ignorant. Another man stated that

41 Some children travel as much as fifty-seven miles (one way) to school. This problem is increasing as routes are becoming longer with more students going to school each year. See "Annual Report of the Choctaw Area Field Office," June 30, 1956, pp. 16-17.

42 The original letter was written on March 25, 1955, by Mrs. Emeline Ben, president of the club. A copy of the letter and related correspondence were read in connection with this study.

43 Contrary to this opinion, Agency policy encourages greater attendance in existing schools. In fact, the Mississippi Choctaws are one of three tribes which have been the object of special attention on the part of the Indian Bureau since 1953. At that time the new Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Glenn L. Emmons, stated as a part
he believed the area office was obstructing the school because the federally-sponsored Indian high schools in Oklahoma and Kansas are dropping in enrollment and that Mississippi students are needed to keep the schools operating.

Concerning the lack of students, which was obvious in the time that the eleventh grade was conducted, one woman remarked, "They [students] aren't going to go to a school that they don't know if it'll keep going." Another woman discussing the matter said, "The government spends millions to help foreign countries, but they won't spend enough here to help us get a high school--it would be just a drop in the bucket to what they're giving to foreigners." The same person reasoned that if the eleventh and twelfth grades were begun, eventually the students would continue and graduate from school. In the 1956-57 school year there were 49 students attending high school in Oklahoma and Kansas, some of whom might have attended at Pearl River if a good school had been there.

Sentiment among the Indians and among some others who wish to help them is that if the students could finish high school in Mississippi they would remain and contribute something to their people. As it is, most of those who finish high school never return. Of course, of his over-all policy, that the Bureau would seek to eliminate the out-of-school backlog of children as rapidly as possible. The Choctaws had one of the highest--over half of the school age children were out of school. In four years the backlog has been sharply reduced. (Hildagard Thompson, "Education Among American Indians: Institutional Aspects," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, COOKI [1957], 101-103.)
in order for the additional education to become effective, the change in the educational status of the Indians would have to be continued over a long period of time before the general condition of the Indians would rise in the estimation of the larger society. The remarks of the Bureau's special investigator forty years ago are still pertinent today, particularly in the Agency area:

Mississippi offers few or no opportunities for an educated Indian. Such an Indian probably could find no suitable employment of any kind. . . . There are certain kinds of manual work open to him, but, generally speaking, it is on the farm that he must earn his daily bread.\textsuperscript{44}

Actually, the first graduates of a high school would face exactly the same problem that the two young Indian men do who are now teaching in the Indian schools. Neither feels free enough to try to break the color line in Philadelphia or Carthage, the county seat of Leake County. One of them remarked, "I just don't want to be embarrassed." Both take frequent week-end trips to Jackson (ninety miles away) or to Meridian (fifty miles away) where they receive little or no discrimination. It is much easier for the high-school graduate to settle elsewhere because his opportunities for work are much better. The only high-school graduates who are living in the agency area today are employed by the Agency. The only opportunities for work in Philadelphia would be at common labor which pays very little.

\textsuperscript{44}"Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners," Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior, op. cit., p. 347.
Agency personnel recognize this problem and have made some effort to cope with it. The director of education began a vocational training program on his own initiative four years ago and succeeded in placing eight students in learning situations in Philadelphia—furniture repairing, clothes pressing, and the like; however, the area office in Oklahoma requested that he discontinue the program in the second year of operation. Expressing regret over having to abandon the program, the director added, "... These Indians need to be given a chance to show the public that they are capable of doing something."

The Agency had hoped to solve the high-school problem by gradually transferring students in the upper grades to white schools, but the Supreme Court decision of May 17, 1954 on school desegregation brought an end to that plan, at least temporarily. In 1952-53 there were nine students attending the high schools connected with the public junior colleges of the state; in 1956-57 there was only one student and the school was over a hundred miles from the agency.

The director of education summarized present educational efforts in saying, "We're trying to build our program so that the Indian will be able to compete with anybody when he gets through with his training." This, in effect, is the general policy of the Indian Bureau today: "The goal of the entire program... is to give the Indian people, at long last, the kind of opportunities which other American citizens traditionally enjoy—opportunity to choose the line of work
they prefer and to make the most of the abundant talents and abilities which so many of them possess."

Beginnings in Higher Education

In the course of this study, some questions arose as to why some Indians (for example, the two mentioned on the preceding page) finished high school and college, while many of the students drop out at the end of the sixth or eighth grade, depending on the community in which they live. Of course, it is supposed that they leave school for economic reasons or because they feel that their education is adequate for the type of work they will be doing.

In this connection it is helpful to examine the grade levels achieved by students from the various communities. The Conehatta community had its first high-school graduates, four in number, in 1956. The following year there were four more. The Bogue Homo community had a student to complete the eleventh grade of work in 1957, the highest that anyone from that community has attained. There have been several high-school graduates from the Bogue Chitto and Pearl River communities. Three students from Standing Pine and the son of migrants from that community have graduated from college. It is these that have made history for their Tribe in the past five years. Because of their accomplishment, they were the object of

---

45 Statement by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, quoted in Thompson, op. cit., p. 102.
The First College Graduates

The parents of the first Mississippi Choctaw to graduate from college attended school only eight years. The wife was a teacher in the Standing Pine community prior to 1918 and her husband is one of the few Indians who own property. Although their home life is much like that of the other Indians about them, they apparently came to value education in spite of their own meager training. A daughter finished high school at Haskell, Kansas in 1948, returned to Mississippi and attended Clarke Memorial (Baptist) Junior College for two years.46 After transferring to Blue Mountain (Baptist) College, she graduated in 1952. Not only was she the first Choctaw to graduate from a college in Mississippi, but she was also employed to teach in the public schools in north Mississippi. She taught for a year before marrying. She and her husband, also a Choctaw, have settled in New Orleans where he is a plumber.

Another member of the same family, a son, finished high school in the preparatory department of the same junior college. After transferring to Mississippi (Baptist) College, he graduated in 1953. After a period of service in the Army, he was employed by the Agency in December, 1955 to teach mathematics in the Pearl River school. He

46 A missionary related to the writer his efforts to get the girl to go to college. Having obtained money for her first year from interested whites, he went to her home to tell her the news and found her barefooted in a field picking cotton.
thus became the first Indian to be employed for a position other than chauffeur, road repairman, housekeeping aide, and the like.

In 1956 a third student from the Standing Pine community graduated from Mississippi College. A first cousin of the two previous graduates, he also did his work at church-related schools. A year after his graduation he was commissioned an ensign in the Navy, another "first" for the Mississippi Indians. A sister of this individual had earlier completed training as a practical nurse at Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1954.

Of the two students who graduated from Mississippi colleges in 1957, one is the son of migrants from the Standing Pine Community. At Pearl River his parents operate a general store, the only Indian business in the agency area. The youth boarded in a white home in Meridian and attended Meridian Municipal Junior College, where he finished high school and two years of college. He graduated with honors from Mississippi Southern College, a state school, and is now also employed by the Agency as a teacher in the Standing Pine School. The other 1957 graduate, a native of the Red Water community, is a product of church-related schools. He is now the pastor of an Indian Baptist church in Oklahoma.

47 This gave him the distinction of being the first Mississippi Choctaw to graduate from a public (white) high school. Two of his sisters recently completed training at a business college in Jackson and are now employed by the Agency.

48 The Indians of this community and those of Standing Pine once were members of the same clan (iksa) called Red Water.
The Standing Pine Community

Three of the college graduates and parents of another have come from the Standing Pine Community. In order to gain further insight into these accomplishments, the community itself was the object of special inquiry. It is fifteen or more miles from the city of Philadelphia and the town of Carthage; however, it is five miles from the town of Walnut Grove. Actually, it can be located only in general terms because all reservation land is checkerboarded with white and Negro farm land. A public school was maintained in this area for the Indians long before the establishment of the Agency school. Two of the principal white informants for this study taught Indians in this community in the first decade of the present century. One of them is certain that a school was maintained in the area by his father (a farmer employing Indian tenants) as far back as 1880. Indians who had been pupils of the white teachers also helped maintain the school until 1918, although none had gone beyond the eighth grade. The first two schools built by the government were at Standing Pine and Pearl River. So it appears that the people of Standing Pine have been exposed to education for a more continuous period than in any of the other communities.

Among various ones questioned about the community, additional

---

49 There were 35 students enrolled during the 1956-1957 session.
reasons for the accomplishments were suggested besides the long continuous operation of a school. One man believed that "the young and the old people both seem to have more ambition to try to get an education and try to better themselves and adopt the better ways of the white man." Another said he believed it was because some of their teachers (and he named five whites who had been teachers at Standing Pine since 1900) "seemed to take more interest in the Indians' welfare in every respect." A missionary remarked: "They [Standing Pine Indians] have been treated more like they were white people than any of the other six reservations." He added that these are the only Indians in the agency area who are permitted to vote.

From the information available, it does appear that the Indians of the Standing Pine community have been exposed to western culture through formal education longer than any of the other communities. But being in contact with culture does not mean that it will be adopted. The investigation of this community has suggested another factor which may be of greater significance. The members of this community have been living among sympathetic whites who encouraged them to attend school and assisted them in numerous other ways. It is perhaps the atmosphere created by mutual trust and understanding which both races have had for the other that has helped motivate them. The following chapter tells of some additional relationships between Indians and whites, those associated with religious life.
CHAPTER VIII

RELIGION

Prior to the coming of Europeans, religion had been highly developed among some groups of American Indians, but among the Choctaws it was on a rudimentary basis when the first traders and missionaries appeared. Since it was nothing unusual, few details were recorded of Pre-Columbian religion. Ceremonies of all kinds attracted little attention, the only exception being those connected with death. Unlike their western neighbors, the Natchez, the Choctaws had simple religious ceremonies.

In addition to the fact that early observers did not see much worth noting, what they did record is frequently colored with interpretations related to the Hebrew-Christian religion. Analysis is further hindered because the Choctaws had no system of writing whereby old legends and ceremonials could be preserved. Hence, when

1"Religion is defined as a "... system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggles with ... [the] ultimate problems of human life. It is the refusal to capitulate to death, to give up in the face of frustration, to allow hostility to tear apart one's human associations." (J. Milton Yinger, Religion, Society and the Individual /New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957/, p. 9.)

2The example par excellence of this is James Adair's History of the American Indians in which he develops the thesis that the Indians are one of the lost tribes of Israel. (Originally published in 1775, the work was edited by Samuel Cole Williams and reprinted in 1930 by the Watauga Press, Johnson City, Tennessee.)
writers in the nineteenth century began to record in some detail aspects of the Choctaw religion, it was obvious that there had been much diffusion of Christian elements into the religion.

This was perhaps to be expected for the Choctaws' religious beliefs and ceremonials were simple, thus making it easier for them to accept new ideas. Swanton makes the observation that "... the aboriginal Choctaw [Indians] seem to have enjoyed the enviable position of being 'just folks,' uncontaminated with the idea that they existed for the sake of a political, religious, or military organization." The absence of strong native institutions meant less opposition to outside ideas. This was also the case with the Cherokees; however, those with the most highly developed institutional life—the Creeks, Seminoles, and to some extent the Chickasaws—were the slowest to adopt new ideas.

I. PRIMITIVE BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

A Supreme Deity

Early writers indicated that the Choctaws believed in a supreme deity, in a great or good spirit. Later writers stated that they also believed in a "great evil spirit," but Swanton thinks this is in error, or else it is an adoption from the Christian

religion. The great good spirit, according to the Reverend Alfred Wright, was either the sun or closely identified with it. The spirit's representative on earth was fire. To the sun they attributed life and death, but they do not seem to have felt that it directed or controlled their daily activities.

Several early observers state that they believed—in addition to the good spirit—in a number of lesser spirits which were both good and evil. Cushman believed these spirits had much influence on the behavior of individuals. Good fortune was attributed to the good spirits, while misfortune was caused by evil spirits.

A small band of the Choctaws numbering forty or fifty in Noxubee County still adhere to variations of these old beliefs. Once a year the leader of the band, Cameron Wesley, who claims to be a descendent of the Choctaw chief, Mushulatubee, gathers his followers at the base of Nenih Waiya mound and goes through a ritual. Appeals are made to the Great Spirit and the little gods

---

4 Ibid., p. 195.

5 Alfred Wright, "Choctaw Beliefs," The Missionary Herald, XXIV (1828), 179-180. Wright was a missionary among the Choctaws before their removal from Mississippi.


7 The following Newspaper articles give an account of Wesley's ceremony: Meigs 0. Frost, "Chief Prays to Indian Gods at Ancient Mound," The Times Picayune-New Orleans States, October 20, 1940, p. 26; Paul Flowers, "Once Mighty Choctaws Meet for Pathetic Holy Ceremony," The Memphis Commercial Appeal, May 5, 1947, p. 1; Edyth W.
(presumably the lesser spirits referred to above) to return the land to the Choctaws and to bless them in various ways. After the ceremony the worshippers indulge in a "feast" which may include a beef, if they are fortunate, but more often than not consists of salt pork and white bread.

Origins

The problem of origins of both the Choctaw themselves and the world is dealt with in a number of legends recorded at various times. The origin of the world is never seriously dealt with in any written legend. Wright stated that the Choctaws believed that the earth was at an early time formless or in a chaotic state. Their thinking concerning a more remote past is not recorded if such they did.

The origin of the Choctaws themselves is explained in several legends. Most of them tell of a long journey from the West. For years the people traveled toward the rising sun, following the direction in which their sacred stick leaned each morning. In the vicinity

McCraw, "Choctaws Hold Traditional Ceremonies," The Philadelphia, Mississippi/ Neshoba Democrat, May 9, 1947, p. 1

These articles are very misleading. Wesley is referred to as the chief, but his title is recognized by only about fifty Choctaws, most of them his relatives. The implication in all three stories is that this is still the religion of the Choctaws, when, in actuality, over half the Indians in the state are followers of the Christian religion. The last article, written by a Philadelphia reporter, was the most misleading when it might have been the most informative. As it was read largely by the people of Neshoba County, it did nothing more than intensify their stereotypes of the heathen red man.

Wright, op. cit., p. 182.
of the mound, which they named Hanih Waiya (sloping or leaning hill),
the stick remained upright indicating they should dwell there.9

Several versions of the Choctaw origin have them springing
out of the mound. In fact, some old legends refer to the mound as
the "mother mound." There is also the suggestion that all the people
of the world came originally from that source. The presence of a near­
by cave has contributed to its air of mystery.10

It is interesting to note that most of the legends indicate
that the Choctaws themselves did not build the mound. Authorities
are in general agreement that it was built by earlier inhabitants of
the land.11 Probably because of its uniqueness in an area of relative­
ly flat land, this tremendous earthwork12 covering almost an acre as­
sumed an important place in the legends of the Choctaws. A much

9 For a descriptive account of the journey see Gideon Lincecum,
"Choctaw Traditions About Their Settlement in Mississippi and the
Origin of Their Mounds," Publications of the Mississippi Historical
Society, VIII (1904), 521-542.

10 Wesley claims that the Great Spirit made the first man out
of clay from the cave and placed him on the mound to dry.

11 James A. Ford, Analysis of Indian Village Site Collections
From Louisiana and Mississippi, Anthropological Study No. 2 (New
Orleans: Department of Conservation, Louisiana Geological Survey,
November 1, 1936), pp. 45-46; Swanton, op. cit., p. 10.

12 The mound is rectangular, 218 feet long and 140 feet wide
at the base. The top is smaller, being 132 feet by 56 feet. The
height of the mound ranges from 22 to 25 feet. (Calvin S. Brown,
Archeology of Mississippi/University, Mississippi: Mississippi
Geological Survey, 1926/, p. 24.) In 1899 Halbert estimated the
height of the mound to be forty feet. (Henry S. Halbert, "Nanih Waiya,
The Sacred Mound of the Choctaws," Publications of the Mississippi
Historical Society, II [1899], p. 223.)
smaller mound lies a short distance to the northeast of Nanih Waiya and was probably built by the Choctaws. It appears to have been a repository for bones of the dead.\textsuperscript{13} In addition to the two mounds, early investigators also noted a circular earthen rampart about a mile and a half in circumference which inclosed the mounds; however, it has disappeared after having been cultivated for many years.

\textbf{Men With Occult Powers}

The institutions of the Choctaws were not developed enough for the appearance of a priesthood; however, there were shamans who were called medicine men and sometimes prophets. These two terms and the term priest were sometimes used interchangeably by writers. But among Choctaw observers, Cushman is the most enlightening concerning those with special powers. The fact that he lived among the Choctaws for a number of years perhaps enabled him to distinguish different types. There existed in the early days of white contact a prophet or medicine man, a rain maker, and a doctor.\textsuperscript{14}

The medicine man had the highest status of the three because

\textsuperscript{13}This mound lends credence to some of the legends which relate the long journey from the West, during which the Choctaws carried the bones of their ancestors. Upon arriving at Nanih Waiya, many refused to go further, so the bones were buried there. But the bones in the mound may be only those from the village which surrounded Nanih Waiya just prior to historical times.

\textsuperscript{14}Cushman, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 258.
of his supernatural powers,\(^\text{15}\) which were recognized by the people of his community. He could foretell events, exorcise evil spirits, and control nature. Regardless of whether or not the medicine man actually possessed any special powers, Cushman concluded that there was one thing that he did possess: "... the power, art, skill, call it what you may, to make his people believe it, and that was all-sufficient for him..."\(^\text{16}\) The doctor was merely a conjuror of herbs, one who ministered to those who were sick. Both men were usually able to realize their predictions; but even with frequent success, they had to be shrewd in order to explain away their failures.

What is today called a medicine man—or more properly a doctor after Cushman—still exists among the Mississippi Choctaws. There are known to be four, living in as many communities, who prepare special potions from herbs and roots for common aches and pains. This appears to be little more than home remedies that were widely practiced by rural whites a century ago. One contemporary medicine man operates a farm in the Bogue Chitto community. He is a member "in good standing" of the local Baptist church and does not hesitate to avail himself of the facilities of the Indian hospital when they

\(^{15}\) Cushman relates that the warrior who had had special communication with the Great Spirit withdrew from his community into the forest for a period of meditation before fully attaining his supernatural powers. (Ibid., pp. 38-39.)

\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 231.
are needed. There is little or no income realized from the dispensing of the potions, but the practitioners doubtless achieve added prestige in their communities through this activity.

Death

The most elaborate ceremonies of the Choctaws were those connected with death. If nothing else about the Choctaws caught the eye of early travelers, the burial customs did. Even William Bartram, who had little to say about the Choctaws, described their treatment of the dead. The Choctaws' behavior in this regard was unique among the Indians of the Southeast, so this may have accounted for the dislike some of the neighbors had for them, as well as for its being an object of curiosity for early travelers. The versions of the burial customs vary, but Swanton suggests that there was probably considerable variation from community to community.

Whenever a death occurred, the body was wrapped in a blanket or bear skin and placed atop a scaffold near the deceased's house. The scaffold consisted of a platform covered with a roof to protect

---

17 This is not the case with Wesley, who also considers himself a medicine man. He uses a horn to suck out poison or other objects from a sick individual. He and his followers have nothing to do with the agency, but some of them have been known to patronize white doctors in Macon.


the body. The platform was supported by poles six to twenty feet in height. Benches were placed around the scaffold where relatives and friends gathered from one to three times a day to mourn the deceased. The body was allowed to remain on the scaffold until the flesh had decomposed to the extent that it could be easily removed from the bones. Thereupon "bone pickers," old men or women with long fingernails, removed the flesh from the bones and placed the latter in a container made of skin or wood.

The cleaning of the bones was an important occasion for the mourning of the deceased, for at this time relatives and friends from near and far gathered to participate. Once the bones were placed in the container, relatives bore it to the edge of town and placed it in a "bone house." When the bone houses became filled, the whole community participated in a mourning ceremony for all of the dead whose bones lay in the house. Either the house itself was completely covered with dirt, or the bones were removed to a place outside the town where they were stacked and covered with dirt. This is the way many of the smaller mounds came about.

The practice of scaffolding and bone picking was replaced shortly after 1800 by a pole-pulling ceremony, as the Choctaws began burying their dead in a sitting or prone position. The former

---

20 Just why the Indians changed this custom is a matter of interesting speculation. It can be assumed that if the practice of scaffolding the dead disappeared by 1800, the innovation of burial was introduced a number of years earlier. Doubtless the whites who settled among them and took Indian wives wielded much influence on
bone pickers had become "pole pullers." It was their duty to place poles, usually six in number, around the grave of the deceased and to remove them after the period of mourning. But by the latter part of the nineteenth century these special functionaries had completely disappeared. Halbert indicates that the poles were prepared and raised by six men selected by the head men of the two clans (iksas). During the early days of the pole-raising practice, rings of vine were tied to the tallest poles; and it has been suggested that these may have been used by the deceased as a ladder to ascend to the spirit land. However, the practice had been discontinued during Halbert's time. As in the days of scaffolding, relatives visited the grave at least once a day, for a period of weeks or months until the time set aside by the head men for the pole pulling.

On the afternoon of the day of the final "big cry," relatives and friends gathered, some from great distances. At the cry, the two clans camped on opposite sides of the grave. As each family arrived at the grounds, one or more representatives went to the grave and mourned for a short period before unpacking their belongings. In the early evening the assemblage enjoyed a large feast, after which there were speeches by the head men of the clans. Following this the younger people engaged in dancing which took up the greater part of the night. Shortly before dawn the members of the immediate the Indian leaders. And by 1800 the half-breed Indians, many of whom had been educated in white schools, were rising to prominent places of leadership.
family of the deceased once more began mourning. This brought back an air of solemnity to the camp, and all gathered and knelt around the grave for the pole pulling. After a period of loud wailing, the poles were removed, signaling the end of mourning. Some records indicate that a morning meal was served to the assemblage before departing. Halbert states that the practice of pole-pulling disappeared shortly before 1900.

Future Life

Prior to their removal in 1830 the Choctaws believed that they had souls or spirits and that these went after death to the "happy land" or to the "land of ghosts." The only ones who inhabited the latter were persons who died violent deaths and those who had attempted or committed murder. When death came, the spirit did not depart immediately but hovered over the grave for several days. Since the final destination of the spirit, the "happy hunting ground," was believed to be many days away from the earth, personal articles and food were provided for the journey. This practice, according to Halbert, was abandoned by 1900; however, the Reverend Eugene Farr (white), upon officiating at two Indian funerals, found evidence that it still existed in 1940. Some "personal effects" were buried with a man who was not a Christian, and a comb was placed on a Chris-

---

ian woman's coffin as it was lowered into the grave. On the other hand, two contemporary white missionaries and one Indian minister all insist that the practice has disappeared except among the followers of Cameron Wesley. This practice—indeed, most of the Choctaw's aboriginal religious observance—has been replaced by new ideas associated with Christianity and other western cultural patterns.

II. INTRODUCTION OF THE WHITE MAN'S RELIGION

In view of what was said above about the state of institutional development among the Choctaws upon the arrival of the Europeans, it would appear that the proponents of Christianity would have little difficulty in proselyting them. And there was the possibility of relating such concepts as the Great Spirit to God and the spirit land to heaven. But in spite of the rudimentary nature of the Choctaw religious life and any possible similarities of beliefs, early missionary work accomplished little. Although the establishment and work of the missions were related in the preceding chapter, it is necessary, for the chronology of the religious developments, to recount here some of the events in connection with them.

The Catholics were the first to present the Christian religion to the Choctaws. In 1722 a Jesuit, the Reverend Matturin le Petit,
was sent as a missionary to the Choctaws. He was succeeded in 1725 by the Reverend Michael Baudouin who remained in the southern division for about eighteen years. Another missionary, the Reverend le Fevre, served in the same area for a short period. Gerow estimates that a mission was maintained for about thirty years altogether, but on the whole it met with little success. Besides the hindrance of frequent wars with the Creeks, Gerow stated that "... [the Choctaws'] superstition and their low standard of morality made the work of converting them to Christianity very difficult, if not impossible."24

Nearly a century passed before any additional efforts were made to Christianize the Indians. In 1818 at the request of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Congregational), the Reverend Cyrus Kingsbury established a mission station, called Eliot, in the northeastern division.25 Two years later in 1820 another mission, Mayhew, was established in the same division by Kingsbury and his assistant, the Reverend Cyrus Byington. In 1821 Kingsbury organized the "Church of Christ," affiliating it with the denomination of that name rather than with the sponsor of the mission. The church

Colonial Times," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, VI (1902), 351-357.


25 This is sometimes spelled Elliott.

grew rapidly because of its location near the northeastern division's Indian agency. Although the total membership was not recorded, over a hundred converts, presumably all Indian, were added to the church rolls yearly prior to removal—155 in 1830 and 134 in 1831.

A third mission, about which there is little information, was established in 1825 in what is now Jasper County. Although these missions had as their primary purpose the conversion of the Indians, they are better known for the successful schools which they operated. The missions flourished during their brief existence, but by 1833 they had been moved West with the main body of the Choctaws, leaving those Indians who remained no organized education or religion.

III. REVIVED EFFORTS

Catholics

Fifty years passed before any further efforts were made to Christianize the Indians. As was related in the preceding chapter, about the year 1880 the Bishop of Natchez passed through Neshoba County and was struck by the pathetic conditions of the Indians. A short while later he prevailed upon a Dutch friend, the Reverend J. B. Bekkers, to come to the United States as a missionary to the Choctaws.

Bekkers arrived in Neshoba County in 1883 and made his head-

quarters at Tucker. Immediately he set about purchasing land for his mission. He bought a total of 600 acres of land on which he constructed a church, a school and houses for the Indians. The church, dedicated in 1884, had a membership of both whites and Indians from its inception. In 1885 three Sisters of Mercy came to assist Bekkers, who was transferred in 1898 after fifteen years work with the mission. He was succeeded by three Carmelite missionaries who remained until 1903 when Indians migrated to the Indian Territory.

Protestants

At about the same time Catholic interest in the Choctaws was revived, Baptists in Mississippi also became interested in converting the Indians to Christianity. In 1878 in Leake County some Indians were converted at a Negro Baptist Church in a community called Government Hills. In the time which immediately ensued, the Indians did not continue to meet with the Negroes but met in the church building on a Sunday once a month when the latter were not meeting. In 1880 this fact was brought to the attention of the General Association of Regular Baptists, a religious organization occupying central and south Mississippi; and the following year a committee reported to the annual meeting of the body that a missionary, the Reverend Peter Folsom, had been secured from the West as a missionary to the Choctaws in Missis-

\[28\] Gerow, having access to Bekkers' diary, describes the first years of the Tucker mission in op. cit., pp. 260-265.
In his first year of work the missionary organized those Indians meeting in the Negro church into the Mount Zion Baptist Church. On October 20, 1882, this church was admitted into the Harmony (white) Baptist Association. The same association admitted another Indian church to membership in 1885.

Folsom was followed in 1883 by his assistant, the Reverend Jesse Baker, also from the West, who died shortly after assuming his work. His successor, the Reverend James Brown, another western Choctaw, died soon after arriving in Mississippi. Both men were buried in the white cemetery at Hickory, Mississippi. One other Indian, the Reverend Elder Jack, was secured as missionary by the Baptists in 1884. His reports appear in the General Association Reports for 1884 and 1885. The Indian mission work of the Baptists was taken over by whites in 1888 with the appointment of the Reverend Nathan L. Clarke as missionary, who worked for a number of years. By 1891 there were nine Choctaw Baptist churches with a total membership of about three hundred.

29 Minutes of the General Association of Regular Baptists of Mississippi, 1881, p. 4.

30 Minutes of the Harmony Baptist Association, 1882, p. 9. An association in the organizational structure of the Baptist Denomination is a group of churches, usually in a certain locality, immediately above the local church.

31 Minutes of the General Association of Regular Baptists in Mississippi, 1892, p. 10.
It appears that by this time those Indians who had become Christians in Baptist churches had generally adopted the white Baptist beliefs and practices. After attending an Indian Baptist church service in 1894, Brown wrote, "One is amazed and encouraged at the progress these people have made in Christianity, contrasting the Indians now and when they were first discovered in America."32

Everything was "... done with as much order and decorum as it is in any of our white churches in the country."33 The service which Brown described was one of a series in a three-day meeting. Beginning at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning there were three preachers in addition to the preliminaries of the usual Baptist service. The service apparently was much like those in the white Baptist churches of his time, the only things out of the ordinary that he observed being the unusual dress of the Choctaws and the use of the Choctaw language in hymn-singing and preaching.

Methodists were not as successful with their efforts among the Choctaws as were Catholics and Baptists, although their interest in work among them had preceded that of the other denominations. As early as 1872 they discussed the possibility of missions among the Indians in Mississippi.34 There is no record of actual work until

32 A. J. Brown, History of Newton County, Mississippi, From 1834 to 1894 (Jackson, Mississippi: Clarion-Ledger Company, 1894), p. 25.
33 Ibid.
the conference meeting of 1891. The Reverend W. W. Cammack had apparently been appointed missionary the year before, for it was reported that he had organized two churches—one in Winston County, the other in Kemper. Before the turn of the century, there were two more churches established—one in Neshoba County, one in Newton. It is not known how many Indians became members of these churches.

In his history published in 1894, Brown discussed the activities of various denominations among the Indians but did not state the Methodist Indian membership. Baptists were estimated to have three hundred communicants, which is the same figure quoted above from an associational report. But his estimate of three hundred "nominal" Indian Catholics is only half the number 690 given by Gerow for the year 1900. From these figures, it appears that about a thousand, or one third, of the Indians had become affiliated with Baptist, Catholic, or Methodist denominations by 1900.

IV. RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 1900

The last removal of the Indians around the turn of the present century once again disrupted the organized religious life of the

36 Brown, History of Newton County, Mississippi, p. 22.
37 Supra, footnote 31.
38 Gerow, op. cit., p. 263.
Choctaws as it did the other aspects of their social life. From Gerow's account it appears that all of the Indians living in the vicinity of Tucker migrated to Oklahoma. The Carmelite Fathers who had succeeded Bekkers went West with them. 39

Of the ten Baptist churches that were known to exist prior to 1900, it is certain that one of them sold its property in Mississippi with the intention of establishing itself again in Indian territory. 40 Only four of those established before 1900 have survived until the present day. The remaining five churches may have merely disbanded or dissolved.

Of the four Methodist churches established prior to 1900, only one survived the last removal. The Black Jack Church in Southwest Neshoba County, established in 1892, is still active and until recently was maintained by white ministers.

The New Choctaw Baptist Association

It is not clear how long the white missionary appointed by the General Association of Regular Baptists in 1888 served; however, the minutes of the group's meeting in 1910 lists its missionary as an Indian by the name of the Reverend Scott York. The next year the Choctaw churches withdrew their connections with the white Bapt-

39 Ibid.

tist Associations and organized the New Choctaw Baptist Association. 

Farr relates a conversation with a Choctaw (now deceased) who participated in the formation of the new group in which it was learned that the Indians had previously been attending the meetings of the white associations but "... did not know what it was all about." The first day of the meeting of the new association "... was taken up with deciding what to do. They knew they wanted their own association, but none of them ever held places of responsibility in the other associations to which they had belonged."

Initial difficulties were eventually overcome and the association was organized with a beginning membership of six churches under the leadership of Choctaw ministers. In the first year that records of the meetings of the new association were kept, the churches reported a total membership of 116 members. Of the $76.55 contributed during the preceding year, fifty-three dollars were used for the salaries of two ministers.

In 1919 the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention assumed the responsibility for the Indian work in Mississippi.

---

41 To what extent this was voluntary is not known.
42 There was already a white group with the name Choctaw Baptist Association in Mississippi.
43 Farr, op. cit., p. 71.
44 Ibid.
45 Minutes of the New Choctaw Baptist Association, 1913, p. 17.
and named the Reverend J. E. Arnold as missionary. Two other missionaries followed him, and the second one served until 1930 when the Board had to discontinue the mission because of insufficient funds. The work was resumed in 1945 with the appointment of another white missionary whose home in Philadelphia was purchased by the Board.

In 1957 there were eleven churches in the New Choctaw Baptist Association with a total membership of 877.\(^{46}\) A perusal of the minutes of the association from 1913 through 1957 indicates a meticulousness for organization. The various activities—Sunday School, women's missionary societies, etc.—carried on in the white churches are duplicated in the Indian churches. The program is imitative of the way white associations maintained their meetings twenty-five to fifty years ago. There are all kinds of special reports and frequent special offerings. Everyone who has anything to say gets his name recorded in the minutes.

The association meets annually as do the comparable white organizations; however, the Indians hold their sessions over a period of three days, while the white groups usually meet one or possibly two days. As Farr suggests, "The association holds a unique place in the life of the Indian."\(^{47}\) It not only functions as an occasion for the transaction of church business, but also contributes to the social

---

\(^{46}\) Minutes of the Forty-fifth Annual Session of the New Mississippi Choctaw Baptist Association, 1957, p. 22.

\(^{47}\) Farr, op. cit., p. 75.
life of the whole family. Since automobiles have come into common use, the practice of visiting in the homes of relatives or friends near the host church is not as prevalent as in the past; however, several years ago as many as twenty people were known to occupy one small cottage at night.

While the men meet in the church to discuss associational business, the associational missionary organization of the women meets on the outside or in Sunday school rooms of the host church. With one exception, all have active women's missionary groups. Children of those attending have the freedom of the area until they and the women are called in for the periodical preaching services. An enterprising Indian frequently sets up a cold drink stand, weather permitting. Meals are prepared and served on the ground by the women in the manner that was once typical of the rural white Baptist churches.

Another Choctaw associational activity of which there is no white Baptist counterpart is a fifth Sunday Executive Board meeting at one of the churches. The Board is composed of the pastor and one member from each church. The meeting of the Board is an occasion for preaching services on Saturday night and Sunday; so people from all seven communities attend. This occasion, like the annual association meeting, gives men, women and children an opportunity to visit,  

The exception is Old Caanan near Edinburg. The membership of the church consists of one family of six. The family refused to go with the church in 1949 when a majority of the members voted to move it to the Pearl River community. Their reason for staying was that someone had to remain and keep up the cemetery.
whereas normal daily working routine on the farm is such that little visiting can take place.

Relations with Other Baptist Groups

In the counties where these Choctaw Baptist churches are located, there are two other bodies of Baptists—white and Negro. Among the three racial groups there is very little or no communication. In fact, it is safe to say that there is no communication at all with the Negro churches. And when there is contact between the white and Choctaw churches, the latter usually take the initiative.

There has never been what Baptists call "close fellowship" among the two church groups. One informant in the Pearl River community related the story of the efforts of a white Baptist church to prevent the Indians from building a church of their own; the distance separating the two was about a mile. The informant, in his sixties, could not recall any joint services or other cooperative activities of the churches.

Until the fall of 1954, the missionary was able to use the baptistry in the First Baptist Church in Philadelphia to immerse new converts. A smaller church on the west side of town then permitted the use of its baptistry once but prohibited its further use because some of their members objected. For the past three years the Indians have been baptizing their converts in streams and in the winter have been using the baptistry of the white Baptist church at Walnut Grove, a few miles south of the Standing Pine community.
The financial assistance for the Indian Baptist church program (i.e., the missionary's salary and aid for building churches) has not come from local Baptist sources, but from state Baptist agencies and from the Home Mission Board. Funds from these two sources were used to construct in Philadelphia an Indian center, a place for resting and eating, as no facilities in the city are available for them. Use of the new center by Indians has been slight, because, as one white remarked, "It takes time for them to get used to something new." A more feasible reason is that a large faction of the Indian Baptists is opposed to the center. This group thinks that "the money could have been put to better use"; that "it's in a bad location"; that "parking space is inadequate"; and that "services held in the center compete with those in our churches." The actual reason for the objections lies in the fact that the Indians who are opposed to the center are by and large those who are loyal to a former missionary who was replaced shortly before the erection of the building.

The dedication of the center in the fall of 1956 brought Baptist leaders from Atlanta, Georgia and Jackson, Mississippi. The first day of ceremonies was for whites; all white Protestant missionary societies in Philadelphia were invited to participate in the dedication and open house which followed. On the following day

49 The center is two blocks from the court square where the main business district is located.

50 One white woman called the missionary to inquire about Indians attending; she let it be known that she would not attend if the service was to be "mixed." No Negroes were invited to any of the ceremonies.
a second ceremony was held, this time for the Indians. At being segregated in this way, resentment ran high among Indian church leaders, including those opposed to the center.

In the fall of 1957 the Baptist Home Mission Board employed its first Choctaw as a missionary, a native of Oklahoma and a college and seminary graduate. (Since 1900 all missionaries had been white.) When he and his white wife came to Philadelphia to discuss the prospect of the work with the Indian ministers, a group of white women protested against the possibility of his living in their neighborhood in a house provided by the Board. They told the local minister of the First Baptist Church: "We're not going to have this example of race mixing for our children to see every day."

Rather than cause trouble the missionary and his wife, upon accepting the work, moved into the basement of the Indian center where they lived for several months. Efforts to buy a house or land in the city limits have met with no success. Recently a Baptist friend of the Indians rented them a house on the northwest edge of the city limits; there are no houses immediately adjacent.

Renewed Catholic Activity

A year after the removal of the Indians from Tucker in 1903, the Reverend Joseph Enis was appointed pastor of the Holy Rosary mission. Under his direction, Indians in Neshoba and surrounding

---

51 Gerow, op. cit., p. 264.
counties who had not emigrated were invited to live on the mission land. Because of their economic plight, and perhaps for other reasons, many responded.

Three other pastors served the mission from the time that Father Enis was given another appointment in 1913 until the coming of the present pastor in 1937. From the fall of 1922 until 1930, the pastors had the assistance of three Augustinian Sisters. Besides operating a school for white children in the community, the Sisters gave religious instruction to the Indian children in the afternoons when they were released from school. In 1931 three Sisters of the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity came to Tucker to assist in the missionary work. The present pastor, like his predecessors, also served as pastor of the Holy Cross Catholic Church in Philadelphia. Under his leadership, two additional missions have been established—one at Conehatta in 1947, the other at Pearl River in 1952. The present Indian membership of the three missions is estimated to be 150, 75, and 25 members respectively.

Recent Methodist Activity

In 1955 the Mississippi Conference of the Methodist Church employed an Oklahoma Choctaw minister to work among the Mississippi Indians. Like the new Baptist missionary, he too is a college and

The writer was unable to get authoritative figures. These are estimates given by individuals living in the community.
Having moved into a house adjoining the Pearl River reservation, his housing was no problem. He did experience a rebuff, though, when he sought to enroll his son in the white high school in Philadelphia. Like the other Indian high-school students in the area, this son is now completing his secondary education in Oklahoma.

The Black Jack church, which was maintained for many years by the white "circuit rider" with a membership of about fifteen individuals, has been revitalized and now members approximately twenty-five. A church has been organized in the Pearl River community and, because of its advantageous location, is growing rapidly. As there are yet no Methodist ministers among the Mississippi Indians, the missionary serves both churches.

The Methodist missionary has a closer relationship with the Methodist churches in Philadelphia than has been true of Baptist missionaries. He and his wife frequently participate in women's missionary groups, and he has preached in the absence of the pastor of the First Methodist Church.

V. LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCHES

Because of the organizational structure of his church, there is little opportunity for the Catholic Indian to rise to positions of leadership. The fact that the Tucker church has a sizeable white membership further hinders his assuming leadership roles. Although
it could not be confirmed from authoritative sources, it was generally told that one Indian youth from Tucker did study for a while to become a priest but returned home.

For different reasons, the Methodist Choctaws have failed to develop leadership in their churches. It was pointed out earlier that the Methodist churches were not firmly established when the 1903 removals took place; and the one church which survived was served by white ministers. Now that a missionary has been employed, there will probably be increased interest and activity in that denomination's work.

Leaders have arisen in the Baptist church for the very reasons that they have not in the other churches. The structural organization of the denomination provides positions of lay leadership. There is no competition with whites except at the level of missionary, the supervisor of Baptist work with the Indians.\footnote{For a period of about six months the Association was without a missionary. During this time the new Indian center in Philadelphia was closed, a fact which prompted the following remark from an Indian minister: "Don't they trust us? We're just as capable of operating that place as they \[the white missionaries\] are."} And because of the long period of continuous organization, interest not only has been maintained, but the actual number participating in the church program has increased yearly.

Since 1900 there have been two or more Indian Baptist ministers serving their churches. Their salaries have never been more
than token payments. Since the total yearly contributions of the eleven churches have only recently exceeded one thousand dollars, it is obvious that there is little to divide among as many as five ministers. Consequently, the pastors are compelled to carry on secular vocations during the week to support their families. The problem of finance hinders their work in a number of ways—not only in the amount of time they can devote to their churches, but in their dealings with whites who continue to identify them with the lower class. They are not able to buy or rent good houses, drive a late-model car, or dress in the manner of the white ministers.54

Indian ministers are further handicapped by lack of education. Those now serving churches do not have any formal training beyond the eighth grade. One minister who graduated from college in 1957 has migrated to Oklahoma. A white minister who has a college degree is temporary pastor of one church. The recent employment of a well-trained Oklahoma Choctaw as missionary may, in the long run, contribute to bettering the relations between white and Indian Baptists.

The continued activity of Indian Baptist laymen is also significant. It was mentioned earlier that the minutes of the Association, as well as minutes of churches, are filled with names of in-
dividuals who make remarks, give reports, or pray, while much of this would not be noted in a similar white Baptist record of today. The names of women have appeared in the minutes of the Association since 1913, particularly in connection with the women's missionary program. Women have served as secretaries, church clerks, Sunday school teachers, and messengers to their association meetings.

In 1953 the Mississippi Baptist Convention voted to permit the New Choctaw Association to be represented on the Convention Board, a body which plans and administers the activities of the denomination in Mississippi. This was brought about at the suggestion of the missionary to the Indians inasmuch as every association recognized by the Convention is entitled to a representative. It took the Indians a little over forty years to be accorded this recognition, while it has been a foregone conclusion in cases of white associations. With the acceptance of a representative from the Choctaw association on the Board, the Indians have achieved at least a symbol of equality; however, this has had little or no effect on the relations with white Baptists in the four agency counties.

VI. PREPONDERANCE OF BAPTISTS

The preceding discussion of the activities of the various denominations among the Indians suggests that Baptists have been

55 Delegates of Baptist churches to various denominational meetings are called messengers.
most successful. This fact is evident from the church membership statistics in Table XII. Approximately 77 per cent of church members are Baptists. The question arises then as to why the Indians are in this denomination rather than in another. The data at hand indicate that they were attracted to the Baptist church for many of the same reasons that Negroes were.

Like the rural Negro church, it is the one institution in the community over which the Indians are able to exercise some degree of control. From 1830 until the establishment of churches at the end of the century there were no institutional areas outside the immediate family in which the Choctaws could express themselves. In fact, as it has been repeatedly pointed out before, they were continually beset with disorganizing experiences which hindered their taking part in any kind of activity other than that for bare existence. At the present opportunities for participation and self-expression are still limited: The community clubs are supervised by agency personnel, and the sponsor of each club is a white person connected with the local school. Likewise, the activities of the Tribal Council are also guided by agency personnel. But with their churches the situation is quite different. Although some of the

---

56 Baptists do not include in their membership children who have not reached the "age of accountability."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Church</th>
<th>Year Organized</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baptist</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethany</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Pearl River</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogue Chitto</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Bogue Chitto</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogue Homo</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Bogue Homo</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvary</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Union</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canaan</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>Pearl River</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Pearl River</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopewell</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Standing Pine</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Conehatta</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Zion</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td>Red Water</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Canaan</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Edinburg</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine Bluff</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Sebastopol</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Catholic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Rosary</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Tucker</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Conehatta</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Pearl River</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methodist</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl River</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Pearl River</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Jack</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Dixon</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**

All Churches 1,137

*Source: Baptist Churches: Minutes of the Forty-fifth Annual Session of the New Mississippi Choctaw Baptist Association, 1957, p. 22; Catholic and Methodist churches: estimates from individuals in the communities where the churches are located.*
property is owned by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, the
Indians can conduct their services as they please, elect whomever
they choose as their pastor, and, in general, freely express them­
selves.

In addition to the appeal of the autonomous form of govern­
ment of the Baptist denomination, the simple fact of contact doubt­
less contributed to the spread of that faith among the Choctaws.
Toward the end of the century Baptists and Methodists—white and
Negro—began to outnumber Presbyterians and Catholics who were also
in the rural areas. Presbyterians made no effort to work with the
Indians after the Civil War; and Methodists began later than Bap­
tists and were not firmly established when the 1903 removal took
place.

On the other hand, it is doubtful that the emotional appeal
of the Baptist service was overly significant, since the Methodist
service before the turn of the century was also characterized by a
high degree of emotionalism. The emotional pitch that still charac­
terizes many rural white services is absent in the Indian church. A
white missionary stated that in his ten years of working with the
Choctaws, he had seen only one man shed tears. He observed that
"one of the discouragements about working with them is their lack
of show of emotions." The historians, however, imply that years
ago when the Choctaws had their cries, when the Choctaws had their
periods of mourning, all—men and women—wept.
The salvation theme, stressed by Baptists and Methodists, has appealed to them because of the frustrations they face in the world about them. The message is "simple and plain," making it easy for the individual to accept. Although they do not sing the gospel songs with the enthusiasm of whites or Negroes, the words are probably as meaningful. The heavenly themes are likely very real for them, for, being deprived of the opportunity to strive for the goals stressed by the larger society, they can only look forward to a better life yet to come. Thus, the beliefs emphasized by the Baptist denomination provide the Indians with hope and, at the same time, with a sense of security as they face the vicissitudes of their earthly life.

Providing them with a sense of security is perhaps the principal function of contemporary Christianity, but the church itself has another important function as a social organization. Like the rural churches of whites and Negroes, the Indian church house serves as a place of social contact for families and individuals who are scattered miles apart on farms during the week. Until recently when services became more frequent, the monthly assemblies were important opportunities for the gathering of families in the entire community and beyond. Often services were held on Saturday night also, thus increasing the time for visiting. The lengthy meetings of the association and executive board provided opportunities for Indians from all the areas served by the churches to visit in homes and eat
together.

The importance of these special services—indeed, the Sunday program itself—to the social life of the Indians may diminish as a result of inevitable change in their way of life. Many families today have some kind of motor transportation which enables them to visit in their community or elsewhere in the evenings or whenever they wish. Television in the homes of some now most active in religious work may deflect interest from that program of the church which goes beyond the Sunday service. A more immediate reason for possible decline of interest in these meetings is the fact that more churches may come to have services every Sunday \(^{58}\) thus necessitating placing special meetings on weekdays when few can attend.

Whatever its future, the church has played an important part in the lives of the Choctaws during the past seventy-five years. The place of the church, or, more broadly, religion itself, in the years ahead will depend to a large extent on the economic situation in the agency area. It is the economic life of the Choctaws on which attention is focused in the next chapter.

\(^{58}\) One church has had weekly services for about a year.
CHAPTER IX

ECONOMIC LIFE

In contrast to the rudimentary religious development among the pre-Columbian Choctaws, the Tribe reached a relatively high position among the North American Indians in economic development. Much has been written about the Choctaws' hunting activities, but that means of food supply was secondary to their extensive farming.

I. A TRADITION OF FARMING

The Choctaws were the principal farmers of the Southeast, producing enough to trade with their neighbors and with the first whites who came among them.

Early Agriculture

As was customary in many of the tribes where farming was practiced, it was the main task of the women to tend the fields. The earliest source on the Choctaws, the anonymous French writer, noted that the women not only performed household tasks but also worked the ground, sowed, and harvested the crop. However, Romans, a short while later, observed that the men helped their wives in

---


the labor of the fields and many other works. Regardless of these differing opinions, it is probable that both men and children assisted the women at particular times like the harvest because of the magnitude of the farming operation.

It is likely that the Choctaws had communal farming plots, as this was a general practice among other Indians of the Southeast. However, there was no mention of this by the early writers. It is known that an Indian could occupy a piece of land and retain possession of it as long as he remained on it; but once he left it, he lost all right to it. The farming land was burned over and used again and again until it lost its fertility; then it was abandoned for other land. The harvests were stored in large buildings, from which the individual Indian family helped itself.

Pre-Columbian agriculture was carried on without the horse, a fact which suggests the especially arduous work of Indian women. But after the arrival of the Spanish, horses soon became a valuable asset to those Indians who were fortunate enough to acquire them. By the time of the removal in 1830, the horse—to be more exact, the small pony—had become a common possession. Women were then relieved of some of those burdens formerly carried on their backs, and the pony also provided assistance for women's labors in the

---


4 Swanton, op. cit., p. 46.
fields.

The principal tribal crop was corn; and, because it was usually so plentiful, the Choctaws developed a number of ways to prepare it for eating. The sunflower was cultivated for its seed, which could be made into a meal for baking. Tobacco was occasionally grown. A practice continued into later times was the planting of beans with corn. Because of the importance of corn, the failure of a crop posed serious threats to the existence of a community. When there was a shortage, greater reliance was placed on seeds, berries, nuts, and game.

At such times whole communities would have to disperse in order to hunt game; however, there were no communal hunts reported among the early Choctaws, though they may have been practiced in some areas. By 1800 as a result of the increasing encroachments of whites, scarcity of land and game became a problem for the Indians.

Economic Disorganization

In the period from 1830 to 1850 when the main body of the tribe was migrating to the West, the economic life of the remaining Indians, like other aspects of their social organization, was chaotic. It was observed that the planting of their crops each year began to be neglected, so constant was their fear of having to leave at any

---

5 Ibid., p. 49.
moment. And the situation was made still more confusing by the excessive drinking of both males and females.

The terms of the fourteenth article of the treaty of 1830 provided that those not wishing to emigrate be awarded a section of land. But, because of mismanagement of federal affairs, slow means of communication among the Indians, and other telling reasons, only 69 Indians' names appeared on the register as desiring to remain in Mississippi. For the next twenty years, the Indians endeavored to get that land promised under the treaty, but their efforts were of small avail, largely because many white leaders sought to remove all of them from the State. By 1846, the Indians had been assigned only 163 sections of land, and they had received scrip as half payment for 889 sections. There is abundant evidence to indicate that the Indians were not able to retain land or scrip very long because of scheming whites, many of whom pretended to help them.

Sharecroppers

The Civil War and its aftermath had dire effect on the Indians as well as on the rest of the society of which they were a part. The Indians, by then, had become established as sharecroppers in the agricultural system about them. One elderly white informant related that his father had as many as four hundred Indians living on his place in the period from the Civil War to the 1903 removal. At

---

6 See footnote 25, Chapter II.
that time about a third of those descendants of the Choctaws who
had remained in Mississippi went West to share in the allotment of
land. Once again they were misled by whites who pretended to be-
friend them while plotting to get their land. In large part, those
remaining after the last removal continued as sharecroppers.

In 1917, the special representative from Washington who in-
vestigated the plight of the Choctaws made a number of interesting
observations about their economic situation:

The Mississippi Choctaws realize that they must earn their
bread by the sweat of the brow. They seem willing to work
and there are certain things they can do particularly well. .
. . The chief fault of the men is that they too easily take
a day off and permit trifles to interrupt them in their work.
For this reason they are unsuccessful as day laborers. . . .

For the work they are accustomed to do they receive very
small compensation and they are practically helpless in the
event that their employer chooses to cheat them or to impose
on them. . . . Because of his nature and the conditions of
society in which he lives, the Indian is practically without
redress and has no one to whom to appeal when he is brow
beaten and cheated; hence he is practically a peon in the
make-up of Mississippi society. 7

A custom which had been carried over from the past was also consid-
ered to be a hindrance to the Indian's bettering himself:

7"Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners," Annual
Reports of The Department of The Interior (Washington, D. C.: Gov ern-

Twelve years later in the annual report of the Agency the
superintendent emphasized this same idea: "I am persuaded that at
least 50% of the white landlords in what is know [sic] as the North
Bend and Bogue Chitto country practice an absolute practical slavery
over the Indians who live with them." (1930 Narrative Report, p. 5,
quoted by John Pearmain in "Indian Office Band Book of Information,
If he could break away from Indian custom so far as to refuse to divide with the improvident what he lays up over and above his needs of the moment, he could make a living and take care of himself.\footnote{Report on the Choctaws in Mississippi, p. 346.}

The representative concluded (1) that the Choctaw needed someone to stand between him and the "unscrupulous employer," (2) that he should receive financial assistance from the government for a year or two, and (3) that he should be educated up to ignoring those customs which prevented his accumulating wealth.\footnote{Ibid.}

Reservation Established

The representative's report doubtless influenced the government's decision to establish the Indian agency in 1918 at Philadelphia. The second conclusion of the representative concerning giving the Indians financial assistance for a year or two proved to be a matter of mistaken judgment of time and other factors. A land-purchase program was started immediately, but much of the land obtained was either inexpensive or had been abandoned. When asked about the inferior quality of reservation land, an agency official remarked that it was just as good as the property of whites around it.

The original plan of setting the Indian up in farming—land, mule, tools, seed, etc.—had to be cancelled because of his lack of cultural experiences in managing his own affairs and in caring for equipment. Included also in the original plan had been the sale of
land to the Indians on a "re-imbursable plan." But for the reasons just mentioned and perhaps more significantly, because of the effects of the depression, no Indian was able to repay his loan. By 1933, eighty families were occupying approximately 5,000 acres of land. Individual farming units ranged from forty to eighty acres.

In 1934, Congress passed the Indian Reorganization Act which gave Indian tribes the privilege of reconstituting their tribal organizations on a limited basis if they so desired. Hence in February, 1934, the Superintendent of the Agency initiated the organization of the Choctaw Business Committee which was to assist him in Indian enrollment, tribal leases, and other details. The first meeting was held on September 14, 1934. Four months earlier a rival group, called the Mississippi Choctaw Indian Federation, had been organized at Union. The Federation lasted a little more than a year and disbanded when two agency employees who had participated in its formation were transferred.

The Business Committee was replaced by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians whose constitution was ratified on April 20, 1945. The Council supervises land rentals, leasing of mineral rights, sale of timber, and maintenance of roads in connection with reservation land. The Council's influence in agency decisions is increasing, but it suffers the same criticism about domination by agency personnel that the old committee received.

---

II. PRESENT ECONOMIC CONDITION

Occupational Characteristics

The great majority of Mississippi Choctaws still earn their livelihood from the soil. There are four Indians who own their farms, while the remainder lease reservation land or work for white farmers. Beginning in 1954, the Tribal Council adopted a policy of leasing farm land and homes. When the program was introduced there were 207 leases, but the number of leases negotiated in 1957 had declined to 144. The total number in effect that year was 204, the difference of 60 being delinquent. The number of delinquents increased from 15 in 1954 to 36 in 1956. The report of the Agency indicates that leasees who are delinquent are turned over to the Department of Justice "for appropriate action."

About half of the Indians are employed by white farmers on a sharecropper basis. Contrary to what might be expected, living off reservation land does not better their situation. Many are totally helpless in the hands of their employers. They must live in whatever houses--houses often without screens and sometimes without windows--which the landlord provides. They are seldom free to move as they are compelled to borrow money for barest necessities in anticipation of completing their crops. And it is well-established that

some employers even discourage Indian children from attending school. 12

Occupational characteristics presented in Table XIII indicate that 84.1 per cent of Indian males are engaged in some aspect of farming.13 (As the situation has changed little in regard to occupations since 1950, the census figures may be taken as generally representative of the present.) As it was pointed out above, all of the Indians in the categories related to farming except four are engaged in farm tenancy of some kind. Of the other Indian males not engaged in farming, a small proportion, 7.1 per cent, are classified as laborers, while less than ten per cent are in work which requires skill or special training.

A comparison of these figures with those for the total Indian male and total United States male population gives some perspective to the occupational situation of the Choctaws. While 84.1 per cent of the Choctaws are engaged in farming, only 43.9 per cent of all Indian males and 15.2 per cent of the total United States males are so classified.14 Laborers in the United States Indian population

---

12 The director of welfare at the Agency remarked that she faces this problem frequently. Her comments to the Indians: "Doesn't your landlord send his children to school? Then, it must be important to go."


### TABLE XIII

**PERCENTAGE OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF EMPLOYED MISSISSIPPI INDIAN MALES, UNITED STATES INDIAN MALES, AND ALL UNITED STATES MALES, 14 YEARS OLD AND OVER, 1950**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Occupation Group</th>
<th>Mississippi Indian Males (per cent)</th>
<th>Total Indian Males (per cent)</th>
<th>All United States Males (per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional, technical and kindred workers</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers and farm managers</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers, officials, and proprietors, except farm</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical, sales, and kindred workers</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operatives and kindred workers</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private household workers</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service workers, except private household</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm laborers, unpaid family workers</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm laborers, except unpaid and farm foremen</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers, except farm and mine</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation not reported</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

make up 16.7 per cent, more than twice the proportion among Missis­
sippi Indians, while the number in the total United States popula­
tion, 8.2 per cent, is only slightly higher than the Mississippi
Indian figure. On the other hand, the proportions in those occupa­
tions which call for skill and training range from a low of 6.3 per
cent among the Mississippi Choctaws to 69.4 per cent of the total
United States male population.

In the past three years the proportion of professionals has
changed slightly, since the Agency has adopted the policy of hiring
qualified Indians for "white-collar" positions. The addition of
two Indian teachers, two Indian secretaries, and an Indian sanitary
engineer is an indication of changing proportions. In this connec­
tion, the two new missionaries who are Choctaws can be added to
those in the professional category. The relocation of those who
have been engaged in farming is also contributing to proportional
occupational changes.

The question arises as to why the Choctaws are engaged in
unskilled employment. Kelly suggests that wage work is an accept­
able pattern for the Indian which does not conflict with his in­
terests and attitudes. This, however, does not appear to be the
case with the Choctaws. The fact that there is a continual waiting
list for farms on reservation land indicates that there is a desire

15 William H. Kelly, "The Economic Basis of Indian Life," The
Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,
(1957), 75.
on the part of these Indians to remove themselves from wage status to that of semi-independent farm operators. And many Indians want their own farms, but securing long-term credit is something which few, if any, can obtain. In 1956, the Tribal Council loaned a man funds to purchase a hundred-acre farm. If this becomes established policy, it may be a means whereby more Indians can become land owners.

Whether the desire is there or not, the Choctaw has no opportunity to learn anything other than farming. In 1953 interested whites prevailed upon the manager of a glove factory in Philadelphia to employ two Indian women on a trial basis. The work of the women was acceptable, but they were discharged because white women who make up the bulk of the 300 employees refused to work beside them. Mention was made in the preceding chapter of the efforts of the Agency's director of education to develop a vocational educational program. The students had been willing to participate in the learning situations, and the director stated that the eight who were training performed acceptably for their employers. Had the program been allowed to continue, the occupational picture for the

---

16 This conclusion was reached through interviews for this study. Furthermore, a survey conducted in 1956 by the loan committee of the Tribal Council revealed that approximately 50 percent of one hundred farmers questioned wanted to own their own land or business. ("Annual Report of the Choctaw Indian Agency to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," June 30, 1957, p. 55. [Mimeo-graphed])
Indians would have eventually changed.

The only jobs outside of agency employment that an Indian can now get are unskilled and of lowest pay—dishwashing, floor-sweeping, and similar work. The agency superintendent in discussing this problem said, "What good does it do a girl to learn typing and shorthand when the only job she can get in Philadelphia is dishwashing?" This being the case, it is easily understood why those who finish high school or learn trades leave the agency area and perhaps Mississippi altogether.

Income

The income of the Indians in Mississippi is among the lowest in the United States. In 1949 the median annual income of Choctaws fourteen years of age and over was $341, the lowest among all Indians classified by states or by agency jurisdiction. Only the rural farm Indian population of Arizona and New Mexico approached the low level of the Mississippi Choctaws. And, more specifically, the Hopi had the second lowest income of $423, which was eighty-two dollars more than the median for Mississippi Indians.

The income of the Choctaws is doubtless related to that for Mississippi as a whole. The median income for the state in 1949

---


18 Ibid., p. 76.
was $758, the lowest among the forty-eight states.\textsuperscript{19} Negroes in
the State fared only slightly better than the Indians with $439.\textsuperscript{20}
This figure also is the lowest for Negroes in the United States.
All of these incomes were less than half of the median income of
$1,917 for the total population of the United States fourteen years
of age and over.\textsuperscript{21}

Similar differences can be observed in Table XIV by comparing
the percentage distribution of Choctaws fourteen years old and over
with income in 1949\textsuperscript{22} with other populations.\textsuperscript{23} Less than $500 was
received by 73.2 per cent of the Choctaws, while 39.5 per cent of
the United States Indians and 17.3 per cent of the total United
States population were in that income group. The low income of
the Choctaws is even more dramatically illustrated by the fact that
98.0 per cent of them had incomes below $2,000, and the total United
States population had only 51.7 per cent with incomes below that
amount.

Since 1949, however, the income of the Choctaws has increased.

\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ibid.}, Vol. II, Characteristics of the Population, Part 1,
United States Summary, Table 175, p. 436.

\textsuperscript{20}\textit{Ibid.}, Vol. IV, Part 3, Chapter B, Table 20, p. 67.

\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Ibid.}, Vol. II, Part 1, Table 138, p. 298.

\textsuperscript{22}\textit{Ibid.}, Vol. IV, Part 3, Chapter B, Table 10, p. 32; Table
21, p. 73.

\textsuperscript{23}\textit{Ibid.}, Vol. II, Part 1, Table 138, p. 298.
TABLE XIV

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MISSISSIPPI INDIAN, UNITED STATES INDIAN,
AND TOTAL UNITED STATES POPULATION WITH INCOME,
14 YEARS OLD AND OVER, 1949

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Group</th>
<th>Mississippi Indians (per cent)</th>
<th>United States Indians (per cent)</th>
<th>United States Total (per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $500</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500 to $999</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,000 to $1,499</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,500 to $1,999</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2,000 to $2,999</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,000 to $3,999</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4,000 to $4,999</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,000 to $5,999</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$6,000 and over</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The director of the credit program for the Agency estimated that the average cash income for a Choctaw family in the fiscal year, 1955-56, was about $600.\textsuperscript{24} If this is correct, it indicates that the Indians' income has nearly doubled since 1949. On the other hand, it is still below the 1949 median income of the total population of Mississippi fourteen years old and over.

III. RELOCATION

In 1952, the Bureau of Indian Affairs established a relocation program for the alleviation of the economic plight of the American Indians. It was recognized that the resources of reservations were not adequate for the expanding Indian population; a program of assistance to those who wished to migrate was organized. Since its inception the Relocation Program has expanded into a large-scale operation in which several thousand Indians annually leave the reservations for a new life in an urban environment.

Objectives

The objectives of the program, as outlined in the relocation Handbook are in harmony with the total program of the Bureau, "... assisting the Indian people to reach a position of economic, social and political security which will permit them to make their own way

\textsuperscript{24} "Annual Report of the Choctaw Area Field Office to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs" (Mimeographed), June 30, 1956, p. 45.
in our complex society." Written in a very "folksy" manner, the handbook makes this further observation to the reader: "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home: Our challenge is to show to the Indian people that there is a better life awaiting them if they have the courage to request relocation." Accordingly the handbook is designed as a practical guide for relocation officers on the reservations and in the cities. Being written after the program was in operation for four years, it appears to have a suggestion for almost any problem which might arise.

The program which is set up by the Bureau has two different but related aspects, that which takes place on the reservation and that which is in the city.

A relocation officer in the area of large concentrations of Indians endeavors to acquaint the Indians with the possibility of securing employment in a large city—Chicago, St. Louis, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, or San Jose (California). In addition to interesting the Indian in emigrating, it is also the reservation officer's task to prepare the relocatee for what he should expect in urban living.

In the city to which the Indian migrates, there is a relocation officer with a staff of social workers. Their task is to assist

\[25^2\]
U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Handbook, Relocation Services, Release 82-1, June 6, 1956, 82 IAM 1.4. (Mimeographed.)

\[26^3\]
Ibid., 82 IAM 1.3.
the Indian in getting a room or apartment, in finding a job, and in adjusting to the routine of living in the city. Financial assistance is provided for a period of four weeks or until the relocatee begins to receive income from his job. Counseling and guidance are provided by the relocation office for a year or until community services are available.

The Choctaw Program

The relocation in the Mississippi Choctaw Agency Area was definitely entered upon with the addition of a relocation officer to the agency staff in August, 1956. While most of the reservation location officers are Indians trained in social work or whites who have had previous experience in this type of counseling (with the Japanese on the West coast, for example), the Choctaw officer came to his position from veterans' rehabilitation. Because of this fact, he has had a difficult time in getting his program across to the Indians; there has been a constant problem of developing mutual understanding.

On the walls of the reservation relocation office there are eye-catching posters telling of the opportunities awaiting Indians in the city: "Chicago Welcomes American Indians"; "Good Housing, Steady Jobs, Good Schools," and similar inviting themes. Pictures show Indians working in factories, owning refrigerators and tele-

---

27 In an interview with the officer four months after he had begun his work, he stated that "they have just begun to talk to me."
vision sets in their apartments, and participating in various activities of city life. The display material has been denounced by many who are concerned with the Indian's welfare. But in a study of the relocation program, Madigan defends the use of the posters which suggest goals the Indian may some day obtain but objects to their emphasis on relocation:

There is pressure upon Indians to forsake the reservation communities, but the pressure is far too big to be contained in the operation of the Relocation Program. In a country in which every little boy is told—in jest, but to make him feel equal and proud—that someday he may be president, it cannot be dishonest to tell an Indian man that he may some day have a television set, a refrigerator and a toilet. That he has to leave his Indian community to get them is a wrong which must be righted.

On the other hand, there are those who feel that pictures can be used to interest the Indian in relocating, but the Indian must be protected from disillusionment. The pictures should serve "... the laudable purpose of informing him but limiting his fancy."

Processing the Choctaw who decides to migrate is about the same as processing other Indians. There is the problem of obtaining birth certificates, particularly for the older people. The relocation officer has the responsibility of obtaining the life history of the individual or head of the family contemplating relocation. In


29 Ibid., p. 16.
particular, the work record for the past ten years must be recorded. Preparation of health records, including a physical examination, are also standard procedure. After a number of lengthy orientation sessions about city life, the relocatees are provided with transportation and subsistence to the relocation office in the city in which they have chosen to settle.

The Indian who fails to succeed in the city of who becomes unhappy for some reason can return to the reservation, if he wishes. One relocatee who had returned to Mississippi stated in the course of an interview that she and her husband returned because he had had "too much whiskey." She stated that her husband seldom got home on Saturday with his pay check. The husband had never been to school, and she had attended through the third grade. The lack of education was doubtless a major factor in the family's failure to adjust to urban life. The relocation officer indicated that this was a common problem with most of those who have been processed thus far for relocation from the Choctaw area.

The program was activated at the Choctaw agency in 1952 about the time it was instituted in other areas, yet few Indians relocated in the period from 1952 to 1956; there was no one at the Agency to give the program adequate attention. In the first full year of its

---

30 During the interview the woman abruptly crossed the room and pulled out of a trunk a map of the city to which she and her husband had gone. Although they had lived there for about six months, she was not able to point out where they had lived nor where her husband had worked.
operation under the direction of the relocation officer, a total of
seventy-six individuals relocated. The largest number, 40, settled
in St. Louis, the closest relocation city, while one or more of the
Indians went to the other relocation cities, none, however, going to
Denver.

Effectiveness of the Program

From Table XV it can be observed that the program appears to
be more effective in some communities than in others. The relocatees
ranged from 10 to 26 from four communities. On the other hand, there
were none from Bogue Homo, which, being the greatest distance from
the Agency, was probably least informed. However, the individuals
in the Red Water and Standing Pine Communities doubtless were ac­
quainted with the program at the outset. It will be recalled that
earlier a white informant was quoted as saying that Indians from
these communities are treated more like whites than any others.
Thus, the Choctaws in these communities may be more or less satis­
fied as they enjoy good relationships with their neighboring whites.

In the agency area opinion is divided on the value of the
relocation program. Officially the tribal council has endorsed it.
The constitution of the tribe has been amended to permit children
relocatees to become tribal members. The relocation officer has

32 Many whites in Philadelphia believe that the Indians refuse
TABLE XV

MISSISSIPPI CHOCTAW RELOCATIONS, BY COMMUNITY OF ORIGIN AND CITY OF DESTINATION, FISCAL YEAR, 1957

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Chicago</th>
<th>St. Louis</th>
<th>San Francisco</th>
<th>San Jose</th>
<th>Los Angeles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bogue Chitto</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogue Homo</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conehatta</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl River</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Water</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing Pine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tucker</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, All</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*There were no relocatees to the Denver office.

sought particularly to gain the support of the council members. This end has been partially accomplished through his attendance at the regular meetings of the council. In spite of this, some members of the council are against the idea. One remarked, "This is our home; we don't want to leave."

A few whites who have been closely associated with the Indians are the most vocal in expressing opposition to the program. "It's damnable," one person remarked, adding, "The West is still a nightmare to them; they're suspicious of anything the Agency proposes." On the other hand, a white civic leader in Philadelphia concluded that "Neshoba County would be better off without them." General consensus among whites seemed to be that the Indians would "change their ways" off the reservation at places where presumably they would have more contact with the culture of the larger society.

Agency personnel believe that relocation is the only way to solve the Indians' economic problem. The superintendent feels that under existing racial tensions they cannot improve their lot economically in the city of Philadelphia or other towns near Indian communities; consequently, their only alternative to continued subsistence-farming is relocation. This viewpoint appears to be

to migrate because they think they would jeopardize their chances of participating in any claims which may be successful against the Government.

33 This fact is a refutation of the often expressed opinion of some Indians and whites that the Agency is trying to perpetuate itself. As relocation succeeds, there will be fewer people to supervise.
shared by other officers of the agency staff.

In recent years increasing mechanization of farming and the decline in the growing of cotton have accentuated the economic plight of the Mississippi Choctaw. A federal program of keeping land out of cultivation, the soil bank, has also contributed to the economic problems of the Indians, particularly for those who have been sharecroppers. With little or no work available in the towns near the communities, the Choctaw has the alternative of continued subsistence-farming or migration to other parts of the state or beyond.
CHAPTER X

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSIONS

The preceding chapters have presented in some detail the historical development of the Choctaws and a description of their contemporary social organization. The summary which follows will be confined to some of the more important findings relative to their contemporary life, while the discussion which follows will be concerned with the problem of socio-cultural change.

I. SUMMARY

The Mississippi Choctaws now number more than at any time in the past hundred years. Their rate of growth is higher than whites and Negroes in Mississippi. The principal factor contributing to this growth is the high Indian birth rate. While the average crude birth rate for the years 1949-1953 was 29.5, the specific birth rate for the same period was 200.0 for the agency area. The births are offset to some extent by a high death rate, particularly in the early years of life. In proportion to the total Mississippi population, the age-specific death rates for the Choctaws in the agency area remain about twice as high until the age 45, when they drop below those of whites and Negroes. Migration is the principal factor, however, in making the proportion above twenty years of age so small.
The continual migration of young people from the agency area also affects the social structure of the Indian society. There have been three concerted efforts to remove the Indians from the State and, in each instance, the social organization of the Indians was nearly destroyed. Because of the extent to which acculturation has grown, there are distinguished three social classes in the Indian society: native, transitional and marginal. The natives have little or no education; they are, in the main, sharecroppers, almost half of the Indian population being in this class. The transitional class is equally as large as the native. Indians who comprise this class are largely oriented toward the values of the larger society. Most of them rent farms on the reservation. The marginals have come from the transitional class. They number twenty-five or less, have at least high-school education, and would like full participation in the larger society.

The Indians are at the very bottom of the class structure of the larger society; however, the Indian himself considers his position somewhere between that of whites and Negroes. Elements of a caste system prevail in all towns and cities of the agency area except one. There is effective segregation throughout the area, particularly in public facilities, employment, housing, education, and religion. Although the older Indians fail to recognize the prevalent discrimination as the cause for the migration of their youths from the agency area, it appears that this is the principal
The lack of leadership has been a significant factor toward retarding advancement of the Indians. For many years interested whites have provided various kinds of assistance. Regardless of intentions of the Agency, there is much dissatisfaction with leadership from that source. As the level of education rises among the Indians, there should appear those able to lead their people if the potential is not lost through continued migration.

As children are assets in the farm life of Indians, families are large, sometimes numbering ten or twelve. Perhaps because of the family size, child rearing is permissive. Kinship is reckoned among the transitional class exactly as among the whites about them, the younger Choctaws often using the English word designating a particular relationship. The father is the head of the house; he is largely responsible for the discipline of the children. In general, the status of women is low. They labor in the fields at any kind of work they are physically capable of doing. However, as they become better educated, their position in the Indian society is slowly rising.

Contrary to the prevailing stereotype of whites in regard to Indian marital relationships, a majority of the Indians who marry today are married legally—that is, by a minister or justice of the peace. Ceremonies are simple, reflecting the low economic status of the participants. There are fewer Indians married than
is the case in the white and Negro populations about them.

There are more Choctaw children in the Indian schools today than at any time since the establishment of the Agency. Even though the average enrollment increases yearly, as late as 1950 the median number of school years completed by the Mississippi Choctaws was 0.5 years. Drop-outs at the end of the sixth, eighth, and tenth grades present a continuous problem. There are seven schools in the seven communities; four maintain six grades; two, eight grades; and only one has ten grades. Students who wish to go beyond the tenth grade must attend Indian schools in Oklahoma or Kansas. Two communities have had no high-school graduates; three have had students to graduate from college. Through 1957 five Mississippi Choctaws have graduated from college. While the number of students graduating from high-school and taking additional training is increasing slowly, most of them do not return to the agency area to live.

The Choctaws by and large have adopted the Christian religion. Although a little less than half of the population is recorded as church members, it is safe to say that most of the Indians are oriented toward the values stressed by the religious denominations (particularly Baptist) in the larger society about them. In or near Indian communities there are eleven Baptist churches, three Catholic missions, and two Methodist churches. Over three-fourths of all church members are Baptists. The beliefs stressed by the Baptist church provide them with a sense of security in the face
of frustrations which they encounter daily. The organizational structure of the Baptist church provides them with freedom of expression not possible in the larger society. The frequent services at the churches are also important opportunities for families widely separated on farms to visit. There is little or no communication between the Indian Baptist churches and neighboring white and Negro churches. The Catholic mission at Tucker has whites in its membership. As Methodist mission work has only recently begun among the Indians, it is too soon to comment on the emerging patterns of behavior in that denomination.

The Choctaws have a long tradition of farming. The 1950 census revealed that over 84.1 per cent of the Indian males were employed in some aspect of farming. As about half of them are sharecroppers, it is inevitable that their income is low. In 1949, the median income of the Mississippi Indians was $341, the lowest of all Indians, by tribal or state designation. In 1955, the average Choctaw family income was estimated by the Agency to be $600. In the agency area Indians are usually not employed by whites, but when they are, the work is on the order of dish-washing or floor-sweeping. About forty Indians are in constant employment by the Agency as chauffeurs, road repairmen, housekeepers, and janitors. The policy recently adopted by the Agency of hiring white-collar employees may, in the long run, lead to a redefinition of the Indians' position in the larger society.
A relocation program sponsored by the Agency is resettling Indians in six large cities in the United States, the closest to the reservation being St. Louis. The program is very carefully planned so that the relocating individual or family will experience a minimum of frustration in the movement. In the first full year of operation of the program, 76 persons were relocated. The plan is designed to get the Indians out of the agency area where most of them are presently able to make only a subsistence living, but many of the older people look upon it as just another effort to get rid of them. The future welfare of the agency area Indians is closely related to economic opportunities.

II. DISCUSSION

In the first situation in which Choctaws were encountered by Europeans in 1540, the latter defined this tribe, as in the case of other tribes, as savages and heathens. The initial definition which structured the relations between the two races on the contrasting ideas of civilized and savage, set the pattern for future relationships between the two races. It then became an easy matter to move among the Indians and take their land on the justification that God had put the land on the earth and the heathens were wasting it. But poor use of the land was not characteristic of all tribes; when the whites arrived, the Choctaws were the foremost agriculturalists in the Southeast. It was also easy to get Choctaws to
sign contracts and treaties, the terms and obligations of which they were partially or totally ignorant.

But the Choctaws did not long remain savages. Since they had no highly developed institutions of their own, it was not as difficult for them to accept new ideas as it was for their neighbors, the Natchez and Creeks. The settlement among them of traders who took Indian wives hastened the diffusion of European culture. Their offspring were often sent away to school, and they, in turn, further contributed to change. By 1800 the Indians were outnumbered both by whites and Negroes in the Mississippi Territory. Although the Indians were concentrated in the east central section of the Territory, there was much interaction between them and whites. Missionaries who operated schools among the Indians were continually writing about good enrollments and of the rapid "progress" the Indians were making.

Until 1830 there were few of the stereotypes that prevail today mentioned in historical documents. But about that time the Indian social organization broke down, leaving the Indians "in a state of suspension." The thousands who were transported West in the decade of 1830 re-established themselves in Indian Territory and made rapid advancement in acculturation; however, the thousand or so remaining in Mississippi experienced nothing but additional disorganization. They were denied land that had been promised them if they did not emigrate. For the next twenty years they
sought to obtain the land while whites continued to harass them, trying to force them to leave the State. In 1843, there was another drive to remove the Indians to the West. Like the situation a decade earlier, many migrated but those who remained were again left without anything. By 1850 those who stayed had largely become sharecroppers in the economic organization of the larger society.

It was in this period from 1830 to 1850 that the prevailing stereotypes of the Choctaws seem to have originated. As it was suggested above, the pre-Columbian Indian society with its social and cultural structures appears to have been functioning reasonably well toward meeting the needs of its members. For instance, the writer Cushman, who lived for sometime among the Indians, was concerned about the apparent lack of training for the children; but he marvelled at the well-behaved young adult. Yet when the society broke down, the social and cultural structures which had held them together also disintegrated. For a brief period those remaining experienced a state of anomie, literally normlessness.

With the old system destroyed, there was nothing for those to do except orient themselves toward the whites about them if they wished to survive physically. The only tasks for which they were prepared in the way of labor were the most menial, a fact which contributed to their becoming sharecroppers. Further acculturation was hindered in this period as there were no schools for Indian children to attend. No one seemed concerned about the Choctaws' condition.
Greenwood LeFlore, who had remained in the State as a wealthy Delta planter after 1830, apparently took no further interest in the Choctaws. He identified himself completely with whites.

Not until 1880, or thereabout, did events occur that initiated more rapid change in the Indians' lives. Schools and churches were organized for them. Although school attendance was usually poor, a teacher from 1880 to 1900 was impressed with the Indian students' desire to learn. The same was said by other teachers who taught prior to establishment of the agency schools in 1918. Since the Indians did not have a highly organized system of their own religious beliefs, it was easy for the Indians to accept new ones. Churches grew, and there was a total of fifteen by 1900.

But once again removal took place so that the Choctaws could participate in the allotment of land in Indian Territory. Once again the social organization of the Choctaws, manifested in family, school, and church, was disrupted, as about half of the Indians migrated. Although some churches survived, schools had to be reorganized; and the Indians who remained continued as sharecroppers until the Agency began purchasing land in 1918.

With various kinds of assistance from the Agency, the general condition of the Choctaws began to improve slowly. But it is of interest to note that one informant for this study related that in the early days of the Agency many Indians refused to have anything whatever to do with it; they feared that they would be duped into
moving West. The first program of the Agency, settling Choctaw families on farms with necessary equipment, was a failure because of the Indians' lack of cultural experience in handling their own affairs. The larger society, however, considered this failure as evidence of the inferiority of the Indian.

Since 1918, acculturation of the Indians has speeded up; more particularly since 1940. School attendance has increased each year as has the total number of school years completed. However, because most of those finishing high-school migrate elsewhere, the median number of school years completed for the adult population remains low.

Unfortunately, the economic condition of the Indians has changed little since they were first incorporated into the larger system as sharecroppers. Although the families that live on reservation land are not sharecroppers, they are not far removed from that class. Both groups can do little more than live from crop to crop. Since the individual's economic situation has a great deal to do with status in the larger society, the Indian is destined to remain on the bottom unless opportunities are opened for him. In economic activities, first of all, but in other areas of contact with whites as well, the old stereotypes prevail.1 Because of the

1 The adults in the native class do exemplify in their behavior many of the stereotypes. That is why the marginals dislike the "old folks" so much.
existing racial situation in Mississippi, the Agency feels that
the only alternative to continued subsistence farming is reloca-
tion. But, again, some of the Indians see in relocation another
effort to get rid of them.

In the discussion of cultural change it will be recalled
that in the first chapter of this study the question was raised
as to why some of the Indians' old culture persists, while in
many areas there appears to be complete acculturation. It was
pointed out that Vogt believes that the students of acculturation,
particularly of the American Indian, have failed to take into ac-
count the traditional American attitudes concerning race.² The
individual's ability to participate in the larger society (or
perhaps his acceptance without reservations) will affect his
clinging to old culture patterns or adopting others. But it has
been demonstrated in the preceding analysis of institutional life
of the Indians that they are far from being assimilated into the
American society about them. The immigrant groups who come to
America are gradually absorbed into the main stream in a genera-
tion or so; Indians who have lived among whites for nearly four
hundred years are still not assimilated. Many of them to a large
degree are acculturated—particularly the marginal individuals, who

²Eyon Z. Vogt, "The Acculturation of American Indians," The
Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,
600XXI (1957), 144.
could not be distinguished from the whites about them were it not for the color of their skin. But they are not assimilated. They do not "share experiences" or have a "common life" with the whites about which Park speaks in defining assimilation.3

The relationship of whites and Indians in the little community mentioned in the latter part of the seventh chapter bears repetition in this discussion of acculturation and assimilation. The Indians, as one informant put it, "have been treated more like human beings" than those in the other communities. Less than ten miles from this Indian community is a white village of less than 1,000 people. The Indians who trade there are allowed credit; they can eat in the two white restaurants; the Indian Baptist ministers are allowed to use the baptistry of the white church for immersing their converts. These facts indicate that the situation here is defined differently from elsewhere in the agency area. Why this is the case is of significance to this study.

The answer may be lost in the passing of time, but some suggestions can be offered as to why that situation is different from those situations in the remainder of the agency area. There are very few Negroes living in the southeastern part of Leake County where the Indians live; perhaps this fact has influenced the attitudes of the whites toward Indians. The deliberate teaching of

---

Western culture has been carried on longer in that than in any other community. Three of the Indians who own homes live in that community. Two Indians who own businesses were reared in that community. Whites who live near the community hold the average Indian in high esteem.

A good indication of the esteem with which the Indians from that community are held is the fact that they are allowed to vote. Such is not the case in Neshoba County, where half the Mississippi Indian population lives. It can be observed in Table XVI that only two Indians were registered to vote in Neshoba County on July 1, 1957 while 25 were registered in Leake County.

A problem faced in seeking to determine why a particular situation is defined in a certain way is that of trying to decide whether the facts pertaining to it are cause or result. Here clearly is the "vicious circle" in operation; or, perhaps, more appropriately, "the self-fulfilling prophecy." The whites have defined the Indians differently in that community; therefore, their behavior toward Indians

---

4 One has a business in a city outside the agency area and is married to a white woman.

5 The Indians in this community are like other transitional Choctaws in many respects. With the exception of the three who own homes; the remainder of the men are sharecroppers or tenants on the reservation. And there are some extremely poor Indians. The writer visited in a house in the community that had only one room, the ground as a floor, and one double bed. Five adults and a child were living in this house.

6 Data were obtained from the records of the circuit clerks of Leake and Neshoba Counties. Inquiries in the two other agency area counties received no response.
TABLE XVI

POPULATION AND VOTING REGISTRATION BY RACE, TWO INDIAN AGENCY AREA COUNTIES, MISSISSIPPI, JULY 1, 1957

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Leake Population*</th>
<th>Leake Registration</th>
<th>Neshoba Population*</th>
<th>Neshoba Registration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1,170</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negro</td>
<td>8,724</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5,595</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>12,407</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>18,410</td>
<td>6,505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21,540</td>
<td>5,565</td>
<td>25,175</td>
<td>6,514</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Arithmetic average annual increase in population computed from census data, 1930 and 1950.

is different. And correspondingly the behavior of the Indians is different.

An important factor in the whites' defining these Indians differently may be changes effected in the cultural orientation of the Indians. And these changes to some extent can be traced to education, one of the "variables" which Myrdal mentions in his discussion of the "principle of cumulation." The Indians of that community have had formal education for a longer period of time than those in any other community. The change in this instance has affected other areas of the Indians' lives. But the change has least affected the economic area; and, as it was pointed out above, the lives and relationships of individuals and groups are influenced to a large extent by economic circumstances. There are no opportunities for economic advancement for the Indians because they are a part of the complex system of race relations in the larger society.

III. CONCLUSION

The Choctaws in Mississippi have an uncertain future. The


8 The change in education has had a much greater effect than is apparent on the surface. The educated Indians leave the agency area for other places where they are able to improve their economic circumstances. But this study is focused on the agency area and is concerned with economic opportunities for those Indians who live in it.
process of acculturation among them is speeding up with increasing school attendance, without a concomitant increase in job opportunities. In the preceding section this problem was related to the pattern of race relations between whites and Negroes in the larger society. As the Indians are defined in terms similar to those defining Negroes, they have suffered as a result of the climate created by the Supreme Court decision of May 17, 1954 on desegregation. At least temporarily, the caste-like wall separating the races has been strengthened, a fact which means that there will be little prospect in the near future for economic advancement for the Indians in the agency area. Thus, the conclusion repeatedly drawn from observations in this study is that migration will continue, probably even to a greater extent in the years ahead.

When the present acute racial feelings have subsided, the measurement of attitudes among the three races (originally intended in this study) would further contribute to understanding the operation of the self-fulfilling prophecy. It has been implied throughout the study that in terms of social distance the Indians are nearer the whites than Negroes. As this nearness varies from community to community, its measurement would add precision to the approach used in this research.

Equally as promising in the further study of this particular problem would be a more intensive analysis of two of the Mississippi Indian communities. It would be worthwhile from the standpoint of
acculturation to investigate more thoroughly the small group of Indians in northeast Mississippi that has no connection with the Agency. A more exhaustive inquiry into the Indian-white relations in the small community described in the preceding section should provide additional insight into the general study of race relations. It would be profitable to explore further the conclusion reached in this study about that community, for it may be the key to a much broader understanding of the problem: It is the atmosphere created by mutual trust and understanding which both races have had for each other that has helped motivate the Indians.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS


B. PUBLICATIONS OF THE U. S. GOVERNMENT


(Mimeographed.)


C. ARTICLES


Halbert, Henry S. "Courtship and Marriage Among the Choctaws of Mississippi," The American Naturalist, XVI (1882), 222-224.


D. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS


Claiborne, J. F. H., Collection. Mississippi State Department of Archives and History, Jackson.


E. NEWSPAPERS


The Times-Picayune-New Orleans States, October 20, 1940.
F. MISCELLANEOUS

Jailer's Records, Neshoba County, Mississippi, 1956.

Minutes of the General Association of Regular Baptists in Mississippi, 1855-1920.

Minutes of the Harmony Baptist Association, 1843-1912.

Minutes of the New Choctaw Baptist Association, 1913-1957.


Records of Circuit Clerks, Leake and Neshoba Counties, Mississippi, July 1, 1957.
### TABLE A

#### RACIAL COMPOSITION OF MISSISSIPPI, BY COUNTIES, 1950

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>White (%)</th>
<th>Non-white (%)</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>White (%)</th>
<th>Non-white (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adams</td>
<td>32,256</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>Lafayette</td>
<td>22,798</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcorn</td>
<td>27,158</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>Lamar</td>
<td>13,225</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amite</td>
<td>19,261</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>Lauderdale</td>
<td>64,171</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attala</td>
<td>26,652</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>12,639</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>37.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benton</td>
<td>8,793</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>Leake</td>
<td>21,610</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivar</td>
<td>63,004</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>38,237</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calhoun</td>
<td>18,369</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>Leflore</td>
<td>51,813</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carroll</td>
<td>15,499</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>27,899</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickasaw</td>
<td>18,951</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>Lowndes</td>
<td>37,852</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choctaw</td>
<td>11,009</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>33,860</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>73.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claiborne</td>
<td>11,944</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>Marion</td>
<td>23,967</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>19,362</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>Marshall</td>
<td>25,106</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>70.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay</td>
<td>17,757</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>Monroe</td>
<td>36,543</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coahoma</td>
<td>49,361</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>14,470</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copiah</td>
<td>30,493</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>Neshoba</td>
<td>25,730</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covington</td>
<td>16,036</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>Newton</td>
<td>22,681</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Soto</td>
<td>24,599</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>Noxubee</td>
<td>20,022</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forrest</td>
<td>45,055</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>Oktibbeha</td>
<td>24,569</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>10,929</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>Panola</td>
<td>31,271</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>10,012</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>Pearl River</td>
<td>20,041</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greene</td>
<td>8,215</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>Perry</td>
<td>9,108</td>
<td>75.7</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>18,830</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>Pike</td>
<td>35,137</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hancock</td>
<td>11,891</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>Pontotoc</td>
<td>19,994</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison</td>
<td>84,079</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>Prentiss</td>
<td>19,810</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinds</td>
<td>142,164</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>Quitman</td>
<td>25,885</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holmes</td>
<td>33,301</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>Rankin</td>
<td>28,881</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humphries</td>
<td>23,115</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>21,681</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issaquena</td>
<td>4,966</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>Sharkey</td>
<td>12,903</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>71.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itawamba</td>
<td>17,216</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Simpson</td>
<td>21,819</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>31,401</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>16,740</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jasper</td>
<td>18,912</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>6,264</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>11,306</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>Sunflower</td>
<td>56,031</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>68.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff. Davis</td>
<td>15,500</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>Tallahatchie</td>
<td>30,486</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>63.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>57,835</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>Tate</td>
<td>18,011</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>58.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kemper</td>
<td>15,893</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>Tippah</td>
<td>17,522</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>White (%)</td>
<td>Non-white (%)</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>White (%)</td>
<td>Non-white (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tishomingo</td>
<td>15,544</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Yalobusha</td>
<td>15,191</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunica</td>
<td>21,664</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>Yazoo</td>
<td>35,712</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>20,262</td>
<td>82.1</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walthall</td>
<td>15,563</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,178,914</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>45.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>39,616</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>70,504</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne</td>
<td>17,010</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webster</td>
<td>11,607</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinson</td>
<td>14,116</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winston</td>
<td>22,231</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE B

**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MALES AND FEMALES, BY AGE CATEGORIES, FOR MISSISSIPPI INDIANS AND SELECTED POPULATIONS, 1950**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Category: Years</th>
<th>Mississippi Indian</th>
<th>Selected Populations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Ages</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>50.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data given for ten year intervals (25-34, etc.) were divided into five year averages.

VITA

Charles Madden Tolbert was born on September 14, 1922 at Union, Mississippi. He attended high school at Philadelphia, Mississippi, graduating in 1940. After studying for a year and a half at East Central Junior College, Decatur, Mississippi, he was employed in the War Department in Washington, D. C. for a year. From 1943 to 1946 he served in the United States Army. Upon his release, he entered Mississippi College from which he received the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1948. The following year he was employed by his Alma Mater. On June 2, 1949 he was married to the former Jean Furr of Tylertown, Mississippi. The couple are parents of one son, Charles II, born on October 30, 1952. For five years the writer was an instructor of sociology at Mississippi College. During that time, he attended summer sessions at the University of North Carolina from which he received the Master of Arts degree in August, 1954. The following month he enrolled at Louisiana State University, where he is presently a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Charles M. Tolbert

Major Field: Sociology

Title of Thesis: A Sociological Study of the Choctaw Indians in Mississippi

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

[Signatures]

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination: May 9, 1958