

**The Students of Sherman Indian School: Education and Native Identity since 1892.** By Diana Meyers Bahr. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014. 192 pages. \$19.95 paper; \$19.95 electronic.

The legacy of off-reservation American Indian boarding schools in the United States remains contested. These institutions aimed to destroy Indian cultures and were sites of death and suffering, but inadvertently, they also nurtured cultural revitalization and pan-Indian movements. Indeed, some alumni recall their boarding school experiences positively. The United States federal government administrators located one off-reservation school in southern California: beginning in 1892, they forcibly rounded up Indian youth and sent them to Perris Indian School and its successor Sherman Institute in Riverside, California, which housed thousands of Indian students. In the early years, students confronted a system that sought to annihilate their indigenous languages, family relations, and traditional cultures. This was undoubtedly a traumatic experience. Over time, however, many students enrolled voluntarily, learned English, practiced an industrial trade, and went on to lead productive, albeit acculturated, lives. Others rebelled, escaped, and defiantly retained many of their indigenous traditions.

During the past two decades a burgeoning literature on American Indian boarding schools has proliferated that narrates their histories and gives voice to Indian students. While several histories exist for other boarding schools, such as the infamous Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, Sherman Indian School lacks a published comprehensive history. The school's more than 120 years of continued operation complicate this task. Independent English scholar and oral historian Diana Meyers Bahr's *The Students of Sherman Indian School* contributes to this discussion. She fills part of this lacuna by situating Sherman's history within the wider context of federal Indian policies. Chronologically organized, the book's five chapters trace the impacts of forced assimilation, termination, and self-determination at Sherman Indian High School between 1892 and 2012. Bahr argues that attendees "negotiated a middle course . . . to cope with powerful moral confrontations. [It] was an effort to maintain the integrity of their Native culture [in response to these policies] while making accommodations that allowed them to succeed in school" (7). Furthermore, according to Bahr, students "gained a deepened appreciation of the diverse cultures of Indian America and a heightened awareness of their own Indian identity" (14).

*The Students of Sherman Indian School* begins in 1892 with the founding of Perris, Sherman's precursor, and proceeds through Sherman Indian School's first thirty years. During this time, the federal government implemented assimilationist policies and the campus expanded to meet the federal government's needs. Teachers forced students to speak English, and taught them math, reading, and history for half of the day. Vocational education constituted the other half of the day's schedule. Students experienced extreme regimentation, often in combination with punishing discipline. Ultimately, however, Bahr suggests that "The integration of Native and white culture was not always achieved" (32). In essence, the school forced students into a position between white and Indian worlds, a theme expressed in many boarding school histories.

The book's next chapter recounts how federal policy towards Indian students changed during the Indian New Deal from 1933 to 1945. Government reports criticizing the substandard conditions and insufficient funding for off-reservation boarding schools, including Sherman, resulted in President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration attempting to reign in assimilation policies. Subsequent federal governments dismantled the Indian New Deal after World War II and, as Bahr argues, policy swung back towards assimilation. Administrators reduced the school's diversity by accepting applications only from the Diné (Navajo), and focused the curriculum on English proficiency and vocational skills. This assimilationist program resulted in "students ha[ving] problems adjusting to boarding school life," mainly because of inadequate preparation and funding (55).

In this second chapter, Bahr utilizes her interviews with "BIA Brats"—mostly Native children of employees who lived on campus—who were forbidden to enroll at Sherman, yet had "the run of campus" (66). Bahr asserts that these children, like the students themselves, experienced a "middle course." Her interviews are an important contribution to the literature on Sherman. However, Bahr represents student experiences through these nonstudents. She observes, "The BIA Brats were sheltered; the students were vulnerable" and [were] "physically and intellectually removed from their cultures, while BIA Brats were being drawn deeper into their Indian identity" (66; 72). This manifested in the intense connections "BIA Brats" maintained with Sherman. In fact, many later returned as educators and employees.

The last half of the twentieth century witnessed severe challenges for Sherman and its students, as the third chapter describes. Federal termination policies, combined with budget cuts, depressed the educational attainment of Sherman students and led to what one investigator termed "frustrating and extreme handicaps" (84). Students responded in a variety of ways. Some invested in their education and sports, while others turned to drugs and alcohol. Eventually, Indian activism and federal investigations led to renewed support for self-determined Indian education, although Sherman still suffered for want of funds.

The final two chapters detail the shift towards, and embrace of, self-determination as the foundation of Indian education at Sherman between 1973 and the present. According to Bahr, "The adverse effects of termination and consequent Indian activism initiated a reexamination of federal Indian policy [which recognized that] parental and community control of education was crucial" (96). Today, Sherman Indian High School remains shaped by students, staff, and community members. Native language and arts offerings, extracurricular activities, and common behavioral expectations complement Sherman's traditional academic curriculum. Still, the school faces many challenges. Students reject strict discipline, and the school remains at the whim of federal budgets. Yet Sherman's success, which Bahr emphasizes, is the result of student determination and administrator support. She asserts that Sherman has a dropout rate below the state average and a 100 percent graduation rate.

Summarizing changing federal policies that shaped programs at off-reservation American Indian boarding schools, *The Students of Sherman Indian School* adds to prior Indian boarding school oral histories, including Bahr's previous work on a

Sherman student, *Viola Martinez, California Paiute: Living in Two Worlds* (2003). Bahr's current book is full of Native voices, including student testimonials previously published elsewhere and interviews with the school's "BIA Brats." These interviews help humanize Sherman's employees, who are often demonized, by highlighting their indigeneity and work in caring for the students. However, the book contains only one previously unpublished student account, although there are thousands of living graduates and hundreds of current students. Moreover, in its focus on the children of BIA employees and in understanding Indian students through the accounts of these nonstudents, the monograph seems incomplete and may leave the reader questioning the accounts' accuracy. Nevertheless, *The Students of Sherman Indian School* provides an introduction for those who are reading about off-reservation Indian boarding schools or Sherman Indian High School for the first time.

*Preston S. McBride*

University of California, Los Angeles

**That Dream Shall Have a Name: Native Americans Rewriting America.** By David L. Moore. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014. 488 pages. \$45.00 paper; \$45 electronic.

David L. Moore has written a big book: it explores five major Native authors (William Apress, Sarah Winnemucca, D'Arcy McNickle, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Sherman Alexie) to address five major themes (authenticity, identity, community, sovereignty, and humor and irony). With its many pleasures and uses, to read *That Dream Shall Have a Name* is like attending a five-session seminar. Each chapter opens up a new topic while weaving in past discussions and texts, and personalized rhetoric, such as "Let's turn to . . ." suggests a teacher dedicated to sharing a world about which he cares deeply. The preface opens with Moore finding patterns in the questions his students ask about Native American literature; this book is his response to those patterns. Moore then links both Native and non-Native students to community audiences, adding and addressing a scholarly audience as well, and finally combines the three audiences together when he asserts, "maintaining practical connections to classroom and community refines theoretical inquiry" (xi). Presumably, influence moves in the other directions as well.

As announced in the subtitle, the book's overall theme is the efforts of these five Native authors to rewrite United States history and ideals of freedom on a truer, inclusive basis that escapes "American self-contradictions" and the "founding binary of civilization and wilderness" (5). The author's goal is not to probe the theoretical complexities of the five concepts, but rather to grasp their importance as entry points into the intersections of the Native and non-Native worlds which the texts engage. Throughout the five main chapters, the focus is on thematically driven readings of primary texts. Fine seminar moments come when new connections are made, as when Moore juxtaposes John Winthrop's community-building with that of William Apress.